

**Minutes for the Ticonderoga Financial Meeting with any Other Lawful Business held
On May 28, 2026 commencing at 6:00 p.m.**

Present: James F. O'Bryan, Supervisor
Dave Woods, Councilman
Laura Best, Councilwoman
Tom Thatcher, Councilman
Heath Towne, Councilman
Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk

Others: Mark Wright, Tom Hardy, Sgt. Budwick, Chief Hurlburt, Officer Cook

Supervisor O'Bryan opened the meeting with the Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution #195-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher, seconded by Dave Woods to amend the budget for 2026, increasing the following budget lines:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| o SW.2142.000 | Unmetered Water Sales | \$345,968.00 |
| o SW.8310.485 | Water Admin Operational Costs | \$345,968.00 |

Due to budgeting error – these lines were not budgeted properly due to district consolidation.

All in Favor James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

Resolution #196-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher, seconded by Laura Best authorizing the following expenditures for training in Lake Placid, NY, for James O'Bryan:
2026 Adirondack Association of Towns & Villages Meeting (June 1) = \$65
Applicable mileage costs

All in Favor James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

Resolution #197-2026 brought by Dave Woods, seconded by Heath Towne to advertise for a full-time Highway Motor Equipment Operator, with CDL license, at \$24.14/hour, with benefits.

All in Favor James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

Resolution #198-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher, seconded by Dave Woods to offer employment, contingent on background check, to Austin Olden as a full-time police officer, with credit for one prior years of service, at the rate of \$30.93/hr., with benefits. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

Resolution #199-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher, seconded by Dave Woods to accept the resignation from Aiden LaBarge as Highway MEO effective June 5, 2026. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

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Councilwoman Best advised the board that we have a SEQRA to go over for the submittal of a grant application in hopes of putting in a playground at the recreational fields. (The board went over the SEQRA questions – finding no or small impact)

Resolution #200-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher, seconded by Dave Woods adopting a negative declaration pursuant to NYS Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) for the Ticonderoga Playground enhancements project at the Recreation Fields. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING NEGATIVE DECLARATION PURSUANT TO
NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT (SEQRA)
FOR TICONDEROGA PLAYGROUND ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Ticonderoga (the “Town Board”) has under consideration certain enhancements to the Town’s playground located on Town parkland located off Burgoyne Road in the Town (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the funding, approval and undertaking of the proposed playground enhancements is an action under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the Town Board wishes to classify the proposed action, establish itself as lead agency and render a determination of significance for the Project as required under SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, a short environmental assessment form (SEAF) has been prepared.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Town Board finds that the proposed action is an Unlisted Action pursuant to the SEQRA regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Board hereby determines that the Town Board shall conduct an uncoordinated review for unlisted actions in accordance with SEQRA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Board has reviewed part 1 of the SEAF, and evaluated the Project and the questions of Part 2 of the SEAF, and taken a hard look at the potential impacts of the Project and found that the Project does not have the potential to cause one or more adverse environmental impacts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Board hereby declares and adopts this resolution as a negative declaration in accordance with SEQRA and Part 3 of the SEAF may be completed by the Town Supervisor accordingly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

Supervisor O'Bryan would like to take a moment to fill the board in on BESS, the moratorium is now in place, we have six months initially to put a committee together and start researching.

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This subject comes with a lot of emotions. Discussion was held again on some of the hazards with these lithium systems. He hopes the board can come up with a plan in the first six months, but we do have the option in the law that allows two additional six month extensions.

Supervisor O'Bryan also brought up the topic of the CHPE (Champlain Hudson Power Express). The board will need to make a decision on this PILOT and should be prepared to do so at the June board meeting. The Essex County IDA hopes to wrap this up by the end of June as to what every Town and schools' decision is on the PILOT. Most of the School districts have entered into a different agreement as this PILOT program affects them more specifically than it does the Towns. We will be prepared to discuss this at the June Board meeting further.

Public Comment

Tom Hardy would like to speak with the board on assessments and gave an example of his personal increase two years in a row. He pointed out that this Town is quickly graying (ie: many senior residents). He does not feel that this Town needs to be assessed every year and asked if the Town had reached out to file a plan with the state. He has had to go to Grievance Day every year and most seniors here are on a fixed income. Some Towns offer tax reductions, has the Town looked into this.

Mrs. Thompson explained that the Town alone offers a senior exemption, an enhanced senior exemption, a veteran's exemption along with volunteer EMS and Fireman exemptions. As she understands it, the first year our new assessor was in office (last year) she had to bring the Town back to 100% valuation and this year, 2026 was a full assessment year, but to be certain of that these questions should be directed to the assessor.

Supervisor O'Bryan explained that he was aware of the every four year assessment process; but also realizes that the State will encourage every year, we are a very complex Town and we hear what you are saying but we are also limited in our involvement with the assessor and the assessments.

Mr. Hardy continued his comments with information about the battery energy storage systems and shared his experience with them. There was much discussion again on the hazards and locations of such systems. Mr. Hardy wanted to stress to the board not to be narrow minded on these systems, don't just look at the hazards, with ORES being involved they can decide not to put it in the proposed site, but be aware that they will be looking into a new site.

Mark Wright asked the board if they had read the letter that he had submitted regarding the Town's K9 program.

