

3/11/2025 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting 5:30 PM Community House

Present: Mayor Dawn White, Trustees: Steve Elwood, Gary Warn, Julie Eisele, Attorney Norman Mastromoro, Police Chief Chad Manley, Billy Vicciarelli, Franny Hulbert-Shaut, John Lull

Public: John Lewandowski, Larry Schoff, Art Dockerty, Kim Snell, Alex Countryman, Charles Straney, Eric Battisti

1. Meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Mayor White.
2. The pledge of allegiance was said.
3. Milo Clark of OESJ School District gave a power point presentation with suggestions about improving Soldiers & Sailors Park.
4. Comments by Steve Elwood:

"In light of the current events I would like to make a statement of my own regard. This is my feelings only and do not speak for the board as they may or may not feel the same way. When I ran for this position I did so with the intent to help keep the public informed on what was going on with village matters. Those that know me know that I stopped using social media for such endeavors as it takes entirely too much time and it became very negative. However I have been more than willing to listen and to answer questions the best I can. I feel that I have been more than open minded and fair with all employees when listening to ideas and complaints. I attempt to keep a neutral opinion until I have heard all of the facts and make up my own opinion. As we know there are always two sides to every story. With that being said, I feel that the purpose of the last emergency meeting may not have been heard or articulated well enough. I would like to share with you what I feel that I can legally say regarding this matter.

At the end of the last board meeting, the board was told that we may not be able to make payroll. This came as an absolute surprise to me. I was unaware of being in any financial distress. Over the course of the next two days I spoke with the parties involved with payroll and the budget. It was told to me that the police tech grant money was used to help cover expenses. This grant money was available and its sole use is police technology. Having been involved with many grants I recognized this as a misuse of funds. I did not know that this money was being used this way and I am certain there was not a board resolution. Three parties were contacted, NYCOM attorney, village attorney and the NYS comptroller's office. Two of the parties recommended that the person in charge of payroll and the general fund should be placed on a paid leave of absence until an investigation can be conducted. This paid leave of absence is not intended to be a punishment nor does it mean termination of employment. It is simply meant to create a separation until the investigation can be completed. At this time I feel that the board has investigated as far as it can without further guidance. I feel that we need to hand the investigation over to a separate agency. The separate agency can conduct a thorough investigation without bias. I feel that is the most important part, that it be done as an independent party. I will not cast blame at anyone, nor will I comment any further on this matter until an investigation is completed. I certainly will not comment on an employee with the public as I feel that it highly inappropriate.

I also understand that tensions are high but I encourage respect of all parties here tonight because if we are yelling at each other, nothing will be resolved."

Public Comment (3 min limit per person): Additional public comment welcomed for items on agenda. No comments made by public for agenda items at this time.

5. Department Heads

- Fire Chief – Report submitted and reviewed.
 - DPW – Billy Vicciarelli submitted report, which was reviewed. Reported that National Grid took down a row of diseased trees that were in the power lines at the Marina. Mayor White requesting a recommendation for what kind of tree would replace those trees as they were providing shade to a row of camp sites.
 - WWTP – Report submitted and reviewed.
 - Police – Chad Manley reported on plan to sponsor a part time employee through phase II training and firearms training with the end goal of transitioning to full time status after training was completed. Also reported on upcoming plan to provide CPR/AED training for officers because they are often times First Responders. Basic First Aid/Stop the Bleed trainings are upcoming. Also reported that MADD is coming to the school in early May with a focus on students going to Prom.
 - Codes Officer – Report submitted and reviewed.
 - Dog Control – Report submitted and reviewed.
 - Marina – Franny Hulbert-Shaut reported that seasonal campers are beginning to sign up with the new rates. She is working on a list of needed supplies and will utilize extra available supplies found in the basement of the Community House. She is hoping to get a handicap picnic table and waiting to hear from the Saratoga Arts to see if there are funds available for that. If monies are not available through that avenue, she will look at using county funds and \$2,500 from last year. There will also be a kayak machine at no cost to the Village. Looking at freezer cost while preparing for an ice cream stand. Board of Trustees confirmed that we continue with essential spending only at this time.
6. Movement of Funds – Attorney Mastromoro reviewed that is legal to move monies between accounts as long as they come from the same fund. It is, however, not legal to move monies between funds without approval of the Board.
- Monies transferred between Funds without approval, due to a deficit in payroll:
 - i. Water/sewer to General
 - ii. Fire Truck fund to General
 - iii. CD's were cancelled at Community Bank
 - iv. All money that was borrowed after February 24, 2025 has been returned.
7. Legals – Attorney Norman Mastromoro –Tax override law – It is necessary to adopt a law for presentation of overriding the tax law at a public hearing in the event that we have to raise taxes over the 2% tax cap. A motion was made to adopt for presentation at a public hearing to be held at the April Regular Board of Trustees meeting. **Motion was made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn.**
- In correction of previous actions taken, a resolution was needed to transfer funds. Norman agreed to put together a motion to ratify the transfer of funds that had happened on an emergency basis.
- Mayor White will get account numbers to Norman with Transfer accounts
 - Resolution to be approved at the next meeting.
8. Old Business –
Norman agreed to review the undertaking between the Village and the State regarding placement of the speed signs. Police Chief Manley agreed to email with information for review.
9. **A motion was made by Trustee Eisele and seconded by Trustee Warn** to create a consent agenda consisting of the 2/18 Regular Meeting, DPW, WWTP, Police, and Treasurer's reports and minutes, 2/24 Emergency Meeting Minutes, and 2/25 Bid Opening minutes.
10. A motion was **made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele** to adopt the Consent Agenda.

11. Trustee Warn made a motion to accept claims in the amount of \$52,546.62 and then withdrew it. Discussion was had to hold on vouchers for further review.

