

Regular Meeting of the Chaumont Board of Trustees
Village of Chaumont/Town of Lyme Municipal Office
Located at 12175 NYS Route 12E
Via zoom meeting
Held on the 16th Day of March, 2021

Board Members Present:

Mayor: Valerie Rust
Deputy Mayor: Michael Nichols
Trustee: Patricia Reome
Trustee: James Morrow
Trustee: Dori-ann Froelich

Also Present:

Village Clerk: Karen Fitzgerald

2021-2022 Budget work session

Mayor Rust opened the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees 2021-2022 Budget work session at 6:00 p.m. via zoom meeting. Mayor Rust requested that the minutes reflect that all trustees are present this evening.

Mayor Rust presented the new items for consideration in the proposed budget including renovations to the tennis courts and asset management plan. Mayor Rust also stated that she would like the Village to hire an accounting firm to take over the payroll, accounting, budget workup, annual report, account reconciliations, Fed & state reporting, state comptroller reporting, and tax cap reporting to be in place in time for the 2022-2023 budget year.

Review of proposed 2021-2022 salaries and proposed overtime was discussed. Pay increases for the Mayor, Trustees, beach director, lifeguards and full time employees were also reviewed. Mayor Rust proposed that the new clerk/treasurer position should start at a substantially lower rate of pay due to the elimination of accounting, payroll and budgeting duties.

Sewer fund expenditures were reviewed including \$40K for Greg's consulting fees and P&T service agreement. The sewer debt payment will be \$83,000.00 in Oct. 2021. The \$18,000. transfer to capital is budgeted to start saving for replacement of sewer lift stations that are nearing the end of their life expectancy. Also included is \$8,000. for VFDs. Proposed changes to the sewer rates is an increase to sewer O&M from \$20.00 to \$40.00. All other rates would remain the same.

Water Fund revenues were reviewed. Mayor Rust reported that usage rates from DANC will increase to \$1.70 per k/gal starting in April 2021. Village proposed rates for the 2021-22 budget year either will remain the same or be lowered to offset the proposed increase in the sewer O&M rate. Mayor Rust proposed a decrease to O&M rates from \$25.00 to \$15.00 and DCC rate from \$25.00 to \$15.00. Inside Village non-sewer users rates will remain the same. Outside user rates will remain the same.

A question arose regarding the calculation of gallons included per EDU. One EDU fee of \$40.00 currently includes 3,000 gallons of water usage. Currently, 2 EDUs include 6k/gal of usage, 3EDUs includes 9k/gals, etc. Mayor Rust was under the impression that the law would include only 3k/gal regardless of the total EDU charge. Mayor Rust will review the numbers and we will discuss at the next budget work session.

The next work session was set for April 20, 2021 at 5:45 pm via zoom. The budget public hearing will be held the same night at 6:15 pm with the regular board meeting to start at 6:30 pm. Karen will place the notice in the newspaper.

Regular Board meeting of the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees

Mayor Rust opened the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees March 16, 2021 Regular Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m. via zoom meeting.

Privilege of the Floor

No one was present for privilege of the floor.

DPW Updates

Summer hours for the DPW will start at the same time that the Town DPW goes to 4 days. It is anticipated that they will decide to go to 4 days around April 12th.

Mayor Rust stated that payroll sewer hours should be kept to a minimum and will notify the DPW of this decision.

Asset Management Plan

Proposals to complete an Asset Management Plan were submitted by DANC and BC&A. Both proposals include services that would be performed to summarize existing assets to assist in future financial planning.

The Development Authority of the North Country submitted a proposal of \$18,000.00 to complete the plan which includes the basic assets, sidewalks & curbs, streets and street signage.

BC&A's proposal to complete the plan was \$14,500.00 which includes basic assets, sidewalks & curbs and streets. It does not include street signs.

Mayor Rust commented that she did not feel that an inventory on street signs is important since signs are generally limited to a 10 year life expectancy.

Upon a motion by Trustee Reome, second by Trustee Morrow and all in favor, it was resolved to hire BC&A to complete the Asset Management Plan to begin after June 2021.

