

## State of the Town of Ossian 2021

I would like to thank all the town officials, employees and volunteers for their continuing efforts and accomplishments during the year.

### **1. Town Board**

The Ossian Town Board continues to be proactive in matters that affect our town.

In January, the town board voted to review our list of local laws, going back fifty years or more. This process, with the help of our town attorney, Louis Colella, involved reviewing each local law, amending some, repealing some, adopting some and adopting entirely new ones in an effort to reflect current needs and conditions. With this being done, the revised list of local laws is now on the Town of Ossian's website, for all to gain a better understanding of our town.

Another step forward was the signing of a shared services agreement between the Town of Ossian and the Town of Dansville, Steuben County for maintenance of Geiger Road and Poags Hole Road.

The town board adopted a tax cap compliant budget for 2022 and is going into the new year debt-free for the seventh year in a row.

### **2. Highway Department**

The Ossian Highway Department has kept a busy schedule this year by oiling and stoning 7.8 miles of town roads, with 4 miles of that no longer being "dirt roads".

In preparation for next year's CHIPs projects the highway department tiled and graveled 2½ miles of roads, along with changing numerous cross-over pipes, wedging of shoulders and an extensive amount of ditching. In their spare time the highway employees mowed our town and county roadsides four times and brought in over \$32,000 in county work.

As anyone drives around town it's obvious that our highway department takes pride in their work, as the Town of Ossian is recognized as having some of the best roads in Livingston County.

### **3. Town Clerk/Tax Collector**

As usual, the town clerk's office seemed to glide through 2021 without a hitch.

The tax season ended with the ledger balancing to the penny on the last bank statement.

Dog licensing is always a challenge and this year Steve used a new approach to inform residents of this annual obligation. One hundred dogs were licensed, a little less than last year.

During the last half of the year, Steve spent time ordering supplies and tying up loose ends to make the transition for our new clerk as easy as possible. We would like to wish Steve the best in his retirement, and thank him for his 20 years of service and dedication to the Town of Ossian.

### **4. Code Enforcement**

Code Enforcement Officer, Bob Bourgoine, kept a full schedule during 2021 by issuing 42 building permits, 4 variances and 2 stop-work orders. Continued training is a mandatory part of the job, whether attending virtually or in-person, which involved 43 hours during 2021. Bob also performed 56 inspections and investigated several complaints.

### **5. Town Justice**

Judge Wilson served as CAP court (centralized arraignment program) judge for Livingston County the week of May 10, 2021. This court is for those charged with misdemeanors and felonies, and assures legal representation. Lesser charges are handled in local courts.

In October, the unified court system provided new computers for his office and courtroom.

The courts are obligated to provide payment plans for those who cannot pay their finds or/and surcharges, without interest and penalty fees.

Bail reform, which began in January 2020, and covid have reduced the number of cases that actually came to court in Ossian. Many choose to enter a guilty plea by mail, which slows down the collection of fines and surcharges.

Along with all this activity, Judge Wilson completed his annual requirement of 12 hours of continued education and testing.

## **6. Historian**

Rhea, like the other town historians in the county, has been involved with Livingston County's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Rhea contributed to a video representing all towns in the county and this video was played at the Board of Supervisor's meeting on February 23, 2021.

In April, our historian participated in a county-wide geocaching trail with two sites located in Ossian, one at our town hall and another at West View Cemetery.

Along with working with Livingston County, Rhea has been handling requests for information from and about local families, including death records. One request centered on Bert Perry, Ossian's own train robber.

With all this activity, Rhea was still able to write two historical newsletters, one in May and one in October.

## **7. Assessor**

2021 was business as usual for Holley. Every month of the year is spent doing field review of new construction, open permits and verifying sales, along with address changes. Processing sales transfers and keeping office files up-to-date are all everyday duties.

Processing exemptions starts in November and ends on March 1<sup>st</sup>, which is Taxable Status Date.

Changes to the assessment roll are submitted to the county April 1<sup>st</sup>. The tentative tax roll was filed with the town clerk May 1<sup>st</sup>. Grievance Day was June 7<sup>th</sup>. The final tax roll was filed with the town clerk July 1<sup>st</sup>.

With all these regular duties, Holley performs a revaluation every 4 years and she has been working on the 2022 Town of Ossian revaluation since August 2021.

## **8. Livingston County Seniorama & Teen Recognition**

The Livingston County Teen Recognition ceremony was held May 26, 2021 at the Avon Drive-In. Jonah Gray, Connor Knapp and Madison Lee of Ossian were honored at this event.

Don & Janeen Wilson were chosen as the senior representatives from the Town of Ossian for 2021. On May 22, 2021 the Livingston County Seniorama was held at Willow Creek Event Venue, Lakeville.

Box lunches were provided and social distancing was practiced at both of these events.

Thanks to Heather Pero, Town of Ossian's representative to the Livingston County Youth Board and Roxanne Morsch, Town of Ossian's representative to the Livingston County Office for the Aging for their assistance with these events.

## **9. Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board**

Chairman, Tom DePuy, and his board conducted public hearings for 3 separate variances, convened for a zoning law interpretation and held a training session at the Ossian Town Hall with the Livingston County Planning Department on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

The goal for the Ossian Town Board in 2022 is to continue its efforts in making the Town of Ossian a great place to live, work and visit.

Sincerely,  
Dwight Knapp  
Supervisor  
Town of Ossian