Minutes of the Town of Sennett monthly Town Board Meeting held on Thursday, May 21, 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: Kris LaPointe, Water & Sewer Superintendent
Harold Gilfus, Code Enforcement Officer
Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Remotely: Emilio Moran (MRB Group), Asmeralda

Others Present: Resident Edward Magdziak, Courtney Kasper (Cayuga County Tourism) and Nikita Jankowski (Harriet Tubman Scenic Byway)

1. Call to Order

The Supervisor called the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Sennett Town Board to order at 6:03 PM on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at Sennett Town Hall.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Roll Call

Town Clerk did roll call. Supervisor Blair, Councilman Wellauer, Councilman Rizzo, Councilman LaPointe, and Councilman Vivenzio were all present.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous month's meeting, as included in the board packet, were presented for approval.

> *Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. The motion carried unanimously.*

5. Public Hearing(s) – Local Law A-2026 – Dog Control and Licensing

The Supervisor opened the public hearing on Local Law A-2026, the Dog Control and Licensing Law for the Town of Sennett. Councilman Vivenzio noted that the law had been in development for several months and had been updated to be more concise and consistent with surrounding municipalities. The animal control officer had previously echoed support for the updates.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Rizzo at 6:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

No members of the public came forward to speak.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman Wellauer at 6:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Following the close of the public hearing, the board elected to act immediately rather than wait the full 62-day window.

Motion to sponsor the enactment resolution adopting Local Law A-2026, Dog Control and Licensing Law, was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.

The Supervisor directed the Town Clerk to submit the adopted local law to the New York Secretary of State for recording, at which point it will take effect.

6. Scheduled Speakers

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

Emilio of MRB Engineering appeared remotely and provided the following updates:

Park Grants: MRB is monitoring the CFA Planning and Implementation Grant program, which is considered the town's best option for parks funding. Guidance has not yet been released, and MRB will review Sennett's needs against published criteria when it becomes available.

Water District 8 – Federal Earmarks: The town now has two members of Congress supporting a federal earmark for Water District 8. Congressman Mannion has submitted a line item appropriations request of $756,000, while Senators Gillibrand and Schumer had previously included the town at $2,500,000. The final amount will be determined in the state appropriations conference and is not expected to be known until fall or winter.

Water District 8 – WIIA Grant Reapplication: MRB presented a proposal to update and resubmit the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) grant application. The Supervisor explained that the WIIA grant is considered a necessary component for the water district to move forward. The updated application will include refreshed financial projections for current interest rates and new letters of support. Emilio noted the original WIIA application cost $8,000, and the current proposal is reduced to $5,000 due to some saved effort, though the portal process remains labor-intensive. The board accepted this explanation.

Motion to authorize the Supervisor to sign the MRB proposal for the updated WIIA 2026 grant application in an amount not to exceed $5,000 was made by Councilman Wellauer and seconded by Councilman LaPointe. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.

2. County Tourism Office

Two representatives presented on the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway: Nikita Jankowski, representing the Byway, and Courtney Casper, newly appointed Executive Director of the Cayuga County Office of Tourism, who noted she is also a Sennett resident.

The presenters reported that approximately 171 resolutions have been sent to municipalities across New York State, with only 20 remaining to achieve the goal. They highlighted the economic impact of Maryland's comparable byway, which generates over $1,000,000,000 annually, and noted that New York State's portion of the byway spans 550 miles compared to Maryland's 120 miles. The broader vision includes connecting the byway to neighboring states and potentially Canada.

The board noted it had previously voted 5–0 to table the resolution approximately six months ago due to concerns about signage restrictions, specifically relating to commercial billboards along the Route 5 corridor. The presenters clarified that the restriction applies only to new off-premise commercial billboards; all existing billboards are grandfathered, and on-premise business signage remains permitted. They further noted that under Phase 2, the town would have until June 2027 to address any billboard-related matters.

Councilman Vivenzio raised a question about whether the town's zoning code would need to be updated to restrict new billboard permits along the designated byway route. The Supervisor and Codes Officer Harold Gilfus acknowledged this would likely need to be addressed. The board agreed to review the resolution, which had been included in the meeting packet, and take action at the June meeting.

