

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – March 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.

Public Hearing – Local Law #2 of 2018 – Override Property Tax Cap – The purpose of the public hearing was 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

a. 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.

b. 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.

Vote on Local Law #2 of 2018 –Local Law #2 of 2018 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c was approved

Spring Brush Pickup Dates – the Village Board and DPW are going to continue the policy from last year for the 2018 Brush Pickup. A motion was made and approved to allow brush to be placed at the curb on Saturdays and Sundays for pickup on Mondays from April 2nd to May 7th. In addition, 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 announced the 2018 dates for the Trash Transfer Stations and they are: Fridays, April 27th and May 4th, and May 11th, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturdays, April 28th, May 5th, and May 12th, from 8 a.m. to Noon. Permits are required and are issued through the Town of Marcellus Clerk's Office. Tires require an additional permit, starting at \$3.00, as well as items that contain Freon, such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners or dehumidifiers - these require another permit and a \$15.00 fee per unit. Some items are not accepted including garbage, OCRRA recyclables, liquids or hazardous waste including paint, oil tanks, fuel tanks, motor vehicles, and no contractor debris (home projects only), All items must be secured and covered when transporting to the Town Transfer Station. Also, there will be an Electronics Waste Disposal Day included with the trash days this year and that will require a special permit.

Onondaga County Planning Board – GML 239 Report of Final Action – Trustee _____ – a motion was made to approve the proposed action with regard to the of the Onondaga County Planning Board's "No Position With Comment," with respect to Local Law No. 2, of 2018 and the Zone Change.

Annual Storm Water Report – the Annual Storm Water Report was tabled until the next regular meeting of the Village Board in April

Spectrum Communications Cable Franchise Agreement – a motion to 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 again approved.

Announce Date and Time for Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing – the Annual Meeting will take place on April 2, 2018 and includes the appointment of non-elected officials, establishing regular meeting dates, as well as designating official newspapers and depositories. In addition, a Public Hearing will take place on April 2, 2018 to consider the tentative budget for the Village for the next fiscal year. Approval of the final budget will probably take place at the next regular Board meeting, on April 23, 2018.

Fee Waiver Request – the Marcellus American Legion has requested a fee waiver for a bathroom remodel project in their building at 13 East Main Street, so as to make it handicap accessible. As with other non-profit groups in the Village, and considering the fact that local contractors are donating time and material, the Board is very much inclined to grant such a request.

Police and School Safety – we would like to call your attention to the issue of school safety. Chief Wicks met recently with MCS Superintendent during a Channel 9 television broadcast, which we have also placed on our website – <http://www.villageofmarcellus.com/recent-news.html> and we urge residents to view it. The video highlights how well prepared Marcellus School Resource Officers are to handle threats against the school, better in the Board's opinion than any other school district in the state. The model prepared by Chief Wicks could be well used in other school district and the Chief has recently visited other school districts as well as State and local officials hoping to encourage some changes that would make the program even more effective.

Village Earth Day Participation – the Board would also like to announce that the Village will again participate in an Earth Day clean up on Thursday, April 19, 2018, with a rain day of Friday, April 20, 2018. Third grade students from Heffernan Elementary School will 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 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, 2018, the bill will be re-levied to the tax bill for June 1, 2018. If those bills for tenants who pay their own utilities are not paid by April 30, 2018, these too will be re-levied onto the owner's taxes for June 1, 2018. Please note that, unlike previous utility bills, payment for this final bill for the year must be made within the month.

Clean Energy Communities – we have recently been notified that the Village of Marcellus has been awarded a \$100,000 grant to implement additional clean energy projects. The monies granted have been earmarked for clean energy projects this spring, and will include a retrofitting of 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 will occur in the Village Hall, the Village Garage and the Water Pollution Control Plant. The Village is delighted not only with this award but also most appreciative of the tireless efforts of former employee, Ryan Riefler, and others who helped to secure this grant.

