Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

September 15, 2026

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This Town Board work session about the proposed Fire District and Fire Protection Contract began at 6:00 PM and lasted 75 minutes at Town Hall. The meeting was led by Supervisor Jack Glenn. Council Members Rick Sturgess and Matt Cooper were present, along with Town Clerk Linda Gilbert. Council Members Kim Walker and Greta Cronin were not present. Five members of the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company and one resident attended, along with Bill VanGorder, from Town of Mohawk Fire District.

The meeting marked progress toward creating a Fire District, but the proposal remains in the planning and documentation stage and will require further Town Board action, Public Hearing input, and the applicable state approval process before it can be officially established. A contract will remain for 2027.

- Fire Protection Contract: The 2027 Fire Protection Contract will continue to be addressed separately from the district-formation discussion. The Board will address the contract during its budget work.
- Proposed Fire District: The Board and Fire Company representatives discussed moving toward creating a Fire District with an independent Board of Commissioners for financial and administrative oversight.
- Fire Company Assets & Finances: Representatives discussed transferring major fire apparatus, equipment, and potentially other assets to the new Fire District. The Fire Company Treasurer reported approximately $333,000 in cash assets, including about $200,000 designated for a Truck Reserve. Town Board members emphasized the need for written agreements protecting taxpayer-funded assets and ensuring adequate reserves for the Fire Company.
- Governance & Commissioners: The Fire Company will provide the Town with recommendations for candidates for the proposed five-member Fire District Commission. The Board stressed the importance of identifying and vetting commissioners before the Fire District is established.
- Public Information: Participants agreed that an informational open house / public meeting at the fire station will be valuable before the Town holds its formal public hearing. The goal is to explain the proposal, finances, equipment costs and anticipated changes and address misinformation.
- Future Service Areas: The discussion also covered potential future arrangements involving neighboring areas, including portions of Bleeker and Arietta, and the possibility of eventually expanding or consolidating fire protection services.
- Fiscal Responsibility: People praised the Fire Company for maintaining reserves, controlling expenses, and avoiding unnecessary borrowing. Maintaining that level of fiscal discipline was identified as an important consideration in establishing the new Fire District in the most affordable and trusted way possible.
- EMS Response: Fire officials acknowledged public confusion, and they clarified that the Fire Company continues responding to EMS calls when requested, including critical incidents such as cardiac arrests and other emergencies. Changes to Fulton County Dispatch protocols have reduced responses to lower-priority calls that do not require involvement of the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

Next Steps:

1. Fire Company representatives will prepare a written letter of intent outlining proposed asset transfers, financial arrangements and other expectations for creation of the fire district.
2. Fire Company will provide recommendations for prospective fire district commissioners.
3. The Town and Fire Company will consult with attorneys experienced in New York fire-district formation and review the required formation resolution and related documents.
4. The Fire Company will hold a public informational open house before the formal public hearing.
5. The Town will review holding a formal public hearing once the required documentation is prepared.
6. The fire protection contract and upcoming budget will be handled separately at another meeting.

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