

# VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS

## Regular Meeting Minutes

### June 6th, 2022

### 6:00 P.M. Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield, Trustees Connie McAllister and Jolene LaSeige, Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Code Enforcement Officer Tim Tuttle, Sewer Superintendent Mark Basford, Bob Poor, Ernie Swartsfigure, Sam Booth, Emily Hastings and Tom Grazer.

Present by phone:

Absent: Attorney Henry Leader and Trustee Stacy Gushea

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance was said by all in attendance

A moment of silence was held in honor of long time Village Clerk Esther Gushea

2. Appropriations:      Sewer and General

Bills were audited by Trustees Charles Fifield and Jolene LaSeige

Motion: Connie McAllister      Seconded: Charles Fifield      Vote: unanimous

3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of May 2nd, 2022 regular meeting and May 8th, 2022 special meeting were approved

Motion: Charles Fifield      Seconded: Connie McAllister      Vote: unanimous

4. Reports: Departments and Committees

a. Sewer Report: A written report was received. Mark Basford was present and stated that things are pretty normal. The camera was used and the problem was solved.

Basford is looking into a problem with the bigger camera that the Village owns. Basford is working on moving sand in hopes that the new sand will be coming soon and report back to the board with a price. Basford noted that the price of chlorine is high right now and getting hard to find.

27.5 Hours reported by Basford for May and 38 Hours reported for Jared Murray

Motion: Connie McAllister      Seconded: Jolene LaSeige      Vote: unanimous

b. Code Enforcement Report:

Tim Tuttle was present and gave a verbal report. Tuttle submitted a written report. Tuttle went over the highlights of his written report. Violations etc. Discussion was held on a recent garage fire and Tuttle stated he was having a hard time locating the homeowner. Clerk Hammond provided a P.O. Box number to tuttle for the owner. A request was made by the homeowner's estranged wife to discontinue the sewer billing due to no electricity. After discussion it was decided to leave billing as is.

Discussion was held on the recent Apartment Building Fire on Main Street owned by Anhminh Reynolds. Tuttle stated that Atlantic testing has come forward and said they can't do testing on the building because it is too far gone now. Tuttle has requested this in writing from Atlantic testing. Tuttle stated that the owners want to get it cleaned up.

Motion: Jolene LaSeige      Seconded: Connie McAllister      Vote: unanimous

Trutess Jolene LaSeige asked Tim Tuttle about the status of Ed Couglars building that is being leased by Hartmans. Tuttle stated that he spoke to one of the parties and that Hartmans stuff will be removed by this date June 6th, 2022 and then the building will be turned back over to the estate. Tuttle is fearful that this won't happen as there is still a lot of material there.

Mayor Michael Hammond asked Tim Tuttle to get intouch with the County Attorney about hazardous buildings in our area. Tuttle will try to call and Hammond will send out an email before next month's meeting.

c. Clerk's Report:

Clerk Lisa Hammond stated that the new quick books program is loaded onto the new laptop. Quick books will cost around \$400.00 a year and will be the cost to have our own license. The 2020 AUD has been filed and accepted by the state. Becky Donnelly and clerk Hammond have begun working the 2021 AUD. Hammond stated that she called the County about the Street signs and line stripping to get on the list (back in May) and will reach out to them again. Village tax collection has started with an easy transfer from the old laptop to the new one. Hammond noted that a dish garden was sent to the funeral home in honor of past Clerk Esther Gushea.

Motion: Jolene LaSeige      Seconded: Charles Fifield      Vote: unanimous

d. Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hammond stated that he co-hosted the Mayors Dinner in Waddington with the Mayor of Waddington. The meeting speaker was Pat Kelly from the IDA about job opportunities for young adults graduating from this area. Next meeting will be held in Massena. Hammond went over the Friday nights in the Falls schedule with the next event being July 15th with Pat Duffy singing and Parker Piercy cooking. Flyers will be made up and placed around the area.

Motion: Connie McAllister      Seconded: Jolene LaSeige      Vote: unanimous

e. Committee Reports:

*Trees* - A brief discussion was held with Bob Poor on trees. A couple Maple trees at Scott Rivers location need to be attended to. Mayor Hammond was given approval to get a hold of TTS tree service out of Canton. Mayor Hammond would like to see a couple red maple trees placed in the Village and maybe a couple crabapple trees. Discussion was held on planting a tree in memory of Esther. Trustee Jolene LaSeige suggested a plaque in memory of Esther on a piece of Sandstone.

Falls Fest - Michael Hammond gave a brief update along with Connie McAllister. To date 6 businesses have responded to donation letters sent out. McAllister sends thank you cards out and deposits the money right away.

Motion to accept committee reports made by Charles Fifield and Jolene LaSeige

5. New Business:

A. Sewer CD's:

Mayor Michael Hammond reported that he and Clerk Hammond went to the St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union and with prior approval from the Village Board were able to close out both CD's without penalty. Mayor Hammond now wants the board to decide where to place the CD monies. Clerk Lisa Hammond will get a pay down on the current USDA loan for the Sewer Plant.

