**Police Reform Public Session**

**VILLAGE OF COXSACKIE**

**January 18, 2021**

Mark Evans called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Trustee Donald Daoust, Trustee Rebecca Vermilyea. Trustee Katlyn Irwin was present via Zoom video conference. Trustee Stephen Hanse was absent.

Mayor Evans stated that in 2020 Governor Cuomo announced the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, which was established by the Governor's Executive Order in June 2020. To meet this initiative for the Village’s police department, the Village has hired a consultant, Olio Consulting, to lead us through this process. An important component of this process is to gain input from the public on the Village’s police department. To accomplish this the Village has scheduled two public listening sessions. The first session being tonight, and another on Wednesday, January 27th at 7 p.m. These sessions will be an opportunity for Village Board, Police Chief, Sargent and consultant to listen to any thoughts, issues, and concerns. It is listening session only to gain information from the public.

Theresa Wilson, of Olio Consulting, stated that per the Governor's Executive Order, every locality with a police department must adopt a plan for reform by April 1, 2021. Part of this is a complete review of the department’s policies and procedures, and the Village Board at the request of Chief Mento has signed up to use Lexipol. Lexipol is a company that has standard and vetted policies and procedures approved by attorneys and police officers with decades of experience. The Village’s current police department policies and procedures are an accumulation of many years of historical documents which were written internally, copied from other agencies, or based on some general guidance from NYS. They have not had a comprehensive review or re-examination in a very long time, thus the decision to use Lexipol. Several municipalities in the Albany area have recently signed on to Lexipol. Once a plan is formalized it will be put out for public review. Once the plan is deemed acceptable it will be adopted via resolution and submitted to the state. In conjunction with reforming policies and procedures, the Village is also examining the Police Department hiring procedures.

**Public Comment Period**

JD Fielding asked how much of the police reform would directly affect the public.

Theresa Wilson stated that there is not a huge tangible impact on the public. Although, any changes to the hiring process will go into effect immediately. The Lexipol policies are designed to not have racial biases. It is important to have the community voice concerns, so that the Village can remain open and transparent.

JD Fielding asked if there was a fiscal benefit for the Village to comply with the State mandate.

Mayor Evans stated that there is a fiscal detriment if the Village does not comply. If the Village does not comply there is a risk of not being able to receive State funding. There have been no talks from the State on receiving a fiscal benefit. However, the Village is stuck spending several thousand dollars in order to complete an unfunded mandate.

No further public comments were made.

A motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the proposed acquisition of real property in the Town of Coxsackie for a water tank was made by Trustee Daoust and seconded by Trustee Vermilyea. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Irwin voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

A motion to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular Police Reform Public Session was made by Trustee Vermilyea and seconded by Trustee Irwin. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Irwin voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Daoust and seconded by Trustee Irwin. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Irwin voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nikki Bereznak

Clerk