

Village of Canton, New York

VILLAGE BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes: February 16, 2022

Board Present:

Michael Dalton, Mayor
Beth Larrabee, Trustee
Klaus Proemm, Trustee

Carol Pynchon, Trustee
Anna Sorensen, Trustee

Others Present:

Gerald Ducharme, Village Attorney
Tim Nolan, Code Enforcement
James Santimaw, Chief
Linda Casserly, Historian

Sally Noble, Clerk/Treasurer
Meghan Richardson, Rec Director
Cindy Brand, Assessor
Leigh Rodriguez, ED

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

The Mayor added items to the agenda. Under old business; Item c. will be 64 Main Street, Item d. will be the MOU with the Town. That is the MOU for Stiles Ave. Under new business will be g. Accept Tracy Fuller resignation, h. will be an update on the NYCOM meeting and I. will be school safety meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- a. **Approve minutes of January 19 and 26, 2022-** Trustee Proemm made a motion to approve the minutes of January 19 and 26, 2022. A motion was made by Trustee Larrabee. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

ACCEPTANCE OF DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Police Chief Report- Chief Santimaw said that he had another meeting with officials from the State Police, Lake Placid, local colleges about the World University Games that are coming up in 2023. The State Police are taking the lead on that. There may be some athletes staying at SUNY Potsdam but mostly up near Lake Placid because that is where the games are being held.

Trustee Pynchon had someone reach out to her about some Neo-Nazi, white supremacist stickers that have been appearing around the community on poles. Chief said he was contacted by Pat Gagnon of SLU. That was the first he heard of it. It was agreed that that if someone sees something they should report that directly to the Police Department.

Recreation Director – Meghan followed up from the Chiefs report that the pavilion is a practice site for the teams playing at SUNY Canton for the World University games. The karate class has started back up again. Fund raising for the ADA kayak launch continues to be a huge success thanks to Mark McKenna. It should be arriving in time for the Rushton Canoe races. Two weeks ago, they had issues with the ice resurfacer it had to undergo pretty major repairs to

the auger and the conditioner. Thanks to DPW for assisting in the repair but also for fixing a 10-year-old broken water main line underneath the compressor floor.

Last Friday night we hosted a high school girls state hockey quarterfinal game. It was a good opportunity for us and everything went well.

Trustee Sorensen asked about the note about the organizational shifts in the recreation advisory committee and was wondering if Meghan could give some background on why and how that happened. As a Board member hearing from community constituents is pretty important so she is just trying to understand. Meghan replied there was a recreation committee meeting and they talked about the organizational chart of the community group. It was discussed in our group of 5 and decided that the citizen advisory group should just be a group for her as a recreation director and when we have updates needed for her committee she would share with her committee.

Historian – on vacation

A written report was sent by the **animal control officer** and the **Fire Chief**.

Treasurer Report – Clerk Noble highlighted that on February 1 NYS Retirement was paid. It was over \$358,000. Last year it was \$328,000. The first year she was here it was just over \$700 for the whole Village. She also highlighted that our sales tax collection is up \$80,600 from the same period last year. That is a 26% increase. Trustee Sorensen asked if sales tax receipts last year was also up. Clerk Noble replied they were up \$4,000.

Code Enforcement – Tim said things have been pretty quiet. He issued 1 permit. He did some training for flood planning. He had 1 complaint. The Parkway project is winding down and is almost complete. Trustee Pynchon added that one of the things we've been talking about in communications and technology with Heidi is trying to split out the town and Village code web pages. This is so people know they're going to the right place.

Assessor – Assessor Brand thanked Trustee Sorensen for help with putting that out in the North Country Now to drum up new enhanced star exemptions from the basic star. She has 26 new applicants. It was good to get the word out. She also reported that the equalization rate has been set. It is going to be 86%, the residential did drop to 80 but the commercial came in at 90. So between the 2 we are at 86%.

Economic Development – Leigh said she did not submit a written report this month. She said there isn't a whole lot of new things to report at this time of year. We are working on the CDBG CARES act it is on the agenda later. They did an RFP for the Willow Island project and did not receive any bids. The MOU for the Stiles Avenue project is on the agenda. The rest is just continuing to work on existing projects.

