

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – March 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.

Public Hearings - the Board conducted three public hearings prior to its regular Board Meeting on March 28th, following which the Board approved the resolutions and Local Law #2 of 2016.

First Public Hearing – Paul Street Sidewalk Rehabilitation – The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the 2016 application for funding through the Onondaga County Development Grant Program for sidewalk rehabilitation work on Paul Street and update the Village's Consolidated Five-Year Plan. The project would include the installation of approximately 450 feet of deteriorated sidewalk with new 5-foot wide ADA compliant sidewalk located on the north side of Paul Street. Improvements would begin near the intersection of Paul Street with North Street (NYS 174) and would extend east approximately 450 feet to Austindale Avenue. Minor drainage improvements such as cleaning existing drainage pipes and replacement of catch basins are also included. The estimated cost of the project is about \$52,800 and the grant would provide 75% (\$39,600) of the funding for the project, while the Village would have to provide for 25% (\$13,200) of the funding. The sidewalk project would be designed during the fall and winter of 2016 and construction would commence in the spring of 2017 and completed by summer, 2017 – provided the monies are awarded by CD and the Village is able to provide additional and adequate funding.

Second Public Hearing – Local Law #2 of 2016 – Override Property Tax Cap – The purpose of this hearing was to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding Local Law #2, which would allow the Village Board to override a property tax cap that is in excess of the tax levy limit of 2%, mandated by the State of New York. The property tax cap of 2%, which is another State mandate, complicates our budget and at a recent workshop, the Board decided to override the tax cap. The Governor has proposed a property tax cap freeze if the Village stayed under the tax cap and moved towards consolidation of some sort. We expect to be able to stay under the property tax cap of 2% and we have also moved towards consolidation, particularly of the village, town and school district sewer districts. However, the Governor's "tax cap freeze" proposal complicates the Village budget process and we are unable to abide the formula devised by the State for a tax freeze.

Third Public Hearing – Increase Sewer Rents – The purpose of this hearing was to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding a proposed increase in the sewer rents, allowing the Village Board to adopt a resolution amending Document G of the Village of Marcellus Code Book. A sewer rate increase, effective April 1, 2016, was proposed in this resolution, raising the minimum sewer rent from \$63.00 per quarter to \$75.00 per quarter, or \$12 per quarter – \$48 per year. It should be noted that prior to last October, sewer rents had not increased since 2007, but we now find it necessary to raise them again. This increase will cause the average Village residential property owner to pay an additional \$12 per quarter – the minimum annual sewer rent will be \$300 and the average will be about \$360 per year. It might be noted that New York Rural Water has stated that a treatment plant that does not charge at least \$1/day, is losing money and grossly underfunding that service. The background information on the need for this proposed increase in sewer rents continues to be the increased costs resulting from directives and mandates imposed on the of Environmental Conservation (DEC). While increased costs in the transportation and treatment of sewage as well as the operation and maintenance of the Village Sewer System continue to rise dramatically, it is the DEC mandate that the Village remove phosphorus from its plant effluent that is causing another increase in sewer rents. In order to reduce the amount of phosphorus to an acceptable level, it has been determined by our engineers that a total reconstruction of the

Treatment Plant is necessary, at a cost of approximately \$5.5 million. This cost would effectively bankrupt the Village, but our petitions for some sort of modification of the mandate by the DEC have been rejected. In January 2016, the Village Treatment Plant was given another year to come up with a plan to remove the phosphorus from its effluent. If a plan is not designed, the Village be labeled "in consent," meaning that we will be in violation of our permit to operate the plant and will be subject to fines and court action. In order to adequately prepare for such an eventuality, the Village Board has found it necessary to build up its sewer fund balance and this proposed increase in sewer rents is the second of several projected increases that will be necessary in the years to come.

Spring Brush Pickup Dates – the Highway Superintendent announced that the first day for brush pickup in the Village will be from Monday, April 4, 2016. The last day to put brush out to the curb for pickup will be Sunday, May 8, 2016. In addition, the Town of Marcellus has announced dates for the Trash Transfer Stations and they are: Fridays, April 29^h and May 6th, and May 13th, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturdays, April 30th, May 7th, and May 14th, from 8 a.m. to Noon. Permits are required and are issued through the Town of Marcellus Clerk's Office. Tires require an additional permit, starting at \$3.00, as well as items that contain Freon, such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners or dehumidifiers - these require another permit. Some items are not accepted including garbage, OCRRA recyclables, liquids or hazardous waste including paint, oil tanks, fuel tanks, motor vehicles, roofing shingles and brush over 6 inches in diameter.

Back Injury & Safety Prevention Policy – the Board approved a recommendation made by Village employees at a recent meeting of the Village Safety Committee regarding a Back Injury Prevention & Safety Program and to insert such policy in the Employee Handbook.

