

Porter Town Board adopts budget, hears comments

STAFF REPORTS

Porter Town Board members went on to adopt the town's \$5,684,540 budget for 2023 in a session that featured some comments of interest both before and after attending residents.

The budget, which brings with it a tax rate of \$2.0587 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for town property owners, was unanimously approved "as is, with no changes," per Town Supervisor John "Duffy" Johnston. He went on to thank board members, and particularly Bookkeeper Kim Boyer, for their work in crafting an efficient spending plan for

2023.

But not before some comments on the plan were heard from the Youngstown Free Library. Karran Swayze, president of the library's board of trustees, expressed her concerns on what she viewed as funding cuts to the library's budget.

Swaze said that Youngstown Free Library funding sources have declined while costs continue to increase. Swaze, along with Maggie Stein, library treasurer, cited higher internet costs to better serve the increased library patronage, the cost of programs, higher foot traffic and

state-mandated minimum wage increases in their requests for greater funding assistance from the town.

"The library plays a vital service, vital to the community," Stein said.

In response, Johnston said the town provides equal funding amounts to both the Youngstown and Ransomville libraries, and that Ransomville bears the added costs with maintaining its own building, while Youngstown operates of the Youngstown Red Brick Village Center maintained by the village.

"We did not reduce the amount

this year; we kept them the same," he said.

Deputy Supervisor Jeff Baker said the Youngstown Library also has outside funding sources in the form of annuities to help it out.

Later on, another question of interest – that of leaf and yard waste drop-offs – was heard by a town resident. Karen Cline of Creek Road asked the board what options it could offer residents other than the town's providing a Dumpster in the Town Hall parking lot each fall. Kline said she felt that town residents having to dispose of yard wastes

in bags was "not environmentally friendly," and that some type of town drop-off was more preferable.

Johnston said the town already provides that with the Modern Disposal Dumpster for leaves, while Town Councilman Tim Adamson said the town might want to work with Modern for another option. Town Highway Superintendent Dave Burmaster cited potential higher costs with such a venture.

The matter was left with Adamson to look into it further with Modern officials.

Americarb to expand manufacturing operations in Niagara County

Company to invest \$6 million at Niagara Falls plant for carbon and graphite product manufacturing

Empire State Development announced that Americarb Inc., a leading global producer of carbon and graphite advanced materials, plans to add 45 jobs and invest \$6 million in its Niagara Falls plant. The investment will be used to purchase and install new machinery and equipment utilized in the manufacturing of high-temp composite material for the production of clean hydrogen, and in aerospace and defense applications.

"Advanced manufacturing is a critical economic driver in New York state," said ESD President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight. "By making this significant investment in the Niagara Falls plant, Americarb has now renewed its commitment to our region and workforce, making the facility a key part of the next generation of innovation in the clean energy and defense sectors. Most importantly, this expansion will help accelerate job growth throughout the region, which is laser-focused on the industries of tomorrow."

A press release noted, "Americarb Inc. manufactures ultra-high and high-temperature composite material used in commercial and defense applications, as well as unique high-temperature processing capabilities. The advanced carbon com-

posites it manufactures are stiffer and lighter than many metals, and possess excellent strength properties that make them an effective alternative in high-temperature applications. Its ultra-high strength composites can be used in applications exceeding 2,500 degrees Celsius."

Americarb Controller Mark Rawls said, "The expansion into this state-of-the-art facility marks a continuation of Americarb's growth in New York state, and is a pivotal milestone in taking our production of high-temperature composite materials to the next level. Thanks in part to New York state, our new machinery will strengthen our output capacity in response to growing industry demands, while also building the networks of tomorrow."

The press release added, "Recently, the Americarb plant, located at 6100 Niagara Falls Blvd., has seen rapid growth in two markets that require its high-temperature composite material. The first is fuel cell membranes for electrolyzers used in the production of green hydrogen. The fuel cell membrane makes up half of each completed fuel cell and is a key component to technology that allows the separation of hydrogen and oxygen. Hydrogen fuel cells (HFCs) produce no harm-

ful emissions and are generally between 40% to 60% energy-efficient, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. This range compares to the typical internal combustion engine of a car, which is about 25% energy-efficient.

