

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – November 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 (clerk@villageofmarcellus.com) the Village Office.

Proclamation – Robert J. Wilson – the Mayor offered a proclamation, recognizing the service and memory of former Trustee Robert J. Wilson, whose untimely passing earlier this month is keenly felt by many in the community.

Employee Drug Testing – a contract with Lakeshore Employee Testing Services, to perform drug and alcohol testing for commercial drivers who are employed in the Village Highway Department at a cost of \$55.00 per employee was approved, authorizing the Mayor to sign said contract.

Annual Maintenance Permit with NYSDOT – Is there a motion? – Trustee ____ – a motion was made and approved to authorize the DPW Superintendent (and/or his designee) to complete and sign the appropriate forms in order to acquire the annual maintenance permit with the NYSDOT.

Request to Adjust Utility Charges – the Board received a written request from the property owner at 8-12 West Main Street, asking that the Board consider adjusting the Village utility charges for several of the previous quarters. The outstanding utility bills for the property dated back to June of 2016, although the current owner did not acquire the property until December 2018 and was unaware of the outstanding bills at that time. Nor was any of this referenced, as it should have been, when the property changed hands at the closing. Because the property owner was unaware of the outstanding bills nor of the penalties that have accrued, a motion was made and approved authorizing the Clerk to adjust the bill to reflect the time period since the property changed hands – from 12/1/18 to 9/30/19, plus half of the penalties that were accrued – This would total \$980.00 for two units plus \$153.00 in penalties, for a total invoice of \$1,133.00.

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

Announce Christmas Tree Lighting December 6, 2019 – the Board would also like to announce that the annual Marcellus Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on Friday, December 6, 2019 beginning at 6 p.m. in the Village, at the Point. This is a change from previous years when the tree lighting took place on a Thursday. There are many different activities and participants in this year's ceremony and a flyer has been prepared for residents who wish to pick one up.

Announce Village Meetings for December 2019 – the Village Clerk has printed copies of future meeting dates for the Village for the benefit of residents. The Village Office will be closed on November 28th and 29th for the Thanksgiving Day holidays. Also, the Village Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on Friday, December 6th, in the Village, at the Point. This is a change from previous years when the tree lighting took place on a Thursday. Also, the Village Office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th for the Christmas holiday and the Village Office will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st for the New Years' Holiday.

Updates – Mayor and Board

Reminder – No Parking – November 1st to April 1st – the public should be aware of the fact that as of November 1, 2018, there is no parking allowed on any street in the Village of Marcellus from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m. so that the Highway Department can plow snow. This no parking ban will remain in effect until April 1, 2020. 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.

Leaf and Brush Pickup – brush pickup ended on October 8th and if any residents have missed the deadline, they are welcome to utilize the Village composting site behind the Village Hall. Leaf pickup extends from October 15th to November 18th. After November 19th, residents may collect leaves into large brown paper leaf bags and place the bags at the curb for pickup, weather permitting – please note that only these leaf bags will be picked up after November 19th. Residents may also drop off brush and leaves anytime at the Village

compost site, located next to the Highway Department garage. Please remember to keep leaves in the Village right of way, between the sidewalk and the road, and out of the street where they might end up clogging the catch basins and lead to flooding. With snowstorms that may occur, any leaves that are still in the Village right-of-way, between the sidewalk and the road, will remain there until the snow melts and the DPW has an opportunity to remove them. That might not be until the spring of 2020. Residents are welcome to bag their leaves and bring the bags to the compost site at the rear of the Village Hall.

Other DPW Work – in recent weeks, the DPW has been very diligent in picking up leaves, long beyond the cut-off period. We have received some very nice compliments from residents for their efforts and we appreciate the response. With the coming of the winter snows, some of the memorial benches and pedestrian signs have been removed until spring by the department. The Department have also put up and decorated the Village Christmas Tree at the Point, ready for lighting on the 6th and the new Christmas decorations have been put up as well. The Board would like to thank members of the DPW for all of their efforts as we prepare for the winter months, knowing how especially dedicated they are with the removal of snow and ice.

Health Care Costs – continue to rise, but not as much as in previous years, and both the Village and its employees will be required to pay, on average, an increase of about 3% for health coverage and 0% for dental coverage, beginning in January 2020. Coverage is similar to last year, with little increase in premiums, but some increase in deductibles.

Pension Costs – for next year have been projected by the Village Treasurer to be within the allotted budget amounts. At this time, there appears to be no increase in pension costs for next year.

Compost Project – continues to be very successful and please remember that composting continues all year round even though the demand obviously lulls through the fall and winter. Some residents might want to secure compost this fall, since it can be stored outside, without cover, through the fall and winter for its intended use next spring.

Planning Board – the Board met in November to discuss several items, including new local laws regarding garage sales and small cell wireless deployment requirements and design guidelines. Also some updates from the Mayor and Board regarding taxes, West Main Street drainage, the Green Gateway Project, Village lighting, the Main Street Improvement Grant Project and development projects in the Village including new businesses that have opened.

School's Open – we continue to ask residents to please watch for school children walking and remember that there are pedestrian crossings on Main Street, as well as 20 mph speed limits in school zones and a 25 mph speed limit on First Street, a route that is heavily traveled by schoolchildren. Please slow down. Tickets will be issued for speeders.