Mrs. Thompson stated that the letter had been emailed to all the board members and a hard copy was placed in everyone's mailbox yesterday when it was received.

Most of the board had not seen the letter regarding the Town's K9 Officer which is attached to these minutes.

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Resolution #201-2026 brought by Tom Thatcher seconded by Heath Towne to pause the Financial meeting at 9:25 a.m. to return shortly. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

Resolution #202-2026 brought by Dave Woods, seconded by Tom Thatcher to Re-enter the Financial Meeting and immediately exit to an Executive Session at 9:35 a.m. to discuss a particular personnel matter that would affect their employment or matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed, inviting Officer Cook, Sgt. Budwick and Chief Hurlburt to attend individually when called in. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Tom Thatcher – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. **Carried.**

(Tom Thatcher left at 10:30 a.m.)

Resolution #203-2026 brought by Heath Towne, seconded by Laura Best to exit the Executive Session at 11:00 p.m. and immediately adjourning the meeting with no decisions or resolutions being made. **All in Favor** James O'Bryan – Aye, Dave Woods – Aye, Laura Best – Aye, Heath Towne – Aye. **Opposed** – none. Tom Thatcher – Absent. **Carried.**

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk

May 26, 2026

Mark A. Wright
12 Father Jogues Place
Ticonderoga, NY 12883

To: Town of Ticonderoga Town Board

I respectfully request that this letter be placed in the Financial Meeting minutes of May 28, 2026, for the public record and that the full meeting minutes with this correspondence be promptly posted on the Town's website for public access and inspection.

On Monday, May 18, 2026, I was listening to the Town Board Public Hearing and subsequent Town Board Meeting which followed. At that Town Board meeting I heard a discussion regarding the K9 Handler and K9 dog. The discussion was curtailed, as it should have been, as this became a personnel issue discussed in open session rather than executive session. However, it was apparent from the information freely broadcast in that discussion that the Town of Ticonderoga was considering or that a proposal was in process for the release of the K9 dog, "Raven," which is used for narcotics detection and investigations. This is deeply concerning and I could not be more disturbed about such a prospect having fought and labored for the re-creation of this program and its funding to better protect the people of Ticonderoga.

As Town Supervisor (2022-2025), I entertained and strongly supported a request by the Ticonderoga Police Department to reinstate the K9 program for the purposes of increased public safety. That program was approved by the Ticonderoga Town Board through resolution and the Police Benevolent Association and subsequently added to the PBA contract with the Town via a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

The K9 program (dog, equipment, etc.) was primarily funded, with Town Board resolution, using COVID American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) stimulus funding provided to the Town of Ticonderoga from the United States Treasury Department. In the distribution and assignment of ARPA monies, I was required, as Town Supervisor, to justify and provide rationale annually to the Treasury Department regarding the disbursement of those funds for all Ticonderoga ARPA projects. Those records may be found on the town server.

The rationale for the use of ARPA funding for the K9 program was directly associated with an increase in public safety and community-oriented projects...aka, combatting the use and distribution of illegal narcotics in Ticonderoga which is destroying our town. Should the Town decide to cease the K9 program and release the K9 dog, this would signal to Ticonderoga residents that the Town Board no longer has concerns on the safety of its residents from

illegal narcotics and will not take increased measures such as the use of a K9 to combat this issue when the resources are available and have been deployed to do so for over a year.

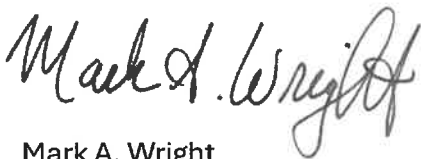
An additional impact to the Town should the K9 animal be released is one of financial. The release would mean that Ticonderoga did not need ARPA federal funding to increase public safety through the installation of a K9 program, a sum exceeding \$16,000. The Treasury may require the Town to return all federal monies associated with the program to the US Treasury as was the case for any unused funding to all ARPA recipients at the end of 2025. Should the Town release the K9 dog, rest assured that I will inform my former US Treasury contacts of the town's decision to cancel the program which was funded with ARPA taxpayer dollars.

In addition, the Town Board should understand that the K9 Handler is subject to a claw back provision in the PBA contract with the Town. If the K9 Handler should leave before a prescribed period, the Handler must return a percentage of the tax dollars expended for training, etc. back to the Town of Ticonderoga. That is non-negotiable and the Town Board should never consider waving any such provision of the contract, or any contract, for fear of creating a precedent on all other Town contractual issues. This is hard earned, taxpayer money. Surrendering any of that money will require me to provide information to that effect to the residents of Ticonderoga via social media and other media platforms in the spirit of open government.

Chief Hurlburt and I closely collaborated over many months to effectively initiate this program. I hope that the Town Board has obtained expert advice from Chief Hurlburt as the only individual in town government who has extensive experience and knowledge about law enforcement operations and the impacts associated with maintaining or cancelling the K9 program and releasing the K9 dog.

One would hope that the Town of Ticonderoga could learn from its past mistakes, for example, when it released the prior K9 animal to an officer who left the Department for "greener" pastures. I encourage the Town Board to not let this happen again and to make the right decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark A. Wright

Cc: Town Supervisor
Town Council Members
Town of Ticonderoga Chief of Police