

Village of Afton
Board of Trustees Meeting
Jack D. Bolster Community Center, Afton, NY
August 10, 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees August 10, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Susquehanna Room, 105 Main Street, Afton, NY

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm, by Mayor Janice Nickerson.

Mayor Nickerson announced at the start of the meeting that all visitors kindly hold all comments during the meeting until we reach the point in our agenda for public recognition.

Present: Mayor Nickerson, Trustee Muller, Trustees Lawrence, Trustee Simonds, Trustee Humphrey, Clerk/Treasurer Palmatier, DPW Supervisor Bailey DeBetta and Village Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Butler.

Visitors: Richard Cuthbertson, Kathy Ryan, John Lawrence, April Leggett, Patricia Stafford, Maryann Palmetier and Charles Torres.

- A motion was made by Trustee Muller authorizing Clerk/Treasurer to pay the Following, audited vouchers, Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed. **General Fund Vouchers # 76 - 116, Totaling \$11,214.49.**
Water Fund Vouchers # 16 – 24, Totaling \$3,494.95.
- Motion to accept previous minutes with no additions or correction, made by Trustee Simonds. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.

Monthly Report:

- **DPW/ Water:** Mayor Nickerson read the DPW Report aloud. They have replaced and installed new street signs on East Main Street. They have fixed water shut offs, painted lines in the center of the Village and back parking lot. The team went to Greene to help them mill their streets. They have trimmed brush along the roadways. Forms were set and concrete poured for the sidewalk at Leggett Park, Topsoil was placed, around the newly, poured sidewalk. The department has removed the sidewalk at 169 Main Street, set forms for placement of a new sidewalk. They have cleared and cleaned up the loose stones on Spring Street. They have also continued with water checks, brush pick up, watering the flowers as well as mowing and weed whacking. Mayor Nickerson, Thanked Bailey DeBetta for his efforts throughout the Village. Mayor Nickerson informed Mr. DeBetta that she has heard from many residents, how much he has accomplished in the 2 weeks that he is has been on the job.
- **Police Department.** Report distributed. Mayor Nickerson stated that the report was available for anyone wishing to view it.

- Code Enforcement: Report distributed. Village Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Butler read his report aloud. He had a resident contact him with questions on the possibility of placing a solar farm on his property. Mr. Butler referred him to the County to obtain more information. Another resident contacted him about having a shed removed and a dumpster in place for the debris. The homeowner stated that there was no hazardous waste material within the removal process. Mr. Butler stated a resident contacted him about watering his lawn. Mr. Butler stated it is ok to water your lawn as long as there is no water drought order in effect within the Village. Mr. Butler stated that a law firm looking to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy, for a home located within the Village reached out to him. He has referred them to the County. Resident contacted him about sidewalks on South Main Street; he explained that the Village is working on fixing the sidewalks. Mr. Butler contacted the political candidates, about the signs left throughout the Village after the primary votes. He was, assured that remaining signs would be removed. Another resident contacted him about the placement protocols of fencing on their property. Mr. Butler explained that they must be sure that the fencing will be, placed along their property boundary lines. He received a complaint about a dog in which he referred to the Animal Control Officer. Mr. Butler continues to send out lawn care notices and working on the disabled and junk vehicles throughout the village. He had attended the planning board meeting.
- Planning Board: Trustee Humphrey informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Planning Board held a meeting last week. Trustee Humphrey stated that Planning Board Member April Leggett has continued to be in contact with Norwich Cooperative Extension for assistance with the New York State Agriculture and Markets program for guidance with the chicken proposal. Ms. Leggett stated that the Planning Board Committee is looking over protocols for sanitation and inspection of chickens. They are also continuing to work on the sign law updates.
- Finance/Insurance: Mayor Nickerson stated that in August of 2017, the Village was notified that The New York States Comptroller's Office, had selected them for an audit. The audit covered a period of January 1, 2016 to August 9, 2017. The Comptroller's Office found that the money's that the Village has saved over a period of many years could not sit in one general use account. At the time of the audit, the Mayor was Sally Muller. During her time as Mayor, Mayor Muller had continued adding to the general savings, as those before her had done. By the completion of the audit, Cynthia Burnett, was, elected as Mayor. The auditors told Mayor Burnett that the Village needed to safeguard the Villages assets and ensure the public trust and confidence in the Villages financial practices. There needed to be specific reserve accounts created for the savings accounts. Mayor Burnett, was, asked, in May of 2018 to adopt a comprehensive fund balance policy addressing the village budgeting practices and establishing reasonable fund balance levels and specify how those funds should be, appropriated, this was never completed. Over the last several weeks, the Board has worked to meet these requirements.
- A motion made by Trustee Simonds to create a Capital Reserve Water Improvement Fund for \$490,469.45. This fund balance will come from two separate accounts the Water Systems Improvement – Account # 9762 – for \$205,739.21. In addition, the Water Fund Savings – Account # 9774 – for \$284,730.24. Then closing Account # 9762 and Account # 9774. In the creations of this account this fund balance, will go towards the water tank replacement. Seconded by Trustee Muller. All in favor, motion passed.