Mayor Dalton – There was a monthly report from DPW reporting on what they are doing on a daily basis. The Mayor added the kayak launch has been fully funded. The pavilion has been taken care of. Thank you to the DPW for their assistance. The Mayor works on a daily basis with DPW and water/wastewater. The salt estimates for next season are due by the beginning of March. We are waiting for the transfer switch hopefully in the next month or so we will have something there. After speaking with the Town Supervisor, we are good to go on the municipal

building entry way on the roof. That contract was signed and that expense will be split between the town and the village. Bertrand's will be doing that work.

The Mayor also reviewed plans with Mark Basford for AT&T to change out some of their cell antennas on the water tower near SUNY Canton. That will probably happen this spring. Walt Rexford is working on equipment at the golf course getting ready for this season.

Trustee Pynchon made a motion to accept the Department Head reports. The motion was seconded by Trustee Proemm. All voted in favor. The motion carries.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Broadband – Trustee Sorensen said the committee will be meeting next week to review the MC Fiber report with them to learn of their findings. Some of them have been attending the SLC committee meetings as well.

Public Safety – Trustee Larrabee said the committee has met several times with the Community engagement committee. They had their first event the first Saturday of Winterfest, which was a sledding event at SUNY Canton. There was a fire truck, an ambulance and members of those crews, Canton PD as well as SUNY Canton Safety. It was great fun with a great turnout. Kids got to meet some of our public safety folks and we had cookies and hot chocolate.

Trustee Larrabee attended a meeting with the Mayor to speak about the methadone clinic that is on the agenda later.

Recreation – Trustee Larrabee met with Meghan and gave her all the contact information for NYS DOH and all the information regarding Taylor Park. The committee also met regarding the ice conditioner that is also on the agenda for later.

Community Choice Energy – Klaus wanted to inform the Board the education program is going to be delayed probably a month or so. The delay is because Joule has some large solar projects not coming on line as expected because of legal opposition. We are talking the end of March or April.

Complete Streets – Along with the Mayor, Chief and committee members met with representatives from the school and we are working on State Street safety improvements and also to get started on the path from the school to Sullivan Drive. We got a start working on that. We also continue to work on Judson and the raised crossing at Farmer. We have to do some investigation on storm drainage and figure out the logistics of that.

Communications and Technology – Trustee Pynchon reported that she did a second training with Heidi and Megan. It went well. Sally, Heidi and Jeni are working on moving our zoom recording off zoom on to YouTube. We are at 700% capacity. We will also be looking at navigation issues on the website. If anyone has any suggestions, please let us know.

Economic Development – Trustee Pynchon said we are continuing the conversation about housing so working on the housing strategic plan. She will be following up with Mike and Sally

on consortium agreements to see which ones are paid and which ones are signed. There is a consortium meeting coming up.

Finance Committee – The committee we’ve been meeting monthly and making good progress. We are continuing to explore the steps of separating the clerk and the treasurer positions. Sally is getting information from the County. Sally will continue to do monthly department budget reports. We got a little bogged down with the deputy treasurer leaving. Sally, Mike and I are working on the non-contract policy. You will get a draft soon.

Trustee Pynchon is working with Elana from Roemers office on our affirmative action and equal opportunity policies and statements. Trustee Pynchon will get together with Chief and Leigh to talk where we might have any kind of contracts that have affirmative action or equal opportunity requirements. She has also reached out to NYCOM for some affirmative action and equal opportunity employer statements we had talked about. Just to have a jumping off point.

The Mayor added that this week as the Village Attorney was reviewing items associated with the Comptroller’s report and our progress that we are making on the corrective action plan discovered that we didn’t properly notice the availability of the report and place a copy in the Clerk’s Office. There was a question about how that was formally filed with the Clerk. We are correcting that. Sally has sent the notice and making sure that it is properly posted. In addition as we move forward the last of the AUD’s were completed. Those will be available as soon as we have the file.

Shared Services – Trustee Pynchon said shared services are going to be meeting again. We have been talking about getting together. We and the town have approved all but the recreation agreement. The committee will be meeting shortly to see if we can get that done.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION:

- a. **County Legislator Update-** Mayor Dalton said he spoke with Legislator Fay. He talked a little bit about our request for some additional ARPA funding from the County, for our water projects. There are several requests that the County is looking at now so whether we get funding or not is questionable. In Canton there are several requests now so we will see how it gets prioritized.

