

**BUDGET DISCUSSION TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**September 24, 2025**

A Budget Discussion Meeting of the Lansing Town Board was held at the Town Hall Board Room, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY, and streamed live on YouTube on the above date at 6:34 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Ruth Groff, Supervisor, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Roll call by Jessica L. Hall, Deputy Town Clerk, showed the following to be

**PRESENT:**

Judy Drake, Councilperson	Laurie Hemmings, Councilperson
Christine Montague, Councilperson	Joseph Wetmore, Councilperson
Ruth Groff, Supervisor	

**ABSENT:** No one absent

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mary Ellen Albrecht, Bookkeeper, Jennifer Schenck, Accountant, Mike Sigler, Tompkins County Legislature, Frank White, Bob Campbell, Michael Parkes, Dave Emmi, Doug Nemes, Diane Marabella, John Marabella, Shawn Wilczynski, Kelly Gavitt, Diane Kinne, Scott Hicks, James Spencer, Lisa Lincoln, Mark Zuss, Kate Heath, Chris Pettograsso, Tracey Houck, Margo Hittleman, Richard Lansdowne, Lynn Landon, Adam Buck, Dennis Griffin, Pete Meskill, Jeannie Kirby, Keith Kirby, Donna Nygren, Ryan Weese, Lauren Baker, Cory Baker, Tom Butler, Eric Eisenhut, Christine Eisenhut, Aaron Thompson, Michelle Uhl Stark, Bert Stark Jr, Lance Clark, John Stevens, Kellea Bauda, Joe Lovejoy, Dave Hatfield, Nolan Hatfield, Sandy Sweazey, Michael Sweazey, Laurie Moskow, Jeff Moskow, Melanie Towner, Frank Towner, Becky Barrows, Jamie Jones, Siobhan Hull, Edin Kelly, Dave Buck, Sabrina Johnston, Joe Wilkes, Doug Boles, Priya Sirohi, Lucas Wentworth, Agatha Dirosa, Dorota Kossawska, Leigh Miller, Christopher Miller, Nathaniel Taylor, Adam Miuspaugh, Amelia Safi, Ed Johnson, Kristin Maushart, Darin Buck, James Gray, Patrick Nedrow, Serena Adams, Roy Johnson, Jamie Perkins, Matt Nesbitt, Elissa Badique, Sarah Lounsbery, Hilary Lambert, Bill Klepack, Donald Schiedec, Lou and Mo Reycroft, Gary Sloan, Martin Conlon, Rebecca Frye, Corey McNaughton, Peggy Coleman, Kurt Anderson, Melkon Babigian, Amy Newman, Harold Mills, Carl Schimmelfing, Heather Fowler, Mitch McMillen, Andy Sciaraba Jr., Andy Sciaraba Sr., Pamela Wiley, Philip Branch, Sean Farrell, Jerry Goodenough and a few other attendees

Supervisor Ruth Groff reviewed the proper etiquette of a public hearing and stated due to the volume of comments received in a short amount of time, the Town Board would be postponing the vote on the moratorium until the October Town Board meeting to ensure thoughtful consideration of all comments. She read the following timeline:

**From the Town Supervisor's Office**  
**Timeline of Process Leading to Proposed Moratorium**

1. **2018:** The town adopted a Comprehensive Plan. Talks began shortly after to discuss updating the zoning to coincide with this new plan.
2. **2019:** The Town Board passed Resolution 19-49, creating a Conservation Advisory Council.
3. **2021:** The Town Board adopted the Natural Resources Inventory and Scenic Resources Inventory.
4. **2022:** The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan was adopted
5. **2023:**
  - i. The RA zoning district was split into two distinct districts, the RA and the AG, to better align zoning with land use goals.
  - ii. As work continued to revise additional districts, it was determined that updating one district at a time was inefficient and slow.
  - iii. A budget proposal of \$100,000 to hire a consultant for a total zoning rewrite was declined due to lack of funding.
6. **2024:**
  - i. The Open Space Conservation Plan, a product of the Conservation Advisory Council, was approved

- ii. The Town applied for the New York Department of State Smart Growth Community Planning Zoning Grant for the purpose of a full rewrite of the zoning code.
7. **2025:**
- i. On February 3, the Town received acknowledgement from the state that we had been awarded the Smart Growth Community grant of \$100,000 for a zoning rewrite.
  - ii. February 18, Colliers presented to the town the Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Gap Analysis
  - iii. April 22, representatives from the state met with the Town Supervisor, the Director of Planning, and the Deputy Supervisor, to review all aspects of the contract, including reporting requirements.
  - iv. April 28, a resolution was passed authorizing the Town of Lansing Supervisor to sign the contract for the \$100,000 grant.
  - v. One of the requirements of the grant contract was for the town to create a Zoning Advisory Committee (“ZAC”). A request for applications from the community for this committee was posted and all applicants were accepted and appointed at the August Board meeting.
  - vi. An RFP was issued in August to procure a consultant for the zoning rewrite.
  - vii. September 2, the initial meeting of the ZAC was held.
  - viii. At the September 17 Board meeting, Resolution 25-109 awarded the bid to Colliers Engineering & Design for consulting services for the comprehensive zoning rewrite project.
  - ix. At the September 17 meeting, now that the rewrite process is officially underway, the Board discussed whether to move forward with a proposed moratorium.

**MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED LOCAL LAW # 7 OF 2025 ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON LAND USE DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS AND APPROVALS AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE DAYS**

Councilperson Joseph Wetmore, moved to **OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED LOCAL LAW # 7 OF 2025 ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON LAND USE DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS AND APPROVALS AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE DAYS** at 6:45pm.

