

## **Annual Meeting and Budget Hearing – April 6, 2020**

The following are updates from the Annual Meeting and Budget Hearing, held on April 6, 2020. If there are any concerns or a need for more information, please call (315-673-3112) or email (marboard@twcny.rr.com) the Village Office.

**Swearing in Elected Officials** – was delayed until a new election takes place, possibly in June 2020.

**Annual Meeting** - the Board held its Annual Meeting on April 6, 2020, for the purpose of making appointments, designating official newspapers and official depositories, establishing regular meeting dates of the Board and other matters to come before the Board.

**Appointment of Deputy Mayor** – the first appointment was that of Trustee Timothy P. Manahan to serve as Deputy Mayor of the Village of Marcellus. In the absence or inability of the Mayor to serve, the Deputy Mayor is vested with all of the powers of the Mayor.

**Set Date & Time of Regular Board Meetings** – the date and time of the regular Board Meeting was set for the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., in the Village Hall and for Board Workshop Meetings to be held on the Thursday or on the Friday prior to the Regular Board Meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Village Hall. The Workshop Meetings may be canceled or changed at any time by the Mayor, with appropriate notification to the media and other members of the Board of Trustees

**Set Date & Time of Special Board Meetings** – the Board approved a motion to allow the Mayor to call Special Board Meetings when necessary, at a time and date to be decided, and to authorize the Village Clerk to notify each of the Trustees (as soon as reasonably possible) as to the date, time and place of Special Board Meetings. The Village Clerk will also post the appropriate Public Notice and notify the media as to the time, place and reason for the Special Board Meeting

**Establish Rules of Procedure** – the Board agreed to conduct Village Board Meetings pursuant to Rules of Procedure that have been in effect in previous years, a copy of which is on file, for inspection, in the Village Office.

**Official Banks** – the Board approved a motion to adopt a resolution designating Solvay Bank Corp as the depository for regular accounts, and as the depository for capital and investments, and that all monies received by the Village Treasurer, Village Clerk, and Receiver of Taxes be deposited in said depository.

**Official Newspapers** – The Eagle Observer and The Post Standard were approved as the official newspapers for publication of official Village notices.

**Attorney Resolution** – the Board approved a resolution appointing Jeffrey D. Brown as Village Attorney, a public officer of the Village, a copy of which is on file in the Village Office.

**Standard Workday Resolution – Standard Work Day** – the Board approved a resolution that will establish a standard workday of seven (7) hours for appointed officials in the positions of Clerk, Treasurer and

Attorney and an eight 8) hour standard workday for the Code Enforcement Officer. The standard workday resolution for Clerk and Treasurer as well as Attorney and Code Enforcement Officer expired on 3/31/19 and should be renewed when their terms of office are renewed.

**Appointment of Village Employees – Four-Year Appointment –** there are no 4-year appointments this year, the Village Clerk and the Village Treasurer, having already been appointed to terms that do not expire until March 31, 2022.

**Appointment of Village Employees** with Board approval, the Mayor appointed the following Village Employees, all of which are one-year appointments, from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

Custodian, Part Time	Katherine Welsh
Department of Public Works, Full-Time	Greg Crysler, James LaRose, John Holmes, Mallory Reedy
Department of Public Works, Part-Time	Katherine Welsh
Chief of Police, Part Time	Bernard Podsiedlik
Police Sergeants, Part Time	Rich Curran, Keith Gates, Andrea Bastedo
Patrol Officer, Part Time	Matt Hayes, Jeffrey Fortino, Raymond Herrick, Chris Rowe, Shannon Ray, Edward Bragg, Leonard Richer, Patrick DiCastro
SROs/ Special Patrol Officers	Sean Clere, Peter Heise, Karen Munroe, Darren McLaughlin, Jerome Pristash, James Hiltbrand
Police Clerk, Part Time	Brenda Giacchi
School Crossing Guard	Katherine Welsh
CEO/Fire Inspector	William Reagan
Deputy CEO/Fire Inspector	David Weber
Dog Control Officer	James LaRose

**Review of and Approval of Salaries and Benefits –** the Board approved a motion to continue to provide to Village employees, the same benefits (holidays, vacation days, sick leave, bereavement leave, extenuating circumstances, health benefits, retiree health care coverage, clothing and equipment allotment) that have been in effect for the previous year, accompanied by a 3% salary increase for most employees, except for the Mayor and Trustees, whose salaries have not been raised since 1992. A copy of employee salaries and employee benefits is on file for inspection in the Village Office.