"The second growing market is in aerospace and defense, as the composite material is used in hypersonic, strategic missile, and space launch systems programs. Hypersonic flight systems need to withstand temperatures of up to 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit during reentry. Americarb furnaces treat the parts to temperatures exceeding this requirement.

"The project will include new machinery and equipment to meet these growing demands, as well as upgrading Americarb's cybersecurity measures for government contracts."

The expansion will add more high-temperature furnaces, refrigerated cooling capacity and production equipment, including:

- ✓ Rayon washing, drying, coating, drying and continuous high-heating furnace treating system.
- ✓ Two additional 96-inch furnaces for increased volume.
- ✓ Abbot furnace to increase capacity.
- ✓ Upgrade the water-cooling sys-

tem to keep the furnace heating coils cool.

✓ Install a guard building to provide around the clock security required for government contracts.

✓ Upgrade cybersecurity for government contracts.

✓ Pitch and resin impregnation system.

✓ Refrigerated room for storage of resin coated fabric and resin storage.

✓ Autoclave system of 500 degrees Fahrenheit to make 3-D hypersonic parts.

✓ 5 axis CNC machining center.

As a result of the project, Americarb has committed to creating up to 45 new jobs; 41 jobs will be retained. ESD will provide up to \$450,000 in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits in return for job commitments.

New York State Sen. Robert Ort said, "With its \$6 million investment into the company's Niagara Falls plant, Americarb is further committing to not only a new and cleaner method of manufacturing, but it is also committing its future to the residents and workers of our community. Along with the new machinery that will be purchased with this investment, 45 new, quality jobs will be created thanks to Americarb's expansion. We continue to see in-

credible growth in our Niagara Falls thanks to our local industries' well-placed faith in Niagara County's workforce, and I look forward to Americarb being a valuable asset to our community for years to come."

Assemblyman Angelo Morinello said, "I congratulate Americarb for expanding, while partnering with some of the leading companies in the world for solar and stationary fuel cell powered generation. Through these collaborations, the company has been able to develop solutions to lower costs and make the technologies for tomorrow's green energy-fueled future a reality."

City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino said, "As we continue to diversify our local economy, this financial assistance by ESD to retain and increase quality jobs at Americarb is a further example of the commitment of Gov. Hochul to grow the Niagara Falls economy. We appreciate the continued investment by Americarb in our city, and their commitment to our community."

For additional information about Americarb, visit: <https://www.americarb.com/>.

NCCC professor named president of National Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting Board

Niagara County Community College Surgical Technology Program Coordinator and professor Gemma Fournier was recently named president of the National

Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting.

The NBSTSA is the certifying agency for surgical technologists in the U.S. This organization is

responsible for all decisions regarding certification – from determining eligibility to maintaining, denying, granting and renewing the designation. Fournier was first appointed to the NBSTSA in 2018.

Beginning her career as a certi-



Gemma Fournier, NCCC surgical technology coordinator and professor. (Submitted)

ate degree in applied sciences/surgical technology degree from NCCC, bachelor's degree in nursing from Niagara University, and her master's in nursing from University of Phoenix. In May 2012, she received the Fellows of the Association of Surgical Technologists (FAST) Award, followed by the Association of Surgical Technologists Didactic Educators Award and State of New York (SUNY) Chancellors Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013.

NCCC's surgical technology program is a two-year program that offers specialized surgical technology lectures, well-rounded general education courses, and hands-on experience at clinical sites such as the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Catholic Health System, Kaleida Health System, and EMMC. NCCC graduates are employed throughout Buffalo/Niagara area hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. The class of 2022 achieved 86% job placement upon completion of the surgical technology AAS degree.

fied surgical technologist (CST) in 1989 at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Fournier went on to begin her teaching career at NCCC in 1995. She has been a member of the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) for the past 29 years and is a New York state registered nurse and a member of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN). At the state level, she served on the Association of Surgical Technologists New York Assembly Board (NYAST) as president, vice president, secretary, director and delegate for 10 years.

Fournier earned her associ-

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