

VILLAGE OF WOLCOTT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
VILLAGE HALL CONFERENCE ROOM  
DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING

February 27, 2024

7:00 pm

Members Present: Mayor Chris Henner, Trustees: Dave Lewis, Dan Smith and Andrew Marshall

Members Absent: Trustee Misty Harper

Others Present: Fran Acker, Chris Breen, Ed Wazinski, Jerry Lasher, Toni M. Kellam, Dave Miller, OIC Brian Ritchie, Tommy Mettler, Kevin Costello, Dave Zwolinski, Kathy Wachtman, Eva Banas-Duncan, Rich Duncan, Nicole Smith, Matt Ohler, Jessica Courtney, George Buckalew, Rosemarie Lewis, Cody Lapp, Jack Roberts, Chris Trine, Devon Crum, Eva Winter and Travis Winter.

Mayor Henner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Eva and Travis Winter asked to be on the agenda to address the Village Board. Eva Winter asked about the Election Inspectors for the upcoming dissolution vote. She feels the 2 that are working that day are against the dissolution and asked if there would be any neutral inspectors. Mayor Henner and Clerk-Treasurer Acker explained the NYS election law as far as inspectors having to be on a list received from the Wayne County Board of Elections that the inspectors are certified and must live within the Village. Clerk-Treasurer Acker further explained there were 3 that met this criteria, and also told Mrs. Winter that the clerk did not know how the inspectors would vote and could not ask.

Eva Winter also asked about more Village Police presence due to illegal activity at a mobile home down the street from her business. Mayor Henner said he will speak with Code Enforcement Officer Tom Sawtelle regarding codes since there was recently a fire at the location. Deputy Clerk Toni Kellam explained that this property was outside of the village limits. Mayor Henner made Mrs. Winter aware that we lost 1 full time police officer due to the recent petition to dissolve that received because the current village officers were employed in the Village of Lyons when they went through the dissolution process.

The Mayor introduced Kevin Costello who was starting as a full time police officer and mentioned OIC Ritchie was moving to part time.

Travis Winter questioned why they (him and Eva) were taking the beating due to the issue of the village dissolution. Mr. Winter said he heard Dan Smith was telling people not to do business with them. Trustee Smith replied he cannot tell people what to do. Also, he supports those who support him.

The Village Water Department had received correspondences from Exxon regarding possible issues from a dig request that was submitted for the Winter's new building. Mr. Winter said that when Ed Wazinski approached him and showed the map received, he took it as a threat from either the Mayor or Mr. Wazinski. Deputy Clerk Kellam offered to provide copies of emails to Travis. Ed Wazinski responded to Travis that he explained the map to Mr. Winter when the information was 1<sup>st</sup> received and tried to work

with the business, but one of the employees of All Season's kept interrupting and was allowed to do so. Travis Winter did admit he wish he had seen the emails at the time and had doubt because he only seen the map. Mr. Wazinski said he would bring the email copies to Mr. Winter the next morning.

Mayor Henner presented a Facebook post from All Season's and the Mayor said that this was an example that all sides are punching bags and that social media can be a bad thing. Mayor Henner also reminded Travis Winter that he (Travis) was adamantly against Tractor Supply coming into the village when there was a prospect for them to do so.

Mr. Winter said he wanted the "save Wolcott" signs to be taken down from around the Venus Statue. It was explained to him that the signs can be put wherever and that a billboard can even be put on the side of a fire truck if chosen to do so.

Dave Zwolinski asked the Village Board how much the dissolution process is costing the Village. So far the Village has paid \$6,500.00. They have applied for a reimbursement grant to cover \$25,000.00 of the \$30,000.00 cost.

Travis Winter asked about possible fund raising for work to be done on Venus. Dave Zwolinski stated he would be interested in this also.

The Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District is having an electronics recycling event Wednesday Feb 28, and Thursday Feb 29, 2024.

Wayne County Public Health is holding a county wide drive-thru rabies clinic on Saturday April 31, 2024 at the Palmyra Highway Department. Information about both events will be posted in the Village Hall and on the Village's website.

#### **Fire Department-Chief Jerry Lasher**

See monthly report.

Mayor Henner provided an update on the new Firetruck. The delivery date had been moved to May. Since that time, parts have been sourced from another place so production can proceed and looks like completion is back on schedule for mid-April.