**Execute Bond for Village Employees –** a motion to notify the public that the Village, having secured property and liability insurance coverage, has executed surety bonds for all Village employees in the amount of \$50,000 and in the amount of \$100,000 for the Village Treasurer and Village Clerk and that the expense of this undertaking has been a charge to the Village was also approved by the Board.

**Appointment Village Committees** – additional one-year appointments were made, including:  
Chair of Senior Housing Committee – was tabled until a later date to be determined  
Marcellus Betterment Association – an extension of the Marcellus Betterment Association

**Appointment of Village Engineers** – with Board approval, the Mayor made a motion to utilize the services of and solicit competitive bids, when appropriate or deemed necessary by the Village Board, from several engineering firms including MRB Group, TDK Engineering and Barton & Loguidice.

**Appointment of Village Historian** – the Mayor also made a motion to appoint Peg Nolan as Village Historian for a period of one year, 4/1/20 to 3/31/21.

**Appointment to Planning Board** – the Board approved a motion by the Mayor to re-appoint Richelle Schettine to a full 5-year term as a member of the Village Planning Board – from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2025.

**Appointment to Zoning Board of Appeals** – the Board also approved a motion by the Mayor to re-appoint Kay Kershaw to another full 5-year term as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals – from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2025.

**Annual Contracts** – with the Marcellus Historical Society, and the Marcellus Health/Loan Closet were approved, similar to those that have been in effect for the previous year and the Board agreed to table the SRO Agreements with the Marcellus School District, the Lyncourt Union Free School District and the Onondaga Central School District until such time as the Chief of Police has been able to negotiate successfully the terms of a new contract with each of the school districts mentioned.

**Annual Resolutions** – the Board approved the following resolutions:

Authorize Mayor To Sign Checks – in the absence or inability of the Treasurer or Trustee

Advanced Approval of Claims – for public utility services, postage, freight and express charges

Set Mileage Allotment – and reimbursement at the rate of .58 cents per mile

Authorize Organizational Meetings – a motion to authorize municipal officials and employees to attend schools, conferences and seminars conducted for the benefit of the local government, a copy of which is on file in the Village Office was approved.

**Review and Approval of Procurement Policy** – having reviewed the procurement policy adopted in 1993 and that updated in 2002, and again in April 2018, the Board agreed to continue that policy governing the procurement of all goods and services which are not required to be purchased pursuant to the competitive bidding requirements of General Municipal Law Section 103, a copy of which is on file in the Village Office.

**Announcement of Earth Day Participation** – a notification to the public that the Village of Marcellus had hoped to again participate in the Earth Day observance. This observance was to have taken place on April 23, 2020, in conjunction with students from the KCH Elementary School in the Marcellus Central School District. However, this event has now been canceled because of the ongoing health crisis in our nation.

**Adjournment** – following a motion to adjourn the Annual Meeting, the Board approved a motion to open a Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget.

**Public Hearing on Tentative Budget – April 6, 2020**

**Comments from Village Treasurer** – on the tentative budget of the Village of Marcellus for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2020 and ending May 31, 2021. Copies of the tentative budget, which has three components: the General Fund, the Water Fund, and the Sewer Fund, are available for the public.

**General Fund:**

This proposed budget maintains the Village tax rate at \$6.85 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, and will generate approximately \$2,600 in additional revenue for the Village, due to an overall increase in the total taxable value of properties in the Village. This proposed Village tax levy also will not exceed the NYS Tax Cap Limit. Although the NYS Governor has eliminated the Village’s allocation of State Aid to Municipalities, and has frozen the Village’s allocation of State Transportation Aid at current year levels, the Village is grateful to Onondaga County for extending the Village Infrastructure Improvement Program (VIIP) agreement between Onondaga County and the Village. This program has been extended for another ten years, and includes multiple increases in the amount of financial assistance to the Village. The Village greatly values the work performed by its employees, and proposes a 3% raise in this new budget for its employees. Through the continuing efforts of the Village departments to operate as fiscally conservative as possible each budget year, departmental costs have been controlled. This has benefited the Village in offsetting the cuts in State funding, as well as the increasing costs of unfunded mandates by NYS such as pension costs and health insurance. However, a year ago the Village was forced to issue a \$100,000 Bond Anticipation Note (B.A.N.) in order to pay for the emergency storm water drainage repairs to West Main Street. The Village as a whole is already saturated in debt, especially after the costly NYSDEC mandated upgrades to the Village’s Wastewater Treatment Plant. Therefore, the Village Board of Trustees has decided to pay off this B.A.N. upon maturity in September 2020. Consequently, the proposed General Fund budget for the Village’s fiscal year ending May 31, 2021 shows a deficit of \$(62,069.76). The unappropriated fund balance, however, will enable us to deal comfortably with the deficit.

