

Minutes of the Town of Sennett monthly Town Board Meeting held on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Sennett Town Office Building.

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

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

Remotely: Judge Kate Sholar

Others Present: Resident William Feocco

1. Call to Order

Supervisor Blair called the regular meeting of the Sennett Town Board to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at Sennett Town Hall.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Roll Call

Present: Councilman Vivenzio, Councilman Wellauer, Councilman Rizzo, Councilman LaPointe, Supervisor Blair

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 19, 2026 regular meeting were presented for approval.

Motion to approve the March 19, 2026 minutes as written was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Hearing(s) – Public Hearing on Local Law A-2026 – ADJOURNED TO MAY 21, 2026 MEETING

Supervisor Blair noted that Local Law A-2026, the Dog Control and Licensing Law within the Town of Sennett, had been scheduled for a public hearing but had not been properly introduced by resolution prior to the meeting. He advised that an introduction resolution would be acted upon, the public hearing would be opened, and — absent any public comment — would be continued to the May 21, 2026 meeting.

The board considered the introduction resolution, which classified the local law as a Type 2 action under SEQR, meaning no environmental review is required. Supervisor Blair noted that a 239 review through the county planning board would also be required. Councilman Vivenzio sponsored the resolution.

Motion to adopt the introduction resolution for Local Law A-2026 was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman LaPointe. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to open the public hearing on Local Law A-2026 was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

No members of the public wished to speak.

Motion to continue the public hearing to the May 21, 2026 meeting was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Scheduled Speakers

1. MRB – Engineering items – (WD 8 updates; GIS mapping; infrastructure studies, wholesale water agr., Grant writing, Park grants)

MRB's representative Emilio was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. Supervisor Blair and Water Superintendent Kris provided updates in his absence.

Water District 8: The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) grant application was noted as due the following day. Letters of support had already been secured. Supervisor Blair reported that he had revised the grant narrative to prominently feature the redundant water source interconnection between Cayuga County and Onondaga County as a key public safety benefit. A resolution authorizing the grant submission was presented and acted upon later in the meeting. Supervisor Blair also reported that Congressman Mannion had selected Water District 8 as one of his earmarked projects for the FY2026–2027 federal budget. A board member noted this had also appeared in the local newspaper.

Water Superintendent LaPointe advised he received an additional letter of support from a resident and was directed to forward it to the Town Clerk for the record.

Supervisor Blair provided context on the Skaneateles water tower project, noting a cost overrun of approximately \$1,000,000 had caused delays. The donated land from Marty Craig remains in place, and all approvals continue to work through the State Comptroller's office. Supervisor Blair stated he had reached out to Town Supervisor Chris Legg of Skaneateles to formalize a working relationship and memorandum of understanding for the water interconnection, with a meeting expected within one to two months once village-level approvals are resolved on the Skaneateles side.

GIS Mapping: The Water Superintendent reported that GIS field work was approximately 95% complete for Water District 6 and approximately 10% complete for Water District 2, with that district to be prioritized next. Supervisor Blair commended Superintendent LaPointe for his assistance with MRB, noting that well-organized field markings reduced billable hours for the town.

Water Master Plan and Water Rate Study: Supervisor Blair noted that the wholesale water rate study through GHD was ongoing. The Water Superintendent reported that GHD has all necessary information from the town and that preliminary findings indicate the town's current rates are close to what the study recommends — both for wholesale customers and for Town of Sennett residents. Supervisor Blair cautioned the board that the anticipated savings from a revised wholesale agreement may be smaller than originally projected, given the cost of infrastructure improvements at the Auburn treatment facility. He noted that the Village of Weedsport currently has no signed long-term contract with the Town. The board discussed the possibility of pursuing a contract extension with the Village, and the Water Superintendent agreed to contact Village Mayor Chad Platt to follow up. A finalized wholesale agreement is not expected before the fall at the earliest.

Ambulance District: Supervisor Blair reported that following a period of inactivity after the public meeting, he had contacted the town's legal counsel (attorneys Andino and Eaton) to accelerate progress on the map plan report. A draft had arrived in his inbox that afternoon and would be circulated to the board. He noted that data provided by the current EMS provider, SAVES, had significant gaps and that community members employed in the field had raised questions about why the town was not contracting with AMR. Supervisor Blair indicated that a decision on whether to place the ambulance district question on a November referendum must be made within the next two months, and that meaningful progress on the map plan report is needed before that determination can be made.