Chief Lasher referenced the trailer fire at the location mentioned by Eva Travis. He stated the State Troopers were on the scene and stated their hands were tied. 1 person was taken away but got released immediately.

The Fire Department is working on getting quotes for a handheld gas meter. They are averaging \$3,000.00.

The Fire Department is having an OSHA class on Saturday March 2, 2024.

Chief Lasher is working with the insurance company to lower cost by adjusting the deductibles.

#### **Police Department-OIC Brian Ritchie**

See monthly report

OIC Ritchie introduced the new Village Police full time officer Kevin Costello.

### **Highway Department-Chris Breen**

Mr. Breen shared an email with Wayne County regarding shared salt to lower cost.

Chris Breen asked the board when the ice rink could be taken down. This will be done the week of March 4, 2024.

Trustee Smith made the motion to approve purchase of a hydraulic motor from McQueen's in the amount of \$3,239.10. Trustee Marshall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

### **Sewer Department-Tommy Mettler**

Mr. Mettler stated all is running well.

Tommy Mettler is working on a new contract with Evoqua.

Dave Lewis toured the sewer facility.

Mr. Mettler made the board aware that he was notified about a rumor that the village sewer system was failing. Tommy met with the person who heard the rumor and explained the pump stations were rehabbed and over 5 miles of sewer main and other hardware were done in 2015. He assured the person that the system was a long way from failing and offered tours to anyone interested.

Tommy repeated his opinion that all municipalities need to work together no matter what happens with the dissolution vote. He also mentioned that the interim study took hours and hours of desk time from everyone involved.

### **Water Department-Ed Wazinski**

The Village Board reviewed the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2023 and is due to the Department of Health, and is due May 31, 2024. Trustee Smith made the motion to approve the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report. Trustee Marshall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

### **Court Audit**

Trustee Smith made the motion to accept the January 2024 court audit. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

### **Village Clerk-Treasurer**

Trustee Smith made the motion to accept the January 2024 Treasurer's report and financials. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

The Budget workshop scheduled for February 26, 2024 had to be canceled and is rescheduled for March 4, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Village Hall Board Room.

Clerk-Treasurer Acker notified the board that the insurance deductible on the renewal was confirmed and changed from \$250.00 to \$1,000.00 to decrease the amount of the premium.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Trustee Lewis made the motion to accept and approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024 meeting. Trustee Marshall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

## **Resolutions**

### **Resolution 2024-4**

#### **Calling for an Increase in AIM Funding**

**Introduced by: Mayor Henner**

**Whereas**, the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program plays a critical role in funding essential municipal services for cities and villages across New York State; and

**Whereas**, city and village officials share the same priorities as our state leaders which is to make New York safer and more affordable; and

**Whereas**, New York's local governments, who are on the frontlines of controlling property tax affordability and ensuring public safety, are integral to achieving those goals; and

**Whereas**, the State has not increased AIM funding in 15 years and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation has increased by nearly 45% during that same period; and

**Whereas**, this neglect from the State has led to rising municipal tax burdens and harmful disinvestment in essential municipal services and staff; and

**Whereas**, the property tax cap further limits the ability of local governments to properly fund the services their residents need; and

**Whereas**, the challenges of rising inflation, the increasing costs of labor and supplies, and the end of extraordinary federal aid, only accentuate the need for an increase in AIM funding; and

**Whereas**, the Governor's 2024-25 Executive Budget proposes to keep AIM funding flat; and

**Whereas**, an increase in AIM funding would reduce the local tax burden and help revitalize communities across New York;

**Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the Village of Wolcott urges Governor Hochul to work with the leaders of the Senate and Assembly and increase AIM funding in the 2024-25 adopted State Budget.

*A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senator Pam Helming, Assemblymember Brian Manktelow and the New York State Conference of Mayors.*

Adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Mayor Henner, Trustees: Lewis, Smith and Marshall

Nays: None

Absent: Trustee Harper

Office of the Village Clerk

Village of Wolcott

County of Wayne

I hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original duly adopted by the above mentioned Board at a meeting held on the 27th day of February, 2024 and that the same is a true copy of said original and of the whole thereof.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the official seal of the said Board, this 27th day of February, 2024.

