



State of the County Address

Matt B. Murell, Chairman

A LIFE OF A TOWN SUPERVISOR

1-28-25 PART 1

There was once a town supervisor on vacation hundreds of miles from home when, as he drove along, his car radio brought news that a major explosion in his hometown had occurred and decimated part of a major roadway.

Okay, while that may be considered an extreme example, on any given day, something of that magnitude right on down to a dispute over a wayward dog might greet a town supervisor. There's simply no way to know how complex or mundane the events of the day might be. During the day, the position might involve nothing more than paperwork, yet two o'clock in the morning may bring a phone call of an emergency situation. Regardless, what townspeople like to know is that someone who lives among them, and knows the lay of the land, so to speak, is in there fighting for them.

In part two of this two-part series, I'll focus on the duties of a supervisor when leaving his or her town and heading for the county office building in Hudson, where the county Board of Supervisors conducts much of its business. This time, in part one, I'll look at the town or city side of a supervisor's life.

At times, I've heard a new supervisor comment on the enormous scope of duties that come with their new position. All new supervisors are provided with training opportunities through the New York State Association and the state comptroller's office. Nonetheless, all the training in the world can't possibly prepare a new supervisor for all contingencies that may arise. Experience, as they say, is a great teacher.

On the town level, the supervisor serves as the day-to-day manager, which brings with it all the responsibilities a small business might face, and fiscal officer, which brings with it reporting requirements to the state. The town supervisor is also, under general municipal law, the town budget officer unless those duties are otherwise assigned. Further, some towns have certain infrastructure, such as a water or sewer district, or both, which require time and attention on the part of the supervisor. One thing is for sure, one cannot properly perform the duties of a town supervisor alone, but as the saying goes, "The buck stops here."

However, it's not at all a one person show. The supervisor is one of five serving on a town board, where at least once monthly legislation is entertained and managerial decisions may come under review. The supervisor may or may not have a hand in drafting this legislation.

When all is said and done, the position of town supervisor is frequently rewarding and a fascinating learning experience, while it also comes with its frustrating moments. Almost every day, it seems, something new comes along. But there's one thing is for certain: the position leaves no time for boredom.

Above all, it is an honor to serve the public in this capacity.

This is part one of a two-part series.