Trustee Sorensen asked if he had any sense on how those requests were solicited like was there a broad please request money? The Mayor replied he doesn’t think that is how it happened. He thinks the word got out there was going to be some money available in the Community. Trustee Sorensen said when our legislator was here last month, he said he thought they would be expecting them to be deciding at the beginning of this month. Do we have an update on when they might decide this? The Mayor thought there may be some movement when the full legislature meets next. Trustee Pynchon thought the committee was meeting today and then moving to the full board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **Update on the methadone clinic** – The Mayor said he, Beth and the Chief attended a presentation by the County. In addition, you should have received an email today from Gerry with an opinion. As you look through there are some things concerning

discrimination in the type of activities that can occur in the zone where that is. The County laid out their plan very clearly. Trustee Larrabee added they have a process in place. They allowed her to ask a lot of questions. She feels it is a project that is moving forward.

The Mayor said they service about 175 clients right now at different levels. There is about 30 clients that will need the additional help that a methadone clinic will offer. No one walks out with a script any dosing is witnessed there. They will be operating 6 days a week. Once the story was out the Mayor heard from Sai Detmer. He sent the Mayor a box of information. He placed information in each Trustees mailbox.

Attorney Ducharme said his note dealt with the American Disabilities Act which does apply to zoning and actions by local governments citing different facilities and under the definitions is a person with a drug addiction can be deemed to be a disabled person who was entitled to the protection of the act. There are some federal cases specifically on point dealing with methadone clinics. The basic issue is that you do not discriminate against people with a disability.

Trustee Larrabee added that she asked how it was decided to be in Canton. At one point they were thinking about it being in Massena but that was at a time when the law was different than it is now. They needed to have a separate building from an existing clinic and that law has changed so it makes sense to combine it. In terms of proximity to the county jail, where they need to the help with services there. That is what solidified making it in Canton.

Trustee Sorensen said her issue with the whole situation was the method by which it was rolled out. Whereby neither we as a municipality nor our Police Chief or Fire Chief was brought into any kind of conversation about this. This is hugely problematic because it eliminated the possibility that we could do any kind of public discussion and public education about what actually are health services. It is important for our community to be able to provide these services to people who need them.

The Mayor closed by saying they know we will be paying attention and if problems occur we will make sure they are aware of them.

- b. CDBG CARES ACT** – The Mayor opened by saying this was a discussion at the Town meeting. They decided they did not want to make a go of it. So, it looks like the Village will be stepping up to do something with this act. Leigh said this is something we had considered last year. There is new funding available that came out at the beginning of this year so we are revisiting it. The town, has opted not to take lead as an applicant. We have gotten some feedback about other things that could be included in an application. We had a meeting with United Helpers today about mental health services and their need to expand services. There are hoping they can put together something that can be included in our application. We've talked about assistance for small businesses which she feels we should pursue. We need to better understand from the state how we can meet the national objective serving low to moderate income.

The next step if we decide to move forward is to set a public hearing where we can present our intentions for the application to the public and ask for comments and

additional input. We can include broadband services. It would need to be implemented within a year's time. The deadline for the application is June 30 but they are encouraging us to get applications in as soon as they are ready. The Mayor said he and Leigh spoke a little about emergency services. The generator at the fire department is old. Trustee Pynchon said there was a lot of discussion about this at the NYCOM conference. There is a lot of money out there. A public hearing was scheduled for March 16th at 6:00 PM.

- c. **64 Main Street** – The Mayor gave a brief update. Another 60-day extension came in today. That puts us into April. McDonald's is putting together a clean up plan.
- d. **MOU with the Town** – This is the Local Government Efficiency Grant for Stiles Avenue. Trustee Sorensen said the infrastructure committee is meeting with their highway committee to talk about this, hopefully next week. Taking action on this is planned for the March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Authorize payment of vouchers & transfer of funds** – Trustee Sorensen made a motion to authorize payment of vouchers & transfer of funds for abstract # **9 of 2021-2022**. Trustee Larrabee seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

General Fund	\$137,615.96	Golf Course	\$3,598.42
Water Fund	\$15,008.16	Joint Activity	\$10,894.22
Sewer Fund	\$24,494.58		

