



**Town of Fishkill**  
Office of the Town Supervisor

# State of the Town Presentation

## Town of Fishkill

Town Supervisor Ozzy Albra  
May 24, 2023



The Town's statue of Chief Daniel Nimham was dedicated in 2022, after two years of collaboration between Supervisor Albra and a sculptor who completed this stunning piece of art paying homage to Fishkill's native son and Revolutionary War hero.

**Visit [www.fishkill-ny.gov](http://www.fishkill-ny.gov) to sign up for news and updates in your inbox!**

Ozzy Albra, Town Supervisor  
(845) 831-7800 ext. 3309  
(845) 831-6040 Fax  
[supervisor@fishkill-ny.gov](mailto:supervisor@fishkill-ny.gov)

Fishkill Town Hall  
807 Route 52  
Fishkill, NY, 12524  
[www.fishkill-ny.gov](http://www.fishkill-ny.gov)



## Town of Fishkill

### Office of the Town Supervisor

---

May 24, 2023

Dear Town of Fishkill Resident,

I am proud to present to you the 2023 State of the Town Presentation. This presentation is meant to highlight the incredible progress our Town has achieved in recent years, the talented and dedicated staff and officials who do this work, and the ways we are working to make Fishkill a place residents can be proud to live, now and for generations to come.

We have seen many new residents in Fishkill in the past few years, so in this presentation you'll find helpful information about the history of our Town, our Town government and officials, as well as an overview of our offices, services, programs and park spaces. In this presentation, we celebrate a few of the Town's many accomplishments in recent years, including an update to our Comprehensive Plan and work done to prevent overdevelopment, address our traffic issues, improve our water infrastructure and protect our water resources.

I discuss the many changes to Town laws we have adopted in recent years, changes designed to give power to the residents, by taking power away from developers who effectively controlled the Town for decades and creating a series of protections to make sure your Town government prioritizes you, the residents, and your quality of life.

I'm also happy to report on the strong financial position of the Town of Fishkill, and the hard work and responsible practices which go into maintaining our financial strength, as well as provide insight into the practices which shape our Town Budget for 2023 and our commitment to dealing honestly about property assessments and your taxes.

Of course, progress seldom comes without a fight. I touch on some of the opposition to the progress we've made, and I'm proud to report that the Town has been protecting its residents despite the threat of lawsuits by developers who want to get their way – all while reducing the cost of our legal expenses and insurance claims.

Lastly, I talk about our focus on serving you, the citizens of Fishkill, and I look to the future. The work we do is intended to foster a strong sense of community identity and pride for residents, making Fishkill a place we can all be proud of.

I am proud to be able to report to you that the State of the Town of Fishkill is the best it has ever been. But I want to hear from you! My door at Town Hall is always open, and you can contact me at the email or phone number below at any time, and my office will assist.

God Bless the Town of Fishkill!

Regards,

Ozzy Albra, Town Supervisor

---

Ozzy Albra, Town Supervisor  
(845) 831-7800 ext. 3309  
(845) 831-6040 Fax  
supervisor@fishkill-ny.gov

---

Fishkill Town Hall  
807 Route 52  
Fishkill, NY, 12524  
www.fishkill-ny.gov



## Town of Fishkill

### Office of the Town Supervisor

---

#### State of the Town Address – May 24, 2023

Hello and welcome Fishkill residents, to the 2023 Town of Fishkill State of the Town, at my home in Fishkill, New York. I'm Ozzy Albra, the Town Supervisor, and I'd like to reintroduce myself to the residents. In the past four years we've seen many new residents come to the Town, so I'd like to give you a little update on who I am.

I'm married for over 20 years and I have four kids. I grew up locally in Beacon and graduated from Beacon High School in 1984. I served in the United States Army honorably. I'm a longtime resident of Fishkill, I moved here in 1997, and I've taken pride in our community ever since.

I began attending Town Board meetings as an engaged citizen back in 2002. By the time I was elected Supervisor, I had already been to more than 400 town meetings. This turned out to be very helpful as I learned a lot about the role of the Town Supervisor by attending these meetings.

