2015 Conference Sessions

Town Boards – Village Boards – Clerks – Planning Boards – Zoning Boards – Highways Departments – Assessors

Assessor Training - 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
This six hours of training for assessors will cover the procedures to be followed by assessors in reviewing applications for exemptions from the real property tax.

Keynote:  8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Commanding General, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum (invited)
There are many things to think about when negotiating fire protection contracts and this session will discuss them all.

1A. Negotiating Fire Protection Contracts in the Cap and Freeze Era
This session will discuss the roles of the municipal board, clerk, planning board, ZBA, code enforcement officer, highway department and municipal attorney with the municipal court system and the responsibilities of each.

1B. Interaction of Town & Village Boards, Justices Courts
This session will discuss the interrelationships of the ZBA and its interrelationships with other boards.

1C. Record Keeping Tips for PB & ZBAs
This session will discuss how board members and support staff should strive to make records that are of value to enforcement personnel, applicants, municipal attorneys, and current and future Board Members.

1D. Dealing with Difficult Players in the Planning and Zoning Game
This session will discuss how a board can get through an application with as little friction as possible when dealing with difficult people.

1E. Bulk Storage & Hazardous Materials in the Highway Code
This session will address the goals and objectives associated with hazardous materials, including: highways by prescription (use); width and boundaries; abandonment by non-use and discontinuance; minimum maintenance highways; and seasonally limited use roads.

1F. The Many Duties of the Clerk
The powers and duties of the clerk are described and the responsibilities they have to deal with will be discussed in this session.

1G. Property Tax Freeze and What it Means to You and Your Community
An overview of the tax freeze, municipal compliance and certifications for years 1 and 2, government efficiency plans and calculating the tax credit to homeowners will be some of the topics covered in this session.

Session 2: 10:45 a.m. - Noon
2A. "How To" Guides to Shared Services and Cooperation
Explore the "How To's" of shared services, including laying the groundwork for implementing shared service agreements successfully, discuss how to determine the true cost of services; and analyze key stakeholders of shared services.

2B. NYS Grant Gateway
New York State has developed a new funding portal called the Grants Gateway designed to improve the way NYS administers grants by simplifying and streamlining the grants management process. Find out what application registering and "prequalifying" is for the Grants Gateway in this session.

2C. Open Government Issues in Planning and Zoning Decisions
This session focuses on planning and zoning issues including: public meetings, communications outside of public meetings, and planning board and "FOIL-ability" of various planning and zoning documents.

2D. Public Meetings and Hearings
This session addresses the goals and requirements associated with public meetings, in contrast to the purposes and legal requirements surrounding a public hearing. Code Enforcement Officers may receive 1 hour of In-Service Credit.

2E. Roads By Use
This session will examine a municipality’s responsibility with respect to its highways, including; highways by prescription (use); width and boundaries; abandonment by non-use and discontinuance; minimum maintenance highways; and seasonally limited use roads.

2F. Guidelines for Minute Taking
As the clerk, you are responsible for accurately preparing the minutes of your board meetings. What you need to know to prepare them, how to index them properly; and what auditors look for in minutes will be some of the topics discussed.

2G. Importance of a Community Tree Program
This presentation will provide all the tools, funding resources, and inspiration needed to create a tree planting and maintenance program in your community.

Lunch: Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Session 3: 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
3A. Developing an Effective Fund Balance
How much fund balance a municipality should keep each year, and what factors they need to think about when deciding the amount to keep will be the subject of this session.

3B. Resources Available Through Consolidated Funding Process
This session will feature a general overview of the CFA process by Empire State Development and specific overview of grants North Country communities are typically interested in.

3C. Zoning for Small & Large Scale Solar Energy Projects
What are the issues communities need to think about when putting together regulations for solar energy systems? This session will discuss those issues and examples of regulations adopted around NYS.

3D. Powers & Duties of the ZBA
This session will address the powers and duties of the ZBA and its interrelationships with enforcement officials and the planning board. Also discussed will be the issuance of use and area variances and the importance of making good findings.

3E. Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)
This session will review what the CHIPS program is and how it affects your community.

3F. Ethics: What is it, What is it Not, & Why Focus On It? Part I
To be discussed: issues related to ethics in local government; core principles of public service; whether your municipality is ethically fit; and how to make sure ethics is being incorporated into day to day local government business.

3G. Innovative Stormwater Practices
This session will focus on unique stormwater infrastructure practices that use resilient cutting-edge green technologies.

Session 4: 2:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
4A. Internal Controls for Town & Village Boards
Designed to assist municipal officials in carrying out their fiscal oversight responsibilities. Topics to be covered include the fiscal oversight duties of the board; the purpose of an audit; who is responsible; and what to do if someone fraud is suspected.

4B. Cyber Security for Local Governments
This session will discuss the current cyber threat environment, with an emphasis on those threats of greatest concern to state, federal and local governments.

4C. Enforcement of Zoning and Other Local Laws
Learn how the legislative body, ZBA, planning board, and zoning enforcement officer interact together in carrying out enforcement of zoning and other local laws.

4D. Q & A for PB & ZBA
This is your chance to ask the expert your burning legal questions. Back by popular demand, open line for questions on planning and zoning issues with Scott Chatfield.

4E. Emergency Response to Flooding & Problems in Resilience
This session will focus on the do's and don'ts of emergency response to flooding and what you can do to protect highway infrastructure in a manner that protects habitat and the river ecosystem.

4F. Ethics: What is it, What is it Not, & Why Focus On It? Part II
Continuation of Session 3 Part I

4G. Improving Broadband Access in Rural Areas
The NYS Broadband Program Office and the New York State Office of Rural Affairs will discuss how to improve broadband service in rural areas.

Reception: 4:00 p.m.
* * Sessions subject to change due to speaker availability. * *
About the Conference
The March 26, 2015 Local Government Conference is an annual event organized by the staff at the Tug Hill Commission attracting as many as 650 local officials from across the North Country.

Workshops on a variety of topics are geared toward village and town board members, clerks, planning boards, zoning boards, highway departments, and assessors.

Registration Information
Please mail the registration form inside with your check or voucher. Refunds will not be granted after Wednesday, March 11th.

Directions to Jefferson Community College
Take Interstate 81 to Exit 46 (Coffeen Street). Travel east on Coffeen Street 0.25 mile. The college entrance is on your left. Parking at the college is in the back in Lots C & D. Registration is in the Gymnasium.