2. County Tourism Office

The scheduled speaker, Courtney Kasper, Director of Tourism for Cayuga County and a Town of Sennett resident, was not present due to a communication oversight. Supervisor Blair noted that she wished to appear before the board to discuss the Harriet Tubman Scenic Byway as a tourism opportunity for the town. The board agreed to invite her to a future meeting. The board also noted that the Harriet Tubman Scenic Byway topic had previously been considered and set aside due to unresolved questions about potential signage restrictions on Route 5 businesses.

7. Public Be Heard

Motion to open the public comment period was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. The motion carried unanimously.

No members of the public wished to speak.

Motion to close the public comment period was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Department Reports

a. Attorney

Town Counsel was not present. Supervisor Blair noted two open assessment challenges in court, both related to commercial properties in the local plaza. He referenced the ambulance district legal work discussed under Scheduled Speakers and noted no other significant legal matters were pending.

b. Bookkeeper

The bookkeeper was unable to attend. Supervisor Blair reported no significant items to relay on her behalf.

c. Planning Board

Councilman Rizzo reported that there was no planning board meeting in April. In May, the board will take up the East Hill Medical project, described as a significant matter. The board will also consider a special permit application for a used car sales operation at the former Trice property on Turnpike Road, across from Depot Road.

d. Codes/Fire Marshal

Codes Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshal Harold Gilfus reported the following activity for the month of March:

- 4 permits issued (8 year-to-date)
- 7 inquiries received
- \$400 in fees assessed for the month; \$1,650 collected year-to-date
- Year-to-date project value: \$1,972,000 (March project value: \$841,000)
- No violations issued
- 3 projects closed out (3 Certificates of Compliance and 2 Certificates of Occupancy)

On active projects, Mr. Gilfus noted that the final storage unit building — the fifth of five originally approved — was being formed for construction. He reported the Subaru dealership construction was progressing, with in-ground plumbing underway and walls up, with floor work beginning.

Mr. Gilfus raised the matter of a rapid entry key box (Knox Box) ordinance, noting the fire chief had raised the need for emergency access to commercial properties without forced entry. He noted that under existing fire code he can already request such devices but that a formal local law would codify the requirement. Supervisor Blair requested that Mr. Gilfus provide a final recommendation and any edits so the matter could be circulated to the board for consideration as a potential local law.

A notice of claim was briefly discussed involving an alleged vehicle damage incident in the parking lot near BJ's. Supervisor Blair noted the area in question does not appear to be a town road and that the town's insurance carrier had denied coverage on those grounds. Mr. Gilfus agreed to provide contact information for the current property owner so the town could follow up directly.

e. Zoning Enforcement Officer

Zoning Enforcement Officer Jerry Vevone reported on several active matters:

The East Hill Medical complex was noted as the largest project currently in the town. He is coordinating with the applicant to ensure comprehensive coverage as construction details continue to evolve.

Two used car dealership applications were discussed. The first, on Grant Avenue at the former LB Brunner antique store location, had previously gone through the planning board as an allowable use. The second, at the former Trice property on Turnpike Road, is seeking an administrative office location required for the applicant's DMV license. The applicant met with the Zoning Enforcement Officer and will go before the planning board next month for a special permit, with conditions expected to include strict limits on the number of vehicles on-site (no more than four) and lighting controls given the residential character of the surrounding area.

Zoning Officer Vevone also noted an ongoing situation involving a prospective resident who wishes to build a detached accessory structure with a rental apartment — which is not permitted under current code — and who had contacted both Zoning Officer Vevone and Code Officer Gilfus repeatedly with reframed versions of the same request. He confirmed the answer remains no.

Mr. Vevone called the board's attention to a large barndominium being constructed on Owasco Road near Green Shutters, describing it as significantly out of scale with the surrounding residential area and noting that no current provision in the zoning law prevents it. He suggested the board consider whether zoning amendments should address this type of structure. Supervisor Blair acknowledged the issue and noted it would be part of the record for consideration in any future zoning law update. The board agreed the matter warrants attention.

f. Assessor

Councilman LaPointe summarized the assessor's written report, noting that activity during March included review of building permits for potential assessment adjustments, collection of financial documents for the 2025 tax year, review of recent property transfers for inventory accuracy, and processing of tax exemption renewals and new applications. Supervisor Blair noted a preliminary assessed value for Sennett Meadows of \$468,000 for the current year, up significantly from \$20,022 the prior year, reflecting improved financial performance. He noted this figure is preliminary and not yet official.

The board discussed the ongoing vacancy on the Board of Assessment Review, with one seat still needing to be filled. A potential candidate was mentioned who currently serves on the ZBA; the board directed that research be done on whether simultaneous service on both bodies is permissible, with the Town Attorney to be consulted if needed.

g. Fire Dept.

