
Editorials

Hammond's Secrecy

Why is the town of Hammond one of the only towns in St. Lawrence County that refuses to release its proposed town budget to residents of the town and the press?

Last night, one of our reporters attended the Hammond Town Board meeting.

The town board refused to provide a copy of the draft budget to the press or to the citizens who took the time to attend the meeting.

Hammond is also the only town in St. Lawrence County whose town board regularly refuses to provide its community with an agenda prior to town board meetings.

Other towns regularly provide a copy of the agenda several days before the meeting is held so citizens who are interested in what their local government is doing can decide whether they wish to attend.

Hammond routinely refuses to prepare an agenda or to let people know ahead of time what's going to go on at their meetings.

When the Hammond town board considers local legislation, they are also the only town board that refuses to provide citizens with copies of the proposed ordinance so citizens can follow discussions during board meetings.

While members of the Hammond Town Board like to protest that they are not keeping secrets from the people who elected them, the reality is that they do.

They go out of their way to alienate people who attend their meetings. Hammond's voters need to decide whether they want elected officials who keep secrets from them. Over the past two years, some members of the town board have even taken payments from outside corporations with business before the town and then have had the nerve to suggest that it has had no influence on the town board's deliberations.

It's clear to us that the Hammond community must decide whether they want to know what's happening in their community or whether they will sit back and allow the town board to conceal public information from them.