

Minutes of the Town of Sennett monthly Town Board Meeting held on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Sennett Town Office Building.

Members Present: James Vivenzio, Councilman
Michael Wellauer, Councilman
Edward Rizzo, Councilman (Remotely)
Kristopher LaPointe, Councilman
Thomas Blair, Supervisor

Also Present: Cheri Major, Bookkeeper
Hayden Hares, Highway Superintendent
Kris LaPointe, Water & Sewer Superintendent
Harold Gilfus, Code Enforcement Officer
Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Remotely: Emilio Moran (MRB), Tom, Starr

Others Present: William Feocco

Call to Order

Supervisor Blair called the regular monthly meeting of the Sennett Town Board to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 19, 2026.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a prayer by Supervisor Blair.

Roll Call

Town Clerk conducted roll call with all members present: Councilman Vivenzio, Councilman Wellauer, Councilman Rizzo (joining remotely), Councilman LaPointe, and Supervisor Blair. Supervisor Blair confirmed that Councilman Rizzo was a voting member for the evening with his remote location properly publicized.

Approval of Minutes

Councilman LaPointe moved to accept the February minutes as written. Councilman Wellauer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing(s) - None

No public hearings were scheduled.

Scheduled Speakers

MRB – Engineering items

Emilio from MRB provided updates on several engineering projects:

Water District 8 remains the major ongoing project with five grants submitted in the past month seeking funding. Three earmarks are pending, and the NBRC grant was resubmitted. The WIIA grant application is awaiting publication to reapply. Supervisor Blair and Emilio appeared before the county legislature seeking county infrastructure grant funding but were not selected, though the county legislature chairperson expressed continued support for the project.

GIS mapping work continues with plans to resume field mapping with Kris as winter weather improves.

For the wholesale water agreement with the City of Auburn, GHD scheduled a follow-up meeting to discuss study results and potential rate recommendations. The study will require review by the town and surrounding communities once finalized.

General infrastructure studies need town input for developing a water master plan, updating the 2013 water capital improvement plan, and identifying target areas for expansion. A meeting with Supervisor Blair and town officials will be scheduled.

Park grants discussion included pursuing a SAM grant, which Emilio confirmed could be applied for at any time with straightforward application requirements.

Public Be Heard

Councilman Wellauer moved to open Public Be Heard. Councilman Vivenzio seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

No members of the public spoke.

Councilman LaPointe moved to close Public Be Heard. Councilman Wellauer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Department Reports

Attorney

Supervisor Blair reported that Town Attorney Andino was not present and provided updates. Regarding the ambulance district matter, an email was sent requesting updates after residents inquired about progress. MRB and the fire departments were expected to reconvene to address concerns about response time charts and provide additional detail, with work product anticipated by end of April.

For Water District 8, Supervisor Blair rewrote the grant narrative to emphasize emergency infrastructure benefits for two counties, highlighting the project's importance for backing up both Skaneateles and Owasco Lake systems. He strengthened the application by focusing on emergency circumstances and required redundant water sources.

Supervisor Blair completed a letter of intent for the town to become a pro housing community, which could qualify for \$250,000 in technical resource grants (TRIG grants) to fund engineering and planning studies. The board expressed support for pursuing this designation.

Bookkeeper

Cheri presented one budget adjustment for Water District 6, requesting to move \$25,576.88 from account 1068320400 to account 599 due to overspending on Auburn water purchases.

Water Supervisor Kris explained that the overage resulted from percentage-based billing now that meter replacements provide actual readings rather than estimates. Districts 2 and 6 are tied together, and while District 6 overspent by \$25,000, it was nearly offset by \$23,000 underspending in the connected district.

Councilman Wellauer moved to approve the budget transfer of \$25,576.88 from account 1068320 to account 599. Councilman LaPointe seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Cheri also presented information about \$400,000+ in the tax offset fund that was established by a previous board as an emergency reserve. Supervisor Blair recommended formalizing this as a restricted emergency fund with written policy documentation.

Planning Board

Councilman Rizzo reported no formal applications this month. The board discussed an informal inquiry about a possible used car lot and a potential farm application with five buildings on Turnpike Road that has neighbors concerned.

Codes/Fire Marshall

Harold reported issuing one permit in February with a \$100 fee for an \$850,000 project. He conducted one fire inspection after a sprinkler system break at a business. Four inquiries were received, including one for agricultural

chicken barns on Turnpike Road. He completed zoning compliance letters and property transfer reviews. His required code training is scheduled for April in Syracuse.

Supervisor Blair inquired about Harold's fire marshal inspection procedures, specifically regarding Department of Labor boiler inspections. Harold explained he notifies property owners of required inspections but doesn't directly contact the state, as it's the property owner's responsibility to arrange inspections every two years.

Councilman Rizzo asked about Pizza Hut construction progress. Harold reported the interior fit-out is underway with different contractors installing ovens, followed by ceiling completion. Opening is projected in approximately two months.