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Village Clerk

The incorrect date was put in the bottom of Resolution 2024-3. The correct date was in the body of the resolution. Trustee Smith made the motion to correct Resolution 2024-3 to read "Voting for the forthcoming election shall be conducted by paper ballot at the Wolcott Village Hall, 6015 New Hartford Street, Wolcott, New York from 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM on March 12, 2024 for the Village Dissolution and 12 Noon to 9:00 PM on Tuesday, **March 19, 2024 for the General Election**". Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

### **Facilities Use Request**

Trustee Smith made the motion to approve use of Northup Park for LNB Annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 23, 2024 from 12:30pm-2:00 pm. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

### **Mayor Henner**

Mayor Henner stated he reached out to Kevin at Wayne County Highway Department regarding the request for pedestrian safety signs for near Palace Theater. Wayne County Highway had few options. Mayor Henner thought about the possibility of a higher visible sign at the crosswalk.

Some residents contacted the Mayor asking him to address a post on the Facebook page belonging to the committee to dissolve the village:

- Regarding transparency, the Mayor doesn't know how to make more things transparent. All info is available.
- Elections have always been run by the Village and all previous clerks as directed by NYS.
- The subject of job loss and residency was addressed. The Village does not have any restrictions on residents. The village looks at those qualified to fill vacancies. There were only 3 applicants when the village was trying to fill Nick Rizzo's position when he retired from the Highway

Department. Clerk-Treasurer Acker also voiced her opinion that her money goes back into the Village of Wolcott with lunches, shopping, gas, etc.

- Addressing the Town Salt Barn, to go back approximately 7 years, the school was using the Village of Wolcott's salt barn. It was difficult for usage accountability between the Village and the school. A process was put in place but it didn't work. The school was contacted on behalf of the taxpayers who shouldn't have to foot the bill for what was used by the school. There were no hard feelings between the 2 parties. Mayor Henner was contacted about shared services but the decision was made to keep it central for financial reasons.
- Full time officer left due to the upcoming dissolution vote. The most recent officers employed by the Village of Wolcott lost their jobs due to the Lyons dissolution.
- Free water hookups is available for ALL new builds within the Village of Wolcott. The village provides hookup from the main to the house/building.
- Fire Hydrants are flushed annually.
- Storm sewers are cleaned every June/July. The Village of Wolcott bought a vac truck compared to \$4,000.00 a year to contract the job every year.
- Mayor Henner received a call regarding dedication of the mural, which he returned and left a message stating he would be out of state during that time, but if someone could call him back with details, someone from the Village will be there. No one returned the Mayor's call so there were no details to have anyone present.

Mayor Henner said anyone can ask any question at any time.

#### **Trustee Harper-Absent**

#### **Trustee Marshall**

Nothing at this time.

#### **Trustee Smith**

Nothing at this time.

#### **Trustee Lewis**

Trustee Lewis mentioned a couple of Hometown Heroes banners have been received. He would like to spread them out throughout the village starting on Main Street.

#### **Time for the Public**

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Kellam said water/sewer bills will be getting mailed in a couple of days. She asked everyone to read the back of the bills because there is always information displayed there.

Cody Lapp stated he hopes no matter what happens with the dissolution vote that everyone sticks together and works together to help the community flourish. Mr. Lapp thinks there are a lot of good people in the village and thinks it can be great.

Jack Roberts commented that the Hometown Heroes process is an easy one.

Mayor Henner reminded everyone of the LaBerge Group's interim study meeting on Wednesday February 28, 2024 scheduled for 6:00 pm at Leavenworth School.

**Executive Session**

Trustee Smith made the motion to move the meeting to executive session for a personnel matter per the request of Justice Miller and Justice Wachtman, and a contractual matter at 8:40 pm. Trustee Marshall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor. Clerk-Treasurer Acker was asked to stay. Both Justice's left at 9:10 pm. OIC Ritchie and Kevin Costello joined at that time. Trustee Marshall left at 9:40 pm.

Trustee Smith made the motion to move the meeting back to regular session at 9:44 pm. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

Trustee Smith made the motion to bring in Barb Griffith as a temporary court clerk effective 2/27/2024 at a rate of \$15.00/hour. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

Trustee Smith made the motion to accept the verbal resignation of Deb Sloan as Village Court Clerk. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor. A help wanted ad will be placed in the Times of Wayne County.

Trustee Smith made the motion to accept the background conclusion letter for Kevin Costello. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

Trustee Smith made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 pm. Trustee Lewis 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All present voted in favor.

The next regularly scheduled Village Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on March 13, 2024 at 7:00pm in the Village of Wolcott Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Fran Acker*

Fran Acker

Clerk-Treasurer