I'd like to give the new residents an opportunity to learn a little about the history of the Town of Fishkill. Fishkill belonged to the Wappinger people and it was purchased by the Dutch and eventually settled by the English.

Fishkill is proud Constitutional Town. By that, I am referring to the New York State Constitution, which was printed right here in Fishkill in 1777. Here today, I know everyone watching this joins me in reaffirming our commitment to the U.S. Constitution and our State Constitution as well.

Fishkill is also a historic community, rich with many sites of interest. We have the First Reformed Church and Trinity Church, we have the Van Wyck Homestead and Fishkill Supply Depot, we have the Underground Railroad, the Mount Gulian Historic Site, the Rombout Rural Cemetery, and many many more points of historical importance. This history is a source of great community pride, and something the Town has worked hard in recent years to preserve and promote.

The history of the Town government is something that the people should know. They ask me – “What is a Town Supervisor?” The Town Supervisor is the person who runs the day-to-day operations of the Town of Fishkill, the equivalent of a mayor in a City or Village. We have four Councilpersons: Louise Daniele, John Forman, Carmine Istvan and Brian Wrye. I have the privilege of serving with them, as well as former Councilmembers Jackie Bardini, Ori Brachfeld, Joe Buono and Kenya Gadsden.

Our Town Clerk, Becki Tompkins, has been great – she is an extreme asset. Finally, after a run of more than 60 years, our Town Highway Superintendent Glenn Scofield, Sr., will be retiring. His public service is unparalleled. I thank you, Mr. Scofield, for your service to the citizens of the Town of Fishkill. He will be replaced by Carmine Istvan, and I wish Carmine the best in that role.

Town Justices Harold Epstein and Robert Rahemba will both be retiring this year, so next year you will have two new Town justices for the first time in a long time.

One of the first things I decided to do when I was elected was to pass a term limit law. Town Councilpersons and the Town Supervisor can only serve two four-year terms, whether its consecutive or separate, for a total of eight years. Less than 15 Towns in New York out of 900, have term limits

---

Ozzy Albra, Town Supervisor  
(845) 831-7800 ext. 3309  
(845) 831-6040 Fax  
supervisor@fishkill-ny.gov

---

Fishkill Town Hall  
807 Route 52  
Fishkill, NY, 12524  
www.fishkill-ny.gov

and I think it's the thing to do. It stops career politicians, it ends nepotism and encourages fresh ideas and citizen participation. This law needs to be done at the state and the national level as well.

Before I took office, this Town for decades was run by the developers for the developers. Our Town resources were spent to accommodate developers. My policy is to take the power away from the developers and return it to you, the residents of the Town of Fishkill. I invest our resources into our community to improve our services and enhance your quality of life. You'll see this approach in action as I talk to you about the things the Town has done under my leadership.

I'd like to give you all a general overview of our Town, starting with Town Hall. Town Hall is the central office space, and contains most of the Town Departments.

When you enter our Town Hall lobby, the first thing you will see is our court room and our Justice Court offices. These offices are staffed by our dedicated Court Clerks, who can assist you with responding to tickets, paying fines and answering questions related to Town Court.

As you move through the lobby to the main Town Hall area, you'll see the office of our Town Clerk and Town Tax Receiver. The Clerk is the busiest person in Town Hall, and provides countless services to residents, and I'll name just a few:

- Dog licenses
- Marriage licenses
- Birth and Death certificates
- Genealogical research
- Hunting and fishing permits

And SO Much More. Visit our Town Website to see all the ways the Town Clerk can serve you.

Also in Town Hall is the office of our Town Assessor Christian Harkins. The Assessor's Office is responsible for maintaining our assessment roles, which calculate the value of properties in the Town, and which helps determine your tax bill. The Assessor is happy to meet with residents to discuss questions about their property assessment and assist in enrolling for tax exemptions which can save you money.

Next to the Assessor's Office are the Planning, Zoning, Fire and Building Offices. These offices process applications for building permits, site plans, zoning variances and other functions related to code enforcement, and house our Building Inspectors Joel Petrus and Rich Travis, and our Fire Inspector Steve Van Buren.

These offices are also utilized by our Town Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, which are volunteer boards made up of dedicated citizens who care about our Town.

