

Aurora Highway Department Receives Grant for a New Salt Barn

by Shelly Ferullo
Editor

The Town of Aurora Highway Department has been awarded a grant of nearly half a million dollars to build a new salt barn on Quaker Road.

The grant is from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for \$486,000.

Highway Superintendent David Gunner said that the current salt barn holds 1,000 tons of salt and the new barn will double the capacity. It will also protect the water quality of the East Branch of Cazenovia Creek.

The old barn was built in the 1970s on Quaker Road above a ravine that feeds into Cazenovia Creek. Gunner said the loading area is not built well enough to contain the salt and anytime it rains, there is the potential for salt to go into the creek.

"The new barn will have a coffer dam to load salt properly," Gunner said. "It will be placed on the West Side of the property away from the creek."

In addition, the grant will supply the highway department with three 5,000 gallon brine stations to attach to trucks to treat the roadways. The highway department began treating the roads with a saltwater "brine" solution this winter, rather than treating the roads with rock salt.

The solution saves money and uses less salt. In a Facebook post on Dec. 20, 2025, the highway department said that 140 miles of roadway were treated with brine for \$240. If the highway department used a combination of salt and sand, rather than the brine, it would cost over \$2,000 to treat that same distance.

"Salt this year increased from \$35 to \$58 a ton," Gunner said. "Making the brine in house is 25 cents a gallon."

The DEC says that using less salt in the winter is also better for the environment. In December 2025, it launched a "Don't Be Salty, New York" campaign to encourage people to use less salt.

"It only takes one teaspoon of salt to pollute five gallons of water," Commissioner Amanda Lefton said in a press release. "We're asking everyone to take commonsense precautions before using too much rock salt on their sidewalks, driveway and other

places around their homes and businesses to help prevent unknowingly harming our environment. 'Don't Be Salty' and help save your money, remain safe and protect our waterbodies."

Gunner said that the town applied for the grant last fall. He found out that the town won the grant on Friday, Jan. 16.



The DEC suggests that home and business owners consider using a brine solution as well to treat sidewalks and driveways by combining three and a half cups of salt per gallon of hot tap water. Stir until the salt is dissolved and let any gravel settle to the bottom. Pour the brine into a regular garden sprayer and spray in a zig-zag pattern over the desired area. Leftover brine can be saved for another use.

During the town's reorganizational meeting on Jan. 12, the following were appointed to one year positions:

-Kathleen Moffat is assistant to the supervisor and budget officer.

-Jennifer Calkins is secretary to supervisor.

-Luke Wochensky is deputy supervisor.

-Robert Lowell Goller is the Town Historian.

-Stephanie Meyer is Deputy Town Clerk #1.

-Mary Pitkin is Deputy Town Clerk #2.

-Janis Colarusso is Deputy Town Clerk #3.

-Robert Gurbacki is deputy attorney.

-Brigid Maloney was appointed as town attorney for a two year term.

-Chris Contento was appointed to the Planning Board for seven years and Douglas Heidt is Chairman.

-William Heidt and Ben Garvey were appointed as alternates to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for one term. Paul Ernst is the ZBA Chairman. The ZBA has one vacant seat and Stephanie Morgan and Brad Felton are alternates.



Photo by Marty Wangeli

Face Paint

Stella Kemp paints a heart on four year old Addison Rogers during the Aurora Waldorf School's Winter Faire in West Falls last weekend.

Judy Malys Appointed to East Aurora School Board Vacancy

by Sean Cunningham
Staff Reporter

A familiar face will be returning to the East Aurora School Board to fill the position vacated by Jessica Armbrust in December.

At the Wednesday, Jan. 14 school board meeting, the board unanimously approved the appointment of Judy Malys to serve in the role until Tuesday, May 19.

Malys is a retired teacher from East Aurora who served on the school board previously from 2013 to 2022.

At the December meeting, the board discussed the options they had for filling the seat. The board chose to reach out to former board members as they were looking for individuals to appoint who had familiarity with the budget process.

Malys will serve on both the board's policy and safety subcommittees.

"We really truly appreciate Mrs. Malys's willingness, eager willingness," School Board President Joe Cassidy said. According to Cassidy, the ap-

pointment will last until the election, which will be held on Tuesday, May 19. In addition to her seat, Paul Blowers and Daniel Brunson will also be up for reelection. If either of the incumbents choose to rerun and receive the largest vote tally, the board will have the



opportunity to appoint Malys for the remaining six weeks or leave the position vacant. If a newcomer receives the most number of votes, they will fill Malys's seat for the remainder of the school year and then begin a three-year term.

Malys was supposed to be sworn in on Tuesday, Jan. 20, but due to school closures that will take place at a later date.

In other news, the board appointed Eileen LaRouch as Se-

nior Clerk Typist at a rate of \$21 per hour for 35 hours a week.

The board also approved Karen Smith as Curriculum Coordinator for grades five through eight. Smith will cover Stacy Koch who was appointed as interim assistant principal for Parkdale Elementary last month. Parkdale Principal T'Hani Pantoja was appointed as Koch's peer mentor for the rest of the school year, receiving a stipend of \$480.

The health and welfare rate was set for non-resident students attending private and parochial schools located within the district. The rate is \$1,041 per student this year.

Forty Chromebooks, nine printers, a document camera and projector were declared surplus or obsolete.

The district-wide safety plan revisions were unanimously approved by the board. The plan was presented to the board on Wednesday, Nov. 19, where a public hearing was held. The public comment period was open until Wednesday, Jan. 9.

The school board will meet again at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10 in the middle school cafeteria on Main Street.