

VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS

Regular Meeting Minutes

March 7th, 2022

5:00 P.M. Budget Work Session

6:00 P.M. Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield, Trustee Jolene LaSiege, Trustee Stacy Gushea, Trustees Connie McAllister, Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Code Enforcement Officer Tim Tuttle, Sewer Superintendent Mark Basford, Beck Donnelly, Ralph Hammond, Steve Hammond, Bob Poor, James Blackburn, Ernie Swartsfigure, Ray and Raven Johnson

Attorney Henry Leader was present by phone for the Regular monthly meeting at 6 P.M.

5:00 p.m. Mayor Michael Hammond opened the 2022-2023 Budget Work Session by inviting any Department Head that was present to speak on behalf of their Departments.

Mark Basford Sewer Superintendent was present and requested that the lift stations be painted this year. Basford had previously requested painting one in this year's budget and another in the next budget and a cost of \$4,470.00. Three stations need to be done. Discussion was held on getting them taken care of as this has not been done since installation. It was agreed upon that Basford can give the go ahead to Koester for this service. Basford provided a hand written quote for Koester. Basford also requested a service on the pumps. Update to the priming systems needs to be done. Mayor Hammond noted that budget amendments will be done at the May meeting to cover such items as discussed, using the tractor as an example. Trustee Charles Fifield questioned the sale of equipment and using those funds to go toward painting the lift stations.

Discussion was held on the Villages CD's and doing something with them. Implementing a reserve fund was also discussed. Contractual accounts were discussed. The Villages USDA loan was discussed and it was decided that the Clerk Lisa Hammond and Becky Donnelly will check into the interest being paid and work on paying it down or possibly refinancing to get a better rate.

Mayor Michael Hammond proposed increasing Legal and Clerk line items. Attorney Henry Leader did a lot of work on the Villages Local Laws and Codes. Mayor Hammond suggested Attorney Leaders' usual salary of \$1,200 increasing it to \$5,000 to have when unforeseen matters arise. With the concern of what's happening with the recent fires of residents' properties and falling down structures Attorney Leaders guidance will be needed. Discussion

was held on leaving the Fire and Rescue the same as they had an increase the last few years. Fire tax was discussed and the fact that the Village of Rensselaser gives more to the department than our neighboring Villages and Towns. Clerk Hammond and Becky Donnelly are going to investigate and do some homework on Fire tax. Donnelly is working with the Assessor on tax cap questions and tax rates, etc. Email exchanges. A possibly small tax increase was proposed to offset the increase in the cost of living. Consolidation of funds was discussed. Street lights were discussed. Mayor Michael Hammond is going to do some research on the increase of bills even though we have the new LED lights. Library line items will now go under the Clerks line. Flowers and trees were discussed and an increase was proposed.

5:59 p.m. Mayor Michael Hammond closed the budget work session

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 Stacy Gushea

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of February 7, 2022

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Jolene LaSiege Vote: unanimous

4. Reports: Departments and Committees

- a. Sewer Report: A written report was received. Mark Basford was present and stated that a vacuum pump went down at one of the lift stations. Basford assisted the Booths at their business on Main Street with a frozen pipe. Basford noted that this is where DANK comes in handy with their GSI mapping system.

24 Hours reported by Basford for January and 34 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. Tuttle stated that he placed a plaque on Kevin Reynolds' burnt out building on Main Street and that the time is ticking. Tuttle stated he has five other smaller issues and needs to send Attorney Henry Leader the final paperwork. A court date of the 20th of April has been set at Canton Court in April. Attorney Leader stated that he would be glad to look at the paperwork before it goes to court. Mayor Hammond noted that the board held a special meeting on Friday giving Tuttle the go ahead to issue a notice of violation and a notice of condemnation. This allows for a time frame to be set for clean up at Kevin Reynolds Main Street property that recently had a fire. Tuttle stated that Reynolds has selected a contractor to demo the building. Contractor is Goldie from Morristown. Mayor Hammond noted the revenue loss for the Village as the building had six units in it on the sewer system, along with property tax loss. A short discussion was held on the detour of traffic through the building. Mayor Hammond asked Tuttle for a copy of appearance tickets for the board to see after they are written to the five property owners. Tuttle stated that the clean up at Reynolds property has to start within 30 days and be completed within one year. This is Reynolds responsibility. Discussion was held on asbestos and handling of it. Bob Poor was present and stated that when the Fire Department was housed at this property there was no asbestos in 1972. Tuttle stated he would monitor Reynolds building closely and let the Mayor know daily on the progress.

