

Village Of Chaumont
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees
May 16, 2023

Location of Meeting:

Village Office
12175 State Route 12E
Chaumont, New York 13622

Present at Meeting: Val Rust, Jim Morrow, Jose Sosa, Mike Nichols, Dori-Ann Froelich, Erin Fulton, Linda Wendell, Ralph Eastman, Alec Wendell, Lynn Wendell, Michael Nuffer, Diana Burt, and Michael Burt

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Chaumont was called to order at 6:30 PM on May 16, 2023.

I. Privilege of the Floor

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Lois Wendell and other volunteer members of the New York Citizens Audit again attended the village meeting, in hopes of the Board of Trustees signing a resolution to support their cause. The New York Citizens Audit is a group of citizens that have organized for the purpose of performing an open-source audit of the New York State Board of Elections. Mrs. Wendell gave a summary of the information that was brought in last month, explaining that a private audit found that voter rolls do not match from county to state level, and in fact, showed numerous discrepancies. She said the letter from the Board of Elections minimizes their claims, saying “there’s nothing to see here,” and robs the public of the civil right for free and fair elections. She shared the New York Citizens Audit’s director’s rebuttal to the letter from the BOE.

Mayor Rust thanked them for coming. She explained that as a board representing the taxpaying residents of the Village of Chaumont, trustees’ personal opinions do not matter when making decisions for the community. Because the group had brought forth interesting and thought-provoking information at our last meeting, the board reached out to other municipalities as well as village legal counsel to determine how to move forward. The Village of Chaumont’s legal counsel has advised the VBT to avoid passing an official resolution in support of this cause, as these claims cannot be validated. “Ultimately,” Mayor Rust said, “we are here for water, sewer, and highway issues; and as elected officials in local government, we cannot make this decision on behalf of the village taxpayers we represent when not all of them are in agreement and legal counsel has advised against it.” The question was raised concerning who oversees village elections, and the answer was given that it is the county. “What about a petition?” Mrs. Wendell asked. Some members of the Board agreed they would sign the petition – not as elected officials – but as personal individuals of the Village of Chaumont. They shared their appreciation over what the volunteer group is doing, and the group thanked the Board for listening to their cause.

II. DPW Update

Mayor Rust informed the Board of Trustees that Supervisor Ingerson is operating the month of June with beach preparation as the DPW’s primary focus.

Clerk Fulton raised the question of leaf removal with monthly brush pickup. Many residents put their leaves into plastic bags which then find their way into the brush compost against Transfer Site regulations. Mayor Rust said, “We want less outsourcing, but without taking away services from our

taxpayers.” The option of biodegradable bags was discussed, but the board ultimately decided to carry on as usual – with our laborers being extremely cognizant of cutting the bags and removing all plastic when dumping the leaves.

Trustee Nichols brought forward a concern with the property maintenance (grass length and brush removal) at 11931 NYS Route 12E. Clerk Fulton said she will connect with Jim Millington about creating a form letter for these types of situations within the village.

Clerk Fulton presented some resident concerns from Joan O’Brien that were discussed with her in the last couple weeks. The village DPW uses her driveway to back up and turn around when plowing during the winter, causing damage to her driveway. The plowing also caused a broken fence at Tim Fitzpatrick’s near her home on Madison Street. Unfortunately, it is so tight, there is nowhere else for them to turn around. The suggestion from her is that they back out down the road. She also requests more cautious plowing, as many rocks and stones make it into the yard. On Mill Street, she requests that they turn around in front of the barn door. I asked if the DPW returns her property to the condition it was in pre-winter each spring, and she said it was not completed last year. The Board agreed that any disturbed conditions inflicted by our DPW crew must be rectified each spring, and requested Clerk Fulton look into highway law for plowing dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs. What is the village recourse if we are not permitted to use resident driveway for turnaround? Could we sign an agreement with resident that everything will be returned to original conditions in spring to ensure safe turnaround for our laborers? With this all being brought up, Mayor Rust also wanted to remind DPW staff that we must ensure Schell’s road and quarry are returned to prior condition and filled with new stone each spring in thanks for them allowing us the quarry as a turnaround each plowing season.