One of the most important offices in Town Hall is our Finance Office, run by our Town Comptroller Sharon Mitchell. Sharon oversees the day-to-day finances of the Town, and her staff is responsible for the financial management of the Town. This work involves processing our accounts, managing payroll for Town employees, capital project and grant monitoring and financial reporting.

Sharon also plays a key role in preparing the annual Town budget, and I cannot stress to you enough how important Sharon and her staff are to the financial well-being of the Town.

The last office space in Town Hall is the office for the Town Supervisor and Town Board. I have a proud open-door policy, and if you ever have a question or concern, you are always invited to visit my office. Either myself or my assistant Greg Totino will be on hand to assist you.

Our office also has a designated space for Town Board members, and this is one thing I'm personally very proud of. Before I took office, our Town Board members were excluded from the day-to-day management of the Town. They had no office space in Town Hall, no computer or telephone, and very little access to information.

I believe in open government, and I want strong checks and balances, so one of my first directives was to create this office space, and I'm very pleased that our Town Board members use this space to handle Town business.

Having our Town Board members at Town Hall, seeing the work that we do on a daily basis, gives them a better understanding of the work we do every day, and gives me an added level of accountability. I like hearing their ideas and often, their suggestions give me a new perspective or initiative, and that's what cooperation is all about.

One of my favorite perks as Town Supervisor, is that I also serve as Town marriage officer. This means that I can officiate wedding ceremonies. This is a service I provide free of charge. Seeing the joy on the faces of two people saying "I Do" is payment enough. So far I've performed more than 30 weddings at Town Hall, some indoors and some outside in our beautiful atrium that's tended to by the ladies of the Verplanck Garden Club. If you are a Fishkill resident interested in getting married at Town Hall, call my office and we will set up an appointment for you!

But the Town of Fishkill doesn't end at Town Hall. Directly next door to Town Hall is our Police Station, where the Town of Fishkill Police Department is located. Our department is very unique, in that it provides 24/7 service to the residents of Fishkill, but it is staffed by part-time officers. These dedicated men and women are led by our Police Chief Keith Dworkin, who I appointed along with the Town Board in 2020.

Chief Dworkin has overseen some great initiatives at the Police Department, including our growing Community Policing unit, our R U Okay service to check on senior citizens, the Special Needs Assistance Program, and the Town's participation in the Dutchess County Drug Task Force. Most importantly, Chief Dworkin shares my vision for accreditation, which will make our police department one of the premier agencies in New York State.

In 2021, the Town took part in New York State Police Reform, and here at the Town we had great discussions and adopted a plan to further our goal of running a police department where everyone is treated equally and fairly at all times, and everyone receives due process, both the public and our police officers.

Next to our Police Station is our Recreation and Senior Center. Our Rec Department is run by Jason Maietta. Jay began working for the Town as a camp counselor as a teenager, and now he oversees the entire department, delivering excellent programming for seniors, children and families.

The senior center hosts countless events and weekly activities for seniors, organizes special trips and gives seniors access to community, entertainment and special services. Our youth programming

includes a summer camp, after school program, basketball program and countless other activities at the Recreation Center and other Town parks.

Speaking of parks, the Town of Fishkill is home to several, and I am so proud of the fantastic investment we are making into our park spaces.

Perhaps the most well-known Town Park is Geering Park, located near the intersection of Route 52 and I-84. This park is home to sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds and a large pavilion where events are held.

We also have Doug Phillips Park on Route 52 near the Arrowhead, which has Little League fields and is home to the Friendly Paws Dog Park and is soon to be the home of some new and improved park space, including a new sensory park which is set to be completed this summer. That project was led by Councilmembers Louise Daniele and Carmine Istvan, and I applaud their work on this project to provide safe, inclusive play space for children of all abilities.

Shepherd Memorial Park is located on the other side of the Arrowhead on Route 82 near Brinckerhoff Elementary, and it is the primary park for our Little League program, featuring four ball fields, a playground area and a pavilion with a concession stand. The Town has performed major improvements to this park in the past couple of years, with improvements to the fields and fences, and I hope to see lights installed at this park in the next year or so.

