

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – December 2017

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.

2018 Village Election Resolution – a motion was approved to appoint Patricia White and Mary Finn as Inspectors of Election, designating Patricia White as the Chairperson thereof, to fix the compensation for each of the Inspectors of Election and the Chairperson, at \$15.00 per hour, not to exceed \$150.00 per day, and to appoint Joanne Perry as alternate Inspector. In addition, it should be noted that there is no registration day for the Village of Marcellus, since the Village opted out of registration day by resolution on January 25, 1993, that applications for absentee ballots must be received by the Village Clerk at the Village, located at 6 Slocombe Avenue, Marcellus, NY, by March 19, 2018, that the Village Election for the Village of Marcellus shall be held on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at the Village Hall, 6 Slocombe Avenue, Marcellus, NY, between the hours of 12 o'clock noon through 9 o'clock p.m., local time. The offices to be filled on that day are that of Mayor and of Trustee.

Lakeshore Drug Testing Contract – a contract was approved 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 authorize the Mayor to sign said contract.

Lake Country Veterinary Contract – a motion was made and approved to authorize 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 – a motion was made and approved 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 and approved 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, 2018.

Authorize Mayor to Sign Health Insurance Contracts – a motion was made and approved to authorize the Mayor to sign the Health Insurance Contracts with Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield, which contracts provide health and dental benefits for Village employees. There were two plans offered and the employees selected the less expensive plan. 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, 2018, copies of which are available for inspection in the Village Office, have resulted in a 9% cost increase for health and 4% for dental coverage, for both the Village and its employees.

Employee Health Insurance Opt-out – a motion was made and approved 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.

Elimination of P/T Status: Ryan Riefler – a motion to eliminate the part-time status of Ryan Riefler as an employee of the Water Pollution Control Plant was made and approved. In August, Ryan resigned from his full-time position as an operator and offered to stay on as a part-time employee to assist in completing projects and while a replacement was being trained. The part-time status is no longer necessary.

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

Budget Modifications for November 2017 – budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General Fund and Sewer Fund were approved.

Christmas and New Year's Holiday – a motion was made and approved to allow Village Employees to close the Village Offices at Noon on Friday, December 22, 2017 and at Noon on Friday, December 29, 2017 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.

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 last 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, 2017, 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, 2018. 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 CANNOT 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.

Project Bids – the bids received on December 5, 2017 for the WWTP Phosphorus Removal and Upgrade Project were very disappointing, especially that for the General Contract. This can be attributed, in large part to the fact that there were not many bids received and that a major project in Oneida County probably took attention away from our rather small undertaking, by comparison. It will probably be the recommendation of our engineers to reject the bids and rebid at least the General Contract during the winter – especially if no additional funding is received from the State.

Increase in the sewer rates – the Village is hopeful that the additional funding from WQIP Round 14 will help to meet the DEC mandate to upgrade the treatment plant. This upgrade of over \$5.5 million can only come from sewer rate increases and it is hopeful that the increases that are already in place will be sufficient to meet the expense involved. Coupled with the disappointing bids that were received in early December, it is possible that if no additional funding is received, we will have to put the project on the shelf until the next funding cycle.

Code Enforcement and Planning Board – many rental inspections this month and a public hearing is planned for December 20, 2017 regarding the use of dumpsters and expansion of parking at the North Street Apartment complex on Paul Street, as well as discussion of a B-B-Q installation, in the spring, in the rear of #14 Main Street.

Christmas Tree Lighting – the Board would like to extend special thanks to all who were instrumental in conducting a very successful Tree Lighting on November 30, 2017, in particular our Village Clerk, Dawn O'Hara, and our DPW 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. 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 9% for health and 4% for dental coverage, beginning in January 2018. 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, overall decrease of approximately 3% from last year, and attributed to lower pension contribution rates.

Christmas Trees – will be picked up by the Village Highway Department after the first of the year, probably beginning on January 2, 2018. Residents should place trees in the Village right of way between the sidewalk and the street.

Olde Home Days, 2018 (June 1, 2, 3) – the first meeting of the 2018 OHD Committee will be held on Thursday, January 4, 2018 in the Village Hall, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

ZEV Grant – we would note that the Village has been reimbursed \$16,000 by the NYSDEC for the Zero Emissions Vehicle Rebate Program. This grant enabled the Village to install an Electric Vehicle charging station in the Village parking lot, as well add lighting, cameras and asphalt paving to the site. Since this is a 20% match, the Village will accomplish about \$20,000 worth of work for a \$4,000 investment and we again credit and congratulate former employee, Ryan Riefler, for his continued efforts on behalf of the Village and its residents.

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). A \$100,000 grant has been reserved for the Village of Marcellus to implement clean energy projects this fall and winter. This will include a 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 already or will occur in the Village Hall, the Village garage and the Water Pollution Control Plant and we also hope to add six (6) new historic lighting, with LED type fixtures to several streets in the Village – 2 on Bradley Street, 2 on Chrysler Street, and 2 on Paul Street. The Village has finalized the application for this grant in early November, which is the first step in securing the funding. We now wait for several months for the application's approval.

Creekwalk – is in its final stages of completion – paper work for the most part as well as reimbursement from the State. 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 – <http://www.villageofmarcellus.com/creekwalk-news.html>.

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 2018 – we would make note the list of those meetings scheduled for the remainder of December and for January 2018, which is provided for those so interested – please note also that the Village Offices will be closed on Monday, December 25th, and Monday, January 1st for the Christmas and New Years Holiday. Because these holidays fall on a Monday, there **will be a one-day DELAY in trash collection each of those weeks**. The Village will also be closed on January 15, 2018 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.