

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

July 15, 2026

<https://TownOfCaroga.com> contains all issues of the **Caroga News Flash**.

This monthly meeting began at 5:00 PM and lasted 100 minutes. The meeting was led by Supervisor Jack Glenn. Council Members Rick Sturgess, Matt Cooper, Kim Walker, and Greta Frasier were present, along with Town Clerk Linda Gilbert, Highway Superintendent Roy Stock, and 8 members of the public.

To continue from the July 8 meeting, this work session featured discussion between the Town Board and Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company (CLVFC) about the 2027 Fire Contract. After wide-ranging questions from Town Board member and residents, the Board scheduled another work session for September 10.

Topics:

1. Discussion of 2027 Contract & proposed Fire District for the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company —

- Regarding the 2027 Fire Contract, CLVFC President and Treasurer Brian McIntosh elaborated and detailed the budget proposal for Town Board review and approval, including components (trucks, equipment, maintenance, operations) over time (2025, 2026, 2027, 2028).
- Mr. McIntosh also shared a budget justification, grounded in the CLVFC's lean financial operations (the lowest in the region, with strong volunteer services and community donations) and the reality of necessary budget increases (given rapid cost inflation of essential fire equipment and trucks).

Budget Components	2025	2026	2027	2028
increase from prev year	247,900	297,578	335,549	367,210
		20.04%	12.76%	9.44%
Trucks (purchase/replacement)	90,000	78,470	111,261	125,725
Pumpers	71,000	57,000	87,000	98,310
Rescue / Support	19,000	21,470	24,261	27,415
Equipment (purchase/replacement)	14,000	18,910	23,068	26,067
Turnout Gear 10 sets every 5 years	6,000	10,000	13,000	14,690
Communications -- As needed	800	904	1,022	1,154
SCBA Total replacement every 16 years	1,200	1,356	1,532	1,731
Portable Equipment -- As needed	500	565	638	721
Hose	1,000	1,130	1,277	1,443
Defib 5 years	1,000	1,130	1,277	1,443
Jaws 20 years	2,500	2,825	3,192	3,607
Boat -- As needed	1,000	1,000	1,130	1,277
Maintenance	17,000	25,000	28,250	31,923
Trucks	10,000	12,000	13,560	15,323
Building and Grounds	2,000	4,000	4,520	5,108
Sirens	1,000	500	565	638
Portable Equipment	500	3,000	3,390	3,831
SCBA	2,600	1,500	1,695	1,915
Jaws	400	1,000	1,130	1,277
Communications	500	3,000	3,390	3,831
Operating	126,900	175,380	172,969	183,495
Fuel	2,500	3,500	3,955	4,469
Heat/Utilities	12,000	13,560	15,323	17,315
EMS Consumables	1,500	4,500	5,085	5,746
Physicals	3,100	4,000	4,520	5,108
Insurance	14,000	15,820	17,877	20,201
Dues & Subscriptions	800	1,000	1,130	1,277
Training/Travel Conferences	1,000	9,000	10,170	11,492
Office		5,000	5,650	6,385
District creation		25,000	15,000	16,950
Legal		2,000	2,260	2,554
Debt Maint	92,000	92,000	92,000	92,000

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- Regarding a proposed Fire District, CLVFC Member John Delesky shared a fact sheet on July 15, 2026:

Some facts about Caroga Lake Vol Fire Company becoming a Fire District

We have a fairly new Fire Station. The old station was built in 1951. Fire engines are bigger and we could not store all our equipment inside. New station cost \$2.5 million. The Fire Company had a down payment of \$1 million we had banked over 10+ years. We had heavily fund raised to help with the expense. The Fire Company itself raised over \$250K by asking citizens to sponsor a room or a ceramic "tile" in the hallway. This reduced the mortgage expense to \$92K/year. We were able to build without state funding which would have increased the cost approximately by 30% and more as the cost of materials skyrocketed during Covid. The station is not a Taj Mahal but an efficient working fire station. By efficient planning and saving and pursuing donations we saved \$\$ in building costs.

Town of Mohawk built a new fire station on Route 29A in Fonda. Their mortgage expense is \$330/year.

Northville FD (Great Sacandaga Lake Fire District) built a new station. They did not have a large down payment. Formed a Fire District to build. Their mortgage payment is approximately \$400K/year. They paid prevailing wage construction.