Update Fee Schedule – the Board agreed to update the Village Fee Schedule, upon recommendation of our Code Enforcement Officer, including that for mobile food vendors among others, a copy of which fee schedule is on file in the Village Office for public inspection. The fee schedule will also be available on line, at the Village website, under Village Code, Document C.

Election Results – congratulations are extended to Trustee Sara N. Tallman on her re-election as Trustee on March 15, 2016. Re-elected to a four-year term, Sally will serve until 2020. The Board is grateful for the very dedicated service that she has provided our Village for the past four years and looks forward to continued accomplishment in the future.

No Parking – regulations during the winter months, which calls for no parking on any Village streets from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., ends on April 1st.

Sign Placement – soon the Highway Department will re-install pedestrian crossing signs on Main Street in the Village. The signs are placed in the road, near the crosswalks, warning motorists that all vehicles must yield to pedestrians who are walking the crosswalk – a New York State law. It is hoped that the signs will make it easier for pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, to cross Main Street safely as well as cause motorists to slow down as they approach these crosswalks.

Village Earth Day Participation – the Board would also like to announce that the Village will again participate in an Earth Day clean up on Friday, April 22, 2016. Second grade students from Heffernan Elementary School will participate in this event and we welcome any individuals or groups to join us in helping clean the Village of any litter lying along the roadside and village rights of way. We will meet in front of the Village Hall to distribute bags and gloves. If you're interested in participating, as a group or an individual, please show up about 1:30 p.m. and contact the Village Clerk at 673-3112 for more information.

Utility Bills – the utility bill that residents receive this month is the last bill for our fiscal year. Residents should note that if not paid by April 29, 2016, the bill will be re-levied to the tax bill for June 1, 2016. If those bills for tenants who pay their own utilities are not paid by April 29, 2016, these too will be re-levied onto the owner's taxes for June 1, 2016. **Please note that, unlike previous utility bills, payment for this final bill for the year must be made within the month.**

Creek Walk Project – we have a setback with the Creek Walk Project, in that the bids that were opened on May 9, 2016 were much too high for the Board to consider. We are in the process of consulting with our engineers and NYSDOT to determine if part of the trail could be constructed at this time, and the remainder constructed when more funds become available. We are still hopeful that construction of the trail can begin this spring and summer.

Budget – the Village Board is working to finalize the 2016-17 Village Budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting. In January, Village residents received their County and Town tax bill and that bill reflected a tax reduction for Village residents, on average about \$10 for a house valued at \$100,000 in the Village. Similar to last five years, this tax reduction was made possible by the County, having slashed by more than half the sales tax revenue that used to go to the Village, was 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. Our budget remains far short of what the Board needs to provide adequate services and we therefore anticipate a slight tax increase of less than 2% (or 1.9%), or 13 cents/1000, which does fall within the Governor's tax cap, but not tax freeze, proposal.

Homeowner Responsibility for Sewers – property owners should be aware that they are required to maintain the sewer laterals that extend from their homes to the sewer main – typically located in the middle of the road. Sewer laterals are entirely owned by the private property owner, who is responsible for the entire length of the lateral, to the sewer main. At the sewer main, the Village assumes responsibility.

Area Code Overlay Approved for 315 Area Code – residents should get ready to change the way they dial their calls made within the 315 area code. To complete calls within the 315 area code region, the new dialing procedure requires calls to dial **area code + telephone number**. This means that all calls in the 315 area code that are currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using **ten digits – area code + telephone number**. There will also be a new area code, **680**, assigned to the same geographic region as the existing area code – 315, and the same dialing procedure will apply to telephone numbers assigned to the new 680 area code – **680 + telephone number**. Beginning **February 11, 2017**, you must use the new dialing procedures. After this date, if you do not use the new procedure, your calls will not be completed and a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again. The New York Public Service Commission is urging residents to begin using the new procedure in March 2016, so that they will become familiar with the new procedure.

Time Warner Cable Is Going All-Digital on April 12, 2016 – those residents who are subscribers to Time Warner Cable TV should be advised that, by April 12, 2016, they will need a digital set-top box or digital adapter to avoid losing their television picture. Adapters will be free of charge for 24 months, after which, each adapter will be billed at the prevailing monthly rate at that time.

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

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

Announce Date and Time for Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing – the Annual Meeting will take place on April 4, 2016 and includes the appointment of non-elected officials, establishing regular meeting dates, as well as

designating official newspapers and depositories. In addition, a Public Hearing will take place on April 4, 2016 to consider the tentative budget for the Village for the next fiscal year. Approval of the final budget will probably take place at the next regular Board meeting, on April 25, 2016.

Village Meetings for April 2016 – a list of those meetings scheduled for April 2016 has been prepared for those so interested – please note also that the Village Office was closed on Good Friday, March 25th, and on Memorial Day, May 30th. Also, Olde Home Days 2016 is scheduled for June 3rd, 4th and 5th and the Committee continues to meet the first Thursday of every month, in the Village Board Room. The next such meeting is planned for April 7, 2016.