- A motion made by Trustee Simonds to create a Capital Reserves Police Equipment Fund for \$35,000.00. This fund balance will come from General Savings Account #1 - # 9750. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion made by Trustee Lawrence to create a Capital Reserves Improvement / Building Fund for \$315,331.17. This fund balance will come from General Savings Account #1 - # 9750. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- In the creation of accounts Capital Reserves Police Equipment Fund and Capital Reserves Improvement / Building Fund, the General Savings Account #1 - # 9750, will be closed.
- A motion made by Trustee Simonds to close the FEMA Account # 3108- \$16,243.54. Then moving those funds to Unemployment Savings- Account # 9737. Making Unemployment Savings- Account # 9737 fund balance \$29,768.39. Seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion made by Trustee Lawrence to create a Capital Reserves Employee Accrued Liability Fund for \$5,000.00. This fund balance will come from Unemployment Savings- Account # 9737, leaving a fund balance in the Unemployment Savings- Account # 9737 of \$24,768.39. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion made by Trustee Lawrence to create a Capital Reserves Improvement / Building Fund Account # 2 for \$288,590.75. This fund balance will come from General Savings Account # 2 -#3042. Leaving a fund balance of \$200,000.00 in General Savings Account # 2 -#3042. Seconded by Trustee Muller. All in favor, motion passed.
- Christmas Parade Committee: Trustee Simonds stated that she has not heard anything, but that she will reach out to Brenda James.
- Parks Committee: Mayor Nickerson stated that the Afton Community Parks Associations is not a part of the Village of Afton. That Trustee Sally Muller is the spokesperson for the Afton Community Parks Associations. They the Association is no different from that of the Sertoma. That these groups and associations work with the Village to raise funds to better the community. Mayor Nickerson stated that the Parks Associations has just donated more funds to place additional pre- school equipment at Leggett Park. The Associations long-term goal is to create a community park with in the Village.
- Historian Report: Report distributed. Mayor Nickerson stated that the Town / Village Historian Kathy Ouimet always does such a wonderful job with her reports. They are very lengthy and detail oriented. Mayor Nickerson stated the report is available if anyone wishes to view it or want a copy.
- Dog Control Officer: - Report distributed.

Old Business:

- Playground Equipment – The sidewalk has been placed at Leggett Park. Mayor stated that we were under the understanding that the footers were finished; they are not. We will

need to have this done prior to placing the playground equipment. Trustee Humphrey stated that, Andrew had placed cobble in at the time, Greg Page had drilled the footers, and perhaps we can get him to come back.

- Tree Removal – Mayor Nickerson stated that we currently have a resident on High Street looking to participate in the tree removal program. This program consists of village residents paying half of the cost of a tree removal located on their property closest to the street and the Village paying the remaining half. Mayor Nickerson stated that Mr. DeBetta has been in contact with a tree cutter from Greene to do the work.

