

Town of Jay News

Winter Edition 2024/2025

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Town Board
Thomas McDonald
Olivia Dwyer
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Steve Forbes

Town Clerk
Carol Greenley-
Hackel

**Highway
Superintendent**
Chris Sorrell

**Water/Sewer
Operator**
Paul Mintz

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From The Supervisor's Office

As 2024 comes to a close, the Town of Jay reflects on a year marked by progress, community initiatives, and strategic investments aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents. Here's a recap of the projects, grants, and equipment purchases that shaped our town this year.



Major Projects

Community Center ADA Upgrades

This year, the Town of Jay completed significant accessibility upgrades at the Community Center. These included the installation of a lift to the second floor, construction of a new ramp, fully automated doors, and surrounding sidewalk improvements. Funded entirely through a CDBG grant and ARPA funds, the project required no local taxpayer contributions. The upgrades ensure the Community Center is accessible to all residents and visitors.

Wastewater Treatment Upgrades

Phase 1 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades began this year with DEC approval. This phase, at a cost of almost \$2 million includes DEC required disinfection and phosphorus removal enhancements funded

through a \$1 million grant, with additional contributions from the Town of Black Brook.

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Town of Jay initiated the long-overdue update to its Comprehensive Plan, supported by a \$66,690 DEC Smart Growth Grant. This project aims to engage residents in shaping the future of our town, with surveys and open houses fostering community involvement.

Main Street Revitalization Efforts

Supported by the \$20,000 NY Main Street Technical Assistance Grant, revitalization plans for Main Street Au Sable Forks took center stage. The North Country Rural Development Coalition, formerly the Pride of Ticonderoga, and In-Site Architecture conducted site inspections to identify properties eligible for im-

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From The Town Clerk- Carol Greenley-Hackel

Important Dog Licensing Reminder

As we approach the end of the year, it's time to make sure that all dogs in our town are properly licensed for 2025. Dog license renewal is a simple process that can be completed at the Town Clerk's office. Please bring proof of rabies vaccination and a completed application form, which can be found on our website or picked up in person. Help us keep our town safe and compliant with local ordinances by ensuring your furry friends are licensed on time!

Upcoming Basketball Tournament

The excitement is building for our Annual Missing Children's Basketball Tournament, taking place in March! This fun-filled event will showcase local talent and provide a great opportunity for families to come out and support our athletes. Whether you're a player or a spectator, we encourage everyone to join in the excitement! The tourna-

ment will take place the second weekend of March at the Community Center and AFES and we are expecting a great turnout. More to come on this amazing weekend!

Holiday Wishes

As the holiday season approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our warmest wishes to all members of the community. This time of year reminds us of the importance of togetherness, generosity, and gratitude. Whether you're celebrating with family, friends, or taking some time for yourself, we hope your holidays are filled with joy, peace, and good health. Thank you for your continued support of our town—it's the residents like you that make our community truly special.

Happy Holidays,
Carol and Tamber

Highway Department—Chris Sorrell

The Summer certainly went by in a flash, but we were able to wrap up our summer projects and quickly switch gears for Fall/Winter preparations. We have been fortunate to have an extension of nicer weather that has allowed us to get paving done. Luck Brothers was able to get some paving done the week of 11/11 on Jay Mountain Road. The section paved was from the Glen Road intersection up past #270 (top of steep hill past sharp corner). They also were able to get paving done on Cross St. and a section of AuSable Drive over the week of 11/18.

We have been busy in our Harkness Sand Pit screening sand and hauling loads of sand to the stock pile at our Acres location.

At the shop, we have been preparing equipment for the winter season along with cutting and stocking firewood for the outdoor Wood Boiler.

As long as the weather continues to hold, we will keep addressing the items on the to-do list for our department.

Happy and healthy holidays!
-Chris Sorrell, Highway Superintendent

Comprehensive Plan Special Board– Chairman Wally Walters

The update to the town's 1997 Comprehensive Plan is now underway.

Over seventy people attended the Comprehensive Plan Open House which took place on October 17th, and more than three hundred residents participated in the Community Survey over the past month. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed their insights.

