

**Village of Afton  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Jack D. Bolster Community Center, Afton, NY  
January 8, 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held January 8, 2024 in the Susquehanna Room, 105 Main Street, Afton, NY.

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

**Present:** Mayor Dedman, Trustee D. Lawrence, Trustee Humphrey, Trustee T. Lawrence, Trustee Winans, Clerk/Treasurer Palmatier, DPW Supervisor DeBetta, Village Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Butler and Officer in Charge Frank Ventura.

**Visitors:** Donald Ouimet, Linda Matthews, April Leggett, Melanie Hager Mueller and Jeremiah Santiago.

- A motion made by Trustee D. Lawrence authorizing Clerk/Treasurer to pay the following audited vouchers. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor motion passed.

**General Fund Voucher's # 173 - 195, totaling \$11,422.26.**

**Water Fund Voucher's # 71 – 79, totaling \$2,922.48.**

- Motion to accept previous minutes with no additions or correction, made by Trustee Humphrey. Seconded by Trustee T. Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- Mayor Dedman stated that the Local Law #1 of 2024, entitled “A LOCAL LAW ENTITLED ‘FENCES had remained open from our pervious board meeting, as we are waiting for 239 review plan from the County. We are at this time reviewing the law, it will remain open until our next meeting.
- At this time visitor April Leggett who is a Planning Board Member addressed the Village Board of Trustees with some concerns pertaining to the current fence law as is it written. The key recommendations are as follows:
  - There should be a revision giving a grandfathering of existing fences.
  - That all businesses must enclose their garbage bins in order to maintain an attractive appearance, with fencing to be at least five feet high with a gate. All existing businesses at the time the law is enacted will have one year to form the enactment date to comply with the law. Failure to comply will result in a fine set by the Village Board of Trustees.
  - That storage tanks such as large propane tanks, piles of debris, used equipment or other unsightly items should be concealed behind obscuring fences and gates.
- There was many discussions among the Village Board of Trustees about these recommendations. It was agreed that perhaps a grandfather clause should be included with the fencing law. However, there were

concerns over the potential gray area of trying to enforce businesses to comply with fencing structures to conceal trash or any other debris.

## Monthly Report:

- DPW/ Water: Verbal report given by DPW Supervisor DeBetta. Supervisor DeBetta received 3 estimates for placement of a generator at Vallonia Springs for the well house. He stated that the best price for the complete job was from Superior Heating. He asked that the Village Board of Trustees make a motion allowing for him the purchase the needed generator to run the well house better effectively during storm outages.
- A motion made by Trustee D. Lawrence allowing for the purchase a generator with the complete installation from Superior Heating at cost not to exceed \$6,700.00 with the funds for this purchase to come from the General Fund Saving # 2- Account # 3042. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- Police Department. The police report was read aloud by Mayor Dedman. Mayor Dedman introduced the newly appointed Officer in Charge for the Police Department, Mr. Frank Ventura. Mr. Ventura stood and introduced himself to those in attendance. He expressed that he is happy to be here to help rebuild the Police Department. He is hopeful that patrol will be more visible within the community. He has spoken with all the current patrolman, who have indicated that they are committed to working. Officer in Charge Ventura stated that he is impressed with Afton Police Department, however there is some equipment that is outdated. He informed the Village Board of Trustees that he had come across some paperwork pertaining to a grant that was submitted by the previous OIC, Rowe. He had spoken with the Village Clerk Treasurer who informed him that the funds have been received, with that he'd like to obtain body cameras along with a new computer that is needed for the department. Officer in Charge Ventura presented the Village Board of Trustees with an estimate for the body cameras. The estimate is under the grant amount, the Village Board of Trustees told Mr. Ventura to get the cameras along with the computer he needs, as these items will be purchased with grant funds.
- Code Enforcement: Report read aloud by Code Enforcement Officer Butler. Code Officer Butler asked the Village Board of Trustees about obtaining appearance tickets to issue when required. There were discussions among the Village Board of Trustees on this topic. Visitor Donald Ouimet, The Town of Afton Judge was asked if he was aware how this process would work. Justice Ouimet indicated that one would be required to make an appearance to the court, however he's not aware if there are any local laws pertaining to this matter. It was stated that perhaps the Officer in Charge, the Code Enforcement Officer and the Town Justice could work together to come up with a summary of writing for a needed plan to move forward.
- Planning Board: Trustee Humphrey informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Planning Board review the fence law. Mr. Richard Cutting came and spoke with the Planning Board about the use of solar energy. Mr. Cutting expressed that there are good and bad aspects in the use of solar energy fields. Mr. Cutting stated that anyone who is a state worker with a retirement from New York State does not qualify for state refunds for a solar energy panels on their property. He was not informed of this when he placed solar energy panels on his property, therefore they missed out on the funds allowable by the state and had to pay out of pocket. Trustee Humphrey stated that the persons wishing to place a go-cart track at the fairgrounds attended the planning board meeting.
- Finance/Insurance: Remains the same.

