

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – February 2016

Since the minutes from our regular monthly Board meeting are not formally approved and posted on the Village website until the following month, it seems that our residents might be more fully informed of Village affairs by having regular updates posted on our website sooner, rather than later. To that end, it has been decided to provide our readers with some monthly updates, and if there are any concerns or a need for more information, please call (673-3112) or email (marboard@twcny.rr.com) the Village Office.

Onondaga County Planning Board – on Local Law No. 1 of 2016 – the Village Board accepted the Onondaga County Planning Board’s decision with regard to Local Law No. 1 of 2106 (Vacant Buildings) noting that no significant adverse inter-community or county-wide implications would result from enactment of the law.

Election Resolution – the Board approved a motion to publish an election resolution designating the following:

- The polling place for the Village election is the Village Hall, located at 6 Slocombe Avenue, Marcellus, NY
- The election will take place on March 15, 2016. Polls will open at 12:00 o’clock noon and close at 9:00 p.m.
- The names and addresses of the candidates nominated for the office of Trustee, a four-year term, include:
 - i. Sara N. Tallman – 7 Reed Street, Marcellus, NY
 - ii. John Bromka – 36 South Street, Marcellus, NY
- There will be no propositions to be voted upon at this election

Authorize B & L to file Community Development Grant for 2016 – the Board authorized Barton & Loguidice to complete the 2016 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application. It should be noted that there has been a change in the maximum grant allowance from \$100,000 to \$50,000.

Time Warner Cable Franchise Agreement – was again tabled until legal details are negotiated successfully.

PERMA Revised Workers Comp Program Agreement – was also tabled until legal details are negotiated successfully

Police Updates – Chief Wicks would like to make sure that all residents continue to lock their autos and houses. Last year around this time, both in the Village, but also on the outside, on the periphery of the Village in particular, there have been burglaries – particularly into unlocked automobiles, and property (GPS, other electronics and pocketbooks) has been stolen. Virtually all of these thefts have taken place because autos have been left outdoors and unlocked. If the cars are locked, the thieves usually move on. It might also be noted that there are only two sheriff’s patrols at night, covering the entire southern and western parts of the county, and our Village officers are to be commended for their efforts in providing police service, not only for Village residents, but also for those who live on the periphery of the Village but pay no taxes.

Another Police Update – Prescription / Drug Drop-Off Box – Chief Wicks would again like to announce that a prescription/drug drop-off box, similar to a mailbox, is now located in the lobby of the Village Hall and is available for use by any residents who would like to dispose of any prescription or other drugs anonymously. The County Health Department will stop by monthly to pick up and properly dispose of such items.

Flushable Wipes – as we have been mentioning for the last few years, products called “flushable wipes” have been introduced to the market. Our Treatment Plant operatives have indicated that the wipes are not

“flushable” and are causing sewer backups in the village on residential properties. A review by Consumer Reports confirmed that these wipes do not break down and will create sewer backups. If you are using these wipes, please do not flush these wipes down the toilet. They should be discarded into the trash. If the wipes are flushed and cause a sewer backup, you will probably need to contact a plumber since the backup will occur on residential property.

F.O.G. (Fats, Oils, Grease) – in the wastewater is a topic that we continue to address at every Board meeting. It is a major concern and we continue to urge our residents to be more and more aware of the problems associated with grease in our sewer system. The Treatment Plant operators urge you to scrape grease and food scraps from cooking surfaces into a container and put in the trash or composts them. Do not put grease, fats or oils of any type down your drain or garbage disposal. Do use baskets or strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids – and then empty them in the trash for disposal. There continues to be an increase of calls from residents who have had sewer backups, and these have been attributable, for the most part, to grease buildup and blockage.

No Parking – we continue to alert residents that there is no parking on any of the Village streets, from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., from November 1st to April 1st so that the highway crew can plow snow.

Snow Plowing – despite the lack of snow so far this season, the plowing of Village streets and sidewalks by our highway department has again been exemplary. The Board would like to commend members of the department for all of their dedicated work, often in miserable conditions, often while the rest of the Village sleeps. Their dedication to task is truly excellent.

