

TOWN OF COEYMANS MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2026 6:00PM

The Town Board Meeting was held Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 6:00p.m. at 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena N.Y.

PRESENT: Stephen Donnelly, Supervisor
Michael J. Stott, Deputy Supervisor
Stephen J. Schmitt, Council Member
Patricia Grogan, Council Member

ALSO PRESENT: Candace McHugh, Town Clerk
Richard Reilly, Town Attorney
Michael Ravalli, Jr., Town Attorney

Supervisor Donnelly opened the meeting and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked that the record reflect all board members were present.

Approval of Minutes: The following minutes were approved:

- February 26, 2026 Town Board Meeting

Council member Donnelly made a motion to accept the minutes for February 26, 2026, Council member Stott seconded the motion.

APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 0 – ABSTAIN 0 - SO MOVED

Old Business:

Transportation Terminals/Owner Occupied Contractor Yard Definitions: The Supervisor gave an overview of the history of the terms. Both the Town Board and PBZBA were contacted via email asking if anything needs to be edited. Council member Schmitt reminded the board the section stating the owner must reside on the property should be removed. In addition, he mentioned discussions about a minimum lot size for a contractor yard. He feels there should be something in place for lot size. Council member Stott feels the Owner Operator Contractor Yard definition covers the properties which raised concerns and opens the door for future businesses. The Town Attorney asked if there were existing properties which would not be in compliance. Council member Grogan suggested using the current minimum lot size of 1.87 acres which is required to build a house as the minimum size. Mr. Reilly asked if it should be limited to residents only or open to those who may own property but not necessarily live in the town. Council member Grogan made the point that she is aware of some agricultural operations which may hay land in the Town of Coeymans but live in an adjacent municipality. Council member Schmitt remembers situation in which people who lived outside of the Town purchasing property in an RA zone and using it in a controversial manner. Mr. Reilly asked if the board would like for his office to find a middle ground and recirculate.

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Truck Traffic Discussion: Supervisor Donnelly said he would be scheduling site visits in the industrial areas with the building department and Chief Sewer Plant officer to identify the tenants and assess the sewer situation. Council member Grogan asked for clarification on whether this will be done for all industrial properties, not just the Coeymans Industrial Park. Mr. Reilly stated it would be all of the industrial zone, Site visits may not be needed for all. There were questions as to whether it was valuable to have the PBZBA attorney along with the site visits. Mr. Reilly believes it would be beneficial to have Mr. Keniry attend.

Agricultural Events Center: Council member Schmitt asked that this definition remain on the agenda in old business until a conclusion is drawn. Mr. Reilly asked if the board was looking for any updates to the definitions. He suggested changing the name to Rural Event Center as opposed to Agricultural. This could broaden the uses of the definition. All agreed to keeping them listed on the agenda.

New Business:

Boys & Girls Club: Supervisor Donnelly has held an initial meeting with them and feels they could collaborate with local clubs and organizations. The Club would help run youth employment, food insecurity spaces, etc. He believes the cost would be somewhere around \$200-\$300 thousand dollars.

Resolutions

Resolution 056-26 Appointment of Part Time Police Officer (George)

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Stephen Donnelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael J. Stott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stephen J. Schmitt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patricia Grogan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Total</i>	<u>4</u>		<u>4</u>		

I, Council member Grogan offer the following resolution and move its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans Police Department (the “Department”) continues to actively recruit qualified Police Officers to serve the residents of the Town of Coeymans; and

WHEREAS, there exists a need for additional Part-Time Police Officers in the Department in order for the Department to maintain its high standard for public safety and for the safety of its officers; and

WHEREAS, a qualified candidate, Nicholas W. George, is desirous of part-time employment as a Police Officer with the Department; and

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WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans Police Chief is desirous of hiring an additional Part-Time Police Officer; and recommends the hiring of Nicholas W. George.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize the Police Chief to hire Nicholas W. George as a Part-Time Police Officer with the Town of Coeymans Police Department at an hourly rate of \$31.60 per hour, effective as of February 26, 2026.

