

**Village of Afton  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Jack D. Bolster Community Center, Afton, NY  
November 13, 2023**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held November 13, 2023, 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 and Village Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Butler.

**Visitors:** Donald Ouimet, Linda Matthews, Rhonda Barriger, Maryann Palmetier, Susan Wainwright, Wendy Elliott and Melanie Mueller.

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

**General Fund Voucher's # 135 - 157, totaling \$18,325.78.**

**Water Fund Voucher's # 50 – 62, totaling \$4,135.30.**

- Motion to accept previous minutes with no additions or correction, made by Trustee T. Lawrence. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.

**Monthly Report:**

- DPW/ Water: Verbal report given by DPW Supervisor DeBetta.
- Police Department. No report.
- Code Enforcement: Report read aloud by Code Enforcement Officer Butler.
- Planning Board: Trustee Humphrey informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Planning Board has continually been working on forming Solar Field Guidelines. They reviewed the Local Law on Fences that was completed by the Village Attorney. The October 2023 report was distributed, will be placed on the village web page. Trustee Humphrey informed those in attendance that Mr. Gerry Matthews will be stepping down as the Chairperson for the Planning Board by the end of March 2024. If anyone is interested in becoming a member or the Chairperson of the Planning Board, to reach out to the Clerk's Office or a Board Member. Trustee D. Lawrence expressed that the village is still looking to fill one more seat for the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well.
- Finance/Insurance: Up to date, remains the same.
- 4 Towns Forward: No representative.

- Historian Report: Melanie Mueller gave a verbal report since being appointed by the Town of Afton as the new Historian. She stated that she has set office hours for Tuesdays from 9:00 am until noon. She indicated that she has spent time getting acquainted with the office. She has already done some research for the Daughters of the American Revolution for the Bainbridge and Afton Chapters. As well as the Order of the Eastern Star and the Freemasons both of Deposit, NY, both of whom will be merging with Afton, NY. She also did research for Nancy Grover Hicks. The Town of Afton has allowed for her to purchase a new computer. She has created a new Facebook page, the old Facebook will no longer work. She has also created a new email address, it's as follows: [aftonhistorian@yahoo.com](mailto:aftonhistorian@yahoo.com). On October 5, she attended an event at the Bainbridge Museum. The Village of Afton Board of Trustees congratulated her on her appointment.
- Dog Control Officer: - Report distributed.
- Afton Central School – No representative.

**Old Business:**

- Discussion of meeting procedures. – Written guidelines for public comments was distributed, these guidelines were presented and voted on by the Village Board of Trustees at the October 9, 2023 Board Meeting, and are as follows:

## Guidelines for Public Comments for the Village of Afton, NY

Public Comment is an opportunity for the Village Board to hear public opinion. Prior notice or request to, or approval from the village to speak is not required. The public shall be allowed to speak only once during the Public Comment period of the meeting or at such other time as the presiding officer shall allow. Public comment shall be listed on the agenda immediately prior to adjournment. During each public comment session, everyone who wishes to speak shall be allowed to speak. Each individual wishing to make a public comment shall have a total of three minutes to present their comments. Speakers must state their name and address before they speak. Speakers must address their comments and or questions to the full board and not to any individual person or Board Member. Board members may not interrupt a speaker except for clarification or informational reasons and any time used for those purposes shall not be counted as part of the speaker's time. When the three minutes has elapsed, the meeting chair will ask that the comment be concluded. Board members may, but are not required to, make comment(s), answer a question(s) and/ or ask the speaker a question(s). Any additional written correspondence or letters may be submitted to the Village Clerk for distribution to the Village board of Trustees. Speakers must observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste.

- Discussion of election poll watchers remains the same.
- Discussion of proposed fence law has been returned by the Village Attorney. The Village Board of Trustees received the proposed fence law for review, prior to the board meeting. The Village Board of Trustees agreed with the law as it was written.
- A motion made by Trustee Humphrey to hold a Public Hearing, on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 7:15 pm in the Jack D. Bolster Community Center, 105 Main Street Afton, to present the public with the Local Law #1 of 2023, A Local Law Entitled Fences. Seconded by Trustee T. Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- Progress on the 2 yellow houses, Trustee T. Lawrence expressed that he's still working a written long-term plan for these properties to be presented to the Village Board of Trustees for review before being sent to the Village Attorney. He is hopeful to have a written plan within the next few weeks to move forward by the first of the year.
- Trustee D. Lawrence asked if any of the Village Board Members has heard from Lamont Engineers, Brendon Becker, as the last Village Meeting, he had attended there was discussion of placement of water meters within the Main Street Business District. Trustee D. Lawrence expressed that the village had received funding for this project, we need to move forward with the bidding process. Clerk/Treasurer Palmatier expressed that Mr. Becker reached out to her a few months ago, asking for a list of the area businesses on Main Street, in which it was sent to him.
- Mayor Dedman informed the Village Board of Trustees that he has been looking at other surrounding area village's web pages. He states that he felt that the best formatted and informative are Sidney and Unadilla. He will need to gather more information to see what's included within their contracts, before presenting it to the Village Board of Trustees.
- Discussion of Norfolk Southern Corporation Lease Agreement – The Village Board of Trustees discussed the termination or arbitration of the contract with the lease agreement, as the information received indicates that the rental fee will continue to increase on a compound basis. We are reaching the time frame in which the village will be expected to pay the largely increased rate from comparable years past, with no indication as this time if the rate will be higher.
- A motion made by Trustee T. Lawrence to ask the Village Attorney to compose a formal letter to Norfolk Southern Corporation regarding the lease agreement to begin the termination process on the current lease agreement. Seconded by Trustee Winans. All in favor, motion passed.
- Out of transparency and courtesy the mayor will personally speak with Horton Hardware and the NBT Bank to inform them of the village's intent, a formal letter will be sent as well. The village does not know if the roadway will be blocked off by Norfolk Southern Corporation once the lease agreement is terminated.
- Trustee D. Lawrence gave an update on the proposed new location of the boat ramp. She stated that we have received several emails looking for more information from the companies that could possibly do the mussel survey. However, we don't have any of the information that is being asked of nor do we have any funding avail to complete the survey. At this time, she has not been able to obtain any grants for this proposal, with no funding we cannot move forward or do a DEC design.