We also have Dutchess Park Lake. This is located just down the road from Shepherd Park, and has a wonderful lake. Recently the Town undertook some beautification at Dutchess Park Lake, treating algae and setting up a fountain aerator to keep the lake looking beautiful. If you've seen the swans there, you'll know this was a successful effort.

Another exciting park space in the Town is Jean Van Pelt Park. This park is located on Washington Avenue, and is about to get bigger. What do I mean by that? Well, as many of you know, the Town worked with Dutchess County to secure a new bridge at Washington Avenue, and when this project is complete, the old bridge will be taken down and that will open up new space at Jean Van Pelt Park for the Town to utilize, and I'm sure we will find excellent ways to do so.

We also have Camp Foster, where the Town has undertaken work to beautify this natural space and install a foot bridge for walking, and we will be installing an aerator at a lake at this park also.

All of these park spaces are overseen by our hardworking parks director Brandon Knapp. Brandon and his team also handle our Town Buildings and grounds. If you've been to one of our Town parks and you see the beauty, you have Brandon and his crew to thank. Well done, Brandon.

Investing in our park spaces has been huge priority for this administration. Doing so improves the recreational opportunity for families and children, and having functional, beautiful spaces to go helps foster community pride.

For so many years, Fishkill had no real identity. We have changed that, by investing in our parks, our open space, and in other initiatives that highlight our Town. I'd like to briefly mention 2.

Last year, the Town dedicated a statue of Chief Daniel Nimham, a native son of Fishkill, a tribal leader of the Wappinger people, and a Revolutionary War combat veteran who was killed in battle. This statue was a passion project of mine since taking office, and I thank the Town Board for their support

in making it a reality. This statue helps to shine a spotlight on our incredible local history and I can't begin to tell you how many people have stopped me at Town Hall or around Town to tell me how much they love the statue, which is very gratifying.

Second, I'd like to talk about the banners you have seen around Town on Route 52. These are the Hometown Heroes banners. Each banner is hung to honor a Fishkill veteran who served our nation in uniform. These banners honor men and women who served in every major military theatre since World War II, in every branch of the military. Some residents got a banner for a deceased parent, some for a sibling or spouse, but all of the families who see a loved one on these banners are touched and proud.

As a veteran who has a banner this year, I can't say enough about this program, and I want to give special thanks to Councilmember Louise Daniele for spearheading this program, Councilman Carmine Istvan for his coordination, my assistant Greg for his work on all the photos veterans brought in, Sharon and Olympia from the Finance Office, banner printer Roy Bartels, and Lee's Tree Service for making this wonderful program possible.

And of course, I salute all my brothers and sisters in arms who are honored with these banners.

Lastly, we have our Highway Department. Highway operates out of a facility adjacent to Geering Park. As I mentioned, our Superintendent is Glenn Scofield, and his staff are responsible for maintaining our Town roadways, with paving, repairs, snow plowing, and other highway maintenance tasks. We're blessed to have very dedicated staff at Highway, who are always on hand during a snowstorm to clear the roads, and during summer storms to clean up any debris.

We built a new salt shed at the Highway Department. I know it doesn't sound glamorous, but it needed to be done. We also built a gas station for Town vehicles at the same time. Next we are building an additional garage for our vehicles, and we are doing this ourselves in-house, saving us at least \$500,000. Once done we're going to be able to move space around at the Town Highway Department, so what we are going to do is put big dumpsters in the Highway Department and let the citizens of Fishkill use them Monday to Friday during business hours, where you can bring stuff and leave it there in the dumpsters. If that works out and it's not abused, that's something we can do permanently.

I know I've said it already, but it bears repeating – thank you Glenn Scofield for your lifetime of dedication to our community. Others will succeed you, but no one can ever replace you.

For the first time since 2009, the Town has adopted an update to our Comprehensive Plan. This is a master document that spells out the Town's vision for the future. We had a Comprehensive Plan Committee, comprising more than a dozen Town residents, consultants, employees and officials. It was our first bipartisan Comprehensive Plan ever. I'd like to thank our Planner, Liz Axelson, who was the lead author, Drake Loeb for providing legal counsel, Town videographer Pete Skorewicz who filmed the meetings, Councilmen John Forman and Brian Wrye who served as liaisons to this process, former Councilmembers Jackie Bardini and Kenya Gadsden, and a special thanks to my secretary Greg Totino who served as secretary and webmaster.

