

VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 1th, 2023
6:00 P.M. Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield, Trustee Jolene LaSieve, Trustee Connie McAllister, Sewer Superintendent Mark Basford, Trustee Samatha Booth and Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Shirley and Nicholas Calton

Absence: Attorney Henry Leader, Grant Backus

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

Addition to the Agenda:

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

Bills were audited by Trustees Charles Fifield and Connie McAllister

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

3. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of October 9th, 2023 were approved

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Jolene LaSieve Vote: unanimous

Mayor Michael Hammod stated that the minutes and agendas are current on the website.

4. Reports: Departments and Committees
 - a. Sewer Report: Mark Basford gave a written and verbal report. An issue on State Street was briefly discussed and taken care of by the homeowner. Sand is getting tested from the Plant. Basford made sure with the board that he could go ahead with starting on one of the beds at the plant. Basford is working on removing rusted valves and replacing them by hiring a contractor to help on the

project. Lift stations are working at this time. Basford will be having shoulder surgery on January 2, 2024. Mayor Mihcael Hammond stated that Attorney Henry Leader has been in contact with Corning's Attorney. Hammond read the correspondence between the Attorneys on the Sewer Usage Agreement. The current agreement runs out this month after 25 years. Clerk Lisa Hammond noted that they have not been current in payments. Leader and Corning are going to set up a meeting to negotiate a new contract. Discussion was held.

33.5 Hours reported by Basford for and 33 Hours reported for Jared Murray for the month of October 2023

Motion: Jolene LaSiege Seconded: Samatha Booth Vote: unanimous

Board members and Mayor Hammond thanked Basford for all he does for the Village.

- b. Code Enforcement Report: Covered during Mayor and Clerk Report
- c. Clerk's Report: Clerk Lisa Hammond reported that she forwarded information via email to the Planning and Zoning Board members about an upcoming training. On October 20, 2023 the Villages AUD was approved by the Comptroller's Office. Both Becky Donnelly and Clerk Hammond will begin working on the 22-23 AUD under a new system from the State. Hammond reported sales tax was received in the amount of \$18,602.00. Jarod Murray at the sewer plant is now being reported to the retirement system along with Mark Basford. Murray has been an employee for five years. Sewer bills were mailed out on October 31st with no correspondence enclosed from the Fire Department. Hammond noted that the Fire Department had previously requested that a flier of some sort be enclosed to save on postage for them. Clerk Hammond did not receive any material to do so. Hammond stated that she continues to go back and forth with Corning about unpaid sewer bills. Hammond has been in contact with the Village Attorney on the matter. One building permit was applied and paid for this month.

Motion: Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

Clerk Lisa Hammond added that the new Furnace was installed at the Historical Building and a bill will be forthcoming. Canton Community Fund Grant will be applied for to help offset this cost.

d. Mayor's Report: Mayor Hammond stated that he and Attorney Leader are working on the burnt building of Reynolds. Assemblyman Scott Gray, DANC, Attorney for the Village and the Mayor are having a meeting about the structure.

The Village received a thank you note from the Cemetery Association for the nice work done in the area of the cemetery.

Motion: Charles Fifield

Seconded: Samatha Booth Vote:unanimous

e. Committee Reports:

Trees - TTS discussion under other business below

Playground/Falls Festival Committee - Playground equipment to get rid of, air plane.

Flags are down around the Village. Mayor will remove barrels soon around the Village.

Small Business - none

Motion to accept committee reports by Trustee Connie McAllister and Seconded by Trustee Samatha Booth

5. New Business:

a. Affidavit of Tax Collection:

Clerk Hammond stated that over \$35,000 was collected in property taxes this year with \$11,000.00 of it being sewer relevies. All board members signed an affidavit. Hammond will sign in front of Notary and send it to the St. Lawrence County Treasurer's Office.

Motion made to approve signing Affidavit by Trustee Jolene LaSiege and seconded by Trustee Charles Fifield.

