

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – March 2023

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).

Public Hearing – Local Law #2 of 2023 – Override Property Tax Cap - a Public Hearing was held to enact proposed Local Law No. 2 of 2023, which would authorize a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c.

Comments on Local Law #2 – Override the Property Tax Cap – the Mayor - The purpose of the public hearing is to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding Local Law #2, which will 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. We expect to stay under the property tax cap and we have also moved towards consolidation, particularly of the village, town and school district sewer districts. However, the tax cap complicates the Village budget process and we might not be able to abide the formula devised by the State for a tax cap. Having learned from the experience of several towns, it is 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 fines for violating the tax cap. The public might think that the Village, by overriding the cap, is just ignoring the law and not in support of a tax cap, when in actuality the Village is very much in favor of it. However, with the Village continuing to receive unfunded mandates from the state, coupled with a cap on its ability to raise revenue, it is very difficult for the Village to plan or even survive. There are too many variables in the tax cap and therefore, the Village Board has proposed this local law to vote to override the tax cap, just to protect the Village from penalty.

Public Hearing – Local Law #3 of 2023 – Moratorium - a Public Hearing was held to enact proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2023, which would authorize a moratorium that no exterior changes may be made to commercial buildings in the Village Center zone without first appearing before the Planning Board, including painting and the replacement of siding or other surface materials. An exception to this would be normal maintenance such as touching up existing painted surfaces.

Comments on Local Law #3 – Moratorium – the Mayor - The purpose of the public hearing is to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding Local Law #3, which would authorize a moratorium in the Village Center zone prohibiting exterior changes to commercial buildings in the Village Center zone without first appearing before the Planning Board, including painting and the replacement of siding or other surface materials. An exception to this would be normal maintenance such as touching up existing painted surfaces. In light of the recent controversy regarding the color scheme used on a property in the Village Center and the fact that the Design Guidelines in the Village Code are not legally enforceable, the Village Board and the Planning Board will begin to draft an amendment to the Code that will make design guidelines for properties in the Village Center mandatory. To that end, the Board has approved a proposal from its engineering firm, MRB, that will assess the current codes from a standpoint of alignment with best practices and desired outcomes, work with Village leadership to identify issues with current guidelines and identify opportunities for codification. MRB will develop language to address gaps between current guidelines and community expectations, and update language to ensure alignment with current best practices, and potential future needs and New York State law. The approved proposal will update the design guidelines and prepare the required SEQR documentation to adopt these updates. Because the approved contact with MRB will take several months to complete and be adopted, this moratorium will remain in effect until that time.

Local Law #2 of 2023 – Override Tax Cap Resolution – a motion was made to approve Local Law #2 of 2023 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c.

Local Law #3 of 2023 – Moratorium - a motion was made to authorize a moratorium prohibiting any exterior changes to commercial buildings in the Village Center zone without first appearing before the Planning Board. The moratorium will remain in effect until the design guidelines have been updated and approved by the Village Board. Is there a second? Is there any discussion? All in favor – All opposed –

Consent Agenda – a motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda, which consists of the following items:

Minutes of the last Regular Board meeting for February 2023

Audit of Bills on Abstract Sheets #010

Police Report for February 2023

Building Inspectors Report for February 2023

Town Board Minutes for February 2023

Financial Statements for February 2023

Spring Brush Pickup and Spring Trash Dates – the Village Board and DPW are going to continue the policy from last year for the 2023 Brush Pickup. A motion was made to allow brush to be placed at the curb on Saturdays and Sundays for pickup on Mondays from April 3rd to May 8th. Also, during the summer months (June, July, and August), brush may also be placed at the curb on Saturdays and Sundays for pickup on the first Monday of each month during those summer months. In addition, the Town of Marcellus has tentatively scheduled the 2023 dates for the Trash Transfer Stations as follows: Fridays, April 28th, May 2nd, and May 12th from 8 a.m. to Noon and Saturdays, April 29th, May 6th, and May 13th from 8 a.m. to Noon. Permits, prices for which will be determined, are required, and issued through the Town of Marcellus Clerk’s Office. The Town Board has also agreed to have an Electronic Waste Collection and to also have a Community Shred day during the Spring Trash Days. This latter event will only be held on Saturday, May 6th at the Town of Marcellus Highway Garage. The cost to the Town is to be determined, and the Village will share in that cost. There will be no cost to the residents for the shredding, but there is a limit of five boxes per car. Some items are not accepted including garbage, OCRRA recyclables, liquids or hazardous waste including paint, oil tanks, fuel tanks, motor vehicles, and contractor debris (home projects only). All items must be secured and covered when transporting to the Town Transfer Station.

