

# Councilman Scott Hughes updates residents on open government efforts

*The following is a re-print of an editorial by Councilman Scott Hughes that appeared in the April 1, 2011 issue of the Community News*

**“Your Right To Know.” That’s the motto of Sunshine Week, a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the importance of open and transparent government.**



Sunshine Week was March 13-19 this year, and as a Clifton Park Town Councilman, I am proud to say that your town government is more open, transparent and accessible today than ever before.

A healthy democracy truly thrives when residents are informed, empowered and engaged. We’re using the power of technology to bring local government closer to you.

For example, you can log on to [www.cliftonpark.org](http://www.cliftonpark.org) and view live streaming video of Town Board meetings, or watch archived video of the most recent board meeting at your convenience.

Our commitment to transparency starts with the budget process. Workshops are open to the public and you can view the line-by-line Clifton Park budget on our website or in person at the Town Clerk’s office.

Other open government initiatives we’ve taken include:

- A 2009 update of the town’s ethics law was recognized by experts as one of the best ethics codes in New York State. The law is posted on the state Bar Association’s web site as a model for other municipalities.

- Clifton Park was one of the first communities to use the Reverse 911 system, which allowed Supervisor Phil Barrett to update residents during the 2008 ice storm that left thousands without power.
- We recently launched an Emergency Notification System on [cliftonpark.org](http://cliftonpark.org) that allows residents to voluntarily sign up to receive e-mail and text messages in the case of a town-wide emergency.
- Whether you are building a deck, applying for a STAR tax exemption, or signing up the kids for summer recreation, application forms and permits are just a click away at the town website.
- Town Clerk Pat O’Donnell’s office is open until 7 p.m. every Thursday for anyone who is unable to visit the clerk’s office during regular business hours.
- Since some residents don’t have access to a computer, we have a twice-a-year town-wide newsletter that is mailed to every home. Our Parks and Recreation booklets are also mailed to town residents.

For these reasons and many more, Clifton Park residents can take pride in knowing that your town government is delivering on its commitment to be open, transparent and accountable.

We value your feedback and suggestions. You can email me at [shughes@cliftonpark.org](mailto:shughes@cliftonpark.org) or contact any town official by going to [www.cliftonpark.org](http://www.cliftonpark.org) or by calling Town Hall at 371-6651.