Over the next two months, our Comprehensive Plan Special Board and our expert consultant, Dr. Ann Ruzow-Holland, will compile and analyze the results of the open house, the survey and other inputs. We also will be conducting a series of interviews to learn more. This feedback will help shape the content and priorities which will guide the update of the Comprehensive Plan over the next two years.

Our next major public event will be a Visioning Workshop in the Spring. This workshop will invite community members to help develop alternative visions for the

town's future. These visions will then be refined for further public consideration in subsequent months.

The Comprehensive Plan Special Board will provide periodic progress updates through Jay Community News and on our website at planjay.com. We encourage anyone interested in being more involved to consider participating in a group interview, volunteering for a working group or attending the Visioning Workshop in the Spring. For more details, please visit our website.

Although the Community Survey is now closed, we are always eager to hear from you. Please reach out to us at planjay@townofjayny.gov. We usually meet monthly at the Community Center on the 3rd Mondays, from 6:30-8 pm. Our meetings are open to the public, in-person or on-line.

-Wally Walters, Chair
Jay Comprehensive Plan Special Board

Planning Board– Chair Melinda Beuf

2024 continues to be a slow year for the Planning Board. We've had two applications for subdivision so far and were asked to review a pending application from 2023.

Members of the Town of Jay Planning Board are all volunteers appointed by the Town Board. Term limits are 5 years and each member must complete 4 hours of

training each year. There are 5 active members and 2 alternates.

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Public Hearings will be advertised at least ten days prior to the hearing. Cancellations of the meeting will be posted in the Jay Community News. All are welcome.

-Melinda Beuf

Historian—Sharron Hewston

Late this fall I had the pleasure of visiting John Brown's Farm in Timbuktu which is within North Elba, New York. Timbuktu was established for African American Homesteaders in mid-19th century. While there, I photographed the traveling statue of Harriet Tubman, the Underground Freedom Fighter who was barely 5 foot. She was born Maryland in 1822 as a slave, and she'd died in Auburn, New York in 1913 at the age of 91 a free woman. By the grace of God Harriet was blessed with longevity. Her incredible life story is told in the movie HARRIET, which I highly recommend.

In 1849, right after her two sisters were sold, Harriet decided that her life and freedom were worth fighting for at the young age of 29. After securing her freedom, Harriet returned to the South making 13 different trips to rescue over 300 slaves. She led them North to freedom by way of the Underground Rail.



As a Historian, I was deeply moved to see Harriet's statue showing her holding the North Star in her right and the key to freedom in her left hand as she stood on top of a pile of shackles and chains. Yes, Harriet was very small in stature, however, her courage knew no bounds. God love her, Harriet became invincible!

I am attaching my photos of Ms. Harriet to share with you. She's a heroine definitely worth remembering and her life-worth celebrating.

It's important to know that we have our own ties to the Underground Railroad. We learned this while in junior high school at that time of the Miller house that was located within The Grove a half mile from Main Street, here in Au Sable Forks. That house on 13 Grove Road belonged to Arthur & Florence Miller, it's where my husband Geoff grew up. We have photos of the Dutch Oven that was discovered within the walls adjacent to the double, brick fireplaces that were utilized long ago. It was during the FEMA Buy Outs when the house was being torn down that the Dutch Oven and its contents exposed would verified the era to be that of 1812. Obviously this is larger story to be

told but with not enough space to do here, and now.

The following information is of value since it verifies our connection to the Underground Railroad in our neck of the woods. Syracuse Underground Stationmaster Jermaine Loguen had suggested receipts to find trustworthy included to aid them he had mentioned: Jesse Gay and Alfred Spoon in Eliza-

bethtown, Uriah Mihill in Keene, Jesse Toby Jr. in Jay, Wendell Lansing in Wilmington, William M. Flack in Au Sable Forks, Merrill in Merrillville, and Rensselaer Biglow in Malone.

In closing, I wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year come 2025.

My Warmest Regards, Sharron
Forks Native, Last Generation of The Mill Kids
and Historian.

Climate Smart Taskforce- Knut Sauer

The Town of Jay, designated as a Clean Energy Community by NYSERDA <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec>, has had a productive year. The taskforce has earned over \$80,000 in grants year-to-date, with a potential to earn an additional \$220,000 pending extension of the NYSERDA CEC program through 2025. These grants have funded various energy efficiency projects, including converting light fixtures to LED, insulating steam pipes, and installing air source heat pumps. According to calculations, these efforts have reduced greenhouse gas emissions from municipal buildings by over 10%.

