

VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 7th, 2022
6:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Deputy Mayor Charles Fified, Trustee Stacy Gushea, Trustees Connie McAllister, Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Code Enforcement Officer Tim Tuttle, Fire Chief Dallas Denny, Ralph Hammond, James Blackburn and Ernie Swartsfigure

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

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

Addition to agenda:

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

Bills were audited by Trustees Charles Fified, Connie McAllister and Jolene LaSiege
Charles Fifield asked Clerk Lisa Hammond if the National Grid bills had gone up by a lot?
Clerk Hammond checked and they did not. Fifield in agreement.

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of January 10, 2021

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

4. Reports: Departments and Committees
 - a. Sewer Report: Both December 2021 and January 2022 written reports were received. Mark Basford was called to a Fire on the Hutchinson Rd in the Town of Oswegatchie and not present at the meeting. Mayor Michael Hammond read the reports to the board members. All matters are running smoothly at the Sewer Plant. Basford asked in the report approval to purchase tools for the garage at the Sewer Plant. This matter to be discussed at Budget time.

32 Hours reported by Basford for January and 30 Hours reported for Jared Murray

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

b. Code Enforcement Report:

Tim Tuttle was present and gave a verbal report. He and Attorney Henry Leader are continuing to work on the ongoing list of violations in the Village. Tuttle and Leader spoke on phone this date and will start the process of written appearance tickets. Tuttle noted that no one has replied back on their violation notices and these matters are now past the deadline date. Discussion was held on a rental issue dispute that Tuttle followed up on in the Village. Mayor Michael Hammond asked Tuttle to remind David and Sally Hartman that the designated snowmobile trail in front of their property should not be plowed up, as it is a liability for the Village. Tuttle stated he would talk to them and the board needs to realize they have driveway access for each property. Tuttle reported 5 hours worked the month of January.

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

c. Clerk's Report:

Clerk Lisa Hammond reported that W2's and quarterly sewer bills were mailed out. CHIPS and other source reimbursement total is; CHIPS \$4,613.81, PAVE NY \$5,109.55 and EWR balance is \$3,899.51. Mayor Michael Hammond stated that he would like the EWR work/monies to go into ditching in front of the Fire Station and under the Town Rd (CR14) used. Hammond hopes to tackle that project in the spring. Clerk Hammond stated that Karen Clary who has been working with the Clerk on quarterlies and budget matters in the last couple of years has moved. Hammond stated that she reached out to Becky Donnelly, Village Clerk of Heuvelton about assisting with these matters along with the AUD because Gray and Gray has not been accessible to her. Hammond noted that many emails have been sent with nothing being completed by them to date. Donnelly handles these matters for the Village of Heuvelton and would be a great asset to the Village of Rensselaer Falls.

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

d. Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hammond noted the next Mayor's Dinner will be held in Potsdam. Hammond asked for help with coordination with National Grid on matters for the spring, poles, etc. W9's were sent for the Senator Richie Grant funds and Hammond will follow up on this matter.

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

e. Committee Reports:

Trees - Mayor Michael Hammond stated he would follow up with National Grid on the rest of the trees that need to come down.

Playground/Falls Festival Committee:

Michael Hammond stated that there was a date on Facebook of the 21st of February for a Festival Committee meeting at 6 p.m. Location to be determined. Discussion was held on free books this month at the Library. Clerk Lisa Hammond asked everyone present to spread the word.

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

5. New Business:

A. Budget Workshop:

Mayor Michael Hammond asked about availability. After discussion it was decided to meet at 5 p.m. on March 7th, 2022 for budget discussions, before the regular monthly meeting at 6 p.m. Clerk Lisa Hammond noted that Karen Clary, who has worked with the budget and other matters in the past for the Village has moved out of State. Both Mayor Hammond and the Clerk have approached Becky Donnely, Village Clerk for Heuvelton about taking on this role. Donnely has accepted, as she works 4 days a week for Heuvelton. Board members were in agreement with this.

B. Broadband Committee Discussion:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that he attended a couple meetings on the matter. Hammond stated that the Town of Canton entered into an agreement with MC Fiber Solutions, run by John and Andy McAdoo. The McAdoos are running a fiber consulting business. The Town of Canton is paying the business \$4,000.00 to do a needs assessment for the Town of Canton and both Villages. After a ECC survey deadline the County put out an RFP, who has broadband, who doesn't, and how it's working for them. It was discovered that a lot of people in this area still don't have internet or good internet. Mayor Hammond noted that at this time Canton is not looking for a contribution from the Village of Rensselaer Falls for the needs assessment. A brief discussion was held on access and dead zones.

6. Updates. none

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

James Blackburn was present and asked about filing of Workman's Comp Claims and procedure. Discussion was held on the fact that claims used to be filed herewith the Village of Rensselaer Falls Clerk and now they are being filed with St. Lawrence County and then on to the Canton Town Supervisor. Blackburn had conversations with both the Town Supervisor and Jodi Wentzel from St. Lawrence County on the matter. Both Mayor Hammond and Blackburn agree that this matter should be questioned. Mayor Michael Hammond will reach out to Village Attorney Henry Leader on the matter and report back.

James Blackburn asked Mayor Michael Hammond what the Village was going to spend the ARPA funding money on? Mayor Hammond stated that half the stimulus monies have been received and at this time a couple ideas have been floated around but no decisions have been made at this point. Minimal discussions have been held with the community.

Ernie Swartfigure stated that the lawnmower is ready for snowblowing and servicing. Swartfigure will do some minor repairs that need to be taken care of on the equipment owned by the Village. Mayor Hammond noted how nice the sidewalks look this year and thanked Ernie. Hammond also noted he would call Steven Smith at the Town of Canton Highway and thank them for the nice clean up job of all the snow.

Mayor Hammond asked Connie McAllister and Ernie Swartsfigure to make a list of street signs / inventory that are in need of repair after discussion was held on damaged ones due to plow trucks. After a list is secured the Clerk will call the County about making new ones and the Town about erecting them.

6:48 p.m closed regular monthly board meeting

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

6:49 p.m went into executive session for the purpose of Public Officers Law 105

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote; unanimous

7:13 p.m. came out of executive session

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded; Connie McAllister Vote; unanimous

7: 14 p.m. closed regular monthly meeting

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond, Village Clerk