Seconded by Council member Stott, offered for discussion and duly put to a vote, the results of which appear above.

Resolution 057-26 Appointment of Part Time Police Officer (Germani)

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Stephen Donnelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael J. Stott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stephen J. Schmitt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patricia Grogan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Total</i>	<u>4</u>		<u>4</u>		

I, Council member Stott offer the following resolution and move its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans Police Department (the “Department”) continues to actively recruit qualified Police Officers to serve the residents of the Town of Coeymans; and

WHEREAS, there exists a need for additional Part-Time Police Officers in the Department in order for the Department to maintain its high standard for public safety and for the safety of its officers; and

WHEREAS, a qualified candidate, Ryan J. Germani, is desirous of part-time employment as a Police Officer with the Department; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans Police Chief is desirous of hiring an additional Part-Time Police Officer; and recommends the hiring of Ryan J. Germani.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize the Police Chief to hire Ryan J. Germani as a Part-Time Police Officer with the Town of Coeymans Police Department at an hourly rate of \$30.47 per hour, effective as of March 9, 2026.

Seconded by Council member Donnelly, offered for discussion and duly put to a vote, the results of which appear above.

Resolution to Appoint Superintendent of Highways - TABLED

**A resolution was read in regards to the vacancy within the Highway Superintendents position. Supervisor Donnelly recommended George La Mountain be appointed. Council member Grogan

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stated all four board members agreed in a workshop that this appointment needed to be discussed further. She stated she had asked several times to post this position. A Notice of Vacancy was submitted in which she questioned due to its lack of detail. She submitted an example of a posting which has not been published at this time. Council member Grogan is not against the 2 potential candidates but does not feel a fair shake was not given to the rest of the employees to apply. Council member Schmitt concurred with Mrs. Grogan. Council member Schmitt feels this resolution is premature based on their workshop discussion and lack of interviews. Council member Stott stated the election was 4 months ago and at the time those were the only two people interested in the job. He feels tate due to the close electoral race Mr. La Mountain is a good candidate. Mr. Reilly informed the board they could go into executive sessions to hold interviews with candidates should they wish. Ultimately the resolution was tabled.

Resolution to Approve Laberge USDA Grant Administrative Addendum – TABLED

**Council member Schmitt stated he was not clear why this is considered “additional work” all of the sudden. Supervisor Donnelly stated Laberge had to do additional grant administration in order to get the pumps here as soon as possible. Council member Schmitt feels the situation was known beforehand by the engineer. The Supervisor offered to call them for further clarification. Mr. Ravalli jr., spoke with Laberge briefly about this. He explained additional work was done to pull the \$60,000 the cost of that was taken from the original addendum worth \$10,000. It was recommended to review the initial addendum before moving forward. Council member Schmitt made a motion totable the resolution which was seconded by Council member Stott, all were in favor.

Resolution 058-26 Approve Laberge Addendum for Congressional Spending Administration

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Stephen Donnelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael J. Stott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stephen J. Schmitt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patricia Grogan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Total</i>	<u>4</u>		<u>4</u>		

I, Council member Grogan offer the following resolution and move its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans (the “Town”) is desirous of submitting FY2027 Congressionally Directed Spending (“CDS”) and Community Project Funding (“CPF”) Request Applications to Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand and/or Congressman Tonko for FY2027 Federal Budget Earmark Appropriations, to support the Town of Coeymans Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project (the “Project”); and

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WHEREAS, the Town has previously retained Laberge Engineering and Consulting Group, Ltd. (“Laberge”) to provide grant development services to the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town has received a proposal dated March 5, 2026, from Laberge (the “Addenda”) to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, Laberge proposes to bill a fee for Addendum No. 2026032-00, in the amount of Three Thousand and No/100 dollars (\$3,000.00) per Project; or Six Thousand and No/100 dollars (\$6,000.00) for the same Project if submitted to more than one representative.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize Supervisor Stephen Donnelly to sign the Addenda provided by Laberge, to allow Laberge to perform grant development services in connection with the Project, for an amount not to exceed \$6,000.00.

