



## VILLAGE OF AURORA NEWSLETTER

January 2025  
Volume 20, Issue 1

The Village Clerk's Office is open Monday-Thursday, 10-2 or by appointment. The Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer is available on Mondays & Thursdays from 1-4. To meet with the mayor, clerk, treasurer, or code enforcement officer, please call (315) 364-7293 or contact us via email:

Mayor (Jim Orman) – [mayor@auroranewyork.us](mailto:mayor@auroranewyork.us)

Clerk (Ann Balloni) – [villageclerk@auroranewyork.us](mailto:villageclerk@auroranewyork.us)

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer (Deborah Brooks) – [deputyclerk@auroranewyork.us](mailto:deputyclerk@auroranewyork.us)

Code Enforcement Officer (Bob Rhea) – [codeofficer@auroranewyork.us](mailto:codeofficer@auroranewyork.us)

DPW staff, please call (315) 364-5239 or email [aurorah20@auroranewyork.us](mailto:aurorah20@auroranewyork.us)

Due to inconsistent staffing in the village office, it is best to call ahead for an appointment with the clerk, treasurer, and/or code officer. Occasionally, we are called away from the office for meetings, site visits, etc. during regular office hours. We appreciate your consideration.

Message from the Mayor:

Greetings All.

This has proved to be a very eventful year. We began with hopes of accomplishing several positive endeavors we had undertaken. I am happy to report that we did succeed on several fronts. With the help of much community input we were able to enact a short-term rental law. This was done within our community as there is no New York State legislation to help direct us. In addition, we completed a re-zoning law. This resulted in a collaborative effort from residents, administration, Cayuga County Planning Department, and legal counsel. Thanks to all who provided input on these important issues that helped pave the way forward.

Speaking of paving we were able to partner with NYS to complete the paving of Rt. 90 through the Village. This not only provided a smoother ride through Aurora but greatly enhanced our look with fresh asphalt and striping for greater visibility. We were also able to partner with NYS and the Villages of Union Springs and Cayuga and be awarded the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). We have completed the review process and are awaiting word from NYS on which projects will be approved. This usually happens in February.

On April 29<sup>th</sup> we were dealt a serious event that clouded our future as a Village. When Wells college closed this Village suffered severe aftershocks. Our water plant would no longer be operated by Wells. The Village was left with the only available option of assuming operation of the plant. We were very fortunate to have both experienced operators of the plant join our work force. With their help, along with our legal counsel, Cayuga County Health Department, our engineering consultant, and our own staff we have been able to maintain a supply of water for the Village. However, we do not currently have a budget to sustain this without some assistance from NYS and the possibility of raising water rates. We are working diligently with NYS officials to partner with us on this.

We are also working with Wells on issues involving the village. We have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Wells and Ledyard Farms to keep the stagecoach and omnibus in our possession. The storage and maintenance and insurance would be covered by Ledyard Farms. We have also been involved in trying to have our historical archives be stored locally. We have offered a nominal amount to Wells to purchase the water plant building. We have offered the same for the dock and open space. All of this is subject to Wells agreeing and the NYS Attorney General approving. This is a process in accordance with Attorney General policies regarding the closure of a non-profit. The Village is working very closely with Wells and these and other effects of the closure. We will keep everyone advised but this is a slow process.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department for continuing their tireless efforts to keep our Village safe and provide outstanding emergency medical care to those in need. This has been continued despite the Department suffering a 25% drop in membership with Wells students no longer being here to join the department. Thank you AVFD!

In closing I'd like to extend a huge thank you to our amazing staff for continuing their high level of delivering services to our community despite this being a very challenging year. This extends to our Boards that assist our residents and businesses to complete their projects. You are the best!

With several things going on we look forward to 2025 with much hope and promise. We have many positive things to build upon and move forward together. Be assured we will continue our 100% commitment to accomplish this.

Jim Orman

### ***Historian's Corner: The Spirit of Christmas (in Aurora) Past***

As "Christmas in Aurora" approached last month, some wondered if it could be the fiftieth anniversary of the event. So I wrote to Randi Zabriskie and received a charming essay in return. She believes the first one was in about 1978 (let's say it was and mark calendars now!). Randi's plan was that women would be invited to Jane Morgan's Little House, the dress shop in the small brick building just north of the United Ministry, to jot down a wish list. (Dorinne Russ was the only one who actually did so, wishing for "a bird.") Randi continued that the first "Christmas at the Little House" was

Born on a Thursday night, because UMA Choir practiced next door so we knew a good champagne punch and Rusty Hopkins' Christmas cookies would be just the thing after all that singing.... We were blessed by a perfect sprinkling of snowflakes.

After several happy years solo, we had Victoria and Richard MacKenzie-Childs under the Fargo, Higgins Emporium, then Laura-in-Aurora joined the neighborhood and brought many followers. When Winnie Murphy was manager of the Aurora Inn she provided a warm fire and tiny roast beef and turkey sandwiches. I invited Rusty with her Christmas baskets, soup mixes and jams, Claire Morehouse with her fabulous mustard, and Shooky (Dick Shook) with his incredible life-like duck carvings. Of course the party was renamed 'Christmas in Aurora.'

From there the event grew and was "adopted" by the Aurora Arts and Merchants Association. As the years passed, other businesses and also nonprofits joined in and Jane Morgan's Little House moved to Jane Morgan's Bigger Little House and became where Santa waited patiently to make his presence known for the Village Christmas Tree Lighting.

Sadly, there is little brick and mortar left of Aurora's retail life, but I am grateful that you, with your loyal vendors, keep the spirit of CIA alive. Steve Zabriskie is devoted to his Silent Auction at the Masonic Lodge and will probably continue it *posthumously!*

Thank you, Randi, for these happy memories of good times with neighbors, a great note on which to start the year.

Linda Schwab, PhD  
Village Historian

#### **NEWS FROM THE AURORA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

We responded to 120 calls as of December 20.

Theon Parseghian was elected chief for his second year, and JD Balloni and Sarah Homick were voted in as assistant chiefs.

We welcome anyone interested in joining the fire department! Stop by and see us the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm for membership information.

Have a healthy and safe new year!

#### **DPW REMINDERS**

The leaf machine is stored away and replaced with the plows and sander. When the snow flies, once the first sweep is complete, please move your vehicles to a cleared space so the DPW can easily plow the entire road.

#### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Meetings are held in the firehouse meeting room, 456 Main Street**

**Community Preservation Panel (CPP): First Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.**

**Planning Board: Second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.**

**Village Board of Trustees: Third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.**

**Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): Fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., as needed**

