

Village of Coxsackie

Workshop Minutes

December 7, 2023

The Workshop Meeting was called to order by Mayor Mark Evans at 6:00 p.m. Present were Trustee Donald Daoust and Trustee Rebecca Vermilyea. Trustee Katlyn Irwin and Trustee Rodney Levine was absent.

**Invited Guests**

Betty June Cure and Dan Beachler were both present on behalf of the Cemetery Committee.

Betty June Cure stated that the cemetery was established in 1826 and is the second oldest non-denominational cemetery in the county. Recognizing its age and historical importance, the restoration committee has been careful to keep it as it would have been in that century. Communities were proud of their cemeteries, as they were “status symbols” since only the well-to-do could afford a cemetery plot. They were designed to be like parks where people could stroll through and sit on benches while visiting their departed. The landscape committee headed by Helen Rosenfield have planted trees and shrubs appropriate for the era, and most of the plant material has been donated by the Rosenfield’s. She said that they have had continual problems with people placing artificial flowers and wreaths in the cemetery, and more recently a plastic gnome. The issue has made the committee aware that they need to post a set of rules for the cemetery. She presented the Board with a set of proposed rules that could be put on a brass plaque to be attached to the fencing in front of the cemetery. She stated that the cemetery was designated as a State and National Historic Site in 2018.

Betty June Cure stated that the proposed rules for the cemetery would read as follows: “Open from dawn to dusk, No dogs, No artificial materials except veterans’ flags, No planting, and Stones are fragile-please no sitting, leaning or picking up stones.”

Dan Beachler stated that they would like to post these on a small bronze plaque on the front gate.

Mayor Evans stated that the Board can adopt the proposed set of rules.

Trustee Daoust stated that he understands that the rules say, “No dogs”, but what about service dogs?

The Board deliberated, and it was determined that service dogs wouldn’t be an issue.

Trustee Daoust asked about including, “No bikes or scooters.”

Trustee Vermilyea stated that she doesn’t feel that that is a current problem to address.

Betty June Cure stated that she would also like to discuss the book that she is writing as the Village Historian. She said that sometime during the Covid shutdown, she started cleaning out her office and found a few stories they had written for the History Walk and Cemetery Tour. Thinking that the stories should be preserved, she started researching and collecting more material about the village and suddenly she had enough material for a book. The book, “It’s Our Village”, covers the history and life in the Village of Coxsackie from the 1600’s through World War 2. There are more than 100 stories, and with pictures, when bound, the book should have 250 pages. Although she has written most of the stories, David Dorpfeld contributed some he had written while he was Greene County Historian, and Michael Rausch promises to add a story

or two. She is hopeful that more people will contribute ideas or additional stories. She said that this is not a vanity project. All proceeds will go to help finance start-up costs for the Coxsackie Historical Society. She and David Dorpfeld have been looking for a publisher. She said that although publishers like the book, they will only give the Society 10% of the selling price of the book, which is peanuts. She stated that they are looking for a way to have it self-published. She is hoping that the Village will include some money in the next budget to help finance the publication. She presented the Board with copies of some of the stories that are in the book.

Dan Beachler stated that they have sold some T-shirts at the Christmas by the River event to help raise funds for the committee.

Mayor Evans asked if there was a map that existed showing the location of each cemetery plot.

Dan Beachler stated that this is something that he is working on.

Mayor Evans stated that when it is created, the Village can create a cemetery section on the website, and post it along with the cemetery rules.

### **Department of Corrections and Community Supervision-Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project Funding**

Mayor Evans stated that the Village will now owe \$5,240,000.75 over the next 34 years. The final closing with EFC for this project occurred earlier today, December 7<sup>th</sup>. The yearly payment should be around \$174,000.00.

### **Water & Sewer Requests**

The Board discussed the request received from Brandi & Nick Gatti, of 10 Spencer Boulevard, asking to remove penalties from their water/sewer account in the amount of \$29.66, due to misplacing the bill. After deliberation, it was determined that it will be added as an agenda item for approval at the next Board Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Board discussed the request received from Nick Oringer, of 35 Wayne Drive, asking to remove penalties from his water/sewer account in the amount of \$33.49, due to misplacing the bill. After deliberation, it was determined that it will be added as an agenda item for approval at the next Board Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Champlain Hudson Power Express**

