

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – January 2018

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.

Award WWTP Upgrade Bids – a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the following contract agreements, subject to a permissive referendum, for construction projects at the Waste Water Treatment Plant was made and approved:

The General Contract price, base bid only, of Five Million Three Hundred Ninety Five Thousand Six Hundred Eleven Dollars (\$5,395,611.00) is awarded to Blue Heron Construction Company of Jordan, New York.

The Electrical Contract price, base bid only, of Seven Hundred Thirty Nine Thousand Dollars (\$739,000.00) is awarded to Myriad Construction of Syracuse, New York.

The HVAC Contract price, base bid only, of Seventy Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Three Dollars (\$79,263) is awarded to King & King Mechanical, Inc. of Auburn, New York.

Again, it should be noted that the awarding of these bids is contingent on the permissive referendum and bonding timeline.

Police Department Promotion – Officer Rich Curran to Title of Detective – the Mayor made a motion to appoint, at the request of Police Chief Wicks, Officer Rich Curran, presently an officer in the Marcellus Police Department, to the title of Detective in the Department. Because of this title promotion, there is also a change in salary from \$18.40 to \$19.00 per hour. This title promotion and appointment will be effective on Thursday, January 25, 2018.

Review of Employee Handbook – a motion was approved to review the Village of Marcellus Employee Handbook, a copy of which is on file in the Village Office for public inspection. The Handbook went into effect on February 1, 2013, and it has been decided that the Board would conduct such a review each year upon its anniversary. This year, as part of the review, the Board has decided not to amend the handbook but to approve those changes that have been already ratified in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

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 December 2017 – budget modifications requested by the Village Treasurer transferring revenues and appropriations in the General and Sewer Funds were approved.

Addendum to Employee Health Insurance Opt-out – at its December meeting, the Board approved an 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. A motion was made to approve an addendum to this health insurance opt-out, which specifies that employees who choose to opt out of health coverage with the Village of Marcellus will be paid the sum of money for the level at which they are eligible. These levels include: Individual (\$1,400) for single employees who opt out, Double (\$2,800) for married employees who opt out and Family (\$4,000) for employees with children under the age of 26 who opt out.

County-wide Shared Services Initiative – Use of County’s e-Tax software – a motion was approved to authorize the Mayor to sign and return a letter from Onondaga County Real Property Tax Department, indicating that it is the intention of the Village of Marcellus to use, at no charge, the County’s new e-Tax software when it becomes available. Use of this software is expected to save local governments in the County an estimated \$300,000 per year by reducing the annual fee for real property tax services administration and tax billing. The savings for the Village of Marcellus is estimated to be approximately \$642.00. More importantly, use of this software is in keeping with New York State’s County-wide Shared Services Initiative law.

Village Meetings for February 2017 – please note also that the Village Offices will be closed on Monday, February 19th for the Presidents’ Day Holiday and that the second meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2018, will take place on Thursday, February 1, 2018 in the Village Board Room.

Police Update – the Prescription/Drug Drop-Off Box located in the lobby of the Village Hall continues to be a welcome addition to the Village. Any numbers of individuals continue to take advantage of using the drop-off box 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. The Chief would also announce that his office would continue to collect needles and syringes that are brought to his office. It is expected that the County will soon provide a similar drop off box for the disposal of such items anonymously.

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. The Wastewater Department recently sent a letter to all businesses in the Village making them aware of the responsibilities that each of them have in dealing with fats, oils and grease. They will also be conducting inspections in the weeks ahead to make sure that there is full compliance with not only our local law, but also with that of Onondaga County.

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 **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.

Special Board Meeting – on January 10, 2018, the Board convened a special Board Meeting, the purpose of which was to authorize a Supplemental Bond Resolution of the Village of Marcellus authorizing the issuance of an additional \$1,700,000 serial bonds to finance the construction of improvements to the Village’s Wastewater

