

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – December 2020

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 the Village Office (clerk@villageofmarcellus.com).

Sign 12-Month OCRRA Municipal Hauler Contract – a motion was made to authorize the DPW Superintendent to sign a 12-month contract for 2021, beginning January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2021, with Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency for disposal of refuse that is picked up by the Village DPW, for which there is no cost to the Village. It might also be mentioned that OCRRA’s Board approved an increase of \$12.60 per unit (612) to cover the increased cost of recycling fees. The Village agreed to amend its agreement with Superior Waste Removal to cover this increase, but there will be no added expense for Village residents for the remainder of the contract, which ends in November 2021.

Annual Maintenance Permit with Onondaga County DOT – a motion was made 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 Onondaga County DOT.

Lake Country Veterinary Contract – since Lake Country Veterinary Clinic is no longer willing to act as a shelter to house dogs picked up by the Village Dog Control Officer, this contract is no longer in effect and no motion is required.

Marcellus Veterinary Hospital Contract – a motion was made to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement between the Village of Marcellus and Marcellus Veterinary Hospital whereby Marcellus Veterinary Hospital will establish a shelter to house dogs picked up by the Village Dog Control Officer, said contract to include the hospital fees for housing, vaccinating, and caring for stray dogs.

Village Improvement Plan – a motion was made to continue the Village Infrastructure Program, an agreement whereby the County provides financial assistance to the Village for the construction and maintenance of public improvements, and to complete the Application for Financial Assistance provided to the Village by the County of Onondaga and to submit such application by January 1, 2021.

Authorize Mayor to Sign Health Insurance Contracts – a motion was made to note in the minutes that since all the employees elected to renew on the existing Gold 5 plan, there is no need for the Mayor to sign the Health Insurance Contracts with Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield, which contracts provide health and dental benefits for Village employees. The Mayor has already signed a copy of the one document that Excellus does require to be updated annually. The Village will cover 90% of the cost of an employee’s benefits, while the employee will pay 10% of said cost. The new contracts and coverage, copies of which are available for inspection in the Village Office, have resulted in a slight increase for medical coverage and 0% for dental coverage, beginning in January 2021. Coverage is similar to last year, with little increase in premiums, but some increase in deductibles.

Employee Health Insurance Opt-out – a motion was made to approve a health insurance opt-out for full time Village employees who are covered under another health care program. This opt-out, the details of which are on file in the Village Office, would grant a buy-out incentive for the employee who chooses to opt-out, and would also provide a financial benefit for the Village, whose annual premium on behalf of the employee, would be eliminated.

Budget Modifications for November 2020 – a motion was made to approve budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General Fund.

Christmas and New Year’s Holiday – a motion to allow Village Employees to close the Village Offices at Noon on Thursday, December 24, 2020 and at Noon on Thursday, December 31, 2020 so that our employees receive time off from work. If the DPW Employees are called in to plow, they will be able to take off another half-day off from work, at the discretion of the DPW Superintendent. These will not be considered as holidays.

Village Meetings for January 2021 – we would make note the list of those meetings scheduled for the remainder of December and for January 2021, which is provided for those so interested – please note also that the Village Offices will be closed on Friday, December 25th, and Friday, January 1st for the Christmas and New Years Holiday. Because these holidays fall on a Friday, there will be **NO DELAY** in trash collection each of those weeks. The Village will also be closed on January 18, 2021 to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. There are also several handouts that are provided – on Water, Grease in the Waste Waters and other items of concern.

Updates – Mayor

F.O.G. (Fats, Oils, Grease) – in the wastewater is a topic that had been much discussed and will continue to be on the WPCP's agenda in the months ahead. We continue to provide a flyer that emphasizes the need to keep Fats, Oils and Grease out of the sanitary sewer system.

Flush-able Wipes – are not flushable and this was demonstrated early in December at the Orange Street Pump Station when the alarm sounded indicating that the pump station was fouled and inoperable. No wastewater was lost from the system and the station was returned to service within three hours thanks to our treatment plant operators' quick response at 3 a.m. What fouled the pump was feminine hygiene products and flush-able wipes, which DO NOT break down and end up causing a blockage. These items should never be introduced into the sanitary sewer system, since they are inorganic and fail to break down. They should be disposed in a resident's solid waste as ordinary garbage. Again, please do not flush so-called flush-able wipes.

No Parking – November 1st to April 1st – the public should be aware of the fact that as of November 1, 2020, 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, 2021. 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 – 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. Some drivers have claimed that they have no place to put the snow. That, however, is not an excuse to put the snow into the street, nor across the street when plowing. 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, accidentally, must be removed before finishing the job.

Composting – continues to move along and we would like to thank our operators as they prepare more compost for pickup in the spring.