Zoning Enforcement Officer

Councilman Wellauer reported for Mr. Vevone who advised it was a slow month with inquiries about car sales at 430 Grand Ave, rezoning questions for a health center on Genesee Street, car sales on Turnpike Road, and usual real estate agent calls about zoning criteria.

Supervisor Blair discussed IDA inquiries about property across from the town, including potential gym, solar, and PDD development interest. He emphasized that any zoning changes require town board approval and advised the IDA not to make promises about allowable uses.

Supervisor Blair then presented a significant opportunity involving a \$7 million grant for water line extension from the city to Turnpike Road that could serve 26-27 EDUs. This connects to IDA plans for potential industrial development requiring expansion of the town's industrial district. The project could attract large manufacturers, increase tax base, and boost the town's share of county sales tax distribution, but would also increase demands on fire and emergency services and add truck traffic.

The board discussed the pros and cons, with Councilman Wellauer noting Route 34 is already a high truck corridor making it suitable for such development. Water Supervisor Kris suggested connecting the new water line to the existing 12-inch line on Turnpike Road for emergency backup capability.

Supervisor Blair proposed scheduling a meeting with county planner Kari Terwilliger, MRB engineers, and potentially other agencies to evaluate the proposal. The board expressed general openness to exploring the opportunity.

Assessor

Councilman LaPointe reported that Jeff Lowe has been sending reminder letters and calling property owners about exemption renewal forms. New exemptions were processed, and meetings held with property owners. The New York State equalization rate decreased from 61% to 60%.

Fire Dept.

Supervisor Blair reported 50 alarms in February (102 year-to-date), including 5 fires, 29 medical calls, 1 hazardous situation, 3 public service calls, and 12 false alarms. Mutual aid was provided 4 times and received 13 times. Notable incidents included structure fires in Weedsport and Owasco, and sprinkler issues at the Movieplex.

Highway Dept.

Highway Superintendent Hares reported winter activities including plowing, salting, and equipment servicing. Stone was ordered for summer road work, mailbox repairs were completed, and plow damage around town was fixed. Martin's Door service installed an overhead door on the pole barn, though Councilman Wellauer noted concerns about missing weather trim that should be addressed.

Water Dept.

Water Superintendent Kris reported installing 9 meters with less than 90 remaining. The new van will receive safety lighting installation on April 6th. A water leak on John Smith Street was repaired. Tank cleaning is scheduled for May without taking the system out of service using a specialized rover system.

Regarding the town park water service, several issues need resolution: the project requires a 2-inch service but available directional drilling may be limited. Material costs for crossing the road are estimated at \$8,280 not including installation. Alternative routing via the fire department's 6-inch main would cost more in materials but avoid road crossing complications.

Additional concerns include concrete encasing requirements near the building, dual trenching with electrical lines, and clarification of contractor responsibilities for restoration work. Supervisor Blair agreed to schedule a coordination call with the project manager, architect, and relevant town officials.

Water Superintendent Kris is preparing to interview 6-7 candidates for the water department position and requested clarification on pay scales and signing bonuses, which the board confirmed had been previously approved.

Town Clerk

Kate reported \$433 in February revenue with \$409 to general fund and \$24 to animal population control. Tax collection showed good progress with 37 online transactions and 1,759 parcels collected with 90 remaining unpaid.

Water bill online payments increased to 83 accounts (10% overall) compared to 64 last year, with Water District 6 showing the highest online usage at 14.6%.

Kate will be attending the Town Clerk's conference in Albany April 19-22.

Supervisor Blair noted one delinquent water customer would be pursued in justice court.

Animal Control

Councilman Vivenzio reported 3 complaints, 2 dogs seized and redeemed, 2 license applications, and 1 unlicensed dog notice in February.

Councilman Vivenzio requested board review of the proposed animal control local law that had been circulated previously.

Supervisor Blair moved to schedule a public hearing for 6:05 PM on April 16th for Local Law Number 1 of 2026 regarding animal control. Councilman LaPointe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Committees

Parks

Councilman Rizzo reported the parks committee decided on a second pavilion twice the size of the existing one, plus 3 pickleball courts and 3 bocce ball courts for phase 3 development.

Supervisor Blair noted construction has begun on the parking lot expansion with contractors agreeing to leave topsoil for the dog park project. He emphasized the requirement for daily worker lists and current workers' compensation documentation for all contractors working on town property to protect the town from liability.

The board discussed drainage improvements needed for the dog park using available spoils from the construction project. Highway Superintendent Hares agreed to assist with this work.

Councilman LaPointe presented a custom fabricated town park sign created by Starr Cashin. The artistic metal sign was well-received by the board for its quality and uniqueness.

The board approved an electrical service upgrade for the park from 200 to 400 amps to accommodate future pavilion and lighting needs.

