

**VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**December 11th, 2023**  
**6:00 P.M. Regular Monthly Meeting**

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Trustee Jolene LaSiege, Trustee Connie McAllister, Sewer Superintendent Mark Basford, Code Enforcement Officer Grant Backus, Attorney Henry Leader, Trustee Samatha Booth and Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Shirley and Nicholas Calton, Ralph Hammond, Bob Poor and Director of Engineering Thomas Haynes from DANC

Absence: Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield

6:00 p.m. Mayor Michael Hammond opened the regular monthly meeting

1. Pledge of Allegiance was said by all in attendance
2. Appropriations: Sewer and General

Bills were audited by Trustees Charles Fifield and Samatha Booth

Motion: Samatha Booth      Seconded: Jolene LaSiege      Vote: unanimous

Trustee Jolene LaSeige signed a voucher to pay, St. Lawrence County Highway at the meeting. Trustee Samantha Booth questioned signing the voucher from the County because it was prepared by them and looked different then the Villages. Booth also questioned Becky Donnellys voucher as the check amount was different. Clerk Lisa Hammond corrected the check amount and Trustee LaSeige signed the voucher.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of November 13, 2023 were approved

Motion: Jolene LaSiege      Seconded: Samath Booth      Vote: unanimous

4. Mayor/Trustees Sworn In:

Mayor Michael Hammond  
Trustees Jolene LaSeige and Samantha Booth

All of the above were sworn in by Clerk Lisa Hammond for a two year term

5. Appointments:

Deputy Mayor - Charles Fifield

Clerk- Lisa Hammond - sworn in by Mayor Michael Hammond for a two year appointment

Deputy Clerk - Becky Donnelly

Planning Board - Full

Zoning Board - Full

Official Newspaper - North Country This Week

Mileage - Federal Rate

Official Bank - Community Bank

Attorney - Henry Leader

Code Enforcement Officer - Grant Backus - sworn in by Mayor Michael Hammond

Mayor Michael Hammond stated the above appointments

Attorney Henry Leader will prepare and send his oath of office to the Village

Motion was made by Trustee Jolene LaSeige and seconded by Trustee Connie McAllister all voted in favor.

6. Reports: Departments and Committees

- a. Sewer Report: Mark Basford gave a written report and verbal report to the board members. Basford stated he is still waiting on test results of sandbeds. Basford asked for permission to purchase valves at an estimate of \$2,533.00. Motion was granted.

Motion: Jolene LaSeige                      Seconded: Samantha Booth. All voted in favor.

Report approved by motion.

Motion: Samantha Booth                      Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

33 Hours reported by Basford for and 30 Hours reported for Jared Murray.

A brief discussion was held on a trailer parked near the sewer plant. Mayor Michael Hammond asked Clerk Lisa Hammond to reach out to the owner of the property and

inquire about it.

Mayor Michael Hammond and Trustee Jolene LaSeige thanked Mark Basford for his continuous good work running the sewer plant

- b. Code Enforcement Report: Grant Backus was present and discussion was held on existing issues. Clerk Hammond gave Backus a folder of permits issued to date. Mayor Michael Hammond stated that Grant Backus needs a laptop to do training, issue permits and handle correspondences. Discussion was held.

Motion to purchase chromebook or laptop for Code Enforcement use in the amount of \$500.00 range

Motion: Jolene LaSeige    Seconded: Connie McAllister    Vote: unanimous

- c. Clerk's Report: Clerk Lisa Hammond reported that Corning is still behind on paying sewer. Mayor Michael Hammond, Mark Basford and Attorney Leader met with Corning about expiring contracts and payments. Clerk gave an update on furnace issues in the building. Becky Donnelly and Clerk Hammond continue to work together on items.

Motion: Jolene LaSeige                      Seconded: Samantha Booth    Vote: unanimous

- d. Mayor's Report:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that he, Trustee McAllister and Clerk Lisa Hammond attended the Mayor dinner at the East Branch restaurant in Heuvelton. Grant funding was the topic of conversation. Hammond stated that the next Mayors meeting will be held with Town Supervisors at SUNY Canton and would like a strong showing from the Village of Rensselaer Falls.

