

A Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Orchard Park, Erie County, New York, was held at the Orchard Park Municipal Center, S4295 South Buffalo Street, Orchard Park, New York on the 7th day of January 2026 at 7:08 PM, the meeting was called to order by Supervisor Joseph Liberti and there were:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Joseph Liberti	Supervisor
Julia Mombrea	Councilmember
Scott Honer	Councilmember
John Mariano	Councilmember
Greg Bennett	Councilmember
William Even	Town Clerk
Timothy D. Gallagher	Town Attorney
Tom Minor	Building Inspector
Gregory Sheppard	Interim Chief of Police
Andrew Slotman	Highway Superintendent
Wayne Bieler	Town Engineer

Supervisor Liberti read into the record the following: “If anyone appearing before the Town Board has a family, financial or business relationship with any member of the Board, it is incumbent upon that person to make it known under State Law and the Town Code of Ethics.”

1) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY SUPERVISOR LIBERTI, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby approve the Regular Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2025 and be it further

RESOLVED, that the reading of these minutes be dispensed with as each member of the Town Board has previously received copies thereof.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS

No one came forward

New Business #1 Appoint an Interim Chief of Police

2) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, TO WIT:

WHEREAS, the Town of Orchard Park requires interim leadership to ensure continuity and effective management; and

WHEREAS, the sudden retirement of Chief of Police Patrick Fitzgerald would leave a void in top level management in the Police Department.

NOW, THEREFORE be it

RESOLVED, that Gregory Sheppard is hereby appointed as Interim Police Chief, effective January 6, 2026, and shall serve in this capacity until a permanent appointment is made or until further resolution by the governing body; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this is a temporary emergency action under New York State Civil Service Law not to exceed 30 days as approved by the Erie County Civil Service Personnel Officer, as the position of Police Chief and its fulfillment is subject to the rules of New York State and Erie County Civil Service and compliance thereof; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the interim Police Chief's salary will be equivalent to \$82.68 per hour; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Gregory Sheppard will have all the powers, duties and responsibilities customarily associated with the position of Police Chief during this interim period.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 7th day of January 2026.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

New Business #2 Appoint a Police Officer

3) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town board does hereby approve the appointment of Jeffrey Zak to the position of Police Officer in the Orchard Park Police Department, starting step, effective January 19, 2026, as recommended by the Chief of Police.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

***Interim Chief of Police Gregory Sheppard spoke of Police Officer Jeffrey Zak's accomplishments.**

New Business #3 Approve the promotion of a Police Officer to the position of Detective

4) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby promote Police Officer Marshall McGraw to the Position of Detective, (probationary) effective January 8, 2026, with a rate of pay as defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, as recommended by the Chief of Police.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

***Interim Chief of Police Gregory Sheppard spoke of Detective Marshall McGraw's accomplishments.**

New Business #4 Approve the promotion of a Police Officer to the position of Patrol Lieutenant

5) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby promote Police Officer Andrew Kowalski to the Position of Patrol Lieutenant, (probationary) effective January 8, 2026, with a rate of pay as defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement as recommended by the Chief of Police.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

***Interim Chief of Police Gregory Sheppard spoke of Patrol Lieutenant Andrew Kowalski's accomplishments.**

New Business #5 Approve 2026 part-time seasonal staff for the Recreation Department

6) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER HONER, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board is hereby authorized to approve the appointment of Olivia Ranalli to the 2026 part-time Seasonal staff for the Orchard Park Recreation Department effective January 8, 2026 as Program Coordinator with a pay rate of \$16.50 an hour as recommended by the Recreation Director.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

New Business #6 Approve the Board of Assessment Review to select a chairperson

7) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER MOMBREA, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby authorize current members of the Board of Assessment Review (BAR) to select a chairperson for the BAR for the year 2026.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

New Business #7 Approve the establishment of the Deputy Supervisor

8) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER BENNETT, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, TO WIT:

WHEREAS, the Town Board of Orchard Park recognizes the need for enhanced administrative capacity and continuity of leadership to ensure efficient governance, effective public service, and responsiveness to community needs; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Deputy Supervisor role will provide additional support to the Supervisor, strengthen succession planning, and ensure that the Town Board maintains consistent leadership during periods of the Supervisors' absence(s); and

WHEREAS, the Deputy Supervisor shall serve at the pleasure of the Town Board, and shall reflect our commitment to smart growth, fiscal responsibility, and strong community engagement, while making sure Orchard Park remains well-managed and prepared for the future; and

WHEREAS, the Deputy Supervisor's yearly stipend will be \$5,000.00 annually.