Mrs. O’Brien also brought up crosswalks in the village, as well as general sidewalk repair. She believes crosswalks must have more visible signs, or possibly lines repainted – perhaps even an individual who could watch for crosswalk speeders. She has personally almost been hit in a crosswalk on Route 12E and has witnessed the same for others on multiple occasions. Mayor Rust said the village has had the “Yield to Pedestrians in Sidewalk” signs previously. People kept hitting them and complaining about them and it was becoming too expensive to keep replacing. The DOT has said they will not put the signs. She agreed that an extra set of eyes would be a good idea, and committed to reaching out to Traffic Control at the Barracks on 342 to request a speed saturation patrol.

III. Motion to Approve Abstract #12 of 2022/2023

Deputy Mayor Morrow made a motion to approve Abstract #12 of 2022/2023 and Trustee Froelich seconded the motion.

IV. Motion to Approve Minutes of April 18, 2023

Trustee Sosa made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2023 Public Hearing and Regular Board of Trustees Meeting, and Deputy Mayor Morrow seconded.

V. Water/Sewer Report

Clerk Fulton presented a property on County Route 125 that appears to be without village water, but on a sewer utility line. The Board tabled this issue until Greg Ingerson could weigh in.

Due to the fire at 11560 NYS Route 12E, Clerk Fulton requested the Board of Trustees’ permission to waive the water shut-off fee. All in favor.

Deputy Mayor Morrow asked if First Steps Preschool had signed a contract. Clerk Fulton confirmed that they did, with a monthly repayment option.

VI. Treasurer's Report

VILLAGE OF CHAUMONT						
APRIL RECEIPTS						
YR ENDING		May 31, 2023				
	REAL PROP TAXES	LIEU OF TAXES	PEN/INTEREST	SALES TAX CO.	GROSS UTILITY TAX	TOTAL
	A1001	A1081	A1090	A1120	A1130	
	8770.83				19.11	8789.94
					0.01	0.01
					2.74	2.74
						0.00
TOTAL	8770.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.86	8792.69
BUDGET						
	'22 Relieved Tax				TWC	
					Google Voice	
					MCI	

METERED WATER	O&M AND DCC	INT AND PEN	METER FEES	SERV CONNECTION	RET CK	TOTAL	USAGE FEE SEWER RENT	DEBT SER	INT AND PENALTY	O&M AND CONNECTION	TOTAL
F2140	F2142	F2148	F2144	F2145	FEES	WATER	G2120	G2122	G2128	G2770	WASTE
3,541.04	989.67	17.96				4548.67	1,966.34	2,598.51	10.11	1,664.33	6239.29
35.00	40.00					75.00	379.19	67.67		80.00	526.86
1,026.68	281.42	102.04				1410.14	792.01	842.72	16.34	720.00	2371.07
870.00	260.00	70.86				1200.86	689.99	897.73	63.00	585.00	2235.72
2,930.41	981.76	10.00				3922.17	1,769.33	2,563.29	10.00	2,039.97	6382.59
1,543.04	280.00	5.00				1828.04	816.00	594.22	5.00	449.26	1864.48
417.81	100.00					517.81	142.05	416.82		215.00	773.87
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
						0.00					0.00
10363.98	2932.85	205.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	13502.69	6554.91	7980.96	104.45	5753.56	20393.88
WEBPAY											
LIHWAP (transfer from General Fund)											
TAX RELEVIES											

VII. Old Business

Per the VBT request at the last board meeting, Clerk Fulton contacted Valerie Vallone at the Jefferson County Department of Human Resources to ask for clarification on the letter from Valerie Nugent and whether or not Jim Millington's appointment at December's organizational meeting would fulfill the new requirement, or if an updated appointment was necessary. While the Village of Chaumont's PT Enforcement Officer position was previously outside of the competitive class, a permanent appointment releases us from needing annual approval from NYS, and also puts Mr. Millington inside civil service rules. It affords him rights under civil service, and according to Ms. Vallone, would now be a lengthy process concerning termination of any kind.

Trustee Nichols mentioned Millington's current run for Town of Lyme Supervisor, and questioned what that could mean for the Village of Chaumont's ZEO position if he is elected. Clerk Fulton said she has discussed this possibility with Town of Lyme/Town of Clayton's Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer Richard Ingerson to see if he would be interested in this PT position if it were to become available in January.

VIII. New Business

Debbie Eldridge-Block visited the Village Clerk's Office to express her concern regarding the new Spring Clean-up functionality. The Village has worked out a deal with the Town of Lyme Transfer Site to accept all refuse in a specified dumpster, and any white goods, mattresses, or anything that would normally be assessed a tipping fee – free of charge for Village of Chaumont residents for one week in June. Mrs. Eldridge-Block's concern is for older residents and residents without a truck to haul their rubbish to the transfer site. At this time, the VBT feels that we must go forward with this new protocol rather than the outdated process in previous years. We simply do not have the laborers to remove the junk from 350 properties, take it to the county, and still stay on top of their operational duties such as mowing, renovations, recycling, water testing and repairs, sewer maintenance, etc. It was also impossible to ensure that only village residents were taking advantage of this benefit.