Mayor Evans stated that the Champlain Hudson Power Express has provided an updated Road Use Agreement (RUA) for the portion of the project that will go through the Village. The original RUA was done several years ago. So, a new one had to be done to include more specific designs and impacts. The new RUA also includes language on a donation amount given to the Village. Village Counsel has looked it over and found that the only legal issue is the mention of going through, over, or under a park. In this instance it would be Firemens' Park. After Village Counsel spoke with Champlain Hudson Power Express' Counsel, they were able to find a workaround to put in the agreement. The Village will get a clean draft to approve at the next Board Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **RVs in Driveways**

Mayor Evans asked if the Board is interested in considering legislation regarding the regulation of RV's parked in resident's driveways. There currently is nothing in the Village's Code regulating such a thing. The potential issues with having people living in a parked RV is the

noise it would generate for neighbors, such as running generators, and the lack of oversight on whether the water/sewer usage and disposal is handled correctly. Other communities have local laws pertaining to regulating RV's. He stated that the Board may also want to include regulation on shipping containers. After further deliberation by the Board, it was decided that the Village will move forward with considering drafting legislation for the regulation of RVs and shipping containers, not to include containers used for construction, with the assistance of the Village Attorney.

### **Demand Response Proposal**

Mayor Evans stated that there is an opportunity to have the Wastewater Treatment Plant run on a generator at various times through the year, and the Village could make money from it. He said that the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant participated in this 6 or 7 years ago, and they would call and let the Wastewater Plant personnel know when they had to switch to a generator. It was usually during peak electric usage times. The Village did make some money off of this program the last time. With the new 3 year proposal, the Village can receive \$5,576.00.00/year. Mayor Evans stated that he was hoping that there was a way for the Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator to remotely control turning on/off the generator from home, rather than have to have someone called in, but he is not sure that that is a possibility. After deliberation, it was determined that the contract will be added as an agenda item for approval at the next Board Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee Rodney Levine arrived at 6:50 p.m.

### **Fire Department Driving Age**

Mayor Evans stated that the Fire Department is considering lowering the driving age from 21 to 18. The previous insurance company couldn't say "no" to this, but indicated that it wasn't a good idea. Now that the Village is with NYMIR as the insurance carrier, the discussion has come up again within the Fire Council. NYMIR stated that they feel that the driving age could be lowered to 18 so long as the individual is well trained. Mayor Evans stated that he would feel more comfortable so long as the individual completed an Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC). The Board will need to have a further discussion about this.

### **Village Complex Paving**

Mayor Evans stated that the Village had received an estimate to pave the Village complex. The Board needs to have a discussion about potentially using American Rescue Plan Act funds, along with other funds, to pay for this. Mayor Evans asked Scott Martell, Superintendent of Public Works, to get new updated estimates with, and without, milling. He will also approach the church and State Telephone about contributing towards the project since they use the parking lot also.

### **Columbia-Greene Humane Society**

Mayor Evans stated that the Village needs to renew the annual agreement with the Columbia-Greene Humane Society for 2024. He stated that the contract has not changed from the previous year. The Village is only charged when a dog is taken to the Humane Society. This year, no dogs were taken, and the Village was not charged. After deliberation, it was determined that it will be added as an agenda item for approval at the next Board Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Vacation Sell Back Requests**

A motion to approve allowing Scott Martell, Superintendent of Public Works, to sell back 2

weeks of vacation time was made by Trustee Daoust and seconded by Trustee Levine. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Levine voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

A motion to approve allowing Charles VanAlphen, Public Works Foreman, to sell back 1 week of vacation time was made by Trustee Daoust and seconded by Trustee Levine. Trustee Daoust voted yes. Trustee Levine voted yes. Trustee Vermilyea voted yes. The motion carried.

### **Crossing Guards**

Mayor Evans stated that the Village will be potentially losing a Crossing Guard, and is already down a Crossing Guard position that has not been filled. The Board needs to have a discussion about what the Village needs to do to attract people to apply for the positions, and whether that potentially includes raising the pay rate.

### **UHY Annual Contract Agreement**

Mayor Evans stated that UHY contacted the Village stating that they realized that they did not have a signed copy of the annual contract agreement for 6/1/23-5/31/24. This is for auditing and Annual Financial Report filing services for the current fiscal year.

### **Department Head Monthly Reports**

The following Department heads came in at their respective scheduled times to give their monthly report: Department of Public Works Superintendent Scott Martell, Police Chief Samuel Mento, Water Superintendent Adelord Preville, and Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator David Varade.

The following Department heads were excused: Fire Chief Shawn Burdick, Planning Board Chairman Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr., Code Enforcement Officer Michael Ragaini, Historic Preservation Commission Chairperson Patricia Maxwell, and Dog Control Officer Sherry Vieta.

All Department head monthly reports are on file with the Village Clerk.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Berezna  
Clerk