The Comprehensive Plan reflects the priorities of the residents of the Town of Fishkill. We sent out a survey with hundreds of responses. Residents' top priorities reflect my own agenda as Town Supervisor. The Comprehensive Plan and the survey touched on three main issues: overdevelopment, traffic and water.

One of the main concerns the residents of Fishkill have conveyed to me is overdevelopment. It strains our infrastructure, increases traffic, puts our water in jeopardy and crowds our schools. The number one case I'd like to refer to is the Rolling Hills case, which was situated in the area of Route 9D just north of the Beacon/Newburgh Bridge.

One of the things which really bothered me about this Rolling Hills case is that my predecessor wanted to sell Town-owned land to the developer without a public vote. One of the first things we did after we passed term limits was to get the Town Board together to vote to make any Town-owned land that is to be sold, go to a public vote and let the citizens of the Town of Fishkill vote on that.

That has happened, so when any Supervisor or Town Board in the future, the residents of the Town of Fishkill will have the final determination whether land should be sold or not. This is a dramatic shift in the balance of power. Where your Town Board used to work for the developers, we've now given you the veto power in these types of cases.

The Town Board, under my direction, also closed loopholes and strengthened our zoning provisions under Chapter 150 of our Town Code. We made it more difficult for developers to take advantage of the citizens of the Town of Fishkill. And, importantly, we cut provisions which allowed not-for-profits to use the zoning laws to their advantage. As you all know, a few years ago a not-for-profit came to the Town of Fishkill and took about \$50,000,000 off the tax rolls, or about 2% of our value, and that burden went to our tax payers. That's not going to happen anymore.

It's very important to understand that it's just a minor change of the law which protects you, the citizens of the Town of Fishkill.

Another issue we discussed at Town Board meetings was the protection of our water and our aquifer. So under Chapter 146 regarding water, we passed an Aquifer Protection Act, and on top of that the state was impressed with how we were operating and they allowed us into the DWSP2 program. The State came down and reviewed our aquifer and our well fields, and gave us a bunch of ideas to protect our water sources. And that's exactly what we're going to do and I look forward to implementing that in the next year.

One of the most important things the Town has done under my leadership is change the way our Public Hearings and our meetings were set at Town Hall. We increased Public Hearing notification requirements for the Town Board.

As you know, I attended more than Town Board 400 meetings before I became Town Supervisor, and the process was very limited for participation. Your public comment period was at the end of the meeting. So if you came in at 7:00 at night, you wouldn't have the opportunity to speak until perhaps 9:00 at night. We changed the agenda to have this public privilege of the floor for general town items right at the beginning of the meeting. So if the meeting starts at 7:00 you're able to talk about any issue related to the Town around 7:10. We also extended this period at the end of the meeting so you can ask questions about items on the agenda.

In addition to that the Town also eliminated the three-minute gag rule for public comments. If you watch our Town Board meetings today, there is no time limit. You can speak as long as you want as long as it's relevant. That process has even bled into the Planning Board, where the Planning Board now allows public comment for the citizens when a project is about to begin, for the first time in the history of the Town of Fishkill.



Another concern residents have had over the past few years was abandoned properties and distressed properties. We have addressed those for the first time in Fishkill history. This Town Board is the first Town Board to actually enforce the law. We have five properties that were addressed: two were knocked down, three came into compliance and were saved, and are no longer derelict in the Town of Fishkill.

One of these abandoned properties is the CubeSmart property at the intersection of Route 82 and 52. That issue is being addressed as we speak. There is a new developer before the Planning Board right now, and we should have that property moving forward to be built within the six-month period.

Another huge concern for the citizens of Fishkill, of course, has been traffic. I hear it all the time from residents. So we've kept the situation from getting worse and we've been working to improve your traffic situation.

I already mentioned the new Washington Avenue bridge, which is an excellent benefit to the residents. But we aren't stopping there. The second concern for residents is the area of the 9D corridor and I-84 overpass in the area of the bridge. There's going to be extra turn lanes everywhere, and there is talk about making a northbound ramp right before that interchange. I think that's going to be a great solution to the problem and I'm looking forward to getting that done.

