

# JOURNAL

SPRINGVILLE



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February 16, 2023

## **West Valley Demonstration Project Quarterly Public Meeting**

**Wednesday, February 22, 2023  
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

Ashford Office Complex  
9030 Route 219  
West Valley, New York

### **In-Person/Virtual Public Meeting**

(Proper personal identification is required to attend in person)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold an in-person/virtual public meeting to provide information on WVDP activities and progress.

NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

If you would like to participate, please  
contact Joseph Pillittere at  
[Joseph.Pillittere@chbwv.com](mailto:Joseph.Pillittere@chbwv.com) or (716) 998-4900.

## **Ashford Board hears progress with COPS hiring program**

**Max Borsuk  
Editor**

The Ashford Town Board, at its Feb. 8 meeting, heard an update on the COPS hiring program funding that was awarded to the town, which awarded the town \$125,000 to advance the practice of community policing through the hire or rehire of additional career law enforcement officers.

Supervisor John Pfeffer reported he recently heard back from the Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Office, who said there looks like there would be a sheriff for the town to hire in the coming months. Pfeffer also reported the town would need to first purchase a police vehicle for the sheriff. The town has a balance of ARPA funds in the amount of \$83,807.07 to use, which Pfeffer said public safety was a legitimate use of those funds.

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Pfeffer said the town would wait to purchase the vehicle until the town is assured a sheriff can be hired to prevent the town having a police car they cannot use. After discussion from the board members, the board approved a resolution to spend the ARPA funds balance toward the police vehicle if the town is able to hire a sheriff.

In other board news:

– Pfeffer updated the board on grants the town recently applied for. A \$50,000 was awarded to the town for the **West Valley Citizen Task Force** to hire its own technical expert to look at things coming out of the probabilistic performance assessment. The board also applied for a grant for the American Legion to be used as a food bank, which the town did not get. Pfeffer said the town will look into applying for this grant again in the future.

– The board approved a resolution in opposition to the proposed ban on natural gas heating and appliances in New York state.

– Besides a small section of Fox Valley Road, Pfeffer reported the majority of the town is wired and able to be connected to Armstrong for broadband.

– The board approved to change its April meeting to Tuesday, April 11 at 6 p.m.

The next Town of Ashford board meeting will be Wednesday, March 8 at 7 p.m.

## Provision in the state budget could have impact on local towns

**Brenda Hanson**  
**Freelance Contributor,**  
**Neighbor to Neighbor News**

On Feb. 1, Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposed budget was introduced in the NYS Legislature (Senate Bill 4009 and Assembly Bill 3009). Currently, the proposed budget is being reviewed by the Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Tucked away in "Part N" of the proposed budget is a provision that, if enacted, would remove authority from local municipalities to appraise solar and wind facilities for taxation purposes.

Currently, the model used to value solar and wind facilities is being challenged in the NYS Supreme Court (Town of Blenheim et al v. Hiller). A restraining order was issued on April 29, 2022, against New York state based on the State's unwillingness to include the Assessors Association (an association of local assessors) and **NYS Energy Research and Development Authority** in developing a taxation model. The case is making its way through the Supreme Court system at this time.

Should the proposed budget pass the NYS Legislature as is, it will render the judicial proceedings irrelevant. Part N of the budget states, "the solar or wind energy system appraisal model authorized by this section shall be identified, formulated, adopted, published and updated periodically ... without additional consultation with the **NYS Energy Re-**

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search and Development Authority or the NYS Assessors Association and without soliciting or considering additional public comments.”

Passage of the proposed state budget in its current form would bypass the judicial system and remove local voices from decisions related to the taxation of solar and wind facilities in local municipalities. The Office of Real Property Tax Services in Albany would make all decisions regarding the taxation of solar and wind facilities in local rural communities.

Assessors are expressing concern that this provision, if passed, would strip local officials of power to pursue optimal tax agreements with parent corporations of renewable energy projects while simultaneously enhancing tax deals for those corporations.

The language of the budget, Part N, provides no protection for towns that currently have payment in lieu of taxes agreements with corporations, and it is unclear if current P.I.L.O.T. contracts would remain in place or if the corporation would have the option of taxation under a new model created by Albany’s Office of Real Property Tax Services.