- b. **Discussion purchase of Ice Resurfacers** – Meghan said we currently have a 1986 Olympia brand propane ice resurfacers that we use every day. We will keep this unit to serve as a backup even with the new machine. Meghan's presentation is available on the public google drive. The goal of the presentation was to provide the board with information as it pertains to electric and propane machines. She, her staff and the DPW crew all agreed that they would recommend purchasing the 2023 Olympia Ice Resurfacers. The Mayor said the Board will wait for a recommendation from the Recreation Committee.
- c. **Discuss cost of Electricity for EV Chargers** – The Mayor shared information with the Board on the increase in cost for the EV Chargers. Trustee Proemm said there has been an increase in usage. Trustee Proemm also added they are looking for 2 to 4 more spots for additional EV chargers.
- d. **Discuss a Reserve Fund for the Future Purchase of a DPW truck** – Mayor Dalton explained that some purchases are not being made this year. He would like to order a dump truck with a box with these funds plus an additional \$73,000 in next years budget. The truck will not arrive in this fiscal year. He would like the Boards approval to move ahead with the purchase and to encumber the funds. A resolution will be prepared for the next meeting. The Board agreed to move forward.

- e. **Approve Tim Nolan to attend 2022 Code Conference in Lake Placid February 28 – March 3** – Trustee Pynchon made a motion to approve Tim’s training request. Trustee Sorensen seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carries.
- f. **Set Budget calendar** – A tentative calendar was presented. The board will check their schedules.
- g. **Accept Tracy Fuller Resignation** – Trustee Pynchon made a motion to accept Tracy Fuller’s resignation. Trustee Proemm seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carries.
- h. **NYCOM Meeting** – The Mayor reported that he, Trustee Pynchon and Trustee Sorensen attended the latest NYCOM meeting. Topics were AIM funding, State budget, Restore NY, legislation on changing bottle deposits from 5¢ to 10¢, implementation of Cannabis laws.

Trustee Pynchon said she was feeling optimistic about the state budget, Water/sewer money is available from the Federal government but not easy to get, Cannabis laws are a work in progress, ARPA funds are now more flexible on what you can spend them on. There is an April 30 reporting deadline. She felt it was a good meeting and the next one is scheduled for May.

Trustee Sorensen said she learned about labor relations, there is conversation regarding Civil Service reform, COVID leave time, EMS response time, Housing and Community Renewal, Restore NY program and vacant and abandoned properties. She said the budget session was interesting. Even though there is money available there are lots of layers to get through.

- i. **School Safety Meeting** – The Mayor said he Trustee Proemm, police chief, and Toby met with School Superintendent Burke. The conversation was about the stop light at the school and a possible change in flow of sidewalk traffic. They will continue to meet. Trustee Proemm said he will keep the path from the school to the ballfields on the list to make sure it doesn’t get lost. They have a meeting in March and he will keep that on the front burner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

John Gray of Gray and Gray and Associates CPAs, P.C. asked to speak. He gave his credentials and a history of his investment in his building at 1 Main Street. He expressed his concerns over the recent report from the NYS Comptrollers Office and the lack of it’s mention or the mention of the Boards response in the minutes. It wasn’t discussed until 1/19/22 minutes under old business.

There were no other public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION- Trustee Proemm made a motion to enter into executive session at 9:07 PM for the purposes (H) the proposed acquisition, sale of lease of real property. Trustee Pynchon seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carries.

Trustee Pynchon made a motion to come out of executive session at 9:37 PM. Trustee Proemm seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carries.

The board discussed preparing a brief statement for the press. Items discussed were time frame, cooperation by all, no significant exceptions for instances of fraud or abuse, problems result of bookkeeping/record issues, no money was unaccounted for, Finance Committee charged with policies and procedure development and implementation, decision made to split Clerk-Treasurer position and hire Treasurer, Board hired CPA firm with experience with municipal accounting, AUD now up to date and a full audit is scheduled.

The Board was instructed not to publicly discuss its audit findings and report until they were finalized. The Board is committed to continuing to work together.

Trustee Sorensen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 PM. Trustee Larrabee seconded the motion All voted in favor. The motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Noble
Village Clerk