

# VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS

## Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2023

6:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield, Trustee Samantha Booth, Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Shirley and Nick Calton and Canton Town Highway Superintendent Steven Smith

Absent: Attorney Henry Leader, Trustee Connie McAllister, Trustee Jolene LaSiege and Mark Basford Sewer Superintendent

5:30 p.m. Board members entered into an executive session regarding matters of personnel upon motion of Trustee Charles Fifield and seconded by Trustee Samantha Booth. All in favor.

6:00 p.m Board members came out of executive session upon motion of Trustee Samatha Booth and seconded by Trustee Charles Fifield. All in favor.

6:01 p.m. Mayor Michael Hammond opened the meeting.

1. All said the pledge of allegiance in attendance
2. Appointment: Interim Code Enforcement Officer

Discussion was held in Executive Session to hire Grant Backus as interim Code Enforcement Officer until one is hired by the Village. The motion to hire and pay Grant Backus \$300.00 a month on a month-to-month basis was approved. The motion was made.

Motion: Samatha Booth      Seconded: Charles Fifield      Vote: unanimous

Mayor Michael Hammond noted that both Trustees Connie McAllister and Jolene LaSeige are in favor of this interim position for Backus until a Certified Code Officer can be hired.

3. Appropriations:      Sewer and General

Bills were audited by Trustees Charles Fifield and Samatha Booth

Motion: Charles Fified      Seconded: Samatha Booth      Vote: unanimous

### 3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of the regular meeting of January 9, 2023, were approved upon motion.

Motion: Samatha Booth      Seconded: Charles Fifield      Vote: unanimous

### 4. Reports: Departments and Committees

- a. Sewer Report: A written report was received by the board members and read by Mayor Michael Hammond. Mayor Hammond asked Clerk Lisa Hammond to inform Basford of a hole in the ground near the pumping station on Front Street across from Hartmans. Mayor Hammond noted that a cap has come off and snow is falling in the hole.

Basford reported working 31 hours in December and Jared Murray worked 32 hours in January.

Motion: Charles Fifield      Seconded: Samatha Booth      Vote: unanimous

- b. Code Enforcement Report:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that Attorney Henry Leader has mailed violation notices out on a couple of properties and will send a second one this week. A Code Enforcement ad has been sent to North Country This Week to advertise for a certificated Code Officer with a submission date of March 6, 2023.

Mayor Hammond noted he updated the website, removing Tim Tuttle's name as Code Officer, and will add Grant Backus.

- c. Clerk's Report:

Clerk Lisa Hammond stated that she and Becky Kelley, Clerk from Heuvelton have filed the AUD with the State. Hammond also noted that they have begun to work on the budget. The quarterly sales tax check was received in the amount of \$18,127.59 from the Treasurer's Office.

Motion: Charles Fifield      Seconded: Samatha Booth      Vote: unanimous

d. Mayor's Report:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that the Mayor's dinner will be in March, somewhere in Potsdam. Hammond will get the information out to the board when it is received. SLC Health Director Jolene Mongor will be speaking at the dinner.

Mayor Michael Hammond noted that he continues to work with the Attorney on matters and will continue to report such matters back to the board. A brief discussion on the snow on Main Street was held and much appreciation was given to the Town of Canton for clearing out and cleaning up the snow banks.

Motion: Samatha Booth      Seconded: Charles Fifield      Vote: unanimous

e. Committee Reports:

Mayor Michael Hammond noted that he will hold off on committee assignments for another month to hear from board members. Hammond stated as he knows - Trustee Booth is interested in the Small Business and Historical Society committee assignments. Trustees LaSeige and McAllister are on the Festival/Playground committee. Mayor Hammond asked Trustee Charles Fifield if he would be on the Tree committee with him. At next month's meeting, we will discuss the Library committee - Clerk Lisa Hammond as Vice President of the Library has been working with Mayor Hammond, Agnes Hoey the librarian on the renovations with grant funding, along with Shelly Sanderson President of the Library and Canton Director Emily Owens. Mayor Michael Hammond noted he is looking to give up some of the duties that go along with the committees as he is pursuing career opportunities in school leadership and administration, his full-time job outside of being Mayor.

*Trees - None*

Playground/Falls Festival committee: Mayor Hammond stated that the Falls Festival committee hosted a very successful New Year's Eve Party but has not met with Connie McAllister, Festival committee Treasurer about profit and or loss. May 20, 2023, will be Village Yard Sale Day and the Falls Festival will be hosting a band and food truck.