Village Banners – through the efforts of former Trustee Bob Wilson and his committee, as well as our Office Staff and Highway Department, funding has been secured to refresh the welcome banners that grace our Village streets. It is hoped that the banners, which have been delivered, will soon be installed, by mid-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

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 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

Creek Walk – Fred’s Trail will reopen for the public when the snow finally leaves the trail. At first glance, it appears that the winter weather has not caused much damage to the 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 2018-19 Village Budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting. In January, Village residents received their County and Town tax bill and that bill reflected a slight tax reduction for Village residents. Similar to last seven years, this tax reduction was made possible by the County, having slashed by more than half the sales tax revenue that used to go to the Village, was then able to pass on those tax savings to Village 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. Our budget continues to remain short of what the Board needs to provide adequate services but we do not anticipate a tax increase this year. Pending further review, the Board intends to propose that last year’s Village tax of \$6.85/1000 of assessed value remains the same, falling within the state-mandated tax cap. This makes the third year in a row that the tax rate has remained the same.

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. The Board certainly favors a tax cap, and we will probably do that. However, there seems to be no meaningful relief from continuous unfunded State mandates and these, coupled with a cap on the Board’s ability to raise revenue, it is very difficult to plan or even survive.

Waste Water Treatment Plant – at its January 23, 2018 Meeting, the Board authorized the Mayor to sign the following contract agreements, subject to a permissive referendum, for construction projects at the Waste Water Treatment Plant:

- 1) The General Contract price, base bid only, of Five Million Three Hundred Ninety Five Thousand Six Hundred Eleven Dollars (\$5,395,611.00) to Blue Heron Construction Company of Jordan, New York.
- 2) The Electrical Contract price, base bid only, of Seven Hundred Thirty Nine Thousand Dollars (\$739,000.00) to Myriad Construction of Syracuse, New York.
- 3) The HVAC Contract price, base bid only, of Seventy Nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Three Dollars (\$79,263) to King & King Mechanical, Inc. of Auburn, New York.

The awarding of these bids remains contingent on the permissive referendum and bonding timeline. 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 years (40), 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. 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 has been 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.

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: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLTVqkXVvNk>. It 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 – Grand Opening April 7, 2018, – a new business will open in the Village at 20 W Main St. Marcellus Mercantile specializes in vintage finds, time-worn treasures, well-loved décor to give your

home a whimsical one-of-a-kind look a chain store cannot provide. An eclectic mix of authentic vintage finds from a wide variety of time frames and styles are available. Tell them what you like and let them hunt it down for you. By appointment only – call or text – Kim – 315-673-3660, Melissa – 315-673-3660, Sue 315-673-3660

"Olde Home Days 2018" is planned for June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, in the Village and in Marcellus Park, and honoring our Health and Dental Professionals. We congratulate Dr. Andrew Merritt and Dr. Edward Kantor who will be Grand Marshals of the Olde Home Days Parade on June 2nd. Please support Marcellus Olde Home Days. A fun filled weekend is being planned.

Election Results – from the Mayor – Kevin O'Hara and I would like to thank the voters of the Village for our election as Mayor and Trustee, both of which are four-year terms, until 2022, on March 20, 2018. It is our hope that we are able to maintain the Village infrastructure, stabilize the tax rate and the village debt, although an increase in sewer rates, because of mandated upgrades to the WWTP, will be most challenging. Together with Trustee Sally Tallman, we also hope to address drainage issues. We would also thank outgoing Trustee Patrick Cox, who chose not to run for re-election. His steady advice and dedicated service was exceptional during his eight-year tenure on the Village Board. I also know that Patrick will be back on the Village Board soon after he has retired from active military service. Trustee Tallman then read a proclamation honoring Trustee Cox, in appreciation of his very valuable leadership and in grateful acknowledgement of his time, talents and service so freely and unselfishly given.

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Village Meetings for April 2018 – a list of those meetings scheduled for April 2018 has been prepared for those so interested – please note also that the Village Office will be closed on Good Friday, March 30th, and on Memorial Day, May 28th. Also, Olde Home Days 2018 is scheduled for June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, and the Committee continues to meet the first Thursday of every month, in the Village Board Room. The next such meeting is planned for April 5, 2018.