EV Connect Authorization – a motion was made to announce that the Mayor has been authorized to sign a contract with EV Connect, the service provider for the electric vehicle charging station installed in the Village in 2017 as part of a NYSEDA Clean Energy Community grant, for a period of 4 years, April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2025. EV Connect provides network management software that includes pricing and rate management, technical support, and station performance data. For the first four years, 2017-2021, 88% of the revenue generated from electric use by ZEV drivers was allocated to the VOM and 9% was allocated to NYSEDA. Under the new agreement, the Village will receive 97% of the revenue moving forward, at a cost of \$398.00 per year (\$199 per port x 2 ports). Based on usage and net revenue data compiled since the 2017 installation of the charging station, the VOM has seen a substantial increase in

usage due to the increasing popularity of ZEV's over the last 2 years and will continue to provide this valuable service to our community. The total cost to the Village for the 4-year contract will be \$1592.00, and the Board anticipates the revenue generated to outweigh that cost.

Low Income Household Sewer Assistance Program – a motion was made to announce that the Village Treasurer has been authorized to register the Village as a LIHSAP vendor, which will help low-income households pay the cost of sewer services. Those so interested should go to OTDA's LIHWAP webpage (<https://otda.ny.gov>) to learn more and apply online. for more information and helpful resources. A similar service is also provided by OCWA to help households pay for the cost of water service.

Annual Storm Water Report – a motion was made to table the Annual Storm Water Report until the next regular meeting of the Village Board in April.

Budget Modifications for February 2023 – a motion was made to approve budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General Fund and Sewer Fund.

Announce Date and Time for Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing – the Annual Meeting will take place on April 3, 2023, and includes the appointment of non-elected officials, establishing regular meeting dates, as well as designating official newspapers and depositories. A Public Hearing will also take place on April 3, 2023, to consider the tentative budget for the Village for the next fiscal year. Approval of the final budget will take place at the next regular Board meeting, on April 24, 2023.

Village Meetings for April 2023 – a list of those meetings scheduled for April 2023, is provided for those so interested, including the fourth meeting of the 2023 OHD Rotary will be held on Monday, April 10, 2023, at the Village Hall, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Please note also that the Workshop Agenda Meeting will take place on Friday, March 31st and the Annual Meeting will take place on Monday, April 3, 2023, in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m. The next Regular Board meeting will take place on Monday, April 24th, at which time the Board will adopt the 2023-2024 Budget and set the Tax Rate. In addition, the Village

Office will be closed on Good Friday, April 7th, and the Village-wide Earth Day Cleanup will take place on Friday, April 21st. Don't forget to check the Spring Brush Pick-up Dates and the Spring Trash Days. The latter includes a Community Shred Day and an Electronics Waste Day as well.

Updates – Mayor

Comp Alliance – will conduct the annual safety and health training, virtually, for all Village employees, during the month of April.

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 Fools Day, April 1st - no fooling!

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.

Flag Replacement – the American flags that line several of our streets in the Village will soon be in place. We thank the American Legion for its continuing efforts in helping to keep these flags in good condition – an excellent example of how committed the Legion is to our Village and its residents. Thank you.

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 21, 2023. We hope that students from Heffernan Elementary School will help to 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 315-673-3112 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 30, 2023, the bill will be re-levied to the tax bill for June 1, 2023. If those bills for tenants who pay their own utilities are not paid by April 30, 2023, these too will be re-levied onto the owner's taxes for June 1, 2023. Please note that, unlike previous utility bills, payment for this final bill for the year must be made within the month.

Creek Walk – At first glance, it appears that the winter weather has not caused much damage to Fred’s Trail. There were some hardy people who braved the elements to walk the trail this winter, although it was not officially open. We welcome the spring as well as those who will take advantage of this gem in our community.