While the residents understand that overdevelopment and traffic is a huge concern, my biggest concern is our water. Our water is our number one resource. We've been blessed to have a good water source, and we need to protect it. There is a finite amount of water supply and the Town is approaching its limit of responsible usage.

The Town generally has good water infrastructure, but it has to deal with issues occasionally. Most common issues are faults with water systems installed by the developer to the benefit of the developer, which the Town has since taken over and now the taxpayers pay for. We have issues with the Brinckerhoff Water District. Years ago, the developer walked away from it. The Town is not doing any favors for developers anymore. We hold the developers responsible for the water and sewer infrastructure they install.

Recently, we collected a \$350,000 settlement from Toll Brothers before agreeing to take over their water and sewer systems. Prior to my being in office, residents in that district on Merritt Boulevard were very concerned that they were going to have to pay this water bill. I was not going to let that happen. The residents should not have to pay for what the developers use, and Toll Brothers paid that settlement. Additionally, they repaired two sewer lines, one which they paid for, and a second where they reimbursed the homeowners association.

One responsible thing we have done is use ARPA money from the federal government to pay for our water and sewer projects. We purchased generators for booster stations in Beacon Hills. What was happening in Beacon Hills, is that when the power went out, they lost water. That's not going to happen anymore.

The Town is working on remediation of well issues for the Brinckerhoff and Snook well fields. For those who don't know, since 2007 the Snook Well Field, which is located by Route 9 and I-84, has been under Dutchess County Health Department remedial action. Late last year we were able to get that off the remedial action list after almost a 15-year period. I'm proud that the Town Board was able to accomplish that and comply with the Health Department orders. This overall project cost about

\$50,000 and it took some water calculations and bigger mixers as we blend some water with the Village of Fishkill to keep our chloride levels lower in that district.

The Town Board is also working on a connection between the Brinkerhoff and Merritt Park districts for emergency backup and storage. My predecessor left me with a \$5.7 million plan to do this, which the residents would pay for. I reviewed this and found \$5.7 to be too much, and unnecessary. Right now we have this before our Town Engineers at CPL Engineering, and we are trying to get this done for about \$1.1 million, also using ARPA money, with no cost to the residents of Fishkill.

As I touched on earlier, the biggest thing is to protect our water resources. One of the things the Town Board did in 2021 was adopt an Aquifer Protection Plan, and we got involved in the Drinking Water Source Protection Plan in 2022. This is the New York State program I referred to, which was free for us to participate in and in which we received more than \$140,000 in free engineering services from the State. Myself, Councilman Istvan and my secretary Greg Totino were heavily involved in this project, and the plan will protect our water resources.

We have high levels of chlorides in the water from road salt. We're going to identify the risks and potential contaminate sources, and we're going to develop solutions to reduce the salt levels on roads to bring these chloride levels down.

I want to talk to you about our Town finances.

The Town of Fishkill is in fantastic financial condition. In fact, last year, we received a Moody's credit rating increase, and now the Town of Fishkill is the strongest municipality in all of Dutchess County. This comes down to being responsible with tax dollars.

I've taken this responsibility very seriously in my office. I do not take any health benefits from the Town, which saves tax dollars. Additionally, my assistant Greg has saved the residents nearly half a million dollars. When I took office, there were two budgeted full-time positions for staff in my office: one for secretary, one for communications. Each of these included a salary and health benefits. Greg willingly and superbly assumed the job responsibilities of both jobs while taking only one salary, saving the residents more than \$100,000 per year in salary and benefits. Greg, I thank you for your excellent work wearing two different hats, and I know the residents thank you as well.

I'm also committed to being honest about your taxes. I made a pledge to always tell the truth about your assessments. Let me repeat that pledge for you now: I will never use increased assessed values to generate additional tax revenue.

And I will never lie to you. I won't tell you I cut your taxes if your tax bill isn't going down.

As assessed values increase, the tax rate decreases. That's how the math works out. A lot of politicians would tell you that you're getting a tax cut, because the rate went down. But it isn't a tax cut.