**Water Fund:**

Pursuant to an Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of Marcellus, the Village shares in the cost of maintaining the Limeledge Water District, in the form of a fixed annual payment to the Town. Also, the Village is required by OCWA to pay for the maintenance of the fire hydrants in the Village, also on an annual basis. In the absence of revenues from water usage charges since OCWA took over water service to Village residents, the revenues section of this proposed Water Fund budget incorporates an inter-fund transfer from the Village’s General Fund in an amount equal to the amount of expenditures, which will be required for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Sewer Fund:**

The very costly upgrades to the Village’s Wastewater Treatment Plant as mandated by the NYSDEC, in the amount of \$8 million, have now been completed. The \$5.2 million interest free construction loan from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) has now entered repayment. The annual cost to the consolidated sewer system users in the Village, Town and School District for the debt service on this EFC

loan will be \$173,000. In anticipation of this EFC loan repayment event, the Village has already increased the minimum sewer rate per unit from \$75 to \$100 (a 33.33% increase), which became effective with the April 1, 2019 billing. This additional sewer usage revenue will serve to build up the Village's Unappropriated Sewer Fund Balance. This is essential, not only to be able pay for this EFC debt service over the next 30 YEARS, but also to cover the increased costs of running the Village's Wastewater Treatment Plant. Based on this, the Village's proposed Sewer Fund budget shows a \$74,075 budget surplus for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2021.

### **Comments by Mayor on Tentative Budget**

- Loss of sales tax revenue – continues to affect the Village budget. The Village continues to receive infrastructure monies from the County, which have helped to offset this revenue loss, but it by no means has made up what the Village once received.
- Increase in Assessment – the County Finance Department provides the amount of total assessment for all Villages and this year that assessment went up slightly. Most of the increase in assessed valuation came about because of a decrease in tax exemptions
- We expect to keep the tax rate at \$6.85/1000 of assessed valuation – which means that the assessment on a \$100,000 home, will continue to be \$685 a year. It also stays within the state mandated property tax cap.
- Property tax revenue will increase – from \$594,300 to \$596,997 (approximately \$2,655), which represents approximately 55% of the total revenue received by the Village.
- A 3% increase in salaries – for all employees, full and part-time, is included in this budget. Our employees received a 2% raise last year, and the Board felt that a 3% raise was not out of line this year, since they are working with one less person in the Highway Department. This is not much, but reflects on-going financial concerns that the Village faces. As was mentioned, the benefits package remains the same – the Village employee pays 10%, while the Village provides 90% of health coverage. This, I might note, is much better when compared with similar arrangements in the private sector
- Employee Benefits – many of these, including retirement, health insurance, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation have stabilized, but continue to remain beyond Village control.
- Debt Service – continues to be a large item in the budget and it cannot be overemphasized. It is always the gorilla in the room and one that will not go away even if there was complete dissolution of the Village – residents would still pay this debt. The debt for the WWTP upgrades will continue to be very significant for many, many years to come – until 2050.
- ➤ State Regulations and Unfunded State Mandates – continue to compound budget problems for the Village – items over which, there are no controls by the Village. The most recent example is the requirement from NYSDEC, which has ordered the removal of phosphorus down to a 1.0-mg/L level so as to stop the pollution of Onondaga Lake. This is of major concern to the Village

and our plant operators because of the high cost to implement this unfunded mandate. Our WWTP is the only one, other than METRO, that comes under this directive and we must meet a 2019-20 State mandate, the cost of which is now almost \$8,000,000. We have been able to secure some grant money as well as a no-interest loan to cover this cost, which can only come from sewer rents. As a result, sewer rents have increased significantly in recent years.