With roughly \$40,000 in CD money, discussion was held on the price of sand replacement.

After discussion the board wants to hold off on paying the USDA.

B. NYDOT: Shared Service Agreement

A brief discussion was held on the agreement presented. Motion was made to sign the 2 year agreement with the State DOT.

Motion: Connie McAllister    Seconded: Charles Fifield    Vote:  
unanimous

C. Library & Village Office Space:

Emily Hastings, Director of Canton Free Library was present from Canton Library and shared ideas and information about the possibility of the Village and the Library sharing space. The idea is to get the Village Office out of the basement. Emily, President of the Rensselaer Falls library Shelly Sanderson, Mayor of the Village Michael Hammond and Clerk Lisa Hammond met and surveyed the building. Discussions were held.

Emily stated that all were in agreement that it was time for change and revitalization of the building. COVID has played a big role in the function of the Library. Expansion of the existing building is the dream goal for the future. Having a community center at this

location. The current building has a lot of history and much of it would be preserved. Emily noted her grant funding that is available is at least 50 percent off the project. Emily stated that it has been 8 years since she has done a grant for Rensselaer Falls Library and its time again. Emily stated that the deadline is nearing and would recommend a soft start to the big plan, with electrical, and get the space itself more ready for this very open grant. Shared services, consultants, cross training, etc will be involved. Mold remediation is a priority downstairs of the building. Emily stressed that the Library is a very special place for Librarian Agnes Hoey and this would be a real special for all involved. Mayor Michael Hammond added that we should move the basketball court to the Playground. Hammond also gave his visual thoughts on what an expansion would look like at the library. Hammond noted placing a nice digital sign out front. Some existing furniture from the Library building may be moved to the Historical Society. Emily stated that the big grant could be funded by the Library Association, the Village of Rensselaer Falls, and possibly the Canton Library would help fund this Library Branch. Trustee Connie McAllister stated that this grant sounds like a great idea and is in favor of moving forward for the wiring and small projects. Email communications will be held between Library Director Emily Hastings, Mayor Hammond, Clerk Hammond and Library President Shelly Sanderson. Trustee Charles Fifield asked about our Village Insurance covering mold removal. Clerk Hammond will inquire.

## 6. Updates

Town of Canton Highway Estimate:

Mayor Hammond went over the projects:

1. Project: Congress Street pipe in front of the Fire Station ditching from Corner of Canton Street to Rensselaer Street. A 24 inch pipe will be installed, plastic. Trustee Charles Fifield asked about fuel costs and the chance they may come down and or lesser time required for said project. Mayor Hammond will ask for this to be put in writing. Trustee Jolene LaSeige asked about the CHIPS monies. Mayor Hammond noted that the Village has \$41,000 in CHIPS. Discussion was held on what the

County will provide for pipes. An email will be sent to Don Chambers at the County for clarification.

2. Congress Street grinding tree stumps.
3. Elizabeth Street grinding tree stumps.
4. Cornelia Street grinding tree stumps.
5. Behind Cemetery (Dump location) stump ditch line and top with soil.

Trustee Jolene LaSeige expressed her concern again that the Village of Rensselaer Falls residents pay Town of Canton taxes, but yet we are paying them to do these jobs. LaSeige stated that if we were in the Country would we still pay? LaSeige said it's like we're paying twice and this conversation has come up in the past. Mayor Michael Hammond talked about the difference between the DA and DB accounts in Canton's budget. Note that's why they only bill us for labor rates and fuel. LaSeige said we're paying for their benefits and there's not a lot we can do about it, but stated she doesn't like it. Spring clean up in the Village this year was notably not as good as in the past years. Discussion was held on water drainage in the Village being an ongoing problem. Mayor Michael Hammond is going to meet with TTS about the stumps, to see if it is cheaper. Hammond noted he wants to green light these projects to at least get on Canton's schedule. Motion to accept project list in the amount of \$19,425.87

Motion: Connie McAllister    Seconded: Jolene LaSeige    Vote:  
unanimous

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

Ernie Swartsfigure was present and went over some items. Swartsfigure pointed out that the Village received a good inspection by the County recently. Swartfigure wants to purchase a new push mower, battery operated. Board is in favor of it. Trustee LaSeige asked Swarsfigure to put up playground equipment. Discussion was held on the dump. It is in need of being pushed back and burnt. Swartsfigure asked for more hours for the summer. It was in agreement to give Swartfigure 15 hours a week through September.

Motion: Connie McAllister      Seconded: Charles Fifield    Vote: unanimous

7:40 p.m closed regular monthly board meeting

Motion: Charles Fifield      Seconded: Connie McAllister      Vote: unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond  
Village Clerk