Board to review the Harriet Tubman Byway resolution and bring it to a vote at the June 2026 meeting.

7. Public Be Heard

Appointments (addressed prior to Public Be Heard)

Before proceeding to Public Be Heard, the Supervisor addressed three board appointments.

Board of Assessment Review – Ed Magdziak: Assessor Lowe had recruited Edward Magdziak, who was present in the audience, to fill a vacancy on the Board of Assessment Review left by a departing member. It was confirmed that simultaneously serving on the ZBA and the BAR are compatible offices. The appointment is for the remainder of the unexpired term.

> *Motion to appoint Edward Magdziak to the Board of Assessment Review to fill the remaining unexpired term was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.*

The Supervisor noted Mr. Magdziak may be sworn in at his convenience before the Town Clerk or any notary at Town Hall.

Court Bailiff – Chris Czolowski: The Supervisor reported that one existing bailiff is on an extended leave of absence. The town judges had interviewed and recommended Chris Czolowski to serve as a replacement bailiff. Councilman Wellauer reviewed Czolowski's resume and noted he is a current and active police officer with current use of force training, serving as a sergeant with the Oneida Indian Nation Police. The appointment is at the standard 2026 bailiff stipend.

> *Motion to approve the hiring of Chris Czolowski as a court bailiff at the standard 2026 stipend was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. The motion carried unanimously. Motion Passed.*

ZBA Reappointment – Bob Steiner: The Supervisor reported that Bob Steiner, a ZBA member in good standing who had been in Florida, has returned and wishes to be reappointed. The appointment is for a standard five-year term.

> *Motion to reappoint Bob Steiner to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a five-year term was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. The motion carried unanimously. Motion Passed.*

Public Be Heard

> *Motion to open the public be heard period was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio at 6:30 p.m. The motion carried.*
>
> The Supervisor opened the floor to public comment. No members of the public came forward to speak.

Motion to close the public be heard period was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Wellauer at 6:31 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Department Reports

a. Attorney

The Supervisor reported in the absence of the town attorney, Mr. Andino. A new attorney, Jeff Eaton, has joined Mr. Andino's firm and has been reviewing the ambulance district map plan report, adding additional detail regarding response times in response to public session feedback.

The Supervisor also reported he was approached by an executive director of East Hill Medical, which is taking over the former Tessy Plastics building located in the Tractor Supply plaza, expressing interest in possibly co-locating an ambulance barn on their property. The board discussed this development in the context of the ongoing ambulance district study. Councilman LaPointe noted the fire district had previously indicated they were unwilling to host an ambulance on-site, and the Supervisor acknowledged that situation may not have changed. The board agreed the logical next step is to first reconnect with the fire district to assess their current position, and then follow up with East Hill Medical to better understand the scope of what they are offering. Councilman Vivenzio raised the financial question of whether any separately constructed facility could realistically be funded, suggesting that grant funding and East Hill Medical as a co-applicant would likely be necessary. The Supervisor noted that the ambulance district map plan report shows the per-household cost of an ambulance district would be less than that of the fire district.

Supervisor to reconnect with the fire district regarding ambulance hosting, then follow up with East Hill Medical.

b. Bookkeeper

The Bookkeeper was absent. The Supervisor noted he would cover relevant bookkeeping matters later in the meeting.

c. Planning Board

Councilman Rizzo reported the following on behalf of Chairman Edmunds: A use approval for a property on the corner of Turnpike Road and Route 5 was approved by both the planning board and the county. The use was described as a minor vehicle-related operation. East Hill Medical appeared before the planning board informally to understand the process for their planned use of the Route 5 property; they were advised of the required steps and are expected to submit a formal application next month.

d. Codes/Fire Marshall

Codes Officer Harold Gilfus reported the following activity for April:

Five permits were issued (13 year-to-date), with fees assessed of $450 ($2,100 year-to-date). Total construction value stands at $2,083,244. Two Certificates of Occupancy and two Certificates of Compliance were issued. No complaints were issued. Four fire safety inspections were conducted.