Creek Walk Project – continues to move ahead. Advertisement in the local paper as well as in selected journals began on Wednesday, February 17, 2015 and will continue for three weeks – until Wednesday, March 9, 2016. B & L Engineering will review the bids and make recommendation to the Village for a bid opening on March 9, 2016. A Special Meeting will be held on Monday, March 14, 2016 to award the construction bid for the Creekwalk. It is expected that construction of the Creekwalk Project will be able to start in April or May, depending on the weather.

Budget – the Village Board has begun to work on its 2016-2017 Budget and at first glance, it appears that things are still somewhat stagnant at the Village level. In January, Village residents received their County tax bill and that bill reflected, as it did last year, a tax reduction for Village residents, on average about \$10 for a residential home in the Village. The County, similar to last year, has been able to drop that tax because the County, which having slashed by more than half, the sales tax revenue that used to go to the Village, has then able to pass on those tax savings to Village property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. Ever since, the Village has had to make up for the revenue taken by the County and then passed onto Village property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. The County has not added some VIP monies to the Villages this year as it has in the recent past, and these might have helped to offset an increase in Village taxes this year.

Property Tax Cap – our Budget is also complicated by the property tax cap of 2%, another State mandate, and at our March Board meeting, the Board might have to vote to override the tax cap. Having learned from the experience of several towns, it is sometimes best to override, if only to protect the Village from penalty. Should the adopted budget vary from the actual budget, resulting in a tax hike of more than 2 percent, the Village would be responsible for a host of penalties for violating the governor’s tax cap. The Governor has also proposed a property tax freeze if the Village stayed under the tax cap and moved towards consolidation. Last year, the Village was able to stay under the cap, and residents received a rebate check in January. However, the Village might not be able to stay under the tax limit this year, despite having moved towards consolidation, particularly with our sewer project with the Town. There are just too many variables in the Governor’s tax proposal, and the savings, according to NYCOM, would be minimal.

Compost Project – the Village was reimbursed by the State for half of the cost of building the composting facility – approximately \$400,000. However the Village received only 91% of the grant monies and that we will have to wait another year or two to receive the remaining 9%, or approximately \$38,000.

Fiscal Stress – Last February, State Comptroller DiNapoli reported that the Village of Marcellus was “susceptible to fiscal stress.” In our response, we noted that much of this stress could be attributed to the debt on the village books and much of the debt will be reduced when the Village is reimbursed by the State of New York for several projects for which the Village had to borrow and bond before being reimbursed. Since then, the Village has been reimbursed for some of the debt it had to assume in order to pay for the consolidation of the village, town and school district sewer system as well as reimbursement from the State for the composting of the sludge project at the WPCP. As we mentioned last year, we were confident that when state reimbursement took place, the village books would look healthy, and the Village Treasurer has confirmed that, indeed, the susceptibility to financial stress envisioned by the State Comptroller’s Office has been eliminated.

Planning Board – the opening of the North Street Diner is anxiously anticipated by mid-April.

Olde Home Days – June 3rd, 4th and 5th – the first meetings were held in January and February, and the third meeting will be held on March 3, 2016 in the Village Board Room at 7 p.m.

No Parking – we continue to alert residents that there is no parking on any of the Village streets, from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., from November 1st to April 1st so that the highway crew can plow snow.

Time Warner Cable Rate Increases – residents may have already received a letter explaining the reasons for the rate increases, as well as a chart on what those increases will be, beginning January 1, 2016.

Village Meetings for March 2016 – please make note of the list of those meetings scheduled for March 2016, which is provided for those so interested. The third meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2016, will take place on Thursday, March 3, 2016 in the Village Board Room. Also, a Special Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 2 p.m. for the bid opening on the construction of the Creek Walk, and that another Special Meeting will be held on Monday, March 14, 2016 at 10 a.m. to award the bid for construction of the Creek Walk. Election Day is Tuesday, March 15, 2016, from Noon to 9 p.m. and a public hearing on Community Development Grant Application is scheduled prior to our regular Board meeting on Monday, March 28, 2016. There are also several budget meetings planned as well, including one for March 4 and another for March 11 both at 10 a.m. in the Board Room. Additional meetings will be held as needed. Also, the Village Office will be closed on Good Friday, March 25, 2016, and finally, the Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing will take place on Monday, April 4, 2016 in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m.