

## Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – February 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.

**Approve Sewer Credit for Marcellus Grange** – a motion was made to approve a sewer credit for the Marcellus Grange, located at 15 W. Main Street, because of damages incurred at the Grange Hall on and around October 20, 2016. These damages, the Board agrees, are in part a result of sewer main backup and total \$267.00. It is for this amount that the Board is proposing a sewer credit.

**Community Development Grant for 2017** – a motion to deny completion of the 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application by our engineering group was made and approved. It should be noted that the reason for this is that no part of the Village (or the Town) of Marcellus is now eligible for any funding from Community Development grants, according to HUD standards. This is unfortunate because it has been through this grant program that many streets, sidewalks and other public infrastructure have been funded. The Village of Marcellus does not meet income standards.

**Charter Communications Cable Franchise Agreement** – a motion was approved 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.

**Police Updates** – Chief Wicks would like to make sure that all residents continue to lock their autos and houses. Last year around this time, both in the Village, but also on the outside, on the periphery of the Village in particular, there have been burglaries – particularly into unlocked automobiles, and property (GPS, other electronics and pocketbooks) has been stolen. Virtually all of these thefts have taken place because autos have been left outdoors and unlocked. If the cars are locked, the thieves usually move on. It might also be noted that there are only two sheriff's patrols at night, covering the entire southern and western parts of the county, and our Village officers are to be commended for their efforts in providing police service, not only for Village residents, but also for those who live on the periphery of the Village but pay no taxes.

**Flushable Wipes Are NOT Flushable** – as we have been mentioning for the last few years, products called “flushable wipes” have been introduced to the market. Our Treatment Plant operatives have indicated that the wipes are not “flushable” and are causing sewer backups in the village on residential properties. A review by Consumer Reports confirmed that these wipes do not break down and will create sewer backups. If you are using these wipes, please do not flush these wipes down the toilet. They should be discarded into the trash. If the wipes are flushed and cause a sewer backup, you will probably need to contact a plumber since the backup will occur on residential property.

**F.O.G. (Fats, Oils, Grease)** – in the wastewater is a topic that we continue to address at every Board meeting. It is, however, a major concern and we continue to urge our residents to be more and more aware of the problems associated with grease in our sewer system. The Treatment Plant operators urge you to scrape grease and food scraps from cooking surfaces into a container and put in the trash or composts them. Do not put grease, fats or oils of any type down your drain or garbage disposal. Do use baskets or strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids – and then empty them in the trash for disposal. There continues to be an increase of calls from residents who have had sewer backups, and these have been attributable, for the most part, to grease buildup and blockage.

**No Parking** – we continue to alert residents that there is no parking on any of the Village streets, from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup> so that the highway crew can plow snow. 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** – the plowing of Village streets and sidewalks by our D.P.W. has again been exemplary. The Board would like to commend members of the department for all of their dedicated work, often in miserable conditions, often while the rest of the Village sleeps. Their dedication to task is truly excellent.

**Snow Plowing by Independent Snow Plow Operators** – 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.

**Creek Walk 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. When we receive permission from NYSDOT, advertisement in the local paper as well as in selected journals will begin in March and will continue for three weeks. B & L Engineering will review the bids and make recommendation to award the construction bid for the Creekwalk. It is expected that construction of the Creekwalk Project will be able to start in April or May, depending on the weather.

**Budget** – the Village Board has begun to work on its 2017-2018 Budget and at first glance, it appears that things remain somewhat stagnant at the Village level. In January, Village and Town residents received their County tax bill and that bill reflected, as it did last year, a tax reduction for Village and Town residents. The County, similar to last year, has been able to drop that tax because the County, which having slashed by more than half, the sales tax revenue that used to go to the Village, has then able to pass on those tax savings to Village and Town property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. Ever since, the Village has had to make up for the revenue taken by the County and then passed onto Village property owners in the form of reduced County taxes. The County has not added some VIP monies to the Villages this year as it has in the recent past, and these might have helped to offset an increase in Village taxes this year.

**Property Tax Cap** – our budget is also complicated by the property tax cap of 2%, another State mandate, and at our March Board meeting, the Board might have to vote to override the tax cap. Having learned from the experience of several towns, it is sometimes 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 penalties for violating the governor's tax cap. The Governor has also proposed a property tax freeze if the Village stayed under the tax cap and moved towards consolidation. Last year, the Village was able to stay under the cap, and residents received a rebate check in January. However, the Village might not be able to stay under the tax limit this year, despite having moved towards consolidation, particularly with our sewer project with the Town. There are just too many variables in the Governor's tax proposal, and the savings, according to NYCOM, would be minimal.

**Waste Water Treatment Plant** – in December 2013, the Board conducted a special meeting to approve a SEQR Resolution relative to authorizing a bonding resolution so as to borrow up to \$6,000,000 for improvements to the Waste Water Treatment Plant, relative to the upgrades necessitated by the unfunded mandates for phosphorus removal, as required by the NYSDEC. This resolution did not commit the Village to borrow any money, but merely reserved the right of the Village to do so. We are still in the process of making a decision regarding a major upgrade to the Village's Waste Water Treatment Plant, thereby meeting the DEC mandate of treating the removal of phosphorus from the plant's effluent. At our February Meeting, it had been the intention of the Board to conduct a public or informational hearing to alert the residents of the need to borrow approximately \$5.6 in order to comply with the State mandate. However, this will have to be delayed until our March Board meeting because we have not been able to find additional funding for the project.

**Increase in the sewer rates** – unless the Village is able to secure additional funding to upgrade the treatment plant, the DEC will probably 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 over \$5.5 million can only come from sewer rate increases and the increase will be massive. Village and Town sewer users should be aware of this very distinct possibility.

**Planning Board** – has met recently to discuss plans for the building at 24 W. Main Street, now under new ownership and will meet in March to discuss a change in occupancy at the Grange Hall. In addition, the proposed new parking lot at the Marcellus Free Library might be another topic of discussion.

**Code Enforcement** – many 3-year rental inspections and fire inspections this month, as well as complaints about garbage and debris being left exposed and overflowing trashcans. We would remind residents that all garbage must be contained in a proper receptacle, not left at the curb in plastic bags.

**Olde Home Days** – June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> – the first meetings were held in January and February, and the third meeting will be held on March 2, 2016 in the Village Board Room at 6:30 p.m. – again a change of time from 7 P.M.

**Village Meetings for March 2017** – we would make note of the list of those meetings scheduled for March 2017, which is provided for those so interested – please note that the third meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2016, will take place on Thursday, March 2, 2017 in the Village Board Room, but with a change in time from 7 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Please note also that Special Meetings will probably be held in March for the bid opening on the construction of the Creek Walk, as well as to award the bid for construction of the Creek Walk. There are also several budget meetings planned as well, including one of March 10, and March 16 both at 10 a.m. in the Board Room, and additional meetings will be held as needed. Also, Daylight Savings Time will begin on March 12, 2017. Finally, the Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing will take place on Monday, April 3, 2017 in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m.