Regarding Pizza Hut: Gilfus reported he visited the site that day. The establishment has an Ansul system on the Type 1 hood over the pizza oven and over the grease fryer. Remaining items before a certificate of occupancy can be issued include a final electrical inspection and posting of the occupant load. Landscaping is nearly complete. The project is close to completion.

Regarding Subaru: Construction is progressing, with light gauge steel visible on the front façade and underground plumbing installed.

The board briefly discussed a vacant property on Route 20, with the Supervisor reaffirming the long-standing town policy against approving new commercial PDDs or solar development along that

corridor. The Supervisor noted some interest has been expressed by parties potentially interested in the former racetrack property, including at least one group interested in utility-grade uses.

e. Zoning Enforcement Officer

The Zoning Enforcement Officer reported on the following matters handled during the month of April: an investigation into noncompliant signs related to a boarding house on Mutton Hill Road; discussion regarding expanding a PDD on Route 34; a zoning board review of signage for Spirit Halloween at Grant Ave Plaza; a Pizza Hut sign review; drainage discussions with East Hill Medical; setback requirements on a structure; zoning on mobile homes; regulations on full baths in accessory structures; a change of use inquiry for Auburn Auto Group at 330 Grant Ave; and zoning questions on a North Street property at County House Road.

f. Assessor

Councilman LaPointe reported on behalf of the Assessor that April and May hours were spent finalizing the 2026 tentative assessment roll. Properties with building permits were visited and assessments adjusted where necessary. The roll was filed with the county, and change-of-assessment notices were mailed to all affected property owners. New building permits were entered into the RPS software.

The Supervisor reminded the public that Grievance Day for the Town of Sennett is Tuesday, June 2nd, with the Board of Assessment Review meeting from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Supervisor requested that notice be posted on the assessor's page of the town website and on the front door of Town Hall.

g. Fire Dept.

No department representative was present. The Supervisor read the report: In April, there were 53 alarms (201 year-to-date), 139 man-hours, and 293 responders. Calls included 1 fire, 36 medical, 2 hazardous situations, 3 public service calls, and 11 non-emergency calls. Mutual aid was provided once and received 8 times. The Supervisor noted ongoing communication with the fire chief and Codes Officer regarding nuisance fire alarms at Hillside.

h. Highway Dept.

The Highway Superintendent was on vacation. The Supervisor reported on the status of the town brush pile grinding. The current vendor, Clifton, quoted $4,000 per day for grinding but has experienced equipment breakdowns and has not been responsive to scheduling. Two alternative quotes obtained by the Highway Superintendent were described as significantly more expensive— one as high as $49,000—compared to the $8,000–$12,000 expected cost with the current vendor. The board agreed it is worth waiting for the preferred vendor. The Supervisor asked residents to be patient.

Councilman LaPointe reported that Cherry Street paving was completed that day and that pricing was held from the prior year. Due to the county being unable to provide trucks, the Highway Superintendent coordinated with approximately 10 neighboring towns and Midland, with the county agreeing to cover the cost of additional Midland trucks.

i. Water Dept.

Water Superintendent Kris LaPointe reported the following:

East Hill Medical had requested consolidation from two water meters to one; after review, they were determined to be satisfied with their current setup. The water storage tank was cleaned and inspected without being taken out of service; the inspection report has been received. Spring hydrant flushing is nearly complete, with Districts 1, 3, and 7 completed and minimal work remaining in District 6. The Franklin Street pump station's alternating switch was replaced and is operating at 100%. A pump at the Pizza Hut pump station was also replaced. Approximately 52 water meters remain to be replaced. Mr. LaPointe attended the Rural Water Conference at Turning Stone, departing early due to a high-level alarm at Quincy Hill, which was resolved by noon. A possible water leak was reported on Route 5 in front of the former redemption center and is scheduled for investigation the following morning.