NOW, THEREFORE be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of Orchard Park does hereby establish the position of Deputy Supervisor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption, and the Town Clerk is hereby directed to record and publish the resolution in accordance with applicable law.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

New Business #8 Approve the Wayland's Holly Jolly 5K Special Event

9) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY SUPERVISOR LIBERTI, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MARIANO, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby approve the Special Event Permit request for the Wayland's Holly Jolly 5K Run to be held on Sunday January 11, 2026 from 11AM – 12PM.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

*****Proclamation Honoring Chief Patrick M. Fitzgerald*****

WHEREAS, Chief Patrick M. Fitzgerald has dedicated over two decades of service to the Town of Orchard Park Police Department, serving the community in numerous roles since starting his law enforcement career in the early 2000s; and

WHEREAS, under his guidance, the police department has continued to provide high-quality law enforcement, crime prevention, and community outreach services to the residents of Orchard Park, reinforcing the trust and bond between law enforcement and our community; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Orchard Park and the Orchard Park Police Department are profoundly grateful for Chief Fitzgerald's continued professionalism, and compassionate service to the community, upholding the town's values and ensuring the safety of all residents.

NOW, THEREFORE be it

RESOLVED, that the Town of Orchard Park hereby recognizes and expresses its gratitude to Patrick M. Fitzgerald for his years of service, and devotion to the community; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this proclamation be entered into the official record as a testament to his contributions.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

David Schuster spoke regarding the Town's new garbage pickup contract with Modern Disposal Services.

ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT MANAGERS

Supervisor Joseph Liberti congratulated all new and promoted Town employees. He also spoke regarding the new garbage collection procedures and the Town's contract with Modern Disposal Services.

Councilmember Greg Bennett thanked residents for the opportunity to serve on the Town Board.

Councilmember Julia Mombrea congratulated all new and promoted Police Officers. She also thanked all residents that volunteer on boards & committees.

Councilmember Scott Honer congratulated all new and promoted Police Officers. He also thanked Interim Chief of Police Gregory Sheppard.

Councilmember John Mariano welcomed Police Officer Jeffrey Zak, congratulated Detective Marshall McGraw & Patrol Lieutenant Andrew Kowalski, and thanked Interim Chief of Police Gregory Sheppard. He also welcomed Olivia Ranalli to the Recreation Department.

Town Clerk William Even informed residents how to sign up for a quarterly newsletter from the Town Clerk's office.

Town Attorney Tim Gallagher congratulated all appointed Board members and Town employees.

Town Engineer Wayne Bieler congratulated all new and promoted Town employees. He also clarified the Town's new garbage pickup procedures with Modern Disposal Services.

Building Inspector Tom Minor welcomed Councilmember Greg Bennett and spoke of NYS code changes.

Highway Superintendent Andrew Slotman welcomed all new and promoted Town employees. He also thanked Highway Department staff for working very long hours during the recent inclement weather.

10) THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY SUPERVISOR LIBERTI, WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER LIBERTI, TO WIT:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby authorize the approval of all entries on Warrant #1 following auditing by members of the Town Board and in the funds indicated:

General Fund	\$167,384.39
Public Safety Fund	\$108,026.95
Part Town Fund	\$1,515.37
Risk Retention	-0-
Cemetery Fund	-0-
Highway Fund	\$124,605.45
Special Districts	\$208,307.02
Trust & Agency	\$5,624.52
Capital Fund	\$16,020.00

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

There being no further business, on a motion by Supervisor Liberti, seconded by Councilmember Mariano, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm (local time).

Respectfully Submitted,

William C. Even
Town Clerk