Councilman LaPointe read the fire department report for March 2026 in the absence of the fire department representative:

- 243 responders; 119 man-hours
- 2 fire incidents, 24 medical calls, 4 hazardous situations, 6 public service calls, 10 no-emergency responses
- Mutual aid provided: 2; Mutual aid received: 6
- 3 concerns reported to code enforcement
- Total alarms for the month: 46 (148 year-to-date)

The board expressed appreciation for the volunteerism of the fire department.

h. Highway Dept.

Highway Superintendent Hares reported the following activity for April:

- Cleared driveway culverts of debris throughout the town
- Conducted brush pickup
- Performed roadside ditching
- Completed road preparation on Walker Road in advance of paving
- Repaired plow damage
- Brush piles to be ground at the end of the month
- Dumpsters ordered for dump days in May

Regarding brush grinding, Superintendent Hares indicated that the previous contractor would be replaced with Clifton for this cycle due to inability to make contact. The board discussed the ongoing issue with Finger Lakes failing to complete outstanding trim and finishing work on the salt barn (fascia, door trim, ridge cap) dating back to July of the previous year. The board agreed that a local contractor should be sought instead, and Superintendent Hares was directed to obtain a quote and email it to Supervisor Blair for board circulation and ratification at the next meeting.

Dump Days were confirmed for May 2nd and 3rd, with shredding services confirmed for a two-hour window with a five-box limit per household.

A constituent complaint was noted regarding a large tree stump on private property on Walker Road, previously removed by the highway department as a public safety matter. Supervisor Blair stated that the town's involvement in the original removal was a courtesy, and that private property owners are responsible for their own trees and stumps. The matter was noted for the board's awareness in the event of further contact from the resident.

i. Water Dept.

Water Superintendent Kris reported the following:

- Meters were read at end of March; water bills expected to go out the following Monday or Tuesday
- The department's van had been lettered and is expected to be in service by end of the following week
- Meetings with GHD continued regarding the wholesale water agreement
- Several meter installations completed, including replacement of large master meters
- The annual water quality report was submitted to both the county and state Departments of Health and was confirmed as satisfactory
- The large master meter for Districts 1 and 3 (the city of Auburn's responsibility to install under the existing contract) had been sitting in the department's shop for two months; the Water Superintendent indicated he had notified Auburn that installation was overdue

The board asked for a status update on employee hiring. The Water Superintendent indicated he was still reviewing applications and had not yet conducted interviews due to workload.

j. Town Clerk

Town Clerk Kate reported the following receipts for March:

- \$587.00 received in total: \$547.78 to the General Fund, \$4.72 to decals, \$12.00 to the animal population control program, and \$22.50 for New York State marriage licenses

The Town Clerk reported that 86 payments were processed online during the past billing cycle, representing approximately 10% of customers paying via the online/credit card platform. The board noted this figure was lower than expected and discussed whether the option needed to be publicized more prominently, noting it is already featured on water bills.

A permanent speed display sign stored in the highway barn was discussed. The board noted that the sign is ready for deployment pending scheduling. Councilman Rizzo suggested placing a three-way stop sign at the intersection of Wegman Street and Highland Avenue to address speeding concerns raised by residents, noting it would mirror a similar traffic calming measure previously implemented by the City of Auburn on a nearby street. The board expressed general support for the idea but acknowledged uncertainty around the town's authority to install new stop signs without a local vehicle and traffic law. Supervisor Blair directed that research be done to determine the proper legal authority before proceeding.

k. Animal Control

Animal Control Officer (report read by Councilman Vivenzio): For March 2026, there were 2 complaints and 1 compliance action. No further activity to report.

l. Committees (Parks, Veteran Affairs, Sennett Seniors, Historian)

Parks: Councilman Rizzo reported that Parks Committee is working with Mike O'Neil who is currently in Florida and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled upon his return to advance the next phase of planning.

Supervisor Blair provided a detailed update on the town park construction project. A stop work order remains in place for both the general contractor (GC) and site contractor. On a recent site visit, project manager Brian Manthey rejected the GC's pay application, which claimed 30% completion when work appeared to be no more than 10% complete.

Key outstanding issues include the need to dry out the site before additional compaction work proceeds, and the requirement for a compaction test to be performed before crusher run is brought in and again after compaction, prior to paving. The board discussed the slag material already on-site, with the landscape architect's firm (Keplinger Freeman) having stamped drawings calling for 3 inches of crusher run over the existing slag bed. Supervisor Blair indicated he deferred to the engineer's professional judgment but invited board members with relevant experience to raise objections before work proceeds.