In my time in office, I have kept a conservative budget, and your tax bills have been relatively flat, increasing about \$10 to \$30 for most taxpayers. You deserve a Town that deals honestly when it comes to your tax dollars, and that's what I do. But, there's something I would like to touch on, and that's our budget.

Last year, our Councilmembers expressed a desire to be part of the process, and I welcomed that collaborative approach. Board members sat in on budget meetings, made suggestions about funding

and asked for certain items to be placed in the budget. I then assembled all their ideas and presented them a budget for the Town Board to review as a whole, and make adjustments until everyone was satisfied.

The entire board voted 5-0 to accept my initial budget, and then began the process of making changes. Most changes were changes I was fine with. In fact, I was fine with almost every change. But there was one change I wasn't okay with.

\$105,000 of money earmarked for our police department was removed from the budget after it was introduced. I'm not okay with that. In 2020, I was proud to be the first elected official in Dutchess County to promise never to defund the police. That's a promise I take seriously, and with our PBA contract expiring this year, we need to have the funds necessary to negotiate a new contract.

Unfortunately, the board voted to remove those funds, and I chose to vote against the budget. I stand by that decision.

Earlier this year, I also voted against a \$1.7 million bond issue. This was set to fund projects which weren't included in the 2023 budget we already adopted. I believe Town financial decisions should have public input. For instance, our annual budget goes through a public hearing, where we listen to the citizens' opinion on our budget. This bond issue was in the amount of \$1.7 million, and it was adopted by simple Resolution. No public hearing. No notification. No nothing.

I wasn't okay with that either. So I voted against it, but it passed. Sadly, this means that now you, the taxpayers, will pay interest on the money borrowed.

Residential development is strong in the Town of Fishkill. In the next five years, we have about 200 new residential units coming to the Town, with another 100 apartments maybe coming up near Town Hall. All of this is prescribed in Town law in its current zoning. We will not be giving any zoning changes for these developers to put up more homes per acre. There will be no more zoning changes or favors for developers – we will simply be enforcing the laws we already have on the books.

Now, we do have issues such as home and rental cost sustainability. Strong home and property values are a good thing, but the increases in rent and home costs have to be sustainable. We need to look to find ways to encourage growth but keep Fishkill affordable to live here.

Let's just look at the gentrification of the City of Beacon. We can't let what happened to the City of Beacon happen to the Town of Fishkill. We need to keep our children and our seniors here in the Town of Fishkill.

Getting rid of empty store fronts and filling vacancies have been a priority of mine. At the Hudson Valley Towne Centre alone, nearly 20,000 square feet of new businesses have filled vacant storefronts since I took office, including during the pandemic. I've cut the tax rate on businesses to encourage business growth and new business in the Town. We've got the Dutchess Mall redevelopment going on, for a possibility of a 350,000 sq.ft. warehouse. A dental implant manufacturing facility will be going into the old M&T Bank building on Route 52 near the town line, creating probably 75-150 jobs with an average salary of about \$75,000.

On the Route 9D corridor alone, we have 90,000 sq.ft. of new commercial development coming just south of the Heritage Financial Park. On Route 9 near the Putnam border, we have about another 40,000 sq.ft. of commercial space coming.

I oppose any new tax on businesses.

I'm working with a developer on waterfront development right on the Hudson River. This is going to be a beautiful asset to the Town of Fishkill. It's going to include about 100 luxury apartments or condos, and half the property is going to be dedicated to the Town so we can create a Town park with a marina and water access for the residents of the Town of Fishkill. I'm looking very forward to getting that done.

The Town has made great progress in the past few years, but that progress hasn't come without a fight. These big city developers and lawyers use dirty tactics in the Town of Fishkill. They've sued residents and our Planning Board members to get what they want. They hurt your families – they hurt my family – they hurt everyone in the Town of Fishkill.

For years, one of the main reasons developer got what they wanted is that they threatened to sue. When legal action and threats are a weapon for developers, lawsuits are the cost of doing business if you want to protect your citizens over the developers. I'm proud of my record defending the citizens in court. Anyone who brags about not getting sued, is bragging that they've never stood up to a developer – ever.