Seconded by Council member Stott, offered for discussion and duly put to a vote, the results of which appear above.

Discussion: Council member Stott explained the previous board had obtained \$5000,00 within the USDA grant. This will assist the current board in the proctoring of these types of grants for 2026. Supervisor Donnelly explained a project has to planned and ready. He explained the application was very broad. It is the hope of the board to use any funds awarded from this cycle towards phase 2 of the sewer projects.

Public comment: Council member Grogan spoke about cleaning up how public comment is done. The board docs have rules regarding this and they should be reviewed. She proposed possibly adding a public comment period in the beginning of the meeting for non-agenda related items.

Michelle Dorsey lives at 880 Bridge St.

Good evening members of the Town Board.

First, I would like to thank the Building Department for finally issuing our building permit this morning and for lifting the stop work order that had been placed on our property for almost fifteen months. We do appreciate being able to move forward with the maintenance and repairs to the Morton building.

However, along with the permit, I also received a letter stating that the Building Department does not recognize the building as commercial and that it may only be used as an agricultural building.

I do respectfully question how the Town can disregard information that has been presented from its own records.

This Morton building was previously classified by the Town in 1993 as a commercial structure, and it was part of an equine veterinary hospital and commercial horse boarding facility that operated on this property.

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In addition, only one year prior to our purchase, the Town's own 2021 Comprehensive Plan land use map in the identifies this parcel as commercial land use, and the property has been **paying commercial taxes since 1993**.

This property has always been both agricultural and commercial in nature.

Since purchasing the property, we have continued to operate it as a commercial horse boarding facility.

While approximately twenty stalls were removed from the Morton building during renovations, the property **still** contains:

- 30 horse stalls located in multiple barns
- a riding arena
- three large run-in sheds
- numerous large fenced paddocks

This property was purchased specifically as an existing equine facility, and it continues to function as such today.

The purchase itself was completed through a 1031 exchange, which is a federal tax process that applies to commercial and investment properties. Completing that exchange required the involvement of both a commercial real estate attorney and a 1031 exchange attorney, and it was an extensive and highly regulated process.

So while we are thankful to finally receive our building permit and have the stop work order lifted, we do believe that the commercial history and nature of this property should be recognized as part of the conversation moving forward.

If that recognition is not possible under the current interpretation of the Building Department, we are prepared to move forward with a use variance application. However, I want to be clear that this would not be because we agree that the use is not permitted. Rather, it would simply be a way to move the process forward in light of the Building Department's refusal to recognize the commercial history and character of this property.

With that said, I would like to briefly explain why we believe the use we are proposing on our farm is consistent with the Town's own planning documents and New York State agricultural law.

First, I want to start with the **Town's own Comprehensive Plan and zoning framework**. The **Residential-Agricultural (RA) District**, according to the Town's planning documents, allows principal uses including:

- general farming
- riding academies
- recreational facilities
- cultural facilities
- educational facilities
- day camps

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- community buildings
- parks and playgrounds
- libraries
- places of worship
- schools

These are listed as **principal permitted uses**, not special uses. Many of these uses inherently involve people gathering. For example:

- a place of worship involves assemblies
- schools involve assemblies
- community buildings host gatherings
- recreational facilities host assemblies and people gathering
- riding academies host events and clinics
- day camps involve groups of children and families

So, if assemblies were truly prohibited in this district, many of the uses already listed as permitted could not legally function.

Our proposal simply involves agritourism and farm diversification, which fits within several of the permitted categories already listed in the district.

Second, I would like to reference the **Town of Coeymans 2006 Comprehensive Plan**.

The plan specifically states that the Town should:

encourage the development of recreational facilities for the enjoyment of Town residents and visitors.

It even lists examples such as:

- miniature golf parks
- batting cages
- game arcades
- skating rinks
- movie theaters

These are uses that involve large gatherings of people and visitors coming into the community.

