

Village Of Chaumont
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees
July 18, 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, Karen Fitzgerald, Pat Reome, Rick Hathaway, Will Lipczynski, Jim Millington, and Joseph Chernick

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Chaumont was called to order at 6:30 PM on July 18, 2023.

I. Privilege of the Floor

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Rick Hathaway exercised privilege of the floor by asking the Board of Trustees about a property in the village he is considering purchasing for use as a vacation rental unit. The unit is currently being used as 3 apartments, with a twenty-four (24) slip dock attached to the property. The Board agreed that since the home is already being used as a rental unit, it can continue under its current use. He will also be allowing clients at the potential AirBNB to rent boats and dock them in the slips. If, down the line, Mr. Hathaway decides to use the dock for his boat rental business (with pump station, etc.) he will need to undergo Site Plan Review with the Village Planning Board as well as work with the DEC and Village WWTP Supervisor for sewer capabilities in accordance with village law.

Pat Reome spoke next concerning some ongoing issues and complaints in the Village of Chaumont. Speed on County Route 125 continues to be a problem. While the Board informed Ms. Reome that they don't have jurisdiction on county roads, they are willing to contact officials who do. They also encouraged her to contact the Jefferson County sheriff, as there is generally more merit in resident requests. The possibility of removing the "End of 35 MPH" sign and replacing it with an "End of Village of Chaumont" sign was discussed. Ms. Reome then brought up another issue on County Route 125 – a property maintenance violation at 8281. Clerk Fulton agreed to write a letter to Mr. Gerdon asking him to mow his lawn, and send Jim Millington out to inspect if anything else is against village code. Ms. Reome would also like to continue Memorial Park renovation, specifically trimming back the trees. She would like to have DPW help her with this task, and preferably before brush cleanup on August 31st.

Chaumont Chief Will Lipczynski visited to discuss varying matters relating to the VFD with the Board of Trustees. First, he requests that the village DPW inspect the fire hydrant behind the department. A potential leak is causing water damage that continues to wash gravel and stone out of the parking lot. Second, he wanted the Board of Trustees to be aware of a possible VFD member dismissal due to lack of confidentiality/distribution of sensitive info regarding a mental hygiene case. All members sign off on HIPAA contracts when they join the fire department, which designates a 60-day suspension with first violation. This is a second violation. The Board encouraged a quiet resignation to help protect the young member's future career. Deputy Mayor Morrow asked that when the member is let go/resigns that Clerk Fulton be made aware immediately to remove the member from the roster. Deputy Mayor Morrow will attend August's VFD meeting to follow up on this.

Furthermore, the Chaumont Volunteer Fire Department is trying their best to keep up morale. Chief Lipczynski says they have been accused of “not being fiscally responsible,” while they are working tirelessly to save for a new fire truck and maintain all current costs. Their integrity is being questioned when all they want is to be in a better financial situation for equipment and gear – thus the proposal for a fire district. They can’t do enough chicken barbecues to fund what they need. “Between fires, training, and fundraising, we can barely stay afloat,” Chief Lipczynski said. Mayor Rust said some questions/concerns that have been raised that the fire department should be aware of is rumored grant money that the Chaumont Fire Department did not apply for/ did not get and the fact that Three Mile Bay’s fuel budget is much lower. She also wanted to be very clear where the village stands: while Attorney Pinsky says that the Village of Chaumont is responsible for the VFD, they are an incorporation and the village is not the Chaumont Fire Department’s only responsibility. The village lawyer, NYCOM, and our insurance carrier agree that this is different and not a typical village/fire department relationship. The Board wants the Fire District – but the biggest concern is tax increase. We need to know the actual increase in tax dollars per \$1,000. The Village Board is behind the Fire Department 150% and they have full support – but we also must protect residents. Mayor Rust agreed to call Supervisor Countryman regarding Chief Lipczynski’s concerns.

II. DPW Update

DPW Supervisor Greg Ingerson sent documentation informing the Board of Trustee of the status of the Church Street project. At this time, EFC project approvals for leftover grants funds from the Water System Improvement Project have been sent on to Jesse Linstruth of JL Excavation, and the remaining work is set to begin later next month. A request was also forwarded to the Board by the DPW to purchase their own tiller in lieu of continuing to borrow the equipment from the Lyme Central School District.

Clerk Fulton addressed the ongoing geese issue at the beach and informed the Board that she applied for and was granted a Wildlife Nuisance Permit (depredation permit) by the DEC. She also requested the consideration of a changing shed at the beach for bathers, specifically Town of Lyme Summer Rec students who are at the beach Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays throughout the summer. Supervisor Ingerson will get a foundation going and look into Lowe’s and North Country Storage Barns for quotes, or look into building. The Board agreed it was a necessary addition to the village beach.

Deputy Clerk Fitzgerald questioned protocol of how the Village of Chaumont handles beach closings when bacteria levels are determined unsafe by the NYS Department of Health. Should we continue closing and locking the gate, or just place signs along beach stating NO SWIMMING. Clerk Fulton expressed her opinion regarding the difficulty this could place on the Summer Recreation program as well as potential liability issues. The Board agreed to continue to lock the gate going forward when the beach is deemed unsafe by DOH, and Mayor Rust said we could take it by a case-by-case basis for special events on whether or not parties could still use the picnic area across the bridge with reservation.

III. Motion to Approve Abstract #2 of 2023/2024

Deputy Mayor Morrow made a motion to approve Abstract #2 of 2023/2024 and Trustee Sosa seconded the motion.

IV. Motion to Approve Minutes of June 20, 2023

Trustee Nichols made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2023 Board of Trustees Meeting, and Trustee Froelich seconded.