Unsafe Buildings Law

Attorney Burrows forwarded to the Village, information, procedures and legal documents in regards to a 2020 NYS Court of Appeals ruling that it is extremely important that Towns & Villages adopt an "Unsafe Buildings and Structures Law". Although originally this was not a request on the Village's part, after review of the proposed law, it was considered an important tool in the event blighted properties must be torn down.

The steps for adoption include County approval, a public hearing and Village Board approval

It was decided that the proposed law should be sent on to the Village Planning Board and Code Enforcement for their review & comments prior to sending it to Jefferson County Planning.

Village Beach Permit

Karen reported that the application for opening the beach has been received from the NYS Dept of Health which implies that parks and beaches may be opened this summer. It's expected that the beach will need to have extensive restoration in order to open this season.

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Public Employer Health Emergency Plan

In September 2020, Gov. Cuomo signed legislation requiring all public employers in NYS to prepare a plan for continuation of operations in the event of another state disaster involving a communicable disease.

The proposed Plan was reviewed in depth by the trustees, and after this review, the following motion was made:

Resolution 27 (2020-2021)

At their Village Board budget public hearing meeting of March 16, 2021 the following members of the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees were present via virtual meeting through Zoom:.

- Mayor: Valerie Rust
- Deputy Mayor: Michael Nichols
- Trustee: Patricia Reome.
- Trustee: James Morrow
- Trustee: Doriann Froelich

AT said meeting, Mayor Rust, forwarded the following resolution, which was seconded by Trustee Nichols,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Chaumont will adopt the Public Employer Health Emergency Plan of the Village of Chaumont effective April 1, 2021. This plan was developed based on information, best practices and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current COVID-19 pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks. Members in favor are as follows:

**VOTING: AYES: 5
NAYES: 0**

The roll call vote was:	Valerie Rust, Mayor	Yes
	James Morrow, Trustee	Yes
	Patricia Reome , Trustee	Yes
	Doriann Froelich, Trustee	Yes
	Michael Nichols, Deputy Mayor	Yes

RESOLUTION NO: 27 2020-2021 ADOPTED

The Emergency Health Plan will be posted on the Village’s website and distributed to employees immediately.

Water Bill and Property Tax Credit Card payments

Karen discussed a program offered through PayGov.us that allows municipalities the ability to accept credit card payments for their utility and property tax payments. It is completely free to the Village and allows a convenient way for our residents to pay their water bills and property taxes. A service fee of 3% of all payments over \$33.00 is added to the transaction. Transactions under that amount are charged a minimum fee of \$1.00. These fees are paid by the user of the service. Interested residents can go online to the Village's website and click the payment link to complete the payment. The Village is then notified via email that a payment has been made. For auditing purposes, it was decided to open a collector account for water & sewer bills and a collector account for property tax payments. Upon a motion by Trustee Morrow and all in favor, it was resolved to open a collector account for utility payments and one for property tax payments at Citizens Bank of Cape Vincent. Authorized signers on the account are Karen Fitzgerald and Deputy Mayor Rust, each to act separately.

February 2021 Accounts Receivables

General Fund

Real Property Tax	A1001:	\$	-0-
Lieu of Taxes	A1081:	\$	-0-
Jeff. County Sales Tax	A1120:	\$	-0-
Penalty/Interest:	A1090:	\$	-0-
Gross Utility Tax:	A1130:	\$	60.36
Franchise Fees:	A1170:	\$	-0-
Clerk Fees: -	A1255:	\$	15.92
Registrar Fees:	A1603:	\$	30.00
Building Permits:	A2555:	\$	70.00
Unclassified	A2770:	\$	-0-
Beach fees:	A7140:	\$	-0-
Chips	A3501	\$	-0-
State Aid: Aid & Incentives	A3001	\$	-0-
Total:			176.28

Water Fund

Metered Water Sales	F2140-1:	\$	10,280.34
O&M/DCC FEES:	F2140-2:	\$	8,199.06
Unmetered Water:	F2142:	\$	0.00
Interest & Penalty Fee:	F2148:	\$	30.00
Water Meter Fees	F2144:	\$	0.00
Service Connection fees:	F2145:	\$	285.46
Total:		\$	18,509.40