We are currently soliciting bids for a 60kW Solar Panel project to be installed on the highway garage roof, primarily financed with the NYSERDA grants and federal incentives. This system is expected to cover 2/3 of our electricity use at the highway garage and community center.

The Town of Jay is also participating in the New York State Climate Smart Communities program <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/> and are currently working towards Bronze certification with a target date of March/April 2025.

The taskforce, jointly with the Keene taskforce, organized and held a very successful sustainability and energy fair at the Village Green in Jay. We plan on making this an annual event. A huge thanks to all the volunteers that



helped organize the event.

We are discussing a food scrap composting initiative, to be funded by grant monies. This initiative would establish a food scraps drop-off location for residents, with the scraps to be picked up by a third-party organization for composting. It may also include discounted food scraps bins for residents to use for this purpose. Diverting food scraps to a compost facility significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and produces valuable compost.

Lastly, we do need **your** help as we are currently running a few community campaigns; community solar, heat pumps, and electric vehicles (EV). These campaigns educate residents on the benefits of community solar, heat pumps, and EV's. Please help by letting us know if you have either installed heat pumps after July 21, 2023, subscribed to community solar after August 4, 2023, or purchased an electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle since March 8, 2024.

Information on these campaigns, our annual progress report, and other valuable information can be found at <https://www.townofjayny.gov/documents-forms/>.

If you are interested in getting involved with the committee and our activities, please reach out to me at k.sauer@townofjayny.gov

-Knut Sauer

From the Supervisor's Office—continued from page 1

provements. Efforts to secure additional grants are ongoing.

Road and Infrastructure Work

Significant infrastructure work included sidewalk replacements on Church Lane and College Street in Au Sable Forks, as well as the paving of 3.7 lane miles of roads, including Jay Mountain Road and Cross Street. These projects addressed years of damage and improved accessibility.

Grants Secured and Utilized

DEC Smart Growth Grant

The \$66,690 grant funded the Comprehensive Plan update, marking a critical step in strategic planning for the town's future.

CDBG Grants

Two CDBG grants played key roles this year:

- **Upgrades at the Community Center:** This fully funded project enhanced accessibility without impacting taxpayers.



- **Housing Rehabilitation Program:** A \$300,000 grant application was awarded and aimed to support repairs for 3-5 primary homes within the community.

Preserve NY Grant

The town received \$9,500 to support the creation of a Historic District in Au Sable Forks. This designation will open opportunities for funding historic preservation and building improvements.

NYSERDA CEC Program

The Climate Smart Task Force's participation in this program secured more than \$65,000 in grant funding for 2024. These dollars were spent on a heat pump installation in the Senior Center, creating a cooling space for residents during heatwaves; steam pipe insulation; conversion to LED lighting in all town buildings; and to help offset the cost of a 60 kW solar array.

DEC WQIP Grant

The Town of Jay was just awarded a \$600,000 grant to build a new salt shed at the highway garage. This shed will hold our salt and sand allowing it all to stay dry prior to mixing and loading into our trucks. This will help reduce the amount of sand and salt used, as well as cutting down on salt contamination.

CDBG Microenterprise Grant

The town partnered with the Essex County IDA to apply for a \$200,000 Microenterprise Grant. This funding supports new or existing small businesses with fewer than five employees, helping to bolster the local economy.

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Equipment Purchases and Upgrades

Highway and Parks Dept. Investments

The town purchased several pieces of equipment to enhance operational efficiency, including:

- A small New Holland tractor for year-round use, including sidewalk maintenance and park upkeep.
- A 2024 Ford F-350 to replace an aging highway department vehicle.
- A 5-ton was purchased as a replacement to a unit that was damaged and totaled by insurance.
- A Case Front End Loader was purchased with a broom attachment to assist in road maintenance.

Community Events and Engagement

Solar Eclipse Events

The town hosted two viewing locations for the April solar eclipse, drawing nearly 300 visitors. The Dogfather food truck and local entertainment added to the event's success. This initiative showcased the town's hospitality and bolstered interest in future tourism opportunities.