- ☐ Department Cuts – there have been excellent savings from our merger of the Highway and Sewer Departments into a single DPW and our Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent are always very sensible in planning for each budget year. Monies have already been set aside from the previous budget to complete highway resurfacing on First Street, the installation of new light poles on Orchard Circle, and a new pickup truck. The new DPW budget calls for fiber micro paving on Reed Parkway and Maple Street, along with sidewalk repair on First Street, a continuation of street sweeping and repainting of crosswalks, assisting MCS students in the development of the Green Gateway Project and examining in more detail a changeover from head-in to parallel parking on the south side of East Main Street. A major concern for a future budget year is a capital improvement project on Meadow Street which will require a significant investment, not only for reconstruction of the road itself but also for significant storm drainage reconstruction. Also, as a result of a successful application to Community Development, an award of almost \$80,000 will enable the Village to refurbish the two municipal parking lots – one in back of the Village Hall and the other on West Main Street.
- Police Department –
  - ○ The budget for the Police Department has remained stable this year and Chief Podseidlik continues to hire excellent part-time officers. In addition, a new School Resource Officer was appointed for the KCH Elementary School at the beginning of the school year and this too has been an excellent decision. The MPD has also been able to provide SROs, as well as their supervision by Chief Podsiedlik, for the Onondaga Central School District and the Lyncourt Free Union District. There is no cost to the Village for this service and provides a way for school districts that do not have a local municipality to obtain the services of a school resource officer. The department’s budget remains stable this year, and the purchase of a new police car in 2018-19 (by virtue of savings from equipment repairs and maintenance items and grant money last year) will be non-repeating in the 2020-21 budget.
  - The Chief reports that the successful closure rate (identify and arrest suspects) is far above the national average.
  - Some continue to argue that if there is a need to cut services, the Marcellus Police Department should be eliminated. Our Board is unanimous in its decision that our Village needs a police force, and I would like to address that issue once again. The absence of

major crime in our Village has given rise to some complacency as well as questioning the need for a police force. The absence of major crime is not just a piece of good fortune. We don't have major crime because the mere presence of a police force acts a major deterrent to crime and causes the criminal element to move on to other communities – ones that would provide less scrutiny and not hinder illegal activity as much. The criminal element prefers to be as inconspicuous as possible. Some claim that our police department could be easily absorbed into a larger police entity (e.g. the County Sheriff's Department) without losing the level of protection that the community currently enjoys. While the Sheriff's Department provides much assistance to our village, including use of its many resources, it is doubtful that the Department could answer 300-400 extra calls a month adequately, since it would not be able to dedicate a car to the Village on a regular basis. The Sheriff's Department, like all policies agencies, is stretched to the limit with its own budgetary concerns. Our village would be safe, but quality of life issues (a hard-to-define concept made more conspicuous by its absence), ones that are important to village residents, would be seriously compromised. Each village is, of course, different and each should address the issue of police protection in light of its own particular circumstances. At present, our Board is committed to maintaining a police presence in the Village of Marcellus – a force that continues to be increasingly professional and a model for others in the county.

- Clerk and Treasurer – the salaries and benefits of the Village Clerk and Village Treasurer are divided between two funds – the General Fund and the Sewer Fund – since the duties and work activity of both employees is equally divided between these two funds.
- The Village Attorney – is now considered an officer of the Village, not an employee hired by the Village. Our Board has greatly benefited from his advice and counsel.
- ☐ Village employees, Bill Reagan and Dave Weber, now perform Code, Fire, and Zoning Inspections – and their efforts have been most helpful as we continue to enforce the Rental Registration and Inspection Law as well as the Vacant Registration Law and Building Code Regulations. In addition, we are under increasing scrutiny from the DEC to meet mandatory storm water regulations and our Code officers have been most effective making sure that the Village was in full compliance, following recent DEC audits.
- Culture and Recreation – parts of the budget include some monies, in the form of contract agreements, for the Health-Loan Closet and the Marcellus Historical Society, since these organizations provide a service to the Village and its residents.
- The Water Fund – remains but has no revenue. Monies are allocated from the General Fund to supplement this Fund, primarily to pay for hydrant inspections by OCWA (\$4,000) and to pay for the annual Limeledge Contract (\$6,000) for a total of \$10,000 each year.

- The Sewer Fund – the Village Treasurer has addressed the seriousness of this part of the budget and there is a need to continue to build this fund balance and be prepared for expected and unexpected emergencies and mandates.
- The Compost Project – continues to be most successful.
- Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades – the \$7.7 million treatment plant upgrades mandated by NYSDEC to remove phosphorus from the plant’s effluent is virtually complete. There will be some site restoration as well as paving and sidewalk construction that will not be completed until the spring of 2020. The financing package which the Village has been able to secure 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 a \$250,000 SAM (DANSY) Grant.
- Increase in the sewer rates – this has meant a minimum quarterly sewer rate, for Village sewer users, of \$100.00 (from \$75.00), a minimum annual cost of \$400 (from \$300) and an average annual cost of \$547.47 (from \$413.13). Keep in mind that this is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village and that fluctuates. The annual cost for outside users (Town and School District) is anticipated to be \$686.84 (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.



**Motion to vote on the Tentative Budget for 2019-2020** – the Tentative Budget for the Village of Marcellus, for 2020-2021, as well as a motion to keep the property tax levy the same as last year – \$6.85/1000 of assessed valuation – were approved by the Village Board