The dog park was noted as being actively used, with volunteers managing waste station supplies.

Brian Manthey also directed the GC to complete temporary fencing around the entire perimeter of the construction site following an observed gap in coverage.

Supervisor Blair noted that the town park entrance sign must be relocated due to grade changes on site, and that the project remains approximately one week from resuming active construction pending site conditions.

Veteran Affairs: No report.

Sennett Seniors: The Town Clerk noted a seniors meeting was recently held. No formal report was presented.

Historian: Councilman Vivenzio (serving as historian) reported that he had received an inquiry from a gentleman whose family traced roots to Sennett, New York, originally from England. Research into the family's connection to the town's name — specifically a reference to a "Daniel Sennett" appearing as early as 1794 — could not be verified through available historical records. He noted that major historians consulted also could not locate supporting documentation. The Councilman characterized the inquiry as one of the most interesting research challenges he had undertaken.

9. Old Business

Town Records Project

Supervisor Blair reported that the final 20 boxes of town records were taken for digitization using existing funds with no additional cost to the town. A grant application for the current year was not submitted due to insufficient lead time before the deadline. A future grant application, if pursued, would cover remaining records in the codes, zoning, fire marshal, town clerk, water, and highway departments. Supervisor Blair requested a full billing audit from the bookkeeper and the digitization contractor to assess total expenditure and inform future grant applications. The Town Clerk noted that all digitized records are expected to be loaded into the online platform by May, at which point staff will be able to search records by address, tax map number, or owner name. The question of whether digitized records satisfy New York State retention requirements for original paper documents was raised; the board directed that the digitization contractor provide a written response on applicable state law.

Handbook updates (new provider identified)

Supervisor Blair noted that the previous vendor, Jason Banuski, had resumed handbook services after acquiring additional staff. The current handbook has been transmitted to them and a quote and meeting for updates are pending.

E-Code 360 codification project status

The Town Clerk confirmed that the contract provides 180 days from receipt of documents for analysis and drafting. An online platform for all town laws is expected to be available in draft form in fall or winter 2026.

Town Hall capital needs – sidewalks, parking lot striping, painting, etc.

Supervisor Blair noted that parking lot striping would be coordinated with the contractor being engaged for the park. He requested to be included in the initial meeting with the contractor. Full replacement of the town hall sidewalks remains planned when resources allow.

Town branding & marketing project (JVivenzio)

Councilman Vivenzio reported that four vendors had been contacted for signage proposals, though two had not yet responded. He presented a sample sign in a style similar to those used by the City of Auburn as an illustration of the type and quality being considered. All vendors received the same information. Councilman Vivenzio indicated he would email proposals to the full board for review once all four responses are received.

Vehicle and Traffic Safety Signs status & results

Discussed under the Town Clerk's report. Research into legal authority for new stop sign installation is pending. Deployment of the permanent speed display sign is to be scheduled by the Water Superintendent and Highway Superintendent, with board notification upon placement.

AED purchases/replacements (MWellauer, BLaSagna JGreen)

Councilman Wellauer reported that he had contacted EMS coordinator Jason Green regarding scheduling AED training for town employees. Green had requested confirmation that the required documentation — signed by the medical director and countersigned by the Town Supervisor — had been properly filed. Supervisor Blair confirmed the form bearing Dr. Danello's signature had been countersigned and submitted to CNY EMS, who will file it with the state. Councilman Wellauer agreed to forward confirmation to Green once received so that a training date can be scheduled.

Employee positions to fill

The Water Superintendent confirmed that applications for the open water department position are still under review and no interviews have been conducted yet.

Boards in need of new members (BAR [need 1], ZBA [need 1 alternate], PB [need 1 alternate])

Supervisor Blair noted that one vacancy remains on the Board of Assessment Review (BAR), with a potential candidate under consideration pending a legal opinion on eligibility. ZBA and Planning Board alternate vacancies remain open.

Water & sewer ACH/Credit card status (by district)

Noted as addressed under the Town Clerk's report.

Dog Park completion (rules and regs sign sufficient? cleanup? No trespass?)

The dog park was noted as actively in use. No formal action was taken.

10. New Business

250th celebration planning for 2026

Supervisor Blair expressed concern that the town had not yet taken visible action to recognize the 250th anniversary of the United States, with July 4th approaching. He proposed commissioning a banner to be displayed on the front of the Town Hall, designed with patriotic imagery and a removable panel celebrating the 250th so the base banner could continue to be used afterward. Follow up with banner vendors — including A&M Graphics and Farm Boy Graphics — for quotes and design mock-ups. Discussion also touched on the potential use of bunting at the Town Hall and park.

