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# **Town of Long Lake**



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# **Town Archives**

## **2022 Annual Report**

# Long Lake Archives

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Date: December 19, 2022

To: Town Board Members

From: Brian Castler, Records Management Aide

The purpose of Records Management is to preserve, categorize and have records available for immediate and future use. Archives are used to define government's responsibilities and serve as evidence in courts of law. Without records, much of our history would be lost forever.

This year being my sixth full year in the Town Clerk's Office and Archives continues to be an interesting one with some of the same issues and challenges still outstanding.

The main challenge since 2018 has been the space needs for the Archives Building. A review of square footage needs for present and future were reviewed, and as a result, Reports have been provided by me to the Town Board Members dated: July 24, 2018, September 25, 2018, October 3, 2018, October 29, 2018, and March 25, 2019 plus, discussions were held with Maria McCashion, the Regional Advisory Officer from the New York State Archives, which resulted in a meeting that was held at the Town Archives on October 3, 2018. Board members were invited, but no one attended. At the Board Meeting on March 27, 2019, it was determined that a packet would be provided to the Building Committee for review. The packets were provided on April 24, 2019 to the Committee. The Archives is still waiting for final action. Again, if the Town wants to apply for State grants this year, we need to move ahead with bid documents and build the expansion shell (slab, exterior walls, and roof) this spring. **Not until the shell is built, can we apply for these grants, which will cover almost everything else for the expansion, plus some.**

At the Town of Long Lakes Budget workshops on October 7, October 14, and October 21, 2020, discussions were held on short term solutions to the Archives storage problems. One suggestion was to use the Town Hall area over the old fire truck bays. Upon review, it was discovered that this area was being used currently for storage by other Town Departments. An area would first have to be cleaned out, a partition would have to be constructed with a locked entry door to the newly constructed temporary storage area per state guidelines, to provide a secure area for the Town Records and proper shelving purchased. The stairway and area surrounding the doorway to the storage area would have to be kept clear for proper ingress and egress. There is a safety concern regarding the carrying of boxes up and down the existing stairway and the location placement of the shelving due to the baseboard heating and its negative effect on the documents. Also, there may be more work needed to stay in compliance with State of New York guidelines. This possible solution needs to be considered only as a temporary one, is not an acceptable one (even with upgrades) because of ingress and egress problems.

A layout plan and cost estimate were provided to the Town Board in February 2021 and no action has been taken on this location or any other possible location that may meet minimum state requirements. The 2021 Estimated cost was \$6,000.00 Dollars, plus Town labor and equipment.

The following highlights are what was accomplished during 2022.

1. Visitor hours have been Tuesday from 10:00AM to noon and 12:30PM to 4:00PM, and other times by appointment prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic starting April 17, 2020. Currently, visitor hours are the same, except for additional Town requirements.
2. Boxes and files, both Town and Historical Records, with the layout plan and master index of the storage area have been maintained and updated as best it can be due to overcrowding.
3. The Town inventory of equipment is up to date and the master file maintained based on data provided.



4. In the past, records for Disposal have been identified and/or disposed of in accordance with "Record Retention and Disposition Schedule MU-1 by the University of the State of New York At the August 26, 2020, Town Board Meeting, a resolution was approved for the adoption of Records Retention and Disposition schedule LGS-1 by the University of the State of New York which supersedes and replaces the MU-1. This will keep the Town eligible to apply for Local Government Records Management and Improvement Funding Grants.
5. Boxes upon boxes of records have been sorted through and each document was carefully examined and dealt with as the State instructs. Currently, there are over 482 boxes and 238 ledger type documents stored in the Archive building.
6. The Town Board Minute Index has been reorganized so that now the current index, including subcategories, is in one location on the Archives computer. That index has been updated from 2007 to January 2020 during the Archives Covid lockdown to the public since April 2020.
7. I continue to examine, sort, file, and store permanent Town Records as well as those Town Records that are required to be kept from one up to 55 years. Examples vary from timecards, payrolls, personnel files, to audits, Town Attorney files, court records, tax records and assessments, minutes, as well as vital records, birth, death, and marriage records, etc. In addition, the State requires that all records, before disposal, be reviewed for historical or other research importance. Archival records are worthy of preservation and special care because of the continuing importance of the information they contain for legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical purposes.
8. Scanning of pictures and documents has been conducted by Hilary (Guy) LeBlanc, Jr. as a volunteer. He has provided the Town Archives with over 82,000 photos in a digital format. We appreciate the time and effort Guy has provided to the Archives. All at no cost to the Town.
9. In June 2018, North Country Public Radio visited the archives and scanned several of our historical pictures for their North Country at Work Project. These pictures, as well as others, were used in the project and a display was