Sewer Fund

Debt Service:	G2122:	\$	4,924.31
Usage Fee Sewer Rent:	G2120:	\$	9,220.86
Interest & Penalty Fees:	G2128:	\$	30.00
O&M Fees:	G2770:	\$	3,174.33
		\$	17,349.50

Motion to Approve Minutes of the February 16, 2021 board meeting:

Upon a Motion by Trustee Reome, Seconded by Trustee Froelich, and unanimously passed, it was **“Resolved** to Approve the Minutes of the February 16, 2021 Village of Chaumont Regular Board Meeting.

Motion to Approve Payment of Abstract #10 of the March 16, 2021 Board Meeting:

Upon a Motion by Mayor Rust and unanimously passed, It was **“Resolved”** to Approve Payment for Abstract #10 of the March 16, 2021 Regular Board Meeting via email confirmation of each trustee in the amounts of \$5,87.38 General Fund; Vouchers 1387-1394 \$1,562.92 Water Fund, Vouchers 403-407, \$6,565.35 Waste Water Fund, Vouchers 671-676, Trust & Agency: \$1,666.43 Voucher #80, River Crossing Project \$5,564.90, vouchers 37. Trustees will email their approval for the checks presented on the abstract.

Water/ Sewer Report

Karen reported that Peggy Fikes’ water reading was 28k/gal for the last billing period and 20k/gal in the January billing. Her typical usage is 3k/gal per billing period. The unusual usage was attributed to a leaking hot water heater. After discussion it was decided to refund a total of 42k/gal to water and 42k/gal to sewer. All were in favor of this refund.

Mayor’s Report

Mayor Rust informed the trustees that the sewer line attached to the bridge is in need of repair or even possibly needs to be replaced. Since the new bridge project appears to have been scheduled sooner than anticipated, it will become a critical financial consideration in the near future. Mayor Rust has been discussing this with Gregor Smith of BC&A to determine what needs to be done, the estimated costs and timing of the project which may be necessary sooner than anticipated.

Mayor Rust reported that she has been compiling as much documentation as possible regarding the Norbut solar project. This documentation includes emails, meeting minutes and conversations regarding the snowmobile trail. In early presentations of the solar project by Norbut representatives, the snowmobile trail viability was used as a tool to encourage approval of the project. During this past snowmobile season, the snowmobile trail was closed by Norbut. They used safety concerns during construction of the project as one of the reasons. When questioned by the Village for the trail’s closure, Mayor Rust received an email from Dan Huntington that stated “while presenting the project, I addressed my concerns about the trail’s viability multiple times at board meetings and at the public hearing due to set back and lot coverage restrictions in the new solar law.” The trustees who were in attendance at these meetings stated that their recall of conversations regarding the trail in pervious meetings was that Norbut representatives comments remained positive of the trail’s viability and that they were working on ways to legally maintain the trail. No meeting minutes include statements that the set back and lot coverage restrictions would jeopardize the trail. Negotiations for the reopening of trail is expected to begin this summer by the TI Snowmobile Club. The reopening of the trail is of high priority to the Village and the Board intends to support the snowmobile club in any way possible.

Mayor Rust mentioned that she contacted our County Legislature Rep, Bill Johnson, regarding the solar project and he stated that no entity (JCIDA, County, Town or Village) has been contacted to discuss a PILOT agreement by Convergent Energy.

Karen added that Andy Quencer who intended to attend tonight’s meeting contacted the Village to complain of snowmobiles running across his property.

Committee Reports

Trustee Reome: Nothing to report.

Trustee Froelich: The Planning board is working on the fee schedule. They are discussing increases to the site plan review and special meeting fees.

Trustee Morrow: The Youth Commission met to discuss baseball, softball and other sporting activities for the summer. Summer Rec intends to use the beach this summer.