Councilman Vivenzio moved to authorize upgrading the electrical service to 400 amp to the town park for an amount not to exceed \$12,000 to be done by Knapp Electric. Councilman LaPointe seconded. Roll call vote: Councilman Wellauer - Yes, Councilman LaPointe - Yes, Councilman Rizzo - Yes, Councilman Vivenzio - Yes, Supervisor Blair - Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Veterans Affairs

Supervisor Blair reported Adam Jenks plans to reconvene the Veterans Affairs Committee to address changes in laws and other matters.

Sennett Seniors

The seniors group remains inactive for winter but will resume meetings in April.

Historian

Councilman Vivenzio reported interesting recent research requests including a potentially historical house with family lineage back to original land grants. He's researching 37 Revolutionary War soldiers buried in town cemeteries for potential patriot burial signs through the DAR.

Historical sign maintenance is needed for 3 signs, and grant applications are planned for the East Genesee Road signs, and other historical markers. Three original Sennett school houses from the 1880s-1920s are still standing and inhabited.

For Sennett Rural Cemetery maintenance, three bids were received with Upstate Lawn and Landscape at \$350 per cut being significantly lower than TCL Scapes at \$670 and Snyder and Sons at \$650 per cut.

Councilman LaPointe moved to provide the Sennett Rural Cemetery \$5,000 for lawn mowing, with \$800 credit if verified remaining from last year, recommending Upstate Lawn and Landscape. Supervisor Blair seconded. Roll call vote: Councilman Wellauer - Yes, Councilman LaPointe - Yes, Councilman Rizzo - Yes, Councilman Vivenzio - Yes, Supervisor Blair - Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Town Records Project

Kate reported the scanning project is on box 19 of 21, but may lack sufficient grant funding for the final box of maps, which would cost approximately \$5,000 outside the grant. The vendor proposed writing a new grant application for future work. Supervisor Blair requested detailed accounting of all grant expenditures.

Handbook updates

Supervisor Blair reported that HR One has resumed handbook services after acquiring another business and will complete the town's handbook updates.

E-Code 360 codification project status

The manuscript and editorial/legal analysis is expected around Thanksgiving according to the contractor.

Town Hall capital needs

Highway Supervisor Hares plans to replace front and back sidewalks in late April/early May and Councilman LaPointe will contact the striping company for parking lot work.

Councilman Vivenzio is researching town entrance signs with costs ranging from \$400-800 for standard metal signs to \$4,000 for carved signs like Union Springs installed.

Vehicle and Traffic Safety Signs status & results

Supervisor Blair reported the signs are functioning properly with one unit in storage needing software updates before deployment.

AED purchases/replacements

Councilman Wellauer confirmed Dr. Danello signed on as medical director. Next steps include scheduling training for town board members, employees, and volunteers, plus equipment checks by fire department personnel.

Water & sewer ACH/Credit card status

About 10% of water customers are using the online payment service.

Dog Park completion

Kate coordinates cleanup notifications with parks committee members handling waste removal as needed.

New Business

250th celebration planning for 2026

The board discussed installing a banner on the town hall building for America's 250th birthday celebration. Kate measured the building frontage at approximately 80 by 12 feet and contacted vendors for quotes. Farm Boy and A&M confirmed ability to produce a large banner but not install it. The board agreed to proceed with obtaining quotes for a banner rather than organizing a parade due to residents being divided among multiple school districts.

200th Township celebration for 2027

Supervisor Blair noted the town's 200th anniversary in 2027 will require committee formation, with plans to approach the Sennett Seniors group for involvement.

Supervisor Correspondence/Report

Supervisor Blair presented a resolution from another town addressing escalating electricity costs, noting that only 30% of electric bills represent actual electricity with the remainder being state taxes and surcharges.

Councilman Wellauer moved to adopt the resolution strongly urging immediate review of electric delivery charges and authorizing formal complaints to the New York State Public Service Commission. Councilman Vivenzio seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Blair also brought up the industrial district expansion opportunity discussed under zoning, which could involve \$7 million in water infrastructure grants and potential major industrial development, but noted this would require future zoning changes and detailed planning with multiple agencies.

The board discussed document shredding service for the May 2nd and 3rd town cleanup day. Confidata document shredding quoted \$250 per hour for 2 hours of service.

Councilman LaPointe moved to authorize 2 hours of document shredding service with Confidata for \$500 on May 3rd cleanup day. Councilman Wellauer seconded. Roll call vote: Councilman Wellauer - Yes, Councilman LaPointe - Yes, Councilman Rizzo - Yes, Councilman Vivenzio – Yes, Supervisor Blair - Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

No executive session was needed.

Payment of Monthly Bills

Councilman Vivenzio moved to approve payment of monthly bills. Councilman LaPointe seconded. Motion passed with Councilmen Wellauer, LaPointe, Vivenzio, Rizzo and Supervisor Blair voting yes,

Adjournment

Councilman Wellauer moved to adjourn. Supervisor Blair seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:21 PM.

Next regular meeting scheduled for April 16, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Town of Sennett