



## VILLAGE OF AURORA NEWSLETTER

April 2025  
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The village office is generally open Monday-Thursday from 10-4, but it is always best to call ahead and make an appointment. 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 or Christine Tanner) – [deputyclerk@auroranewyork.us](mailto:deputyclerk@auroranewyork.us)

Code Enforcement Officer (Bob Rhea, Monday & Thursday 1-4) [codeofficer@auroranewyork.us](mailto:codeofficer@auroranewyork.us)

To contact Aaron Van Arnum, Tony Filer, or Mike White at the DPW, please call (315) 364-5239

### EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you have not already done so, or need to update, please send your email address to the village clerk or deputy clerk (listed above). The Village only sends emails during water billing or if there is an urgent need to notify residents, such as a water break or an important village meeting. We appreciate your cooperation.

### MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Hi All,

Hope you have survived winter in good fashion. As we enter a new phase in our village, I would like to extend my deep felt thanks to Chris MacCormick for his lifetime dedication to the Village and 20-year member of the Community Preservation Panel. We wish he and Mnetha well in their new home in Maine.

As you know Wells College is being marketed for sale. The time period for offers recently closed and the College is analyzing what they have received. When they have finalized their review, the public will be informed. We hope there are offers that both assist Wells in the closure process and help the Village move forward.

Associated with that closure comes the disappointing news of the latest consequence resulting from the closure. As you know the Village had to assume operation of the water plant in short order. If the Village had not taken over there was no reasonable way for the village to continue receiving water for their daily needs. This was encouraged by the Cayuga County Health department and the NY State Health Department. At the time we had no estimates given to us regarding the financial aspect of that operation. The only way to know was to operate. We had no budget for this. We have gone through existing funds to operate so far. We petitioned NY State for interim funding to no avail. Grants are available but only for capital costs and not operating costs. Those costs fall directly on the users.

We have diligently been communicating with NY State agencies all the way to the Governor's Office. While they have all been supportive, no funding has been forthcoming. There are other communities in poor financial shape, and we are not the only one asking for assistance. We have weekly

zoom meetings with the NYS Health Department and regular calls with the County Health department. They are aware we are facing a crisis. We are now compiling our budgets for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the water budget is critical. We are also seeking cuts in our general budget that provides daily services to lessen the impact of the increase in water fees. We have been working diligently with our consulting engineer and the firm of Barton & Loguidice, our financial advisors with Fiscal Advisors, Inc. and our internal team. Many hours of work and worry are being expended to this. In the end the costs are expected to rise dramatically

For years, the Village has enjoyed a low water rate. With the college closed that total cost now falls directly on water users. Unfortunately, we do not enjoy a large tax base. With the operation of the plant now in Village hands our water budget (currently at \$118,100) is expected to rise to approximately \$315,000. That is a bare bones budget to provide water to all in a safe and healthy manner. We are still carefully analyzing our options, but rates can be expected to rise about 2 ½ times the current rate. With the departure of Wells, the sewer rates will also rise but not as dramatically. When Wells departed, they took over 60% of the users of these services. That burden now falls totally on the Village. I truly wish there was more optimistic news.

Unfortunately, this is the reality of living in this beautiful village in the post Wells College era. Rest assured we are working feverishly to lessen the impact, but the options are diminishing. We welcome your input. To that end there is **a public budget hearing on Thursday, April 10, at the Village Hall at 5:30 p.m.**

Thank you,

Jim Orman

### **SUMMER SWIM PROGRAM**

Given the current situation with the former Wells College, the Village operating the former Wells Water Plant, and the unforeseen costs that we are forced to absorb, there is not enough money in the 2025/2026 budget for the swim program. We are looking into alternate funding options and communicating with remaining Wells staff to try and find a way to keep the dock available for swimming this summer.

### **DPW REMINDERS**

Leaves must be bagged, and brush tied in four feet bundles for pick-up.

The street sweeper is scheduled for April 21, and the leaf machine is also available that week. Please do not park on the road during the street cleaning.

**The NY State Burn Ban is in effect through mid-May and there is never any burning allowed within the village limits.**

**Water/Sewer Bills:** Any delinquent payments not received by April 30 will be included on village tax bills.

### **Applications for Building/Zoning Permits**

Please stop in the village office to meet with Bob Rhea, the code/zoning enforcement officer, if you are planning any type of building project or change of use. This includes roofs, sheds, fences, repairs, renovations, additions, demolitions, etc. He is available on Mondays and Thursdays from 1-4 and will help guide you through the process.

### **HISTORIAN'S CORNER**

In the middle of February, a man in CT called me to say that he had a ledger from an Aurora store with dates in 1811-1812, and would like to give it to the Village Historical Archives. Wow! Since he understandably preferred not to mail it, I met donor Steve Alger in Great Barrington MA five weeks later to receive the precious volume.

This proved to be really two books in one. The front of the ledger has the name Jonathan Swan, who lived at what is now the intersection of Court St and Cherry Ave. Swan was known to be one of the storekeepers in the young village. However, it's a second book as well: a scrapbook, with stories and travel pieces pasted in over the ledger entries over about the first third of the book. These stories, often of the edifying sort for children - such as the horrible consequences of throwing a lit Roman candle at another child - date probably to the 1850s.

When the 1811 entries pick up unobstructed, they are filled with familiar local names. Anyone who has read the late Temple Hollcroft's little book about Aurora (collected from his pieces for the Wells College Alumnae News in the 1950s) will recognize a great many of them as belonging to the early settlement era. For example, Roswell Towsley (builder of the steam mill, now in ruins behind the Inn) appears on almost every page. There are a couple of notations mentioning African-American families, who had arrived enslaved. One, a boy, was sent to the store on errands; another, a freed man, became a householder in his own right. What various people bought regularly or on occasion is a fascinating study: Cornelius Cuyler painted his house that year, and Jonathan Richmond's purchase of "callico" likely meant a new dress for his wife. It's a story just beginning to be discovered. This is truly a treasure!

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

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

**Permit applications that require CPP, Planning Board, or ZBA review MUST be received by the code/zoning officer at least ten (10) days prior to a meeting for consideration of inclusion on the agenda.**

**Community Preservation Panel:** 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:** Fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., as needed

# **Fire Department Ambulance Fundraiser at the Wells Golf Club**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Kevin Fitzgerald is hosting a golf  
tournament to benefit the Aurora  
Volunteer Fire Department Ambulance  
Fund on June 7, 2025. Golf, games, food,  
beverages, and music. More info to  
come....**