200th Township celebration for 2027

Councilman Vivenzio indicated he would convene a planning meeting within the next couple of weeks to begin organizing the town's 200th anniversary celebration for 2027, and expressed interest in soliciting volunteers through the Sennett Seniors group.

11. Supervisor Correspondence/Report

New York State Pro Housing Communities Program: Supervisor Blair reported that the town had previously filed a letter of intent to apply. The formal application has been received and requires input from the codes, zoning, and assessor's offices. He noted that neighboring municipalities Owasco and Weedsport have obtained the Pro Housing Community designation, each receiving \$250,000 grants, and that the certification makes municipalities eligible for larger infrastructure grants for water and sewer projects. A resolution — provided by the state program — was presented for the board's consideration.

Some board members expressed concern about whether the resolution would mandate changes to the town's zoning code. Supervisor Blair and the Town Clerk noted that the program's FAQ documentation states the resolution is a statement of values, not a commitment to execute every option listed, and that it must be adopted as written to qualify for the baseline designation — similar in nature to the Climate Smart Communities program. The board agreed that the designation was in the town's interest as a policy statement in support of housing, and that it did not constitute a mandate to alter the zoning code.

Motion to adopt the Resolution of the Town of Sennett adopting the New York State Pro Housing Communities Pledge was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. Councilmen Vivenzio, Wellauer and Rizzo, and Supervisor Blair in favor. Councilman LaPointe opposed. The motion carried unanimously.

Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Grant – Water District 8: A resolution of authorization and support for the town's submission of the 2026 NBRC Catalyst Program grant application for Water District 8 was presented. The resolution identifies Supervisor Blair as the authorized official for the application and obligates a local match of a minimum of 20% of total grant funds awarded, to be provided through in-kind services or cash contribution.

Motion to adopt the Resolution of Authorization and Support for the Town of Sennett's 2026 Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program application for Water District 8 was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. The motion carried unanimously.

NYSEG Easement – Town Park: Supervisor Blair reported that NYSEG had requested a resolution or minutes entry authorizing the Supervisor to execute an easement along the roadway in the town park to bring electrical service to the building under construction.

Motion to authorize the Town Supervisor to execute the NYSEG easement for the town park in the form submitted was made by Supervisor Blair and seconded by Councilman LaPointe. The motion carried unanimously.

Rapid Entry Key Box (Knox Box) Ordinance: To be circulated to board members for review prior to the next meeting. No action taken.

County Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Planning Inventory: Supervisor Blair noted that Cayuga County has received a grant from the Department of State to conduct a countywide brownfield opportunity area inventory across 32 towns and villages. The town was asked to identify any properties with known environmental issues. The Town Clerk was directed to distribute the county's communication to board members electronically for review and response.

Court Bailiff Appointment – Temporary: Supervisor Blair presented a letter from the town court judges requesting the appointment of a temporary bailiff due to a current bailiff's medical leave. The judges recommended Chris Człowski, a former town bailiff with extensive law enforcement and court security experience, effective May 13, 2026. Judge Sholar appeared remotely to clarify that while the position title holds the designation of "constable" under state and town law, the immediate appointment is for a bailiff role and the two titles are not interchangeable.

The board discussed conditions of appointment. Councilman Wellauer requested that documentation of current training and range certification be provided for review. The board agreed that Judge Sholar would forward Mr. Czlowksi's resume and qualifications to Councilman Wellauer for verification, and that the appointment would also be subject to a satisfactory background check and confirmation of insurance coverage.

Motion to appoint Chris Czlowksi as temporary bailiff for the Town of Sennett Court, effective May 13, 2026, subject to a satisfactory background check, confirmation of insurance coverage, and verification of current qualifications and training by Councilman Wellauer, was made by Supervisor Blair and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Payment of Monthly Bills

Motion to authorize payment of the monthly bills was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman LaPointe. Motion passed by roll call vote: Councilman LaPointe — Yes; Councilman Vivenzio — Yes; Councilman Wellauer — Yes; Councilman Rizzo — Yes; Supervisor Blair — Yes.

13. Executive Session – (Personnel matter)

Motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

The board entered Executive Session at 7:40 p.m.

Motion to return from Executive Session was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon return at 8:12 p.m., Supervisor Blair announced that no actions were taken during Executive Session.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Wellauer and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: May 21, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Town of Sennett