

NYAOT Members Call for a Modern Solution to an Outdated Mandate



PLATTSBURGH — Champlain Supervisor Thomas Trombley recounted an apparent snafu a few years ago with a public hearing notice that never made it into the local newspaper and delayed a proposal to create a new sewer district by a month.

“We had to start over, we had to republish, we set a new public hearing, and I don’t remember the criteria why it was 30 days, but I know we did not have the public hearing until a month later,” he said during the recent Clinton County Supervisors Roundtable hosted by the New York Association of Towns (NYAOT).

The effort to bring public notice requirements in line with the times and technology of today dominated the discussion.

Assemblywoman Mary Jan Shimsky has sponsored the ‘[Local Government Modernization and Transparency Act](#)’ measure that would allow municipalities to post legal notices on their official web site instead of publishing them in newspapers.

The initiative is among NYAOT’s list of [priorities for 2026](#).

There was a strong consensus among supervisors and town leaders, who took part in the May 20 roundtable discussion with NYAOT Executive Director Chris Koetzle, that the current requirement is an added expense for many financially struggling towns, at a time when print journalism is becoming obsolete.

“Not everybody reads the paper, but everybody stays informed on social media and also the web site,” Trombley said, adding that the circulation of the local daily newspaper only reaches a small segment of the North Country. “The use of some sort of online service such as our web site, as long as we have a .gov web site, that makes complete sense to post there.”

Plattsburgh Town Supervisor Charles “Chuck” Kostyk said his town, like most others in the Empire State, already post public notices online, for the sake of transparency. He said making the switch from the newspaper to the municipal

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“It is very difficult for us to manage anytime that we have to have a public hearing, or post anything that requires a public notice, time is of an essence,” he said.

Dannemora Supervisor Joey Varian said that it’s about towns fully being in control of their expenses. “To put it on my web site, there’s no price point,” he added.

In New York, there is no single flat fee for publishing public notices, as costs vary by county and newspaper, according to information online from LLC publishers.

That web site indicates that for towns and municipalities, rates range from \$10 to over \$40 per column inch, bringing the typical cost of a standard legal notice (such as a public hearing or bid notice) to between \$50 and \$300 per ad.

Trombley, the Champlain supervisor, said that the average cost over the past three years for public notices for the town, is about \$2,200 annually.

Saranac Town Supervisor Timothy Napper said the rule is yet another state mandate “that’s just killing us,” and not doing much to help the bottom line of newspapers.

“We’re not going to save these newspapers by the amount of money we’re giving them,” he said. “This public notice should be an easy fix to reduce the regulation and make it even better for small towns in the state.”

Interested in Hosting a Regional NYAOT Roundtable?

NYAOT Executive Director Chris Koetzle regularly visits areas around the state for topical roundtables. To schedule a roundtable in your area, please reach out to us via (518)465-7933 or email info@nytowns.org.