Main Street Façade Grants – in the spring, Onondaga County approved 13 commercial projects and 1 public project under the County Main Street Façade Grant program, in a plan that awarded almost \$300,000 in funding for Marcellus businesses. Several projects have been completed and property owners have already been reimbursed, including a repaving of the two Village parking lots, remarkable renovations of 17 North Street, 19 South Street, 14-18 West Main, 3 North Street, 60 East Main, 20-22 West Main, 52-56 East Main and 5 East Main. Other projects are in the works and some have been delayed because of material shortages and contractor scheduling but we expect them to be completed within the next several months.

WWTP Upgrades – with two years of construction of a very costly project having been completed, sewer users in the Village, Town and School District can be assured that a modern, fully operational water pollution control plant will serve their needs well into the 21st century. Funding for the project can only come from sewer rate increases, and the recent increase has brought the average annual rate for a Village sewer user 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 2021, the average town sewer user will begin to pay approximately \$677.00 annually, an annual increase of about \$128.00. In order to prepare our Treatment Plant for

operation well into the 21st century, these increases, while hefty, are unavoidable. We have also had a sustained complaint by a neighbor about the noise generated by the plant blowers. We re continuing to investigate and try to determine what else can be done to alleviate this noise.

Planning Board – the Board met on December 16, 2020 to listen to a developer regarding development of the Roche Property, about 20 acres of land at the south end of the Village, which property was annexed to the Village in 1978. Since 1978, plans have come and gone, parties have lost interest or passed away, and Linda Roche now owns the property exclusively. Linda has contracted with a developer who is interested in development of the property, to include approximately 27 new residential lots, building quality homes as well as preserving the natural beauty of the land. The proposed subdivision off South Street would be called “Baltimore Ridge” and would be accessed from Dunlap Ave and Baker Street. Sewer follows natural flow and would hook up to existing conditions as would water, since there are stubs at the end of both Baker and Dunlap. The developer would need subdivision approval and will need to file a full environmental assessment form as well. The Planning Board will be the lead agency and Village Engineers will need to review complete plans. There are a number of issues that will have to be addressed, including surface water runoff, site grading on individual lots, road construction, sidewalks, curbing, and lighting, among others.

Christmas Tree Lighting – on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend special thanks to our DPW crew and our office staff who, despite the fact that there was no official tree lighting or gathering, were able to install, decorate and then light the Community Christmas Tree at the Point, a tradition, that goes back to 1916.

Police Warning – residents should be aware of the fact that some thieves have been active in the Village and Town, following FedEx and other vehicles delivering and leaving packages unattended at various locations and then stealing such packages – so called “porch pirates.” Chief Podseidlik urges residents to be vigilant about such activity and to notify the police if they have suspicions. The Chief reminds everyone, once again - Lock your houses and cars. The average time it takes for a thief to get inside a vehicle and get out is about 20 seconds. In less than a minute, items may be gone and it isn't until you get into your vehicle that you notice items are gone. This has been going on in other nearby communities as well. Please call the police is you have suspicions or want to report a robbery. After 2 a.m., the Marcellus Police are not on duty and the only responder would be a single Sheriff's car, whose patrol extends from Onondaga Hill to Skaneateles.

Christmas Trees – will be picked up by the Village Highway Department after the first of the year, probably beginning on January 2, 2021. Residents should place trees in the Village right of way between the sidewalk and the street.

Olde Home Days, 2021 (June 4, June 5 and 6) – tentatively and depending on the pandemic, the first meeting of the 2021 OHD Committee will be held on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at the Welcome Center in the Park, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Green Gateway Project – is one 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 a project summary are provided for the benefit of residents and are available in the Village office, as well as on the Village website (click on <http://villageofmarcellus.com> and then on News, then Village News. While the coronavirus has recently interrupted and delayed our plans, the Village and the students at MCS continue working on the site and it is hoped that conditions will soon improve so that the project will begin anew in the months ahead.

Creekwalk – we might note that the trail is not open nor is it plowed during the winter season. For those interested, please check the Village Website for an update, some photos as well as a video of Fred's Trail –

Other – on behalf of the Village Board, I would extend a very Merry Christmas and wish all our Village residents the joy of family, the gift of friends and the best of everything for the New Year.

Other – ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REQUEST PERIOD JANUARY 1-30, 2021 – The Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board announces that the annual request period for the addition of viable agricultural lands into Onondaga County Agricultural Districts is set for January 1, 2021 to January 30, 2021. Agricultural districts are intended to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. Enrollment of land into a State certified agricultural district provides protection for accepted agricultural practices through New York State Agricultural Districts Law. Viable agricultural land is land highly suitable for a farm operation. Request forms and additional information are available at www.ongov.net/planning/agdist.html, or by contacting the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency at 315-435-2611 or countyplanning@ongov.net.