Before I took office, the average cost of litigation and insurance claims was about \$400,000 per year. Since I became Supervisor we dropped that to less than \$100,000 per year, per our insurance carrier and our Town Comptroller, while protecting you from developers.

Now how did we accomplish all this? A really important thing is that we stayed open during COVID. We continued giving services to the citizens of the Town of Fishkill and we did it in a safe way. We glassed-in Town Hall to protect the residents and the employees, we took temperatures, and we kept commerce going in the Town of Fishkill. It's important to remember we are financially strong because we kept Town Hall open. I'd like to thank Greg, my assistant, for writing our pandemic response plan.

I'm accessible. You can see me in the lobby almost every day. I come around just to talk to people. When you pay your water bill, when you pay your property tax, when you pay your school tax, when you come in for your assessment, I'm out there to hear from you whether it's good or bad, and I'm proud to be able to do that.

The Board members are now allowed to talk to Department Heads and the Town Attorney. And the reason is that I need to know what I'm doing as a checks and balances for myself, and it's good to know that another Board member can come to me and say "Hey Supervisor, I know where you're going with this, let's go this way." And nine out of ten times, it works. So the more our government is working together, it's better for you because it helps us build a better Fishkill.

We put our residents first, we focus on our quality of life – no longer the developers. Instead of spending money on resources which help developers make more money, we're putting our resources into our parks, recreation and historical preservation, to benefit the residents of the Town of Fishkill: very, very simple!

The most important thing is to thank the people who helped me get this all done: the Town employees, our Town boards, committees and consultants, our engineer CPL and our planner Liz Axelson, our Town Attorney Steve Gaba of Drake Loeb, Planning Attorney Dominic Cordisco of Drake Loeb,

Zoning Attorney David McCartney of Feerick Nugent McCartney, members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, and Town officials past and present.

But the biggest thanks and credit go to you, the residents of the Town of Fishkill, who gave me the great honor of serving as your Town Supervisor. I thank you very much.

What would the State of the Town be if I wasn't Town Supervisor? It would be a Town of the developers, by the developers, for the developers still. We'd be looking at close to 1,200 new residential units coming into the Town of Fishkill. Your water issues would be paid for by you, the residents of Fishkill, at a cost of between \$6 million and \$10 million, to accommodate the developers. You would have crowded schools, and possibly another school being built at a cost of between \$20 million and \$25 million that you, the residents of Fishkill, would be paying for. Commercial spaces would likely still be abandoned and decrepit. There's be a lack of community identity and a lower quality of life for you.

So I am happy to report to you that the State of the Town of Fishkill is the best that it has ever been.

Most people are happy but there are a few residents saying "Okay – what's next?" What's next for Fishkill?

The biggest threat we face are the developers who want to come back to take over the Town again. I will always protect the citizens from nefarious developers and their big city lawyers.

We need to prepare to work with the state for the connection between the Rombout and Dutchess Park sewer lines to improve your utilities. We have our waterfront development for the first time in Fishkill history.

One of my favorites is America 250 – the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States of America from the reading of the Declaration of Independence. Our goal for Fishkill is to be one of the more prominent observances nationwide.

We are going to implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, we are going to do aquifer protection and continue with the state on the DWSP2 program which secures our water resources, and we will continue historical preservation. The progress we have made will count for nothing if we don't enforce it. We are going to continue to invest in Town spaces to increase community identity, boost pride, and improve your quality of life. All these things we have done – our history, our parks, our identity – is to give you community pride to say "I'm happy to live in Fishkill." This is why we're doing this.

But these are just my ideas. While I speak to residents at Town Hall and through emails, I want to hear what you have to say. So beginning shortly, maybe in early June, I'm going to begin a listening tour, where personally myself, I'm going to come knock on your door, and I want to hear what your concerns are. What I think is a good idea may not be a good idea to you, and you might have a better idea!

So in a few weeks, you're going to see me come to your neighborhood, I'm going to stop in and say hello, and I want to hear from you, the residents, how we can make the Town of Fishkill even better.

I thank you for watching tonight. God bless you, and God bless all the citizens of the Town of Fishkill. Good night.