Steve Hammond asked about the hazards of Ed Couglars building. A brief discussion was held on the disrepair buildings in the Village. Tim Tuttle stated that he has Couglars building on his agenda for this summer and added that there is a hole in the roof. Mayor Hammond added that the County has a program that if a building is deemed hazardous with hazardous materials, they might help with removing it and he will check into it.

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

c. Clerk's Report:

Clerk Lisa Hammond noted that it has been a pleasure working with Becky Donnelly and learning from her. Hammond reported that she has had a busy month fielding phone calls, emails. Hammond reported that Kevin Reynolds will receive a partial sewer the next quarter on his burnt down apartment building.

Clerk Hammond asked James Blackburn if the Fire Chief Dallas Denny ordered the approved turnout gear? Blackburn stated that he was not sure about this. Clerk

Hammond noted that the Chief stated that the cost go up continuously and so the Clerk stated she will check with the Chief as she has not received a bill for turnout gear as of this meeting.

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

d. Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hammond noted that he and Trustee Connie McAllister attended the Mayor's Dinner held in Potsdam. The guest speaker was from Reach Out, a hot line organization that was established in 1972 for people in need of any kind of help. Hammond and McAllister noted that it was very informational. A brief discussion on sales tax was held at the dinner along with fire departments and their roles at the scene of an active fire.

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Jolene LaSiege Vote: unanimous

e. Committee Reports:

Trees - see updates

Playground/Falls Festival Committee:

Jolene LaSiege reported that a meeting was held a few weeks ago and laid out four dates for fundraising events. After Fire Department approval the 1st event will be April 30th at the station consisting of Corn Hole, raffles. The other events are slated to take place outside. A pizza sale is slated. Michael Hammond stated that the committee consists of twelve members and ten were in attendance for the last meeting with 2 reporting via zoom. Great progress was made.

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

5. New Business:

A. New Fire Department Members:

James Blackburn introduced Ray Johnson and Raven Johnson to the board members. Paperwork was reviewed by the board.

Father and daughter have recently moved back here to New York from Vermont. Ray was a past member of the Rensselaer Falls Fire Department. Raven will turn 18 years old in July. Discussion was held on the status of what Raven is allowed to do at fire senses. Ray Johnson was approved by the board members and Raven approval pending a copy of the physical.

Motion: Jolene LaSiege Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

B. Proposed Budget Public Hearing Date:

Approval to set Public Hearing April 4, 2022 at 5:45 p.m.

Motion: Jolene LaSiege Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

6. Updates

- A. Broadband Committee Discussion: Mayor Michael Hammond stated that MC Fiber Solutions, delivered a deliverable, a needs assessment. About 247 Town of Canton residents don't have service or are under served. Hammond will share this data with the Board members. A brief discussion was held on access and dead zones. Committee meetings are on going and Mayor Hammond will deliver back next step recommendations.
- B. Trees: Bob Poor was present and reported that the tree located at Mike Wainwrights that was taken down by National Grid will be cleaned up by Wainwright. Mayor Michael Hammond will get prices on clean up at Matt McAllisters property. McAllisters large tree is down and needs to be cut up and disposed of. Board members are all in agreement for the Mayor to get prices via facebook and word of mouth.

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

7:12 p.m closed regular monthly board meeting

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Stacy Gushea Vote: unanimous

7:13 p.m went into executive session for the purpose of Public Officers Law 105

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

7:36 p.m. came out of executive session

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded; Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

7:36 p.m. reopened monthly meeting

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

Discussion was held on hiring Becky Donnelly at a rate of \$25.00 an hour to assist with clerical matter for the Village of Rensselaer Falls. All board members were in agreement. Motion was made to do so.

Motion: Stacy Gushea Seconded: Connie McAllister Vote: unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond
Village Clerk