Sustainability and Energy Fair

In collaboration with the Town of Keene, the Climate Smart Task Force organized the first Sustainability and Energy Fair. The event educated residents on solar power, composting, and electric vehicles, and strengthened the town's reputation as a leader in sustainable practices.

Youth Sports and Recreation

The Parks Department collaborated with the Youth Commission to enhance fields and programs, including soccer, baseball, and basketball leagues. The Grove Soccer Field received significant upgrades, ensuring a safe and enjoyable environment for young athletes.

Economic Development Initiatives

Chamber of Commerce

The Au Sable River Valley Business Association partnered with the town to explore the feasibility of establishing a Chamber of Commerce. This initiative aims to unify local businesses and drive economic growth.

Support for Local Businesses

The town's efforts to secure microenterprise grants and revitalize Main Street demonstrate a commitment to supporting entrepreneurs and fostering a thriving business community.

Looking Ahead

The achievements of 2024 reflect the collaborative efforts of the Town of Jay's leadership, departments, and residents. With ongoing initiatives such as the Comprehensive Plan update, Main Street revitalization, and Economic Development, the future looks bright for our community. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this year a success!

Enjoy the rest of the winter,
Matt

Sole Assessor- Timothy Gay, JR.

The Town of Jay is in a cyclical reassessment plan. This means that the town must conduct a revaluation at least once every four years. During the interim years, reassessments may need to be done to maintain 100 percent equalization. Equalization is the level at which assessments are compared to sale prices of such properties. Each year as the assessor, I must review all sales that have occurred, and compare the assessed value against the sale price. This overall ratio is how the equalization rate is determined. This overall ratio can be from 95%-105% and I can claim 100% equalization, meaning assessments are at full market value. Not increasing or decreasing assessment when the market value increases or decreases would result in having to claim another equalization rate.

Everyone pays taxes on full market value whether the equalization rate is 100% or an-

other percentage. The tax rate is determined by taking the levy/full taxable value. Then the equalization rate is applied to determine the equalized tax rate. This is important because, (1) in New York State there is no fixed percentage in which a property must be assessed. (2) Not all municipalities assess at the same percentage of market value. (3) Not all taxing jurisdictions share the same boundaries. For example, Au Sable Valley School District has multiple municipalities. The equalization rate is designed so that every owner within a taxing jurisdiction is paying their fair share.

I understand that this is very complicated and confusing but my intent here is to help reduce that confusion, even if just a little bit. As always, if you would like to know more, please stop by my office, I look forward to speaking with you.

Kind regards,
Timothy D. Gay Jr.

Water & Wastewater Department- Paul Mintz

It's been a busy year for our water and wastewater systems!

On the water side, we've repaired and replaced components at the Nugent Water Plant, the Valley Road Pump Station, the Rt86 Pump Station, and the Au Sable Forks Water Plant (yes, even relatively new infrastructure needs maintenance!) We're currently working through our annual maintenance and flushing of our fire hydrants. When not in the field, we've spent a LOT of time on our lead service line inventory (required by the Dept of Health) and supplying information to MJ Engineering for a water meter feasibility study (required by the DEC). We've also been working closely with MJ Engineering to identify vulnerable components in town that require upgrading

or replacement, for the purpose of finding outside sources of funding.

On the wastewater side of things, our treatment plant is functioning well! A large project at to add disinfection and increase nutrient removal—primarily to reduce phosphorus—is officially underway. The contractors are currently sourcing materials and plan to break ground in the early spring. In our collection system, we replaced one pump (of the 13 in service), repaired one of our septic tanks (out of the roughly 225 in service), and are up to date on our septic tank maintenance.

Thanks for your patience and understanding as we work to improve our systems!

-Paul Mintz

Parks & Open Spaces—Olivia Dwyer

The Town of Jay's parks make our community a great place to live, work, and play. The town is grateful to the staff and volunteers who care for our parks, including the dozens of volunteers who participated in spring volunteer cleanup days in Upper Jay, Jay, and Au Sable Forks last April. Many thanks to Adirondack Mountain Coffee Cafe, Sugar House Creamery, and the Rotary Club of Au Sable Valley for providing food and beverages to keep volunteers energized. This volunteer event returns in April 2025 and we hope to see you there!

Summer was busy in the parks. From the JEMS concert series and the Jay Day Celebration at the Village Green to youth sports at the Grove Pattno & Gale Memorial Park, every week brought a new way to gather and enjoy nature.