The Supervisor also provided an update on sewer capacity discussions related to potential industrial development. The Supervisor had met with Seth Jensen (Director of Facilities) and Jen Haynes (City Manager) of the City of Auburn regarding whether the city's sewer treatment plant could accommodate additional capacity from Sennett and other ring towns. The city indicated it could not commit to additional capacity without a full Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) study, which would be expensive and which the city would likely expect Sennett to fund. The Supervisor noted that the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority is currently planning an 8-inch sewer line extension in connection with a potential industrial development corridor between the city limits and Turnpike Road on Route 34—a project supported by the County IDA as part of potential Micron-related development. The Supervisor has formally communicated to Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority that a 12-inch line may be required to accommodate any significant industrial user, and that the town may not sign off on the 8-inch design. The board discussed the issue, noting the additional cost of upsizing to a 12-inch line is approximately $800,000. The Supervisor indicated his intent to convene a meeting with the IDA and the City of Auburn to align all parties, and asked that the IDA bear the cost of any required capacity studies.

j. Town Clerk

Town Clerk Kate reported that during the month of April the office collected $637 total: $51.96 for decals, $18 for animal population control, and $567.04 to the general fund.

The Clerk reported a new New York State law requiring a donation line to be added to dog license forms, with donations to go to the town's animal control provider. A new budget line item will be required to segregate these donations.

The Clerk reported that the town's Mailchimp email service account has exceeded the free-tier limit of 250 contacts. The next tier allows up to 500 contacts and 10 emails per month, at a cost of $120 per year.

> *Motion to authorize the upgrade of the town's Mailchimp account at a cost of $120 per year was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.*

The Clerk also reported that the town's hallway rug service (Cintas) increased its rate by $17.41 per service, from $157.97 to $175.38 (billed twice monthly, or approximately $34 more per month). The board discussed whether an alternative vendor could handle rug cleaning and concluded no suitable alternative exists.

> *Motion to approve the continued hallway rug service contract at the updated rate of $175.38 twice per month was made by Councilman Vivenzio and seconded by Councilman LaPointe. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.*

k. Animal Control

The Animal Control report for April 2026 was read into the record: 24 calls; 2 dogs sheltered; 1 dog adopted; 1 dog compiled/returned. One dog was injured and placed in foster care for recovery. A seizure and disposition report was also included.

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

Parks: Councilman Rizzo reported that asphalt work is scheduled to begin the following Tuesday. The parking lot will not be completed until after the building is in place, as the lot will be graded to the building. The general contractor has committed to having a company representative on-site during all active work periods.

Two engineering proposals related to the park project were brought before the board:

The first addressed the need to redesign the septic system. The dog park fence was installed approximately 20 feet off the location specified in the approved plans, necessitating a new septic design and Cayuga County approval. Keplinger Freeman Associates submitted a proposal for $2,600 for the new septic design, along with a time-and-materials schedule for ongoing site oversight, as needed.

> *Motion to authorize Keplinger Freeman Associates to prepare a new septic design and Cayuga County approval, at a cost of $2,600, and to proceed under the time-and-materials schedule dated May 18th, was made by the Supervisor and seconded by Councilman Rizzo. Upon roll call, Councilmen Rizzo, Wellauer, and Vivenzio voted yes; Councilman LaPointe voted no; the Supervisor voted yes. Motion Passed 4-1.*

The second matter involved compaction testing of the parking lot base material by CME Associates. The scope includes a modified or standard proctor test ($150), sieve analysis ($130), a technician to run samples ($170), travel/mileage ($67), and a 15% project manager markup, for a total not to exceed $635.

> *Motion to authorize compaction testing not to exceed $635 was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman . Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.*

Discussion ensued regarding the anticipated closure of the dog park during drainage and construction work. The board noted that when a firm date is established, notification will be sent via the town website, Facebook, and the upcoming newsletter.

A brief discussion was held regarding whether to post signage at the dog park indicating the facility is for Town of Sennett residents only. The board acknowledged the park draws users from outside the town but noted the difficulty of enforcement; no formal action was taken.