Budget – the Village Board is working to finalize the 2023-24 Village Budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting. Last year, because the Town of Marcellus performed a reassessment of all properties in the Town, including all Village of Marcellus properties, resulting in an overall 20% increase in the Taxable Value of all Village tax parcels, the Board lowered the tax rate from \$6.85 per \$1,000, down to a tax rate of \$5.82 per \$1,000, and was still able generate at least the same amount of Property Tax Revenue as before. This year, because of major additional expenditures, the Village Board has no choice but to raise its Village tax rate, from the current rate of \$5.82 per \$1,000 up to \$5.89 per \$1,000 (an increase of 1.2%). This represents the first increase in the Village tax rate since 2017 and does not appear to exceed the NYS Tax Cap Limit. The news about the financial assistance received by the Village from NYS and from Onondaga County is somewhat mixed. The NYS Governor’s Executive Budget for the coming fiscal year maintains AIM funding for cities, villages and towns is at the current year level of \$715 million, and also preserves the Village’s allocation of State Transportation Aid at current year levels. The good news is that the Village Infrastructure Improvement Program (VIIP) agreement between Onondaga County and the Village has been extended for another ten years and includes multiple increases in the amount of financial assistance to the Village over the next ten years.

Compost - is available at the Village of Marcellus Wastewater Treatment Plant! The Village of Marcellus Compost is produced from wastewater biosolids, through the controlled biological process of composting. At the WWTP, natural decomposition is accelerated enabling us to produce a high-quality product. By controlling the composting process, biosolids are sanitized through the generation of heat, then stabilized to allow for versatility of end use. Through this process, valuable organics generated from the Village WWTP are naturally recycled into a product which is beneficial to plants and the environment. We are able to transform waste into a beneficial product and continue to divert material from landfills. Our compost is safe, and quality tested. The compost has been treated by a process to further reduce pathogens. This process is defined by the EPA & DEC. The Village has analyzed the compost in accordance with the requirement of the EPA & DEC. Compost is hygienically

and environmentally safe if it is used properly. Village residents can use the compost on new or established lawns, flower boxes & house plants, flower gardens, and vegetable gardens. All Village residents can bring a container(s) to the WWTP at 6 Mille High Drive weekdays 8am-3pm. First come first serve. If you would like confirmation of availability, please leave a message at 315-673-4491.

No Increase In Sewer Rates – the proposed Sewer Fund budget will be the fifth full budget year that sewer rates have not increased. The minimum quarterly sewer rate per unit per 1000 gallons remains at \$100 for Village sewer users. This has meant a minimum quarterly sewer rate, for Village sewer users, of \$100.00 and a minimum annual cost of \$400 and an average annual cost of \$558.35. 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 \$697.84, given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user – a difference of about \$140.00 per year. In order to prepare our Treatment Plant for operation well into the 21st century, these sewer rates, while seemingly hefty, are unavoidable, and the rate is significantly higher in other municipalities, particularly those that offer a la carte services to outside users.

Property Tax Cap – as was mentioned, our Budget is complicated by the property tax cap of 2%, which is another State mandate and at our recent workshop meeting, the Board decided to override the tax cap. We might note that there seems to be no meaningful relief from continuous unfunded State mandates and these mandates, coupled with a cap on the Board’s ability to raise revenue, it is sometimes difficult to plan or even survive.

Flushable Wipes Are NOT Flushable!!! – we continue to urge residents to avoid using what are called flushable wipes – they are NOT flushable – nor are dental floss, cotton swabs, hygiene products, kitty litter, facial tissue, fats, oils, and grease. All of these should be put in the trash and only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed. To avoid plumbing problems, which will most likely occur on residential property, not in the Village main, please be aware of this concern. We also reference an Internet video that explains the problems associated with flushable wipes. Please view the following: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLTVqkXVvNk which is also posted on the Village website. We also urge residents to review the “Trash NOT Sewer” flyer that accompanied a previous newsletter. The information is invaluable and will help residents understand the importance of putting items in the trash, and not into the sewer.

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.

New Business in the Village – an ice cream-deli shop is expected to open soon at #2 East Main, as well as a take-out restaurant called Holy Cow, located at #3-5 North Street. We welcome new businesses to the Village and encourage our residents to patronize them. We also lament the loss of other businesses in the Village Center, and we are hopeful other businesses will fill the void in the near future.

Olde Home Days, 2023 (June 2, June 3 and 4) – the fourth meeting of the 2023 OHD Rotary will be held on Monday, April 10, 2023, in the Village hall beginning at 5:30 p.m. Please support Marcellus Olde Home Days. A fun filled weekend is being planned.