New Business:

- Trustee Humphrey asked DPW Supervisor Bailey DeBetta how much longer the Village would have the additional help with the part time summer help. DPW Supervisor Bailey DeBetta stated he was not sure as to when Mr. Butts would be returning to his bus-driving route, that he would have to ask him. Mayor Nickerson stated that it was agreed, that Mr. Butts would stay on until Labor Day Weekend.
- Trustee Humphrey thanked DPW Supervisor Bailey DeBetta. Trustee Humphrey stated that Leggett Park looks nice; it is a long time coming. Trustee Lawrence agreed.
- Trustee Lawrence asked Village Code Enforcement Officer, Jeffrey Butler if he has done a follow up on Spring Street. Mr. Butler stated that he would like the Police to go along with him when he does. He stated that he had spoken with the property owner once before about cleaning up.
- Visitor April Leggett, who is part of the committee formed for the building lights project, informed the Village Board of Trustees that she and Trustee Simonds have been gathering information. Ms. Leggett stated that Horton Hardware is willing to sell the Village gooseneck lighting at \$65.00 apiece, when they are normally \$85.00 each. Ms. Leggett stated that she has been in contact with a woman from NYSEG who has stated that there are two funding sources available. Ms. Leggett stated that the Official she spoke to at NYSEG expressed that maybe there could be issues in the future, if these building sections were to change ownership. As the new owner may not like the light placement. Trustee Simonds suggested that the Village possibly look into old fashion light poles. Ms. Leggett suggested possible poles with 3-system lighting on them. Trustee Simonds asked about the pole that sits in the middle of the sidewalk in front of the building. Mayor Nickerson asked Visitor Patricia Stafford if she is aware why that pole is there. Mrs. Stafford expressed that perhaps the light was a part of the Afton Bakery, as they had a sign that was luminous at one time. Mrs. Stafford stated that lower level was a village sidewalk; therefore, you would need to speak with the property owner about removing the pole. Ms. Leggett informed the Village Board of Trustees that she has found information pertaining to a discount program for lighting with matching funds up to \$200,000.00. She stated that this is a part of a revitalization funding. Which could include outside businesses, apartment housing and sidewalks. Mayor Nickerson suggested Ms. Leggett confer with Linda Dovona or possibly Chris Kehoe from Hickory & Doc, as they are both very talented, to help place her ideas on paper. Ms. Leggett stated that the NYSEG Official suggested that placement of an uneven number of poles be placed, as this is more appealing to the eye. We can also be metered light that would consist of a dawn to dusk setting. Ms. Leggett asked the Village Board of Trustees if they

knew or has electrons in mind. Trustee Humphrey stated that he is unaware of any that this time.

- Trustee Simonds asked who maintains the handrails in front of the building on Main Street. Trustee Simonds stated that they could use a fresh coat of paint. It is, believed that the building owner is responsible for the care of the handrails.
- Mayor Nickerson stated that the Village Police Force would be increasing their hours to 40 hours a week. The Police Committee is working on interviewing additional Officer's,
- Continued Policy Updates – Mayor Nickerson informed the Village Board of Trustees that this is an ongoing process.
- A motion made by Trustee Muller for the Village to accept the monetary donation from the Afton Community Parks Associations for the purchase of new playground equipment for Leggett Park . Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion by Trustee Muller to hold a Public Hearing on September 14, 2020 at 7:05 pm to inform the public of the amendment of Local Law #3 of 2001. To add the daily licensing fee of \$10.00 daily per person and or unit. Seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion by Trustee Muller to adopt SEQRA Resolution – An Equal Opportunity Policy, Adopt the Chenango County Fair Housing Plan and designation, Amendment of Procurement Policy to include “Encouragement of solicitation and bidding of goods and services from minority and women owned businesses”. Seconded by Trustee Simonds. All in favor, motion passed.

SEQRA Resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, The Village has secured funding through the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for the Water System Study Project and to pursue future OCR funding, the Village is required to comply with NYS OCR regulations; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VILLAGE BOARD OF THE VILLAGE OF AFTON AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Village of Afton adopts the attached Equal Opportunity Policy; and
2. The Village of Afton adopts the Chenango County Fair Housing Plan as the fair housing plan for the Village of Afton; and
3. The Village designates the Chenango County Fair Housing Officer as the fair housing officer for the Village of Afton; and
4. The Village amends the Village of Afton Procurement Policy to include an additional article to read as follows: “The Village of Afton encourages the solicitation and bidding of goods and services from minority and Women Owned businesses.”

