

2025 Clarence Budget Adopted

Following a public hearing, the Town of Clarence 2025 Budget was adopted by the Town Board on Wednesday, November 6th. During my tenure as supervisor, I have consistently adhered to the state-mandated tax cap, keeping the tax rate stable or reducing it each year. This year, due to reassessment, the general fund tax rate has been reduced by \$0.14 to \$0.59 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and the highway tax rate by \$0.23 to \$0.78 per \$1,000. All other special district tax rates have also been lowered. With the average home value now exceeding \$400,000, most residents will see a town tax of around \$250.

I refuse to play along with the gimmicks that many other politicians do, of announcing lower taxes, hoping you wouldn't notice that government tax collection is at an all-time high due to assessments and inflation.

The Town Board remains committed to fiscally responsible governance. I'm proud that, while other towns have raised taxes significantly, Clarence has maintained one of the lowest rates in Erie County without cutting services despite rising costs. The 2025 budget includes continued improvements to our parks, especially at Fogelsonger, and plans for a new recreation building in Clarence Center. Thank you to our Department Heads and Fire Companies for working with me on the 2025 budget.

As in previous years, there will be no pay increase for Town Board members, including myself.

Highway Superintendent James Dussing's teams are working six days a week on the final leaf pickup. The Highway Department has completed two rounds of leaf collection and is now doing the last brush pickup. We remind residents that placing leaves on the street is against town code and poses a safety risk for pedestrians.

We extend our gratitude to American Legion Post 838 and the Clarence Rotary Club for hosting the annual Veterans Day events. The Rotary Club changed their event this year to combine efforts with the Clarence Citizens for Veterans to hold a flag retirement ceremony as part of this meaningful event.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all veterans for their dedication, bravery, and sacrifices in service to our country. Your commitment to defending our freedoms and protecting our way of life is truly inspiring. Today, and every day, we honor and thank you for the immeasurable contributions you've made to keep our nation safe. Your service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

I would also like to thank all of the Veterans for their service to this country, with a special thank you to my son-in-law, Adam, for serving in the United States Marine Corps, which included combat tours in Afghanistan. The Clarence Veterans Memorial is one of the most

important features of our town, as we will forever honor all the Veterans that have been a part of the Clarence Community in some capacity.

Lastly, we mourn the loss of Flora Leamer, a beloved Clarence resident and dedicated community servant. Flora attended every major town event, capturing and sharing moments for the community. She and her husband, John, also meticulously maintained a calendar of events for Clarence and Newstead. Her tireless dedication to our town will be deeply missed. Please keep John and her family in your thoughts.

Wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving filled with family, friends, and gratitude.