

# RESUME FOR TOWN SUPERVISOR

## John F. Strough

### CURRENT OCCUPATION

Town Supervisor, Town of Queensbury - January 1, 2014 - present

Warren County Supervisor, Town of Queensbury: County Committees: Budget; County Facilities; Economic Growth & Development; Legislative and Rules (Chair); Occupancy Tax Coordination; Health, Human & Social Services; Environmental Concerns and Real Property Tax Services; Finance; Tourism.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

\*HIGHLIGHTS\*

- **EXPERIENCE:** 17 years of municipal experience: Planning Board, Councilman, Zoning Committee, Open Space Committee, Comprehensive Land Use Committee, County Supervisor and Town Supervisor. Additional education and training in municipal administration, law, and community planning.
- **BUDGET:** Implemented government efficiencies and outsourcing and promoted responsible fiscal policies. Lowered town tax rate. Town received the BEST fiscal health rating from NYS Comptroller's Office.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Redesigned zoning to encourage "appropriate" commercial development, developed a highly respected open and transparent government. Instrumental in developing and implementing Aviation Road Roundabout, Rush Pond Trail, Queensbury/Glens Falls Memorial Day Parade, Exit 18 Zone, solar on municipal buildings, fertilizer law, shoreline buffer law, Blind Rock historic preservation, 4-acre park between Old Aviation/Aviation Roads, EMS Committee. Nationally recognized for my e-waste solutions.
- **INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY:** SUNY Adirondack, Warren County Safe & Quality Bicycle Organization, SPCA, Warren County Historical Society, Community Action Agency, and SAVE.

## **TOWN BUDGET: THE FACTS DO MATTER**

- The town's tax rate for general operations during my term has gone **DOWN 10.5%**
  - Your town tax was 12% of your 2015 property taxes (Town, Warren County, Queensbury School and Crandall Library), and in 2017 it will be 9% of your total property taxes
  - Your water bills have gone down. In 1992 the annual water bill (O&M + ad valorem) for the average valued home (based on 80,000 gallons use) was \$315. In 2016 it was \$285
  - The Town's fund balance policy is in accordance with GASB Statement No. 5
  - BST, a nationally recognized accounting firm, based on its audit of the town's 2016 fiscal year, found:
    - The town's fund balance policy "embodies sound financial management principles and requires the Town to maintain a stable base at all times"
    - The town's unassigned fund balance of the general fund "appears sufficient to meet the attributes of the Town's fund policy" ... "and sufficient to address the known factors [timing of revenues/expenses, capital plans, non-recurring items, commitments and contingencies], while providing for unanticipated factors"
    - The town "utilizes a conservative approach to fiscal policies and the establishment of fund balance levels"
    - No deficiencies in internal controls, town compliant with all applicable accounting standards
  - Moody's rating: Aa2
    - Strengths: Solid financial performance with ample reserves, manageable debt position
    - Challenges: 2% property tax cap, heavy reliance on unpredictable sales taxes
  - NYS Office of Comptroller found the Town's
    - Fiscal health rating is 0 (the absolute best a municipality can achieve)
    - Per-capita spending is \$234 below average
    - Environmental health has improved 76% (20.8 in 2014 and 4 in 2016)
  - For a median assessed home (\$207,900), your general operations town tax was \$123 in 2017
- My fiscal philosophy, community planning, and economic development strategies will prepare the Town to weather the inevitable economic downturns

## **MOVING FORWARD**

- Implement more government efficiencies to lower tax rates
- Continue with responsible budgeting to assure future fiscal health
- Design zoning for appropriate and tax-lowering commercial development
- Install signalization upgrades for Aviation and Bay Roads
- Negotiate new contracts for fire and EMS
- Improve environmental protection efforts: Lake George, Glen Lake and Lake Sunnyside
- Migrate documents and records to cloud for assured preservation
- Construct new highway garage and salt barns
- Continue with Clean Energy Communities program
- Develop Halfway Brook Trail as part of a comprehensive interconnecting trail system
- Install LEDs for building and street lights
- Redevelop the Ciba Geigy brownfield site
- Work on regional biosolid treatment solution
- Implement other economic development strategies

# ACHIEVEMENTS

\*DETAILS\*

## BUDGET

**LOWERING COSTS:** Now AND in future: Implementation of worker safety program to lower our workers' compensation rate. Vehicle replacement, management and monitoring programs reduced expenses and cost spikes. Implemented efficiencies programs: Outsourced animal control and information technology, website development and management. Reduced administration personnel in Water/Wastewater Department, Town Clerk's Office and Activities Center. Bulk purchasing with county. Electric savings of 25% using solar. Avoided bonding by reserving funding for capital projects.

**IMPROVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Job development + commercial development + sales tax revenues = lower taxes. Under my administration, we successfully developed flexible economic zones, like Main Street and Commercial Intensive Exit 18, that encourage commercial development. Working on securing a municipal sewer for Carey Road and eastern Corinth Road – to spur commercial and light industrial development. Investigating development of the Ciba Geigy brownfield site.

**TOWN TAX: The town's tax rate during my term has gone down 10.5%.** The tax rate for general operations was 60.2 cents/\$1,000 in 2014 (my first year as Town Supervisor), 59.1 cents/\$1,000 last year (\$151 for a \$256,000 home) and I am proposing 53.9 cents/\$1,000 for 2018. Town's general operations: Assessor, Accounting, Animal Control, Building & Codes Enforcement, Building & Grounds Maintenance, Cemetery, Community Development (Planning, Zoning and Enforcement), Fire Marshall, Highway Administration and Maintenance (snow plowing, paving, etc.), Information/Technology, Parks & Recreation, Town Clerk (Licensing, Receiver of Taxes, Records Maintenance), Town Counsel, Town Court, Town Supervisor & Board, Transfer Stations (solid waste).

**FUND BALANCES:** All fund balances successfully audited in line with town fund policy. Because we depend on quarterly sales tax revenues as our primary cash flow (dependent on local economy), fund balances help us avoid incurring debt for capital projects (new highway garage) and unforeseen emergencies, like the three failed culverts and road washouts.

**AUDITS:** Found no deficiencies in internal controls and compliant with municipal accounting standards.

**NYS COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE FINDINGS:** After review and assessment of the town's budget solvency (revenues v. appropriations, cash flow and ability to deal with unforeseen events) and financial indicators (year-end balance, operating deficits, cash position, debt and fixed costs), the town's fiscal outlook is strong/fiscal stress score 0 (the best possible).

**PER-CAPITA SPENDING:** NYS town average \$875. Town of Queensbury \$641 -- \$235 below average.

**ADDITIONAL SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION:** Records/archive to cloud. Changing street and building lighting to LED. Hydro power purchase agreement. Replace old and inefficient HVAC system at Town Office. New, more efficient, highway building. Outsource water tank management. Improve efficiencies through Clean Energy Communities Program.

## GOVERNANCE

**An open and transparent government.** All regular meetings filmed by LOOK TV. All resolutions described and explained. Public able to speak to all resolutions prior to Town Board vote. Public given second opportunity to speak to any town issue at regular meetings. All meeting announcements, recordings and minutes posted on town website. At least three Town Board meetings a month, at least one being an informational/discussion workshop. Document and archive system that serves public information requests. Effective administration: I am thankful for the cooperation of our town department managers in helping me to develop one of the finest towns in New York: "A home of natural beauty... a good place to live."

# ACHIEVEMENTS

\*OTHER\*

Member of a regional technical committee investigating biosolids treatment strategies and possible governance structures.

Emergency replacement of culverts on Dixon Road and Clendon Brook Road

Development of Town Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Designing and holding public outreach programs on Complete Streets and Smart Growth

Negotiated contract to allow placement of fiber optic cable in town owned quad-ducts near Exit 18

Initiated multi-municipal symposium to discuss shoreline septic management programs

Worked with Chazen Company to investigate development potentials for Ciba-Geigy site

Finished contract negotiations with Monolith for the installation of solar panels on six town buildings

Assisted in the development of a marketing plan for the Floyd Bennett Airport

Worked with other local municipal leaders to develop a regional wastewater solutions strategy

Developed a budget and response for NYS Comptrollers Audit of WGF Volunteer Fire Company

Helped Boy Scouts with Eagle Scout projects and received Eagle Scout Mentor pin

Nominated local resident John Webster to NYS Senate's Veterans Hall of Fame

Helped fund SAVE to ensure Lake George boat inspections

Worked with residents to create a North Queensbury Onsite Wastewater Disposal District

Activated EMS Committee to improve emergency coverage effectiveness

Developed an application form and format for those wishing Occupancy Tax

Developed structured, comprehensive and approved long-term budget plans with most of our first emergency responder's organizations, fire and EMS

Develop an improved, more restrictive Fertilizer Control Law

Altered the town's ATV law to better address public safety and trail maintenance

Altered zoning to better meet town needs: Sweet Road, Ridge and 149 intersection area