- Trustee Simonds asked about doing something in remembrance of Joelyn Sines at Leggett Park. Trustee Humphrey stated that this has already been discussed, he stated that a good portion of funds that were donated to the Park Association were from the Joelyn 5K in the past years. The Parks Association intends to honor Joelyn; the Parks Association has a few ideas, when the time comes for doing so.
- Mayor Nickerson stated that anyone wishing to view the bill pay vouchers or the Comptrollers Audit notice, stating that the money needed to transfer into Capital Reserve fund is available for those wishing to view.
- Mayor Nickerson thanked John Lawrence for sharing the feedback information he received on the placement of the bicycles throughout the village, it is nice to know that people are appreciating them.
- Mayor Nickerson informed Trustee Humphrey that she called about the permit on Bumps Creek. She stated that she was, informed that the permit has lapsed. Due to no action taken when it was, issued the first time. We must now start the entire process over again.

Recognition of Visitors:

- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson thanked DPW Supervisor Bailey DeBetta for the removal of the chipped loose stones on Spring Street.
- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson informed the Village Board of Trustees that he would be retiring as Santa this year. He is unsure if there will be a Christmas Parade this year, but if there is this will be his last year.
- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson spoke on behalf of the VFW. He has asked that the pole lighting project not be too tall, as to where it may shine lighting into windows that could or may be unwanted. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that the VFW has received their new planters.
- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson informed the Village of Trustees that Sertoma would be receiving their Adirondack Chairs. They will need to varnish them, and order plaques to place on them. He asked where the Village would like them placed. Mayor Nickerson suggested in front of the old Nursey School Building. Mayor Nickerson stated to Mr. Cuthbertson that Sertoma could place the chairs where they wished.
- Visitor John Lawrence informed the Mayor Nickerson, that any tickets that written by the Village Police Force must be hand written. If entered into the computer system, they then become a Town ticket, and the, fine fees are then kept by the Town.
- Visitor Kathy Ryan thanked the Village Board of Trustees for the placement of the end of 30 mile an hour sign on East Main Street. She stated that she noticed a change in the speed rate in which vehicles are leaving the Village, but notes that they continue to speed coming into the Village limits.
- Visitor Charles Torres stated that he is very pleased with the work-taking place on the village sidewalks. Mr. Torres said that he notice on the agenda the new playground

equipment, what happened to the old playground equipment. Mayor Nickerson stated that the Parks Associations has donated funds for more equipment for Leggett Park. In addition to the already purchased equipment there will two infant swings and two bounce riders placed in the park.

- Visitor John Lawrence asked Mayor Nickerson if she received the information on the boat launch. Mayor Nickerson stated that she has, she has spoken with Bailey DeBetta about it. Bailey has stated that he has spoken with the Town Superintendent of Highways, Kirk Hoyt. He stated that typically, that it is just to the end of the boat launch that has been dredged. As it is a never-ending cycle of removal because the gravel continues to settle in the same areas. Mr. DeBetta stated to do it right you would need to hire an engineer, which could be quite costly. You would need to decide if the Town & Village would want to share the project.
- Visitor Kathy Ryan asked if there was any activity on the police report. Mayor Nickerson stated that the person, who had broken into the Higher Ground Church, has been detained. Patrol responded to Pixley Drive where that was a person found to be sleeping in their car. They also assisted a resident with obtaining fingerprinting for a background check. A welfare check performed on a resident. Patrol responded to the Afton Fair Grounds, for an attempted break in. The Afton Fire Department called about an open door, patrol responded. Patrol assisted the New York State Police in locating a gray Toyota 2 door Celica. Patrol responded to a domestic dispute. The Department also conducted numerous property checks throughout the village.
- A motion made by Trustee Simonds to adjourn our regular meeting at 8:05 pm. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Ann Palmatier
Clerk / Treasurer