We have a fairly new Fire Truck. Under OSHA regulation 29CFR1910.156 which regulates the age of fire truck Best Practices which are not mandatory but are followed by most Fire Companies the primary engine truck must be 15 years old or younger. The oldest truck is recommended to be replaced at 25 years old. These regulations are recommended best practices. Best practices are something attorneys use in liability cases when something is suable. Insurance carries require Fire Company's to have their primary truck under 20 years old. Again, this is something attorney's concentrate on during lawsuits.

Other OSHA requirements are new turnout gear for Fire Company members every 10 years. Turnout gear consisting of coat, pants, boots, helmet, and gloves costs around \$6k/member. We pursued a Federal AFG grant and won it to pay for new gear this year. No cost to the town.

We have numerous mandatory by OSHA/PESH equipment and personnel expenses each year. All fire company members must have a physical each year.

Jaws of Life must be tested by certified outside vendors yearly.

All fire hoses must be pressure tested every 2 years minimum. We have approximately 40 hoses.

All truck ladders must be tested minimum every 2 years.

EMT classes have been paid for for 10 members. Re-certifications paid every 4 years.

We do many other "services" beyond fire fighting that many are not aware of until we are called out to their home or business or neighborhood. TREES BLOCKING ROADWAY, BASEMENT FLOODED, LOST HIKERS OR HUNTERS, INJURED INDIVIDUALS IN THE WOODS (KANE MTN, GOOD LUCK CLIFFS, INJURED SNOWMOBILERS MILES FROM THE ROADWAY).

We perform surface Ice Rescue and train for this. None of our neighboring Fire Departments like Meco, RGL, Stratford, Gloversville do this and are not equipped. If we are not ready for this type rescue the person in the water becomes a recovery before the closest department beyond us arrives.

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- The current 2026 discussion followed the 2025 proposal to create a new Fire District:



Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company Inc.

3262 State Highway 29A, P.O. Box 536, Caroga Lake, NY 12032

Phone 518-835-4138
staff@carogafire.org

Dear Residents of the Towns of Bleecker and Caroga:

Recently, the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company has asked the Towns of Caroga and Bleecker to create a fire district which would include the entire Town of Caroga and a portion of the Town of Bleecker. Both territories are presently served by this fire department. The fire company has approached both towns, and they would like to ensure that all residents are aware of our request. Although the law requires that the Towns schedule a public hearing at which we could answer additional questions, we all agreed that a letter would help you understand our request.

The fire department is hoping that we could create the fire district in 2025, if timing permits.

Please also note that we have asked the Towns to start the process to form the fire district, by scheduling a joint hearing with both Towns and the public. Please know that the Towns' agreement to schedule the hearing does not indicate that they support or oppose the formation. They are simply willing to take public comment and answer questions. The Towns could then approve, reject or delay the formation of the fire district.

What is a fire district and why is it better than the present system?

Presently, the fire department serves both towns under a fire protection contract. The contract is not voted upon by the public. The amount of the contract is capped along with all other town expenses. The fire department's meetings are not open to the public and the residents have no say in the expenditures or operations of the fire department.

Taxes are not required to be equal across all of the Town residents, which allows the residents of one Town to pay a higher share of the costs.

The Towns also have very little control over the fire department, but the Town of Caroga remains liable for all negligence, violations of state and federal laws and injuries caused by the fire department. The Town of Caroga is also solely responsible for providing all equipment required by federal and state laws, and for paying for any injuries to firefighters. The Town of Bleecker is not similarly obligated as our firehouse is not located in that Town.

A fire district is very different and allows significant public input. Of importance:

- All residents of the fire district (Town of Caroga and part of Bleecker) can run for fire district commissioner. There are five commissioner positions, each holding a five year term.
- All residents of the fire district pay the same rate per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value.

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- All residents of the fire district vote on all financing, such as for vehicles, stations, major equipment
- All residents of the fire district vote on the creation of reserve funds
- A fire district is capped on what it can spend on most items, whereas a town does not have the same spending limitation for its fire department
- A fire district is subject to the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Laws, so almost all matters are public record.

Most important is that a fire district only focusses on its fire department, whereas towns generally have many issues before them. This will allow the fire district's commissioners to focus on important issues such as recruitment, retention, safety, policies, budgeting and capital planning.