- 4 Towns Forward: No representative. Discussion among the Village Board of Trustees on when the meeting are held, for 4 Towns Forward. At this time it is very difficult for board members to attend these meetings. As the meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8:00 am in Bainbridge, NY at Bob's Dinner. DPW Supervisor DeBetta stated that he would attend the meeting on behalf of the Village Board of Trustees.
- Historian Report: Verbal report given by Town/Village Historian Melanie Hager Mueller.
- Dog Control Officer: - Report distributed.
- Afton Central School – No representative. Trustee T. Lawrence asked if we could get a representative from the school to attend our meetings. Trustee D. Lawrence indicated that we should have someone from Town attend the meeting as well.

### **Old Business:**

- Discussion of election poll watchers remains the same.
- Progress on the 2 yellow houses, Trustee T. Lawrence presented the Village Board of Trustees with a written plan. He expressed that some of the items within the plan have been carried out, but others will still need addressed. He'd like for this information to be shared with the Village Attorney to begin moving forward with a written contract to place the houses out for purchase.
- Memorial Day discussion. Mayor Dedman asked the Village Board of Trustees if they have come up with some suggestions, nothing at this time.
- Trustee T. Lawrence asked where we were with the Web-Master discussion. Mayor Dedman stated that he has some quotes that he'd get together for next month.
- Trustee D. Lawrence asked where we were with the Norfolk Railroad discussion. Currently the paperwork is in the hands of the Village Attorney.
- Trustee D. Lawrence asked where we were with the grant paperwork with Brendon Becker, Lamont Engineers. Mayor Dedman stated that paperwork from Brendon was received last this afternoon.
- Trustee Humphrey reminded those in attendance that the village is continue to look for Zoning Board of Appeals Members, as well a Chair Person for the Planning Board.

### **New Business:**

- Motion made by Trustee D. Lawrence to close the village office from February 5<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Seconded by Trustees Winans. All in favor, motion passed.

### **Recognition of Visitors:**

Mayor Dedman expressed that we will be adhering to the 3 minute rule in the guidelines for public comment for the village of Afton, NY, set forth by the Village Board of Trustees on October 9, 2023.

- Visitor April Leggett asked the Village Board of Trustees what their intent was with the 2 yellow houses. Ms. Leggett was informed the village would like to see these houses be demolished and replaced with another house structure. The village wanted to see that they came off the never-ending cycle of being bought and then repossessed by the County for back taxes.
- Visitor Town/Village Historian Ms. Hager Mueller informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Daughters of the American Revolution will be having their 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July of 2026. She would like to plan a big event for the community at that time, in doing so she'd like to gather thoughts from the community as to what ones like or dislike would be, along with ideas. She also indicated that she would need some volunteers to help assist. There were discussions among the Village Board of Trustees about the military flags being placed within the community on the utility poles for service members and vets both past and present. Perhaps there is some grant funding for such. Visitor Mr. Donald Ouimet stated that the Bainbridge Lyons Club placed the ones there calling it the Hometown Hero's.
- A motion made by Trustee Humphrey to adjourn our regular meeting at 8:47 pm. Seconded by Trustee Winans. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Palmatier, Clerk / Treasurer