## **New Business:**

- A motion made by Trustee T. Lawrence to move \$1,232.25, from Capital Reserves Water Improvement Savings Fund for payment of Invoice # 19 - to Lamont Engineers for engineering services as follows: (8397.20 – Water Capital Projects – for \$1232.25).  
Seconded by Trustee Winans. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion made by Trustee T. Lawrence to close office for Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 23, 2023. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- A made by Trustee D. Lawrence to close office on Tuesday, December 19, 2023. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- Trustee T. Lawrence expressed that the Skid Steer is in need of new tires. He had spoken with DPW Supervisor DeBetta about the possibility of trading it in, to begin the cycle of equipment rotation. However, it appears that the best option for now would be to replace the tires. After board discussions of the procurement policy, it was stated that DPW DeBetta would gather 2 estimates to be presented to the Village Board of Trustees at next month's meeting.
- Trustee T. Lawrence informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Hope Church is looking at relocating within the village. Where they will be relocating, there will be no room to move their barbecue pit. Trustee T. Lawrence feels as though the Palmetier Pit is a huge asset to the village. He has suggested that the village allow for the placement of the barbecue pit to be relocated to East Main Street under the pavilion. There were many discussions among the Village Board of Trustees. It was decided that the best placement would be on the property located next to the pavilion, where the old Razzmatazz Ice Cream was located. At this location there is a frost-free hydrant that would be utilized. There were discussions of the Barbecue Pit being opened to the public, if being placed on village owned property. As well as a contract agreement needing to be in place for those who may wish to use it. Also, anyone wishing to use it will be required to get a food permit from the Chenango County Health Department. Mayor Dedman will need to check with the Village of Afton's insurance representative before any decisions are made.
- Trustee T. Lawrence expressed that he was not pleased with the matter in which the holiday candles were hung in the village. He said that it was very unsafe, he will be attending a Chamber Meeting to question this matter.

## **Recognition of Visitors:**

- Visitor Susan Wainwright informed the Village Board of Trustees that Ronny Ford asked that she express his Thanks to the Village Board of Trustees for all that they have done and for putting up with him during his time of running the Afton Motorsports Park. Trustee D. Lawrence expressed that Ronny has some race fans on the Village Board. She personally feels as though he did a good job and appreciates what he did for Afton. Mayor Dedman stated that he will touch base with Ronny to speak with him.
- Visitor Linda Matthews asked the Village Board of Trustees if there was something that could be done about the lack of parking by the Presbyterian Church. She stated that school takes up a good portion of the parking areas around the church, that perhaps the parking on Sand Street could be placed at an angle to allow for more parking. She stated that when they host special events at the church, they do reach out to the school to ensure that they have adequate parking. She also inquired about placement of handicap

parking spots in front of the church on Academy Street. There were many discussions as to what best suited parking options may be. DPW Supervisor DeBetta will reach out to the County to see about the placement of the handicap parking in front of the church on Academy Street.

- Trustee T. Lawrence expressed to Fair Board Member Rhonda Barriger that he feels as though the persons taking over the Afton Races should attend a Village Board Meeting to introduce themselves and to discuss the expectations of permit requirements.
- A motion made by Trustee D. Lawrence to enter into executive session at 8:30 pm to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in Favor, motion passed.
- A motion made by Trustee D. Lawrence to exit executive session at 9:04 pm. Seconded by Trustee Humphrey. All in favor, motion passed.
- A motion made allowing for Mayor Dedman to extend an offer to Frank Ventura for the Officer in Charge position working up to 20 hours a week, pending salary negotiations with the salary cap that the Village Board of Trustees has put into place.

The following motion was done by roll call vote, as follows:

Mayor Dedman – Voting Aye

Trustee T. Lawrence – Voting Aye

Trustee Humphrey – Voting Aye

Trustee Winans – Voting Aye

Trustee D. Lawrence – Voting Abstain

- Discussions among the Village Board of Trustees on the permit and fees outline on the failure to obtain the proper required licensing. This information has been sent to the Village Attorney for review.
- A motion made by Trustee Humphrey to adjourn our regular meeting at 9:50 pm. Seconded by Trustee Winans. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Palmatier, Clerk / Treasurer