Trustee Nichols: I visited the beach today and have noted numerous concerns & needs before opening in 2021. The entry gate is closed but not locked. Cleanup of the shoreline will be extensive as there is so much debris, even a portion of a dock and much erosion. The sign is out of the ground and leaning against the storage building. Also, I thought we stored the picnic tables off premises for the winter. Primary access to the beach by snowmobiles this winter has exposed a large root that causes a safety concern along with the extreme erosion. I also visited the tennis courts. The tennis courts are in desperate need of attention as there is trash and grass all around the fence and water facility. Memorial Park is also in need of repair. I noticed a light at the back of the park is on during the middle of the day and there is an abundance of lichen growing on the memorial checkerboard tables and stones. Mike has prepared a list that he will share with the trustees.

Old Business

Tennis Courts: Karen reminded the trustees that Paul Norton approached the Board regarding fundraising to improve the tennis courts. Karen reviewed information of the legality of municipalities receiving funds from other sources like citizen committees is legal. The trustees were in agreement that if concerned citizens would like to form a committee to fundraise for improvements to the courts, the funds can be given to the project. Any suggestions or recommendations for the project would be encouraged from them regarding configuration of the courts. Mayor Rust asked Karen to reach out to Paul to inform him that the Board is in full support of any fundraising campaign for the courts.

River Crossing and Water St. Improvements: JL Excavation is required to be back to do the cleanup of the residents property disrupted in the waterline improvements on Water St by May 30th. Karen stated that BC&A believes that we are approximately \$175,000. under budget which may leave room for a sidewalk project or other improvements on that street. Curbing may be considered but drainage also needs to be addressed. Tim Maloney or BC&A will be coming down to make recommendations.

New Business

The Northern New York “ Fort Drum Chapter of AUSA emailed the Village to consider approving the a Proclamation designating April 2021 as the Month of the Military Child. All trustees were in an agreement and offered the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION

Whereas, April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community; and

Whereas, the Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome; and

Whereas, the Month of the Military Child is part of the legacy left by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who established this Defense Department commemoration in 1986; and

Whereas, Military children deal with separations, deployments, frequent moves and even their parents' injuries as part of the life they were born into or entered with their families; and

Whereas, Military children move an average of 10 times while growing up; these frequent moves, exposure to different cultures and languages and immersion in military customs are all common, life-defining experiences in the military child culture;

Whereas, the term "military brat" is a badge of pride worn by generations of kids who traveled the world with their parents, moving into adulthood with the knowledge that they have the strength to handle anything; and

Whereas, Military Children often follow in the traditions of their parents and enter military service to defend our nation; and

Whereas the strength and resiliency of the Military Child is inspirational to our nation;

NOW, Therefore the Village of Chaumont in recognition of the importance of the Military Child and their contributions to our nation's strength and resilience, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2021 to be

The Month of the Military Child

in the Village of Chaumont and encourage all citizens to direct their attention to the important role Military Children play in our armed forces community.

Correspondence

Nexamp: advertisement promoting saving up to 10% of electricity costs by subscription to Nexmp community solar project. Sandra Blevin contacted the Village that she and others have been receiving a lot of ads promoting sign-up for electric for residents.

The Workplace: Notification that the Workplace summer work program for young people will be available this year. Mayor Rust stated the Village will not be participating this year as we have no one to supervise the individual.

NYS Retirement: Letter addressed to the Mayor and Karen stating that Karen's work hours do not substantiate consideration of full time employment based on the May, June & July, 2016 record of activity submittal. During that time, Karen took time off. The retirement office stated that Karen should have taken the number of hours of vacation time taken and continue maintaining her work schedule into August to offset the time off. Although they understand she is the only employee in the clerk's office and that she continued to work full time in August, they will not adjust the days earned. Unless they relent, NYSLRS said Karen must adjust the days earned since 2014.

A1 Janitorial lawsuit payment: Check in the amount of \$25.51 as a result of a lawsuit brought by the FTC against A1 Janitorial. Because money still remains in the fund, the FTC is sending another round of checks.

Crescent Yacht Club: Letter acknowledging that they have applied for their annual liquor license.

Motion to Adjourn:

Upon a Motion by Trustee Morrow, Seconded by Trustee Froelich, and unanimously passed, It was “ **Resolved** to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Village of Chaumont Board of Trustees March 16, 2021 meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Fitzgerald, Village Clerk/Treas.