Treatment Plant, relative to upgrades necessitated by the unfunded TMDL mandates for phosphorus removal, as required by the NYSDEC, including the acquisition of original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus required in connection therewith (the "Project"). That bond resolution supplements the Village bond resolution adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 23, 2013 (the "Original Bond Resolution"), which authorized the issuance of \$6,000,000 of serial bonds of the Village to finance the Project. The new maximum authorized cost of the Project, and the maximum amount of obligations authorized to be issued, is \$7,700,000. The period of probable usefulness is forty (40) years, computed from the date of the first bond anticipation note, and the bonds are payable from amounts to be annually levied on all the taxable real property in the Village. The reason for this supplemental bond resolution was the fact that the Bids received on December 5, 2017 for the WWTP Phosphorus Removal and Upgrade Project were very disappointing and much in excess of that anticipated when the original bond resolution of \$6,000,000 was approved in 2013. Because the Village can no longer delay and because the DEC expects the Village to complete the project sooner rather than later, and also because the Village wants to take advantage of the zero (0%) percent interest rate offered by EFC, it is the decision of the Board to move ahead with the construction of the project. While the Board, with the assistance of the DEC, will continue to look for more funding, so as to offset the cost of the project, the Board feels that any further delay will result in even higher costs as well as possible fines for lack of action.

Increase in the sewer rates – in an attempt to offset excessive sewer rates, the Village has been successful in its endeavors to secure some funding, including several WQIP awards of \$80,000 and \$1,000,000, and a EPG grant of \$30,000, as well as zero (0%) percent financing from the Environmental Financing Corporation, and it is hopeful that the additional funding can be secured to help meet the DEC mandate to upgrade the treatment plant. A potential SAM grant of \$250,000 is pending, as is a WIIA grant estimated in excess of \$1,000,000. However, the plant upgrade of now over \$7 million, if no additional funding can be found, can only come from sewer rate increases and was hoped 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 probable that if no additional funding is received, we will have raise sewer rates once again, this time in excess of 30%. At present, Village sewer users pay, on average \$413.13 annually. A 31% increase would bring that average rate up to \$541.39 – a quarterly increase of about \$32.00, or an annual increase of about \$128.00. Keep in mind that this is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village. For Town sewer users the increase would be even more astronomical, given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user - the average town sewer user would pay approximately \$676.74 annually, an increase of about \$160.00 per year, beginning in 2019.

Highland Drive Drainage Study – as was mentioned at previous meetings, but which needs to be addressed once again in light of the recent flooding that has occurred in the Village, the Board, in the fall of 2017, hired the MRB Engineering Firm to conduct a drainage study for the area of Highland Drive - which basically affects most, if not all of the neighboring properties on Second Street, Meadow Street, Reed Street, Reed Parkway and First Street. The firm will build off a drainage study conducted back in 1997, consider changes in the areas upland of Highland Drive and develop potential improvements for the Village to consider. MRB will perform a topographical survey of the storm system and immediate surrounding area on the west side of Highland Drive and the Reed Parkway storm systems, set up a base map of the Village's storm sewer system, conduct a hydrologic analysis of the contributing watershed area to determine the peak flow rate during the 2-, 5-, 10- and 50 year storm events at various inflow points into the Highland-Reed drainage system, and create a hydraulic model of the Highland-Reed drainage systems, and determine the impacts to the system under the peak flow rates. The study will also develop alternatives to control the flow to and along Highland Drive and elsewhere in the drainage system along Reed Parkway and mitigate the overflowing during heavy storms that causes drainage issues for residents. MRB will also estimate probably material and construction costs for each

of the potential improvements. It should be noted that this is just a study, a necessary first step, which will lead, hopefully, to the development of long term operation and maintenance requirements for all property owners in the area – a storm water management district, the cost for which would be borne by the property owners. This would involve a blanket drainage maintenance easement that the Village could use so as to protect everyone, should a property owner fail to live up to the maintenance agreement. Such easements would be recorded on the impacted property deeds, so that current and future property owners know and abide by their responsibilities. Should a property owner fail to live up to the agreement, the Village would intervene, fix the problem and assess damages to the offending party. This is a problem that has affected many Village residents for a number of years – Marcellus lies in a valley and all storm water when it leaves the surrounding hills greatly affects those who live at the bottom of the valley. In addition, the storm water damages private property, not public rights of way. Only by establishing a storm water management district, into which all affected property owners must reach agreement, can a possible solution be achieved. The Board expects a completion of the drainage study by the spring of 2018, at which time residents will be notified, costs will have been determined and options provided.

Olde Home Days – June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd – the first meeting was held on January 4, 2018, and the next meeting will be held on February 1, 2018 in the Village Board Room beginning at 6:30 p.m.