Will the fire district increase our taxes?

The fire department will present a proposed budget at the public hearing. Although the budget is expected to increase, this will occur regardless of whether or not a fire district is created. Fire expenses have increased almost forty percent as a result of vender / manufacturer increases for equipment, supplies and apparatus. This is beyond our control.

However, since tax rates are not required to be equal, we will compute the present and proposed tax rates once all residents of the fire district are taxed equally.

What do we want from you?

First, we would like you to come to the public hearing and ask questions and receive information. Hopefully, we would like you to support the formation of the fire district. Then, if the district is formed, we would ask that some of you consider being appointed as one of the first five fire district commissioners, a secretary or treasurer.

All of the legal work to create the district has been completed, and now we just need to hear from you at a public hearing.

The hearing notices will be placed in the newspaper, on the Towns' websites and signboard, and in at least five public places in each Town. We hope this gives you a "heads up" to look for the notices.

On behalf of the entire fire department, we thank you for reading this letter and ask that you attend an upcoming public hearing.

Very truly yours,

CAROGA LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

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Topics (continued):

2. Permit Dispute over Incomplete Zoning Use Variance for the Royal View Pub and Campground

- Council Member Greta Frasier, owner of the Royal View Pub and Campground, publicly demanded that the Town Clerk immediately process and issue the Royal View campground operating permit.
- Town Clerk Linda Gilbert stated that the application is incomplete, given that applicants have yet to complete all conditions specified in the Planning Board's January 27, 2025 Site Plan Review Decision:

Town of Caroga P.O. Box 328 Caroga Lake NY 12032
(518) 835-4211 ext. 101 ~ FAX (518) 835-4037
e-mail – boardclerk@caroga.town

January 27, 2025

Notice of Decision for a Site Plan Review

Owner: Greta Frasier 2533 State Highway 10 Johnstown NY 12095 of the
Property located in the Town of Caroga at: 2533 State Highway 10, and Identified parcel as
SBL#98-2-3 in the R3 and R10 zoning district (APA Low Intensity land use area) for a Site
Plan Review as required by the Town of Caroga Zoning Ordinance, Article 6, Section III
Paragraph B, and per chart use.

The owner proposes to create the Royal View Pub, Pavillion & Campground. Upon review at
the January 22, 2025 Planning Board meeting the application was approved with the following
conditions:

- 1) That all necessary permits are obtained from the New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation.
- 2) That all necessary permits are obtained from New York State Department of Health
including sanitary.
- 3) That all necessary permits are obtained from New York State Department of
Transportation with the town receiving a response back.
- 4) That the applicant obtains a Use Variance from the Caroga Zoning Board of Appeals for
the 'Pub' building.
- 5) And any other permits that are required in order to commence construction with all
reports being filed in the office of the Town Clerk per Article 6 Section VIII paragraph D
(1) of the Town of Caroga Zoning Ordinance.

Chairman Alan Kozakiewicz
AK/LG

Cc: Linda Gilbert Caroga Town Clerk

- The issue was deferred to discussion by the Planning Board at their August 5 monthly meeting.

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Resolutions:

- 1. Caroga Golf Clubhouse Project Grant Resolution of Support** — (5-0 vote)
 - Approved a resolution supporting the submission of the 2026 New York State Consolidated Funding Application requesting \$1.345 million in grants toward reconstructing the Golf Clubhouse.
- 2. Preliminary Contract with Bond Attorney** — (5-0 vote)
 - Approved contract with Bond Attorney Connie Cahill of Barclay Damon, not to exceed \$1,500.
- 3. Highway Equipment Purchase** — (5-0 vote)
 - Reviewed bids for tree-clearing equipment, identified a bid of approximately \$3,300 as the lowest and recommended option, and approved purchase of the 36-inch unit.
- 4. Computer Equipment Purchase** — (5-0 vote)
 - Approved \$1,149 computer purchase from Canada Lake Computers for the bookkeeping office.

Announcements:

- ❖ The next Town Board meetings will be:
 - Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, August 12 at 6:30 PM,
 - Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, September 9 at 6:30 PM, and
 - Fire Contract Work Session: Thursday, September 10 at 6:00 PM.
- ❖ For things to do in Caroga in August and September, see the July 8 *Caroga News Flash*:
https://townofcaroga.com/news_flashes/