Mayor Hammond noted that last year the Festival held two events in the park each month from May to August, but this year it will only be once a month on Fridays. (May 20th, June 23, July 21, August 18, and September 8 & 9 2023. A piece of

playground equipment will be purchased with Festival monies this year fulfilling another goal of their mission as a committee.

Motion: Charles Ffield      Seconded: Samatha Booth      Vote: unanimous

## 5. New Business:

### 1. Schedule Budget Workshop:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that the village has guaranteed revenue from real property taxes through assessments. Our unpredictable revenue Sales Tax is received quarterly and has been up for the past couple of years, but can shift. Hammond noted that at this time the Village is giving the Fire and Rescue nearly 100 percent of the Real Property Tax dollars roughly \$32,000.00 and it is not sustainable. Mayor Michael Hammond noted working with Village Clerk Becky Donnelly has really been educational when looking at how different municipalities handle payments to the Fire Departments and how matters are handled through contract. Each organization has different dynamics. In working with Attorney Leader, Hammond stated that it is possible for the Fire Department to have its own tax levy line on or in the Village Tax bill. The discussion will be held at budget work session time. Mayor Michael Hammond stated for the record that he and all board members are in agreement that there is a service needed to be provided here in the community for Fire and Rescue. Hammond noted a lot of Fire Departments report to the Village Officials and provide information, but we seem to be doing it backward here in Rensselaer Falls, particularly in the terms of the contract between the two parties. The board is also in agreement that even though we provide most of our tax revenue, the Fire and Rescue still are resistant to working with the village to find solutions for all of their financial needs. Hammond ended by stating that the purpose is to get the Fire and Rescue the money they need to be sustainable as well. The discussion was held on a date for the workshop session. It was decided that the board will meet on March 2nd or March 6th, 2023. Clerk Lisa Hammond will post the agenda as soon as it's decided. Trustee Charles Ffield wants to make sure Trustee Jolene LaSeige at the budget workshop meeting and or the March 6th regular meeting,

### 2. Sewer Debt Paydown:

A discussion was held on Sewer Debt. Previous discussion was held at past meetings that the Board would use the CD money from the larger CD to pay

down sewer debt and keep the smaller CD to use for sand replacement. Clerk Lisa Hammond was given the approval to send \$30,104.53 to pay down the debt.

Motion: Charles Fifield      Seconded: Samatha Booth      Vote: unanimous  
Mayor Hammond noted he is in favor of paying down debt on the Sewer Plant.

3. Summer Projects:

Highway Superintendent Steven Smith was present and a discussion was held on upcoming projects and work to be done in the summer of 2023. Mayor Michael Hammond noted the cemetery ditches need to be cleaned to get water off State Street. Cornelia to the cemetery will be widened to 20ft, straight down to the back of the cemetery. South Street needs work to get rid of the water so pavement can be laid down, South Street has settled for some time now. Front Street is peeling from Main Street toward Rt 11, binder and top 7 will be used after the street is milled. Congress Street needs to be done with binder and top 7 at a width of 20ft. Smith noted if the Town of Canton may be working on Irish Settlement Rd, maybe they could work in the Front Street binder to help save time and money. Mayor Michael Hammond asked Steven Smith if the Town Highway would level out the dirt pile on Birch Street that came from West Front Street last year. There is a vacant lot off Birch Street that the Village owns and Hammond would like to see the dirt leveled down through the paper street as a base layer to a future road. Mayor Hammond and Steven Smith held a discussion on the intersection of Front and Elizabeth Street and getting pavement or domed sod over to the drop box. The highway crew last year didn't want to go over that far to box, but Hammond asked Smith to do so this year. Stakes are being purchased to place at that curve and at the end of the sidewalk in Pioneer Park. An ongoing problem in front of Claude Palmer's house near the Fire Station was discussed and will be resolved in the spring. Mayor Hammond thanked Steve Smith for the Town's help here in the Village.

3. Updates:

1. Library/Village Office Renovations Discussion: None

4. Any other business that may come before the Board:

Discussion was held on turning a portion of State Street into a one-way. Clerk Lisa Hammond was asked to contact the County Highway to find out the procedure.

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that he is going to start attending school board meetings at Hermon Dekalb and they are held on the 1st Monday of each month starting in May. Hammond requested moving the Village monthly meetings to the second Monday of each month to allow him to do so. A discussion will be held on this matter at next month's meeting.

7:00 pm closed regular monthly board meeting

Motion: Samatha Booth

Seconded: Charles Fifield

Vote: unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond

Village Clerk