

Farewell Letter to the Residents of the Town of Dresden

Dear Residents of the Town of Dresden,

In September 2024, I was appointed to serve as your Town Supervisor. At the time, I stepped into the role with the simple goal of helping to reduce the level of division that had been present in town affairs and to keep the town moving in a steady, practical direction.

Over the following fifteen months, I came to understand both the responsibilities of the position and the many challenges facing the town. Some issues were routine, and others required more significant attention. In several areas, we worked to bring practices back in line with town policy and with the expectations that taxpayers rightly have for their local government.

Among those efforts:

- We ended the use of public funds to maintain private property and brought that practice back into compliance with appropriate municipal standards.
- We began following the town's adopted procurement policy more consistently when awarding contracts.
- We completed the forced main burial project for Sewer District No. 1, a long-delayed effort costing roughly \$200,000–\$250,000. Through grants from the Lake George Park Commission and the Lake George Association totaling \$120,000, the burden on district taxpayers was significantly reduced.

Serving as supervisor also meant representing the town at the county level. I quickly learned that town supervisors play a direct role in county governance. After only a few months, I was asked to chair the Health and Human Services Committee, the county's largest department, with a budget of approximately \$35 million and more than 140 employees.

During my time as chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, I worked closely with fellow supervisors, staff, and committee members to address several long-standing issues within that department. In particular:

- I recommended bringing in an outside consultant to review departmental operations. That review uncovered approximately \$134,000 in misclassified state reimbursements—more than four times the cost of the study.
- I urged the use of background checks for the incoming commissioner, something the county had not previously done for that position. The process revealed important information and helped lead to the selection of a candidate who is now moving the department in a positive direction.

In addition to my work with Health and Human Services, I also took part in several broader county initiatives:

- I conducted a detailed analysis of the county's 200-vehicle fleet, which was used to evaluate concerns about operating costs and to compare our approach with proposals to

lease vehicles. The analysis showed that the fleet was being operated at a cost well below state and national averages.

- During a difficult budget year, I introduced the use of tax anticipation notes, a financing tool the county had not previously used. After analysis, this approach improved the county's financial position by more than \$100,000.

In the course of this work, I attended well over 100 county committee meetings, in addition to numerous inter-county and regional meetings throughout the Adirondack region. I was also appointed to serve on the Warren-Washington County Industrial Development Agency and the Lake Champlain–Lake George Regional Planning Board, roles I continue to hold.

Taken together, these efforts helped produce well over \$200,000 in measurable financial benefits at the county level, while also strengthening management practices in key departments. When combined with the grant savings achieved on the Sewer District No. 1 project, the total measurable financial benefit connected to this period of service exceeded \$300,000 for town and county taxpayers.

Town Supervisors collectively run the county, and many of them take that responsibility seriously and work hard on behalf of their towns. It was an education and a privilege to be part of that effort.

As the current supervisor remarked at his first meeting, it is not possible to please everyone. Some of the changes I supported were not welcomed by all, and the voters ultimately chose a different direction. That is the nature of public service.

I am no longer your supervisor, but I wanted to report to you what we were able to accomplish during my time in office and to thank you for the opportunity to serve. It was a meaningful experience, and I am grateful for it.

I wish the current supervisor success and hope that the town continues moving in a practical, forward-looking direction, both here at home and in its work at the county level. Although I am no longer serving as town supervisor, I will continue to represent our area through my roles on the Warren-Washington County Industrial Development Agency and the Lake Champlain–Lake George Regional Planning Board, and I look forward to supporting the region's long-term economic and environmental health in those capacities.

If any resident would like to reach out to discuss the experience of public service or the work described here, I would be glad to share what I learned.

With kind regards,
Charles Tall

ctall4@aol.com