Councilperson Laurie Hemmings seconded the motion.

All in Favor – 5

Opposed – 0

The written comments received prior to the public hearing were included in the public packet posted on the website and as a handout at the meeting. They are also available by contacting the Town Clerk’s Office.

Many speakers voiced opinions both for and against the moratorium.

Those opposing the moratorium emphasized economic, employment, and technical details, stating environmental concerns were based on misinformation. The moratorium was also criticized as being inappropriate and unwarranted, and deemed too broad. Some criticized the Board for insufficient public notice for such a critical decision.

Those in favor of the moratorium emphasized the need to align with zoning and planning goals, environmental and resource protection, public participation, and economic preservation. Some raised concerns that 365 days might not be sufficient time to complete the zoning amendments.

Many comments during the public hearing revolved around a proposed data center project, although it was not the intended subject of the public hearing. There were strong opinions both for and against the project itself.

**MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING**

All persons desiring to be heard, having been heard, Councilperson Joseph Wetmore, moved to **CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED LOCAL LAW # 7 OF 2025 ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON LAND USE DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS AND APPROVALS AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE DAYS** at 8:19 pm.

Councilperson Laurie Hemmings seconded the motion.

All in Favor – 5

Opposed – 0

The Town Board tabled the vote on the proposed local law.

A short break was taken at 8:23 pm and the meeting resumed at 8:30pm.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING CONSOLIDATED ABSTRACT # 109**

**RESOLUTION 25-116**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING CONSOLIDATED ABSTRACT # 109**

The bills were reviewed by Councilperson Joseph Wetmore and Councilperson Judy Drake. The Bookkeeper or the Accountant is hereby authorized to pay the following bills.

**CONSOLIDATED ABSTRACT # 109**

TOWN OF LANSING				
Abstract # 109				09/18/2025
Summary by Fund				15:18:49
Code	Fund	Prepays	Unpays	Totals
HG	DPW FACILITY PROJECT		24,229.75	24,229.75
<b>Total:</b>			<b>24,229.75</b>	<b>24,229.75</b>

The question of the adoption of such proposed Resolution was duly motioned by Councilperson Judy Drake, duly seconded by Councilperson Joseph Wetmore, and put to a roll call vote with the following results:

Councilperson Judy Drake – Aye

Councilperson Laurie Hemmings – Aye

Councilperson Christine Montague – Aye

Councilperson Joseph Wetmore – Aye

Supervisor Ruth Groff – Aye

Accordingly, the foregoing Resolution was approved, carried, and duly adopted on September 24, 2025.

**2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

**2026 Tax Levy and Fiscal Projections**

- The current calculation for the overall tax levy is a 23% increase.
- Expenses are increasing at a faster rate than income, creating a structural challenge.
- Fund Balance Requirements:
  - A portion of the tax increase is intended to bring fund balances closer to the Town’s internal policy thresholds. Specifically for the A fund, the internal goal is 25% and at the time of the meeting, it was projected to be at 18.72%.
- Personnel Costs:

- Salaries, wages and benefits are rising by approximately 10% to 12% annually.
  - A new wage classification structure was approved this year to be in effect for 2026. It includes a 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).
  - Health insurance premiums are projected to increase by 18%.
    - The Town will be offering a new, lower-cost plan to employees. It could lead to a premium decrease for the Town. It should be noted that the impact is not yet known.
  - Departments have requested new staff positions
- Financial Obligations for DPW facility:
  - 2026 payments are estimated to be approximately \$600,000
  - 2027 estimated payments are \$1.2 million
- It was mentioned that failing to raise taxes sufficiently in prior years has put the Town in a difficult position this year.

It should be noted these figures are preliminary estimates that could change as the Board continues to finalize the budget.

#### Revenue from Host Community Agreements (HCA)

There was discussion regarding the inclusion of anticipated revenue from HCAs.

- Anticipated revenue from these agreements cannot be officially included in the budget until firm, signed documentation is received. This is to comply with requirements from the NYS Comptroller's Office.
- Status of specific agreements:
  - Delaware River Solar: Town is anticipated to receive \$280,000.
  - Yellow Barn Solar: Negotiations are still ongoing.
- The board also discussed if funding is not in the budget, then the associated projects would be removed from the budget.

#### Posting of Budget

The Board discussed ways to assist the public with understanding the budget and improve accessibility.

- Once the budget moves to preliminary it will be posted online.
- A pdf of the excel spreadsheet should be posted as a supporting document to the budget. It should be watermarked "preliminary" or "draft".
- It would be beneficial to the public to post any supporting budget documentation to help them understand the budget and how tax money is spent.
- Documents should be posted under "Latest News" on the Town's website.

#### Scheduling Special Budget Meeting

- Board members expressed concern about combining the budget discussion with a public hearing on the proposed land-use moratorium.
- Department heads should be present to answer questions regarding their budgets, capital projects, and requests for new staff positions.
- Meeting should be held during regular business hours to better accommodate staff.
- Supervisor Ruth Groff was tasked with checking staff availability before coordinating with board members.

The public hearings for the preliminary budget and special districts will be held on the first Wednesday of November.

All Town Board members agreed to the budget changes presented by the Bookkeeper and Accountant.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING**

Councilperson Judy Drake moved to **ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:20 PM.**

Councilperson Laurie Hemmings seconded the motion.

All in Favor – 5                      Opposed - 0

Minutes taken and executed by the Deputy Town Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica L. Hall  
Deputy Town Clerk