In June, the Adirondack Land Trust transferred the 598-acre Four Peaks property between Route 9N and Hardy Road to the New York State Forest Preserve. This expands public lands in the Town of Jay. There are no marked trails on this property and Rattlesnake Knob is the only peak on public land. Please respect the neighbors and do not trespass on private property surrounding Four Peaks.

The state plans to support mountain bike trails at Four Peaks, like trails built and maintained by the Barkeater Trails Alliance (BETA) on Hardy Road. BETA Executive Director Glenn Glover attended

September's Town Board to offer support in collecting input on what the community would like to see at Four Peaks. This input will then be shared with the state's Department of Conservation to inform the Unit Management Plan for Four Peaks. Stay tuned for how to participate next year.

In October, the town applied for a Recreation Economy for Rural Communities grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This planning assistance grant would support the town in working with the community to plan outdoor recreation that will support economic development and quality of life. Grant recipients will be announced in spring 2025.

This year, the committee expanded its focus to Parks & Open Spaces. Our new name reflects a broader mission to plan for both town parks and connections to public lands in the Town of Jay. In 2025, this committee will also serve as a working group in the town's comprehensive planning process. If you are interested in volunteering on the committee, contact Town Councilor Olivia Dwyer at o.dwyer@townofjayny.gov. The Town of Jay also welcomes new parks employee Brooke Paries to the team. If you see Brooke around town, please say hello!

-Olivia Dwyer

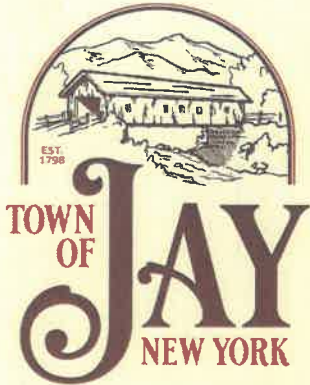
Tax Collector- Lori Ducharme

I trust everyone has enjoyed the beautiful Fall weather and foliage this year. It certainly has been an enjoyable season for me. As we prepare for the 2025 tax season, I just want to remind those who wish to be set up on the 4-pay plan to contact my office early on in the month of January as the first payment is due by January 31st. Also, if you desire to pay in person, please make sure to bring exact change with you; otherwise, we accept personal checks, cashier's checks, and money orders. In addition, please make sure they are made out for the exact amount due

and postmarked by January 31st to avoid an additional penalty being added to your land tax bill.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to my office and I will try to return telephone calls and respond to email inquiries in a timely manner, answering your questions to the best of my ability. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and I look forward to serving the taxpayers of our town once again.

-Lori Ducharme



11 School Lane
Au Sable Forks, NY 12912
Phone: 518-647-2204
Fax: 518-647-5692

Town of Jay News

2024/25 JEMS WINTER EVENTS

THURSDAY NIGHT ACOUSTIC JAMS—7PM
CHRISTMAS PARTY—DECEMBER 6 @ 6PM
CONTRA DANCE—DECEMBER 11 @ 7PM
CHRISTMAS PLAY BY KIDS CLUB- DECEMBER 15 @ 2PM
CHRISTMAS DRAG SHOW—DECEMBER 28 @ 7PM
FRANKIE & THE MOONLIGHTERS—JANUARY 4 @ 7PM
CONTRA DANCE- JANUARY 8 @ 7PM
AUSTIN & THE IN LAWS— FEBRUARY 1 @ 7PM
JEFFREY DUPRA—MARCH 1 @ 7PM

Our Senior Center is open every Monday and
Wednesday, starting at 9:00am.

Come visit with friends, participate in activities ranging from movies
to puzzles, then enjoy a warm, home cooked meal at Noon.

\$3.50 or donation for Lunch for individuals 60+
\$6.00 for Lunch for Individuals under 60

Sponsored by ACAP and Funded by Essex County Office for the Aging

Upper Jay Art Center

Good Mourning (theatre)—December 7, 7PM-9PM
Artist Office Hours - December 17, 5PM-8PM
January Jams (open mic) - January 5, 12, 19, 26- 2PM-6PM
Reel Stories (film)—February 5, 12, 19, 26 - 7PM-9PM