Veteran Affairs: The Supervisor reported that the Veterans Service Officer has some personal matters pending, and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled to confirm his renewed hours. Regarding the 250th celebration banner for the front of Town Hall, one vendor has agreed to conduct an on-site meeting to determine appropriate dimensions. The Supervisor indicated designs will be presented to the board for selection.

Sennett Seniors: The Supervisor and Town Clerk reported that the seniors held their luncheon on May 20th at the lodge with 96 reservations, featuring a presentation by Rescue Me Ranch. Upcoming activities include a July 8th trip to Cortland followed by dinner, an Erie Canal trip in August, and a June luncheon at Yawgerbrook.

Historian: The Historian reported ongoing filing and research work, including organizing genealogy materials and pursuing an abstract of property ownership with assistance from the county. The Historian announced plans to convene a small committee regarding the Town of Sennett's 200th anniversary (bicentennial in 2027) and is seeking participation from families with long-standing ties to the town. Historian to draft a short statement for publication on the town website and Facebook seeking community members to participate in the bicentennial planning committee.

9. Old Business

Town Records Project: All documents have been received back from the scanning company, along with an external hard drive containing all digitized records. The Town Clerk reported that files will next be migrated to Laserfiche.

Handbook updates: A proposal from a new provider (HR 1) was circulated. The Supervisor asked the Town Clerk to recirculate the proposal to ensure all board members have reviewed it.

E-Code 360 codification project status: The project is underway, with a draft expected in late November.

Town Hall capital needs – sidewalks, parking lot striping, painting, etc.: Parking lot striping plans, including handicap spaces and no-parking zones near the veterans memorial, are in development. The board discussed layout using an aerial overlay. Councilman LaPointe to coordinate with the striping contractor.

Town branding & marketing project: Councilman Vivenzio reported receiving responses from approximately three vendors regarding signage for town highway signs and building locations. Rough estimates range from $400–$500 for standard metal signs to $2,000+ for more elaborate signage, and $3,000–$4,000 for larger double-sided entry signs. The board agreed to schedule a work session, possibly on a Saturday morning, to review options and establish a budget. Councilman Vivenzio to identify a vendor willing to attend a work session and propose a date.

Vehicle and Traffic Safety Signs status & results: Brief discussion occurred regarding the portable traffic monitoring sign and its current location.

AED purchases/replacements: Training will need to be scheduled.

Employee positions to fill: The Supervisor noted that Councilman Wellauer and Councilman LaPointe are available to participate in employee interviews on a rotating basis with Water Superintendent LaPointe.

Boards in need of new members: Ed Magdziak's appointment to the BAR and Bob Steiner's reappointment to the ZBA were addressed earlier in the meeting.

Water & Sewer ACH/Credit card status (by district): The Town Clerk reported that use of ACH and credit card payments continues to grow across water districts.

Dog Park completion (rules and regs sign sufficient? cleanup? No trespass?): Addressed under the Parks Committee report above.

10. New Business

250th celebration planning for 2026: The Supervisor reported that a vendor (A&M Graphics) has been contacted regarding a celebratory banner for the front of Town Hall and is scheduled to visit the site in the coming week to assess dimensions.

200th Township celebration for 2027: Covered under the Historian's report above.

11. Supervisor Correspondence/Report – (Industrial District expansion?)

Industrial district expansion matters were addressed in full during the Water Department report above. Additionally, New Business included a brief report from Councilman Rizzo that Highland Golf Course had cut down 167 trees and was depositing the debris along the roadside for town crews to remove. The Supervisor confirmed he had already contacted the golf course's board president and former pro and advised them the town would not be assuming that expense.

12. Executive Session – (Personnel matter)

> *Motion to enter executive session for a personnel matter was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio at 7:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.*

The board entered executive session. Upon returning to open session, the Supervisor announced that no action was taken during executive session.

> *Motion to return from executive session was made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Wellauer at 7:53 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.*

13. Payment of Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of monthly bills, with three signatures required, was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. Upon roll call, all members voted in favor. Motion Passed.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman LaPointe and seconded by Councilman Wellauer. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, June 18, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Town of Sennett