V. Water/Sewer Report

There was nothing to report for water and sewer at this time.

VI. Treasurer's Report

REAL PROP TAXES	GROSS UTILITY TAX	FRANCHISE FEE	REGISTRAR FEES	BLDG/PERMIT	UNCLASSIFIED	BEACH	TOTAL	
A1001	A1130	A1170	A1603	A2555	A2770	A7140		
38199.88	30.85	1454.21	10.00	109.00	499.00	25.00	40327.94	
734.63	18.61	1536.27					2289.51	
25883.56	0.01						25883.57	
8208.70							8208.70	
75511.46							75511.46	
148538.23	49.47	2990.48	10.00	109.00	499.00	25.00	152221.18	
METERED WATER	O&M AND DCC	INT AND PEN	TOTAL	USAGE FEE SEWER RENT	DEBT SER	INT AND PENALTY	O&M AND CONNECTION	TOTAL
F2140	F2142	F2148	WATER	G2120	G2122	G2128	G2770	WASTE
2,975.07	1,124.34	10.00	4109.41	1,124.99	2,330.30	10.00	2,047.84	5513.13
			0.00	221.00	196.67		168.67	586.34
301.66	108.67	5.00	415.33	390.00	331.18	5.00	285.33	1011.51
1,367.35	486.99		1854.34	958.67	1,229.41		1,104.93	3293.01
2,949.43	760.01	32.65	3742.09	1,478.00	2,021.07	24.79	1,529.67	5053.53
412.16	89.67	10.00	511.83	396.00	403.70	10.00	258.52	1068.22
714.47	186.00	12.66	913.13	270.00	794.90	12.67	328.67	1406.24
350.02	100.00	25.00	475.02	300.00	263.37	25.00	225.00	813.37
9070.16	2855.68	95.31	12021.15	5138.66	7570.60	87.46	5948.63	18745.35

VII. Old Business

The Property Maintenance Code in the Village of Chaumont continues to be an ongoing discussion. Deputy Mayor Morrow is continuing to work on updates and amendments to the current law.

Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer Jim Millington gave an update on the ongoing violation at 12234 NYS Route 12E. On June 26th, a formal letter was sent via certified mail listing violations with a deadline of completion by July 7th. On July 11th, Mr. Millington visited the property to inspect the status of the violations. Two (2) of the six (6) were corrected. On July 17th, a follow-up letter was sent and an appearance ticket for the Town of Lyme court was issued for August 28th to answer for the remaining, ongoing violations.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business on the agenda.

IX. Correspondence

Clerk Fulton presented monthly correspondence.

- A proposal from Kyle Gardiner with TextMyGov was shared with the Board of Trustees; a smartphone mass text messaging app that also uses technology to allow citizens with questions to receive immediate responses, find links to information on the municipality's website, address problems, report any issues, and upload photos. The VBT decided to pass at this time
- A membership invitation from the New York Society of Municipal Finance Officers (NYSMFO) was received by the Village of Chaumont
- NYSDOT sent documentation showing current CHIPS, PAVE-NY, EWR, and POP balances
- A letter from the Northern New York Community Foundation asking for collaboration in preserving an extensive collection of postcards featuring Jefferson County communities

X. Mayor's Report/Committee Reports

Trustee Froelich had no committee report to share as the Village Planning Board meeting was canceled this month.

Trustee Sosa had no youth commission committee report to share.

Trustee Nichols gave a report on Memorial Park. The weeds between the pavers and along the curb are growing exponentially and must be removed. Mayor Rust agreed that Greg Ingerson will continue to stay on top of the laborers for these projects – every single landscaping responsibility must be completed in the next two weeks before Community Days. She will also attend the next DPW meeting on July 24th to ensure completion.

Deputy Mayor Morrow shared interest from (2) two potential candidates for the open board position as of August 1, 2023: Tammy McIntosh and Mariah Wallace, both wonderful candidates in the VBT's opinion. Both village residents with a passion for community and involvement, the Board would be fortunate to appoint either of them. Deputy Clerk Fitzgerald asked how the Board would go about appointment, and Mayor Rust suggested they interview both candidates. Trustee Nichols expressed his intention to not run for a seat again in 2024, and Mayor Rust said it may be worth bringing that up in the interviews – one seat will be open in August and one seat will be open in a year.

Mayor Rust began her report by officially appointing Jim Morrow as her replacement, and the Village of Chaumont's interim mayor, effective August 1, 2023. Trustee Nichols made a motion to accept Mayor Rust's appointment of Deputy Mayor Morrow to interim mayor, and Trustee Froelich seconded. Jim will also be on the election ballot this November and will campaign for the official role for 2024.

In her last meeting as mayor, Valerie Rust spent considerable time wrapping up various matters and delegating ongoing affairs.

- The Village Office facility was discussed, with the determination that the village and town offices must be separated
- The Deputy Clerk position was outlined and made ready to advertise
- The Decommissioning Bond with Norbut Solar/Convergent Energy must be secured as soon as possible
- Personnel policy must be updated every 2-3 years
- Personnel evaluations completed in January
- Update utility applications
- Maintain Capital Plan/Capital Funds
- DPW must perform an equipment inventory for the Asset Management Plan
- Various water system, street maintenance, and village operational tasks were addressed

Mayor Rust made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:34 PM to discuss a personnel matter, which was seconded by Trustee Nichols.

The Board of Trustees came out of Executive Session at 9:05 PM with a motion by Trustee Sosa, seconded by Trustee Froelich.

XI. Motion to Adjourn Meeting

Deputy Mayor Morrow made a motion to adjourn at 9:06 PM, which was seconded by Trustee Sosa.

Respectfully Submitted

Erin Fulton

Erin Fulton
Village Clerk/Treasurer