IX. Correspondence

Clerk Fulton presented monthly correspondence.

- Keller Partners & Company reached out to offer help procuring municipal grant funding
- The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. shared the February 2023 revised Privacy Policy
- A memorandum from the Development Authority of the North Country of rate adjustment effective April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024 from 1.81 to 2.29/Kgal
- DANC also sent the updated Annual Water Quality Report (AWQR) that the Department of Health requires all communities to distribute prior to May 31st. As of May 1st, 2023, the AWQR for the Village of Chaumont can be found at either of our local banking institutions (Watertown Savings Bank or Gouverneur Savings & Loan), Chaumont Post Office, or online at www.villageofchaumont.com. A copy can also be requested from the Village Clerk's office
- A letter from Miss Paula Chester of Stevens Point, WI expressing her displeasure "at the Village of Chaumont's acceptance of solar farms."
- The Tax Limit Form for the Village of Chaumont, fiscal year ending 05/31/2024, has been certified
- A letter from Patricia Gibbons, Superintendent of Lyme Central School, informing the board of the new security and lighting system installations at the LCS Bus Garage and Town of Lyme/Village of Chaumont Fuel Depot
- A letter from CBIZ Valuation Group, LLC on behalf of NYMIR to schedule a time for onsite building inspections of all insurable properties. They requested May 22nd, but as Superintendent Ingerson will be out of the country, Clerk Fulton requested to reschedule
- Our liability insurance attorney from Burden, Hafner, & Hansen sent an update on the status of the Roof v. Village of Chaumont Notice of Claim
- Letter from DOT showing current CHIPS, PAVE-NY, EWR, and POP funds

X. Resolution #25 of the 2022-2023 Organizational Year

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees will permanently appoint James Millington to serve as the Village of Chaumont's Enforcement Officer (Part-Time). Responsibilities shall include all Zoning and Code Enforcement municipal duties. With an amendment of the Jefferson County Civil Service Rules effective October 26, 2022, this position has been added to the Non-Competitive Class.

VOTING:	Ayes	5	Nays	0
The roll call vote was:	Valerie Rust, Mayor			YES
	James Morrow, Deputy Mayor			YES
	Michael Nichols, Trustee			YES
	Dori-Ann Froelich, Trustee			YES
	Jose Sosa, Trustee			YES

RESOLUTION NO. 25 ADOPTED.

XI. Mayor's Report/Committee Reports

This week's unfortunate incident at the NYS Rte. 12E crosswalk at Church Street (to the school) was discussed. There was no volunteer crossing guard on duty as the village DPW had a call-off due to illness, and a dog was struck and killed during the morning school commute. The board all expressed sincere sympathies to the pet owner. Mayor Rust explained that our village laborers volunteer this service at that intersection for the safety of our community, as the school does not provide of crossing guard in that area. We consider it a shared service. There is a brief overlap in the spring where our DPW crew moves to (4) 10-hour days (Monday-Thursday) and school is still in session, leaving Friday's AM and PM walkers' commute uncovered, as well as instances such as these where we had a laborer take a sick day and didn't have the staff to cover. Perhaps we could reach out to the school for a contact that would be willing to cover Fridays in the spring as well as emergency situations.

Trustee Nichols gave a report on the village beach, brush around the village, and various street signs. The fence at the beach was once again addressed; DPW crew will be down there this week to address damage. He also gave a report on the latest committee meeting of citizens interested in fundraising for village tennis court repair. While Alex Bay was able to resurface six courts for around 35K, our quote was around 80K, and some committee attendees feel it could be closer to 200K. Mr. Paul Carr went and inspected the courts and believes the bones and structure is good – he is looking into grading the surface to see if the foundation can be adhered to because that would give a better idea of expense. VBT tabled a decision on how to move forward with this until after the committee's next meeting and expense projection.

Trustee Froelich told the trustees that the Village Planning Board meeting for May was a pre-submission conference for Laker's Sweets & Treats, in the former Duck Stop Ice Cream building. They will be adding a service window, painting outside among other cosmetic work, and building a drive-thru in the future. The question of the future of Chaumont Bay Seafood was raised, as well as careful consideration of the parking lot as it is mostly owned by the Crescent Restaurant. A formal Site Plan Application and Public Hearing was waived, with VPB sending on the Board of Trustees for final approval. All in favor.