on exhibit at our Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney Long Lake Public Library. Once the exhibit was done, the poster-like pictures were collected and are now part of our Archives collection.

10. I have answered 16 emails/telephone calls and 12 walk-in requests during this past year. That does not include requests from the Supervisor's Office, Town Clerks Office, Codes, etc.
11. During 2022, the Archives had 12 visitors. In past years, many of the visits were during the summer months.
12. I fulfilled several research requests and inquiries that came from residents, non-residents, and government agencies, all looking for documents and information. The main interests were the steamers on Long Lake and the time frames they were in operation in the Town of Long Lake; the Buttercup; information on the Bible donated to the First Congregational Church (first church in Long Lake); locations of camps on Long Lake, information on family names that had lived here. Also copies of pictures and historical documents on many different subjects.
13. I fulfilled many requests for copies of births, deaths, and marriages for both genealogy and provided certified copies requested by agencies, assessment histories of property, property abstracts, etc.
14. several donations were received from individuals consisting mainly of pictures and other Town related documents.
15. Worked with the Long Lake Historical Society assisting with programs and presentations as requested.

The Long Lake Historical Society Facebook page now has over 1,600 followers.

16. To remain current, the Archives keep in contact with and coordinate as needed with:

- Hamilton County Historian
- New York State Archives
- New York State Office of State History
- Adirondack Research Consortium
- Museum Association of New York
- Adirondack Experience

- Other Town Historians and Historical Societies in the area
- Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services of New York
- Society of American Archives
- New York History Blog

In 2023, the Archives will continue to categorize and file Town and Historical Records and pictures in accordance with State requirements. We need to keep our tracking systems entries up to date, such as Town Board Minute Index, and keep Equipment Inventory Spreadsheet, Index of Archive contents, Listings of box contents, etc., up to date.

Once again, there's a need to continue to review our short/long term needs for Archival equipment (computers, printers, scanners) and storage and to develop a timeline/cost analysis to achieve the Archive's mission and purpose as necessary and in most cases, as required by the State of New York.

Those of you that have "toured" the Archives Building, have firsthand knowledge, and are aware of the critical need for additional record storage space, as it continues to increase every year.

That having been said, there are now eighty-four (84) storage boxes in the Town Office Building cellar which usually has a wet floor, sometimes 2" of standing water. There are 26 boxes currently stacked in the Building Code Officials office. Each year additional boxes are received from the Town Justice Court, the Town Attorney, all Town Departments, etc. All of them need to be stored permanently in the Archives to comply with State of New York Record Retention and Disposition Schedule LGS -1 for the safety and protection of Town Documents. At the beginning of 2022, the Town Justice Court delivered ten full boxes of court records to the Archives which compounds the issue of no remaining shelf space. These boxes are being stored on top of the worktable. As the new year progresses, more Town Records will be deposited in the Archives, creating a more massive problem of proper storage to stay in compliance with New York State laws and regulations.



This issue is not going away If nothing is done, the Town is just multiplying the problem and the cost.

They need to be moved permanently to the Archives to comply with New York State Record Retention requirements.

This year we have again investigated scanning the records and pictures. The cost would be around \$315,000.00, plus annual fees/cost of \$16,000.00. Up to \$75,000.00 may offset this cost by applying and being awarded a LGRMIF eGrant.

Now that we are entering a crisis on storage of Town documents, we need to get into compliance with New York State Requirements, **ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN NOW AND NOT IN THE FUTURE.**

If you have any questions, feel free to call or make an appointment (COVID Guidelines).

Prepared by Brian Castler,

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