Clean Energy Community – as was mentioned at earlier Board meetings, the Village of Marcellus has been designated a Clean Energy Community by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Funds have been secured for the Village of Marcellus to implement clean energy projects and for the last year, these projects have resulted in the retrofitting of several existing Village lights, including the historic lights on Main, North and South Streets as well as the coach lights on Kinderwood Drive 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 have added six (6) new historic lampposts, with LED type fixtures, to several streets in the Village – 3 on Chrisler Street, and 3 on Paul Street. In addition, NYSEG converted all of its overhead cobra lights from HPSs to LEDs. The result of all of this improvement has been exceptional with the average annual energy savings for the Village estimated to be in excess of \$20,000.

Grease Traps – as the holiday season approaches, our Treatment Plant Operators continue to urge our residents to become more aware of the problems with grease in our sewer system. Grease will stick to household and sewer pipes, and over time, grease buildup can block pipes and cause sewage backups. Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system – they only shred solid material into smaller pieces. The operators urge you to scrape grease and food scraps from cooking surfaces into a container and put in the trash or compost 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. During the holidays, there always seems 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.

The Onondaga County Community Development Division – is reaching out to the Village to discuss the Onondaga County Village Main Street Revitalization and Beautification Grant Program. This program is an initiative for elected officials to work with local

business owners to develop a proposal that will positively impact Main Street and Village Center areas. This revitalization would involve aesthetic improvements, business creation/retention and beautification that will lead to healthier and more economically vibrant communities. Proposals will be evaluated and villages selected based on the overall impact of the project. The County will require a 25% match to any total project cost. The Village arranged for business (property) owners to meet with and ask questions of the Director of the Program, Martin Skahen, at a special gathering at the Marcellus Free Library Community Room, on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 7 p.m. Those interested in participating in this program and/or wanted to find out more information about the program, attended this meeting on November 19th and most found it to be most informative.

WWTP Upgrades – to the plant are still going on, with an anticipated conclusion by the end of January 2020. While it has been over a year of construction, we did not experience much inconvenience or interruption in the plant's operation. There have been several change orders to the project, the costs for which have been absorbed by the contingency portion of the budget – which is still rather healthy. Funding for the project can only come from sewer rate increases, and the recent increase has brought the average annual rate up to about \$540.00 – a quarterly increase of about \$25.00, or an annual increase of about \$100.00. This is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village. For Village users, those rates have been reflected in the most recent utility bills. For Town sewer users the increase will be rather significant, given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user. Beginning In January 2020, an average town sewer user will pay approximately \$677.00 annually, an annual increase of about \$128.00, beginning in 2020.

Christmas Decoration Project – it is with much gratitude that we express, on behalf of our Board and our residents, continued thanks to former Trustee Bob Wilson for organizing and leading last year's Village Christmas Decoration Project. Bob contacted a number of businesses, organizations and individuals in the community, asking for donations to help fund the purchase of 30 new Christmas decorations with LED lights. While some were major gifts from businesses and individuals, there were also a number of smaller gifts, and we wish to express many thanks to everyone who was so generous to the Village and to Bob's appeal. Installed on the telephone poles by our DPW department last week, we invite you to take notice of them when you are Main, North and South Streets. We are sure that you will agree they provide much community pride and create a mood that makes people feel good about how our Village looks. As many already realize, if you want a job done and done well, give it to Bob Wilson. Bob has been so very instrumental throughout his long involvement with the Village and we once again express our sincere gratitude to him in particular.

Green Gateway Project – last month, for the benefit of our residents, we provided a summary of what the Board and others have been working on since 2016 – a project that we hope will result in an environmentally positive gateway entrance to our Village – at the site of the former woolen mill on North Street. Printed copies of this summary are provided for the benefit of residents and are available in the Village office, as well as on the Village website. Also, an article appears on Syracuse.com that highlights the project for those so interested, a copy of which is also on our website. We would also mention that the STEAM teachers and students at Marcellus Central have completed two volunteer clean ups of the site in September and October and perhaps another for November. A rough layout of a trail through the wooded area has been completed as well as a proposed outdoor classroom. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has visited the site, as well as representatives of the DEC to offer advice and help. It is hoped that by the spring, students and staff from MCS, as well as the Village DPW will be able to continue their efforts to improve and make good use of this site. We are also in the process of having the entire property re-surveyed, now that the Village owns the entire site.

Village Taxes – most have been paid, while the amount of unpaid taxes at present, including penalties, totaled \$12,424.48 from 16 property owners, a figure significantly smaller than in previous years. The Village will eventually be reimbursed by the County for these tax evaders, but must wait a year before that reimbursement happens. In the meantime, the responsible taxpayers in the Village will continue, as they have in the past, to be responsible for the irresponsible. Property owners were allowed to pay unpaid taxes to the Village until October 31, 2019, when they were turned over to the County for reimbursement.

2020 Census – Everyone Counts! – we encourage residents to visit our website and recent news for information on the 2020 Census, particularly “what you need to know” about the census, how this once-a-decade population count affects you and your government, as well as any concerns you may have about your responses to the 2020 Census.

New Business in the Village – Jordy's Barbershop – the Village is eagerly anticipating the expected opening of Jordy's Barbershop, at the former Great Wall location, at 22 West Main Street. Jordan Michel, proprietor, is hoping for a mid-November opening, and will provide a full line of barber services, including old fashioned scissor cuts and hot shaves. She brings over 5 years of experience with her as she begins her journey as a business owner and master barber here in Marcellus and is looking forward to meeting people in

the community. We welcome Jordan Michel and her business to the Village and encourage our residents to patronize her business when it opens in mid-November.

Other – we would like to thank the Christoff family of Schuyler Road for their very generous donation of this year's community Christmas Tree. Like last year's donation, this large and perfectly shaped tree was installed by Village and Town workers and decorated with new LED lights. We thank all who helped to brighten the point again this year.