

## Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – February 2019

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 (315-673-3112) or email ([marboard@twcny.rr.com](mailto:marboard@twcny.rr.com)) the Village Office.

**Community Development Grant for 2019** – the Board approved a motion to forgo completion of the 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application by our engineering group. It should be noted that the reason for this is that no part of the Village of Marcellus is now eligible for any funding from Community Development grants, according to HUD income standards. This is unfortunate because it has been through this grant program that many streets, sidewalks and other public infrastructure have been funded for many years in the past. Now, the Village of Marcellus does not meet income standards.

**Extension of IMA With Onondaga County Dept. of Water Environment Protection** – a motion was approved to authorize the Mayor to sign the Intermunicipal Wastewater Agreements (IMAs) with Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection whereby the current 2017 fee schedule will remain in effect until each IMA's expiration date, unless otherwise notified. This moratorium will provide an opportunity for the parties to discuss and evaluate a new fee schedule.

**Social Media Policy** – a motion was made and approved for a new social media policy for the Village of Marcellus. Developed by Village Clerk Charnley Abbott and with the endorsement of Village Attorney, Jeff Brown, this policy will enable the Village to make public information more readily available, to inform residents and visitors about government services and local attractions, and to use social media to further enhance the Village's messaging and news delivery systems. A copy of the social media policy is available for public inspection in the Village Office.

**Approve Change Order with Blue Heron for Manhole Repair on Main Street** – a motion was approved to authorize the Mayor to sign the change order for emergency repair of a collapsed manhole on Main Street with Blue Heron Construction, the cost to complete this emergency work to be determined.

**Spectrum Communications Cable Franchise Agreement** – a motion to again table the Spectrum Communications Cable Franchise Agreement was approved, until the Village Attorney has been able to negotiate successfully, the terms of the agreement, with Charter Communications.

**Budget Modifications** – budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General and Sewer Funds were approved.

### Updates – Mayor and the Board

**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.

**Another Police Update** – the Prescription/Drug Drop-Off Box located in the lobby of the Village Hall continues to be a welcome addition to the Village. Any numbers of individuals continue to take advantage of using the drop-off box to dispose of any prescription or other drugs anonymously. The County Health Department stops by monthly to pick up and properly dispose of such items. We have been informed that a similar drop off box for the anonymous disposal of needles and syringes will soon be provided and that the County Sheriff will pick up the expense of providing for the pick up and disposal of such.

**Clean Energy Community** – as was mentioned at earlier Board meetings, a \$100,000 grant has been reserved for the Village of Marcellus to implement clean energy projects. This has involved a retrofitting of several existing Village lights to direct wire LED type fixtures. Other LED lighting retrofits have also occurred in the Village Hall, the Village Garage and the Water Pollution Control Plant. We also have added six (6) new historic lampposts, with LED type fixtures, to several streets in the Village with a goal of installing two (2) additional historic lights on Bradley Street. In addition, we are working with NYSEG to convert all of the remaining overhead (cobra) lights in the Village from HPS bulbs to LED bulbs. The average annual energy savings for the Village as a result of this project is estimated to be in excess of \$20,000.

**ZEV Charging Station** – the station, installed last year as part of a NYSDEC grant, has a defective screen. We did receive a new screen from Solar Liberty, and expected to have it installed by our electrician. However, his attempts to install this new screen were unsuccessful because it was incompatible with the charging station, and we are now waiting on instructions from the manufacturer as to what we should do.

**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. If ticketed by Village Police, the fee will be \$35.00. We urge residents to use the Village parking lots for any overnight parking situations.

**Snow Plowing by Independent Snow Plow Operators** – as in the past, we would like to alert independent snow plow operators that it is illegal to plow or shovel snow or ice during snow removal operations upon a village sidewalk or other public way. While most of the independent snow plow operators in the Village comply as much as possible with the law, there are some who need to be reminded that if a driveway is being plowed, that snow CAN NOT be plowed into the street. NOR can the snow be plowed out of a driveway, across the street and into the village right-of-way across from the plowed driveway. The Village is not responsible for snow that accumulates on a resident's property and the Village is not responsible for removing snow that has been plowed onto the Village right-of-way. We ask that independent snowplow drivers take this into consideration when they are plowing residential properties in the village. No snow should be plowed onto a village street or sidewalk, and any that has been, must be removed.

**Budget** – the Village Board has begun to work on its 2019-2020 Budget and at first glance, it appears that things remain somewhat flat at the Village level. While the recent County Resolution did not fully restore the sales tax revenue that Villages once enjoyed and which was taken from the Villages in 2010, it does go a long way towards resolving some of the acrimony that resulted from the seizure of sales tax revenue. In addition, it represents a commitment on the part of the County to provide additional financial assistance to Villages so that they will remain viable and the centers around which the Towns revolve. Based on population, the Village of Marcellus is slated to receive 4.01% of the funding allocated by the County each year, from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2030 (\$208,500 as compared with \$180,450).

**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.

**Update on WWTP Upgrades** – the \$7.7 million treatment plant upgrades mandated by NYSDEC to remove phosphorus from the plant's effluent continues to be well underway. Construction of two new clarifiers, a new UV tank, a new head works building and modifications to the control building are in progress and on schedule. The financing package includes a \$5,202,600 short term (30 year), interest-free hardship loan and a \$1,379,900 WIIA Grant (formerly called a NYS Water Grant) along with an \$80,000 WQIP #11 grant, a \$1,000,000 WQIP #14 Grant and an anticipated \$250,000 SAM Grant.

**Increase in the sewer rates** – because of the mandated upgrades at the Treatment Plant, as mentioned' at previous Board meetings, we found it necessary to approve another sewer rent increase of approximately 30% at our December Board meeting. This will mean a minimum quarterly sewer rate, for Village sewer users, of \$100.00 (from \$75.00) and a minimum annual cost of \$400 (from \$300) and an average annual cost of about \$541.39 (from \$413.13). Keep in mind that this is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village. The annual cost for outside users is anticipated to be \$676.74 (from \$516.41), given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user – an increase of about \$160.00 per year, beginning in 2019. In order to prepare our Treatment Plant for operation well into the 21st century, these increases, while hefty, are unavoidable.

**Planning Board** – has not met in recent weeks, but does plan to meet on March 13, 2019.

**Code Enforcement** – mostly 3-year rental inspections and fire inspections this month. We would also remind residents that all garbage must be contained in a proper receptacle, not left at the curb in plastic bags.

**Olde Home Days** – May 31st, June 1st, and 2nd – the first meetings were held in January and February, and the third meeting will be held on March 7, 2019 in the Town Park's Welcome Center at 6:30 p.m.

**Village Meetings for March 2019** – a list of those meetings scheduled for March 2019, is provided for those so interested, including the third meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2019 will take place on Thursday, March 7, 2019 in the Town Park's Welcome Center, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please note also that there are several budget meetings planned for March, including one on March 5th, and March 12th both at 10 a.m. in the Board Room. Additional meetings will be held as needed. Also, Daylight Savings Time will begin on March 10, 2019. Finally, the Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing will take place on Monday, April 1, 2019 in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m.