6. Updates.

a. Code Enforcement:

Mayor Michael Hammond stated that Grant Backus is willing to take the classes and be educated on Code Enforcement issues and get certified in the end.

Attorney Henry Leader will meet with Backus on responsibilities and paper work if and when court appearances are required. Clerk Lisa Hammond stated the CIVICPLUS is increasing their fees and in conversations with Code Enforcement Officer Russell Lawrence the Village of Rensselaer Falls should consider going back to paper and not spend money on a program to issue 5 permits a year. Mayor Michael Hammond asked the board members for permission to send Grant Backus to Gouverneur to meet with Attorney Henry Leader on Code matter.

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Jolene LaSeige Vote: unanimous

b. Planning Board Alternate: Discussion and Possible Approval:

Mayor Michael Hammond suggested approving Sarah Wright as a Planning Board alternate. Motion was made by Connie McAllister and seconded by Jolene LaSeige. Vote: unanimous

c. Fire and Rescue: Discussion

NOT EXECUTIVE SESSION: This is what Mayor Hammond entitled it in the agenda. The Village board members did not enter into executive session.

Mayor Michael Hammond gave a recap of scheduling of meetings with Fire and Rescue. Meeting was canceled because no budget was received for review until just days before the joint executive meeting. Chief Newcombe had not received a copy of the Fire Department's budget in the six months he has been Chief, per Mayor Hammond. Hammond dropped a copy off to Newcombe upon receiving it himself. Hammond reminded the board members that they are the authority of jurisdiction. Hammond noted that the Fire Department members had not received a copy of the rescue budget in some time. Discussion was held on the budgets provided, particularly the miscellaneous categories. The Fire Department has approximately \$143,000.00 in a bank account per emailed minutes. The village board has no record of rescue squad meeting minutes. Mayor Michael Hammond wants to have conversations with the Departments and wait to hear from them. Trustee Jolene LaSeige is looking for more details. LaSeige stated that it looks like the departments budgets are in balance, and asked, "what do the departments need if they are indeed in balance." LaSeige stated that the hospitals do not have the capability to use the new machine purchased by the rescue department that requires an ALS person to use this machine.

Mayor Michael Hammond stated we need these services but also need to be fiscally responsible. Trustee Jolene LaSeige stated she will help the Fire Department with any fundraising they want to do. Mayor Hammond will fill Chief Newcombe in on discussion that were held here during this meeting. Trustee Jolene LaSiege stated that she was asked by a County Legislator to be on a committee for Fire and Rescue paid by the County. This program would have County employees to dispatch ALS and Fire and Dispatch. LaSeige has to get approval from her employer (Claxton Medical) to accept this committee position. LaSeige stated that there is funding out there for this to happen.

6abc: Held in Public session - no entry into executive session

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE VILLAGE BOARD

TTS invoice discussion and possible approval was added:

\$13,000.00 worth of work was performed by TTS in front of the dump and behind the cemetery and along State Street & Pine Street. The ditches needed cleaning and exposure to dry up to help with drainage. Wood was claimed, therefore TTS did not take it with them. Jim Gushea, Steve Hammond, Grant Backus and Bob Poor were a great help in working with TTS to get the job done right. Mayor Michael Hammond noted that emails were exchanged between him and all board members prior to the work being done. Mayor Hammond is also going to reach out to TTS about moving a couple brush piles before sending payment. All the work done by TTS was very good. Motion to pay bill when received.

Motion: Trustee Jolene LaSeige Seconded: Trustee: Samatha Booth Vote: unanimous

Nick Calton expressed concerns to the board about another property owner burning. Calton reported it to the DEC and they wont do anything about it because it is wood burning. The smoke and ashes are affecting the neighbors.

7:04 p.m. Closed Regular Monthly Board Meeting:

Motion: Charles Fifield Seconded: Samatha Booth Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond, Villa Clerk