- General Fund \$ 38,830.37
- Cemetery Fund \$ 0.00
- Marina Fund \$ 667.99
- Water Fund \$ 5,690.70
- Sewer Fund \$ 7,357.56

12. New Business

- Motion **made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn** to approve Resolution No 1 of 2025 to hold the village election on 3/18/2025 at the Community House.
- Motion **made by Trustee Eisele and seconded by Trustee Warn** to put out for bids for propane, fuel oil, diesel, gasoline, and trash service.
- Mayor White read Trustee Dockerty's resignation and accepted his resignation with regret.
- Motion **made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele** to approve Resolution No 5 of 2025 to separate Clerk/Treasurer position to Treasurer and Clerk positions.

13. Other

- Trustee Eisele reported on upcoming attendance with Mayor to the NY Forward meeting planned for Thursday.
- Trustee Warn reported on the Mohawk Valley Economic Development (MVED) meeting where Skip Gehring of Gehring-Tricot (Helmont) gave a presentation for trying to acquire 3 small plants to hopefully move more jobs to St. Johnsville.
- Trustee Eisele and Trustee Warn report that they agree with the sentiments Trustee Elwood read in his letter early in the meeting.

14. Public Comment

- John Lewandowski – Had questions about separating Clerk/Treasurer. Stated that when he ran for Trustee that Mayor White had stated to him that “Jayna makes too much money” and she would take care of it. Reports that he feels that it is unfair what was done to Jayna and feels that if anyone disagrees with Mayor White during the meetings that they were shrugged off.
- Larry Schoff stated that he worked with Ms. Cool from Fall 2021 – Summer of 2024 for the Grandstand project. He reported that she always treated him in a friendly and professional manner and felt she was on top of her job. He reported that she needed to submit invoices that were 100% accurate in order to get paid. Stated she always had time for him and answered his questions. Stated he was upset and felt this was not how the Board should treat a good village employee. He recommended that the Board seriously reconsider the handling of this situation.
- Art Dockerty asked questions of the board, including questioning if it is the plan of the board to repay the Police Department grant, general fund, and Fire Department with grant money or by raising taxes. Reports that over the last 5 ½ years he has had zero issues with Jayna and disagrees with relieving the Clerk because of administrative issues as he feels she knows more than anyone in the room.
- Kim Snell asked if it was legal to have a Deputy Clerk administer the upcoming election. Mayor White reported that she confirmed with NYCOM that this was legal. Also reported an issue with parking on S. Division Street/Main St near Monte's. Stated that there is no parking to the corner and past the pole there have been several times where there were almost accidents. Referred to the fire hydrant and people that park there.
- Alex Countryman reported issues with rainwater as the snow is melting in yards. States that Asphalt was torn up, which changed the way the water sat. States he understands that there is not much DPW could

do and that now the sand bags he used on the curb are flush with the asphalt. The water is flowing down into his yard and foundation. Also noted that the Duplex has year round drainage out of the basement.

- Charlie Straney quoted Mark Twain as saying, “It ain’t what you don’t know. It’s what you know that just ain’t so that is the problem.” States that his assessment is that the problem is caused by all of the reimbursements that are being waited for.
 - i. CHIPS – end of fiscal year
 - ii. FEMA – unknown and could change with national climate
 - iii. Delaware engineering is accruing soft costs for WWTP
- Eric Battisti referred to relationships with many on the Board of Trustees and states he is appalled and confused and does not understand what is going on.
- Jayna Cool mentioned that all motions were not completed with a count of the Ayes/Nays.

15. Motion to Adjourn to Executive session to discuss next steps for responding to financial irregularities was **made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele** at 7:09 pm.

16. Motion made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn to return to the general session with no actions having been taken at 8:19 pm. **All ayes, motion carried.**

17. Other –

- Board of Trustees discussed that since grant funds have been returned to the General Fund and funds anticipated to come in over the next month demonstrate that the immediate financial situation is improving. Motion made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn to reinstate Trustee paychecks. **All ayes, motion carried.**
- Police uniforms – Police Chief Manley asked to be able to purchase police uniforms as there are dress requirements for the graduating officer and himself at the graduation ceremony. Cost of uniforms can be up to \$1,500. Board confirmed that monies will be in place and motion made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn to purchase needed uniforms. **All ayes, motion carried.**
- Police Department Grant monies are requested to be approved for use with the purchase of license plate reader (LPR). This is a condition of the grant received. Motion made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn to LPR. **All ayes, motion carried.**
- **Final count of Ayes/Nays for each motion made in the General meeting**
 - i. A motion was made to adopt for presentation at a public hearing to be held at the April Regular Board of Trustees meeting. Motion was made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - ii. A motion was made by Trustee Eisele and seconded by Trustee Warn to create a consent agenda consisting of the 2/18 Regular Meeting, DPW, WWTP, Police, and Treasurer’s reports and minutes, 2/24 Emergency Meeting Minutes, and 2/25 Bid Opening minutes. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - iii. A motion was made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele to adopt the Consent Agenda. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - iv. Resolution was made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Warn to hold the village election on 3/18/2025. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - v. Resolution was made by Trustee Eisele and seconded by Trustee Warn to put out bids for propane, fuel oil, diesel, gasoline, and trash service. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - vi. Resolution was made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele to separate Clerk/Treasurer position to Treasurer and Clerk positions. **All ayes, motion carried.**
 - vii. Motion to Adjourn to Executive session to discuss next steps for responding to financial irregularities was **made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele** at 7:09 pm. **All ayes, motion carried.**

18. Motion to Adjourn made by Trustee Elwood and seconded by Trustee Eisele at 8:40 pm. All ayes, motion carried.

Next meeting April 15, 2025 @ 5:30 pm.

DRAFT