Trustee Froelich also mentioned that Roxy's Retro Gifts has been brought to the attention of the Village Planning Board as the business has never come before their board for Site Plan Review. The VBT agreed that they would like a Planning Board member to reach out.

Trustee Sosa gave the Youth Commission report. A director and assistant have both been hired for the Town of Lyme Summer Recreation Program. The commission voted on a new scoreboard and discussed how to pay officials going forward.

Mayor Rust officially submitted her resignation to the Village of Chaumont. Her last day will be August 1, 2023. After fulfilling the annual AUD responsibilities and submitting to the comptroller, Jim Morrow (who will be appointed mayor until elections in November), and Clerk/Treasurer Fulton will take over the financial duties including the budget and annual comptroller reporting. Deputy Clerk Fitzgerald will be officially appointed as Deputy Treasurer to be the secondary bank statement audit individual for Treasurer Fulton.

Mayor Rust submitted her research conducted regarding village marinas to ensure everyone is being charged fairly. An inventory of water services and sewer EDUs was performed for Crescent Yacht Club, Sawmill Bay, Bearup's marina, and Morina's – and it was determined that all current services and EDUs are sufficient unless anyone expands.

The ongoing conversation regarding the village's outside permissive water area on Hart Road was discussed. Currently, the users on this line are attempting to join the Town of Lyme's Water District #1. At that time, they will no longer be outside water users of the village, but Town of Lyme water users. While the village would still provide the water, we would be paid by the Town of Lyme directly, and the town would assume all responsibility of their private line. The mayor also received an email from James Nichols relating to the 2017 Indenture between the village and the Lisbeth Nichols Trust. The email explained that while the intended purpose of the indenture was to memorialize the reversion of two parcels of land that had been previously deeded to the Village of Chaumont by Robert Hart, for the purpose of operating the village's public water supply system, and the 2017 Indenture asserts that the village is no longer using the parcels for the public water supply system and conveys ownership and rights to both parcels to the Lisbeth Nichols Trust. The Nichols family believes that one of those two parcels is still being used as part of the village public water supply system, including to supply water through the Park Drive lateral, and they wish to address what they believe to be a mistake that "creates the unintended consequence that the Village would have conveyed its ownership of and rights to use the parcel for water distribution to Park Rd. residents, etc." Mayor Rust and Clerk Fulton will look into this and hopefully be able to rectify any mistakes and clear up any confusion so this issue can be put to bed.

Mayor Rust also informed the VBT that she had talked to Town of Lyme Supervisor Terry Countryman about the new Town Barn and Town Municipal Building. While the town is looking into grant money, it isn't guaranteed, and this endeavor could prove to be very expensive for the village. No verbal or written financial options have been discussed, and no agreements or contracts have been put in place at this point – everything is still up in the air. Our highway department does not need to move as they are already securely established. We may want to look into all options (including ones within the Village of Chaumont) for our municipal administrative operations.

Town of Lyme Highway Superintendent Pat Weston approached Mayor Rust about the new Town Barn/Town Office sewer system. As they cannot have a raised-bed sewer system out at their new location, they are planning to run a sewer & water line (10-feet apart) hooked into their own water, and requesting to hook into Village of Chaumont sewer. Mayor Rust intends to find out from the DEC

if an easement can be secured with a line going through someone's property without forcing the property owner to hook into the line, as the sewer line would pass through a few Town of Lyme residents' parcels. Flow rate will stay the same with this potential hook in.

Mayor Rust found that the reason the Village of Dexter did not move forward with their new Property Maintenance Law is that Dexter's VBT did not feel that it included enough enforcement protocol. Chaumont's VBT would like to read through the law again this month and table a decision until the next meeting.

Mayor Rust would like to add an "Administrator's Report" to the Mayor/Committee report section of the Board of Trustees' meeting. This would give Clerk Fulton an opportunity to share with the Board of Trustees any resident issues, community news, information, etc., involved with the new role of Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer that isn't covered in other meeting categories.

XII. Motion to Adjourn Meeting

Deputy Mayor Morrow made a motion to adjourn at 8:58 PM, which was seconded by Trustee Nichols.

Respectfully Submitted

Erin Fulton

Erin Fulton
Village Clerk/Treasurer