Our proposal is a farm-based agritourism use, which is actually far more consistent with the rural character of Coeymans than many of the recreational uses listed in the plan.

Third, the **Town's 2007 Economic Development Plan** specifically encourages heritage tourism and agritourism.

That plan states that the Town should promote agritourism and develop opportunities for visitors to experience agriculture, including visits to local farms and horse farms.

Our farm is exactly the type of agricultural destination described in that plan.

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Fourth, the **2021 Comprehensive Plan Update** states that the 2006 Comprehensive Plan continues to guide the Town and acknowledges that the zoning code has had minimal updates and needs to reflect current needs and economic realities.

Agritourism and farm diversification are now widely recognized as essential tools for farms to remain viable.

Fifth, the **Comprehensive Plan land use map identifies our parcel as commercial land use.** This reflects the historic nature of the property, which previously operated as an equine veterinary hospital and agricultural facility.

Sixth, "**New York Town Law §263** states that zoning must be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

The Town of Coeymans adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2006 and amended it in 2021, both of which promote tourism, agritourism, recreation, and economic development.

However, the zoning code itself dates back to 1961, when it was originally created, and has not been meaningfully updated to reflect those policies.

When zoning language is vague or undefined, New York courts have consistently held that it should be interpreted broadly and in favor of the property owner, not narrowly against them."

Finally, I want to address **New York State Agriculture and Markets Law**, which applies because our farm is located in a New York State Certified Agricultural District.

Under **Agriculture and Markets Law §305-a**, municipalities may not enact or enforce local regulations that unreasonably restrict farm operations within agricultural districts.

And under **Agriculture and Markets Law §301(11)**, the definition of a farm operation includes:

- commercial horse boarding operations
- agricultural buildings and structures
- Agriculture Education
- farm marketing and direct marketing activities

Modern farms across New York rely on agritourism and farm events as a form of direct marketing and diversification that helps sustain agricultural operations.

Our farm includes a commercial horse boarding operation, which is specifically recognized as agriculture under New York law.

So, our position is simple:

We are not asking the Town to approve something inconsistent with its plans.

We are asking to move forward with a farm-based use that aligns with:

- the permitted uses in the RA district
- the Town's Comprehensive Plan
- the Town's Economic Development Plan
- the land use designation of the property
- and New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

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Agriculture, tourism, recreation, and economic development working together is exactly what the Town's planning documents envision.

We respectfully ask the Town to recognize that what we are proposing is not contrary to Coeymans' vision, it is consistent with it.

Thank you.

Michelle Dorsey

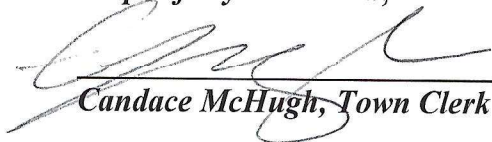
Barbara Heinzen lives on the edge of Coeymans and owns property within. She asked if all the council members had been to the sewer treatment plant. She stated it is the best view of the river and the employees are very welcoming. She also expressed her appreciation regarding the passing of the bond for sewer repairs.

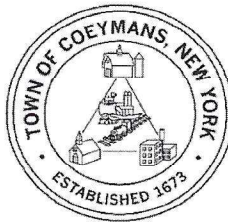
Motion to Enter into Executive Session to discuss contractual matterd and personnel was made by Council member Schmitt and Seconded by Council member Stott- APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 0 – SO MOVED

Motion to Adjourn Executive Session was made by Council member Schmitt and Seconded by Council member Donnelly- APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 0 – SO MOVED

Motion to Adjourn was made by Council member Schmitt and Seconded by Council member Donnelly- APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 0 – SO MOVED 9:57pm

Respectfully Submitted,


Candace McHugh, Town Clerk



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Third paragraph of handwritten text, providing further details.

Fourth paragraph of handwritten text, appearing to be a separate point.

Fifth paragraph of handwritten text, concluding the main body of the page.

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