Motion: Connie McAllister    Seconded: Samantha Booth    Vote: unanimous

- e. Committee Reports:

*Trees* - TTS did a great job for the Village

Playground/Falls Festival Committee - Mayor Hammond stated a Falls Fest Committee meeting will be held after the Village meeting. The Fire Department

is allowing the Festival committee to use the Fire Hall for a Winter Dance at the end of January. The 27th of 2024. December 17th will be a christmas party at the fire department hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary from 1-3 pm.

Followed with activities in the park from 3-6pm. Sleigh rides in Pioneer Park 5-6 pm with activities.

Mayor Michael Hammond thanked the Calton family for continuous help with decorating the park and all their help in our community.

Motion to accept committee reports by Samantha Booth and seconded by Jolene LaSeige.

## 7. New Business:

### a. DANC, Presentation - Discussion & Possible Approval

Board members were in receipt of preliminary documents sent to them on the property located at 209 Rensselaer Street for this discussion. Mayor Michael Hammond, Attorney Henry Leader and Thomas Haynes had previously met virtually and held discussions. Assemblyman Scott Gray had suggested assembling a committee. Since that suggestion, St. Lawrence County, the State, and the Village of Rensselaer Falls are moving forward in efforts to remediate the structure problem and getting this back on the tax roll. Haynes gave a brief history of what DANC does and how they started and examples of projects they have done. DANC assists municipalities. Haynes stated he has been involved personally in six similar projects in getting them redeveloped. Haynes spoke of programs that help municipalities with fees at the landfill. An agreement was reviewed by board members and discussion was held. Attorney Henry Leader had discussions with Mark Walzyk - Leader had also spoken with St. Lawrence County Attorney Steve Button on this matter. The St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators is very willing to help the Village of Rensselaer Falls in this matter as far as getting ownership of this property from the owners. Answers and questions were exchanged. Mayor Michael Hammond stated for the record that he had communication with absent board member Charles Fifield and that he was in favor of moving forward with DANC and the agreement with no money commitment until the deed was acquired. Different grant funding was discussed. Motion to sign agreement with minor adjustments was made and to move forward after possible title transfer.

Trustee: Connie McAllister    Seconded: Samantha Booth    Vote: unanimous

Mayor Michael Hammond will sign an agreement after changes are made to document.

b. Corning Sewer Discussion:

Carrie Tuttle was present at an earlier meeting with Mayor Hammond, Attorney Leader and throughout the idea of Corning running a direct sewer line to Rensselaer Falls connecting to Heuvelton/Ogdensburg sewer system. Discussion was held and matter was tabled. Mark Basford suggested having an independent study done. Trustee Samantha Booth expressed concerns of costs of repairing the Villages old Sewer plant and the potential of rates going up to the home owners. Discussion was held on the unpaid sewer fees from Corning. Corning and DANC representatives are coming to the Villages January meeting for more discussions on a new contract and possibilities of a feasibility study of a new line.

8. Updates.

- a. Library renovation, discussion was held and one window has been installed in the basement. Mayor Hammond noted that we are hoping to get the basement sealed while the area is dry.
- b. Executive Session: Fire and Rescue discussion - No executive session was held No Fire Department members were present.  
Michael Hammond, fire department member, stated that the Fire Department recently placed \$100,000.00 into two CD's for 18 months at 5.3% with SLFCU. Mayor Hammond noted that the e-board and Village Board have still not met on the budget matters and that he will try to schedule something for January's board meeting. Mayor Hammond also stated that he needs to ask what the Rescue Squad has in their general fund.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE VILLAGE BOARD

Trustee Connie McAllister noted that the speed sign on CR 15 is still not working. Mayor Hammond noted that he has the battery and will be ordering a new one.

Ralph Hammond and Bob Poor thanked the Village Board for the new furnace in the Historical building. Discussion was held on the building itself and reserving it.

Nick Calton noted that the Town of Canton has been doing a great job filling in potholes

and taking care of the Village Streets.

7:35 p.m. Closed Regular Monthly Board Meeting:

Motion: Samantha Booth

Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond, Village Clerk