Improved building security for town office complex

## Legislative initiatives:

- Town Code Chapter 160. Transient Merchant Law: to better accommodate local business desires to streamline convention status approvals
- Town Code 179, Article 8, Shoreline Buffers: to reduce the harmful impacts on local water bodies of stormwater, nitrogen and phosphorous pollution
- Town Code Chapter 107: Lawn Fertilizer and Pesticide Runoff Control: to reduce pollutant impacts by restricting shoreline use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Cable TV Franchise Renewal Agreement: Ten year agreement with Time Warner Cable that provides for consumer protection agreements
- "Part B" of the town's 2007 Comprehensive Land Use Plan: a portrayal of town land use: past, present and future.
- Ethics Law rewritten to make it stronger and more meaningful

## Councilman Accomplishments

- Deputy Town Supervisor – 2013
- Helped initiate the town's EMS Bill for Service program
- To protect the historic site's integrity and to allow public access, negotiated the purchase of the land immediately surrounding Blind Rock, 2007
- Helped design and write the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary brochure
- Chairman: Communities That Care, 2003-2007

*more*

- Town Representative, Lakes to Locks Program, promotion of local heritage, 2003 to present
- Helped draft the Town's: Main Street Redevelopment and Zoning program; Open Space Vision Plan; New Zoning Code; Professional Office Zone
- Co-Chaired Glens Falls/Queensbury Memorial Day Parade Committee
- Member: Warren County Bicentennial Committee
- Member: Town of Queensbury 250th Anniversary Committee
- Created Old Aviation Road/Aviation Road Park to buffer the Glen Acres neighborhood from adjacent high-impact commercial development

#### **Prior to Elected office**

- Planning Board member, 2000 to 2003
- Attended most Town Board and Planning Board meetings and many Zoning Board meetings: 1995-2001
- Researched community planning for several local projects: Indian Ridge Development, Corinth Road Corridor development, Cracker Barrel Rezoning, Main Street, Great Escape, Aviation Mall expansion.
- Helped found Citizens for Queensbury, watchdog organization, originally formed to deal with concerns over impacts of a large subdivision proposal.
- Founded CARE (Citizens Against Rezoning), fought rezoning property adjacent to residential area. The proposed development's traffic queuing would have degraded residents' ability to access the Greenway Drive signalized intersection.
- Co-edited book with John Austin, Marilyn VanDyke and Carolyn Curren, *50 Year History of the Queensbury Union Free School District*, 2000.
- Grant Writing: Save Our History (History Channel) and Capacity Building (Parks & Trails NY)

#### **Education and Training: Town Law/Administration/Community Planning**

- Post-Flood Emergency Stream Intervention Training 2017
- NYSDEC - Lake Ecosystem Management, regulatory and permitting process, 2017
- Low Impact Development: 2015 - 2016
- Stream Flood Restoration: 2016
- Community Planning/Zoning: 1998/99 and 2001/02/03/04/07/14/15/16/17
- Emergency Management: 2014 - 2017
- NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services certificate of completion: NYS
- Attended Local Government Conference Series at SUNY Adirondack
- SEQRA 1999/2004/14/15/16
- Storm Water Control 10/30/01
- Main Street Redevelopment 5/27/04
- Stormwater and Erosion Regulations 2013/2016
- 2014/15/16 Association of Towns – Updates on NYS town law

#### **Governance Memberships**

Adirondack Gateway Council, Capital Region Community College Council, S.A.V.E., SUNY Adirondack: Board of Trustees, Warren County Economic Development Corporation, Warren County Historical Society: Board of Directors, French and Indian War Society Board of Directors, Warren County Safe & Quality Bicycling Organization: Board of Directors, Queensbury Roundtable, Glens Falls/Queensbury Memorial Day Parade Committee, Chapman Museum: Education Committee, Advisor to Town Historian, Community Action Agency, A/GFTC Policy Committee, Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board, Warren County SPCA, Board of Directors

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**I do not accept monetary donations.**

My obligation is only to you.

My commitment is for what is best for the community, not for a special interest donor.

I am my own campaign management team – no professional help.

**PLEASE HELP**

**I would appreciate your support:**

For letters to the editor you may use information supplied in my resume or my website:

[www.stroughforsupervisor.com](http://www.stroughforsupervisor.com)

For yard signs please call (518) 798-9696 and leave your name and address. I will deliver.

**When you vote on November 7<sup>th</sup>**

Vote for a proven administrator, sincere in his dedication and desire to build a better community.