

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – December 2016

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 (673-3112) or email (marboard@twcny.rr.com) the Village Office.

Lakeshore Drug Testing Contract – the Board approved 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 and authorized the Mayor to sign said contract.

Lake Country Veterinary Contract – the Board authorized the Mayor to sign an agreement between the Village of Marcellus and Lake Country Veterinary Clinic whereby Lake Country veterinary will establish a shelter to house dogs picked up by the Village Dog Control Officer. The cost for boarding and vaccinations of dogs will be billed to the owner of the dog. For stray dogs eligible for adoption, boarding and medicine will be billed to the person adopting the animal.

Marcellus Veterinary Hospital Contract – the Board also authorized 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 – the Board approved a motion 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, 2017.

Authorize Mayor to Sign Health Insurance Contracts – the Board authorized 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 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 which begin January 1, 2017, copies of which are available for inspection in the Village Office, have resulted in a 13% cost increase for both the Village and its employees.

Employee Health Insurance Opt-out – the Board also approved 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.

Sewer Adjustment Request – 30 Scotch Hill – residents at 30 Scotch Hill have requested an adjustment in the sewer invoice that they recently received, an invoice that was almost 10 times the average usage. The cause of this excessive usage was a significant water leak that occurred prior to the new owners closing on the property in August 2016. The previous owner is unwilling to assist with the invoice and while this remains an issue between the property owners, the Village Board is willing to extend some leniency in the matter. A motion was made and approved to grant the request of the current property for leniency in the matter, to reduce the

amount of the invoice by ½ of the consumption figure, and to authorize the Village Clerk to reimburse the current property owners the appropriate amount.

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

Budget Modifications for November 2016 – the Board approved budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General Fund and Sewer Fund.

Christmas and New Year's Holiday – the Board also approved a motion to allow Village Employees to close the Village Offices at Noon on Friday, December 23, 2016 and at Noon on Friday, December 30, 2016 so that our employees receive time off from work. If D.P.W. 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.

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 were 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, 2016, 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, 2017. 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.

Increase in the sewer rates – unless the Village is able to secure additional funding to upgrade the treatment plant, the DEC could possibly issue a consent order. This will probably mean that the Village will have to go to court, and the likelihood that the court will order the upgrade. This upgrade of \$5.5 million can only come from sewer rate increases and the increase will be massive.

Code Enforcement – many rental inspections this month

Christmas Tree Lighting – the Board would like to extend special thanks to all who were instrumental in conducting a very successful Tree Lighting on December 1, 2016, in particular our Village Clerk, Dawn O’Hara, and our Highway crew and Police Department.

Prescription / Drug Drop-Off Box – Chief Wicks would like to announce that a prescription/drug drop-off box, similar to a mailbox, is now located in the lobby of the Village Hall and is available for use by any residents who would like 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.

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. Chief Wicks urges residents to be vigilant about such activity and to notify the police if they have suspicions. In addition, Marcellus Police have been out recently asking questions relating to recent break-ins around the Marcellus Methodist Church/First Street area. Several cars were broken into last week on First Street as well as on Kelly Ave. This happened at 3:20 am and but for the vigilance of a resident who happened to be awake at the time, more vandalism could have been done. The Chief reminds everyone, once again - Lock up 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 if 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.

Health Care Costs – continue to rise, and both the Village and its employees will be required to pay, on average, an increase of about 13% for coverage, beginning in January 2017. However, coverage is not as good as it has been, particularly in the area of co-pays.

Pension Costs – for next year have been projected by the Village Treasurer to be within the allotted budget amounts, a decrease of approximately 10% from last year, and attributed to fewer police officer contributions by the Village and lower pension contribution rates.

Christmas Trees – will be picked up by the Village Department of Public Works after the first of the year, probably beginning on January 3, 2017. Residents should place trees in the Village right of way between the sidewalk and the street.

Olde Home Days, 2017 – the first meeting of the 2017 OHD Committee will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2017 in the Village Hall, beginning at 7 p.m.

Creekwalk Under Construction – there remains an eight-foot wide section of the trail to be constructed behind the McClurg Building on Main Street. This will require a retaining wall to be built, along with asphalt paving, concrete work and pavement striping and will be competitively bid in the winter of 2017.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year –the Village Board 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.

Village Meetings for January 2017 – we would make note of the list of those meetings scheduled for the remainder of December and for January 2016, which is provided for those so interested – please note also that the Village Offices will be closed on Monday, December 26th, and Monday, January 2nd for the Christmas and New Years Holiday. The Village will also be closed on January 16, 2017 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, as well as a flyer that highlights the past year in review that residents might find interesting.