

**VILLAGE OF CASTLETON-ON-HUDSON  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING**

April 12, 2021

**PRESENT:** Mayor Joe Keegan, Trustee/Deputy Mayor Jenifer Pratico, Trustee Sharon Martin (arrived 7:05 pm), Trustee Lissa D'Aquanni, and Trustee Erik Samarija (all via Zoom video conference)

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Foreman Daniel Lebrecht, Foreman Kenneth Meyer, Foreman Joseph Garavelli, Library Director Melissa Tacke, Building Inspector Gary Ziegler, Fire Chief Matt Carner, and Clerk-Treasurer Padraic Ellis. (All via Zoom video conference)

**PUBLIC:** 7

**CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson was held at Castleton Village Hall, 85 South Main Street on May 10, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Mayor Keegan with the Pledge of Allegiance. This meeting will be posted to the Village website in accordance with the Village's best efforts to comply with New York State Open Meeting Law and Executive Order 202.1.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2021 Regular Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Doug Hanks, property manager for 14 North Main Street, advised the board that the properties that he is managing have been cited on numerous occasions by Code Enforcement Officer James Lance. He stated that he wishes to remedy any issues that the properties may be cited for but Officer Lance does not return his phone calls. Andrew Klein, the owner of the properties which Mr. Hanks manages, stated that he believes that his properties are being targeted by Officer Lance. The Board stated that they will comply with Mr. Klein's FOIL request for all code citations since January 1, 2021, that Officer Lance will be given direction to contact them regarding these violations, and that further information regarding Village Code could be found on the Village website. Suzanne Donnelly, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated that she had spoken to a retired contact from National Grid about supplying electricity to River Rest. The cost would be \$1,500.00 which the Main Street Association would pay for. The Board reported that the property was not owned by the Village and that it was instead owned by the New York State Department of Transportation. Suzanne Cecala, of Campbell Avenue, stated that the second annual Diversity Parade would be held at 11:00 am on June 19, 2021 and invited Village officials to participate. Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:**

- **Mayor Keegan:** Mayor Keegan reported that a letter has been sent to the Department of Transportation regarding the ownership of the proposed bridge to the Village park land. Mayor

Keegan reported that he rode with Officer Lance in April to issue citations. Mayor Keegan met with Foreman Lebrecht regarding sidewalks, street signs, GIS mapping, and the new truck. Mayor Keegan attended the Environmental Facilities Corporation inspection at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Mayor Keegan reported that quotes for redoing the hallway at Village Hall are still pending.

- **Deputy Mayor Pratico:** Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that she collected money at Clean-Up Day with Trustee Martin. Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that flowers had been planted at Mountainview Cemetery and that the water had been turned on. Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that she is checking with the Department of Health on the status of water licenses for Jeff Duncan and Eric Barber.
- **Trustee Martin:** Trustee Martin reported that she has filed several water agreements with Rensselaer County for new properties in Castle Ridge. Trustee Martin thanked Forman Lebrecht and the Department of Public Works for their work on Clean-Up Day.
- **Trustee D'Aquanni:** Trustee D'Aquanni reported that she is working on the quarterly report for the Estuary Grant. Trustee D'Aquanni reported that 665 pounds of garbage and recycling during their clean-up. Trustee D'Aquanni reported that the Castleton-on-Hudson Farmers' and Artisans' Market will run from June to September. Trustee D'Aquanni reported that she has contacted Landmark Consulting regarding finding future funding for the Noyes Engine House. Trustee D'Aquanni reported that she attended a NYCOM seminar on applying for state grants.
- **Trustee Samarija:** Trustee Samarija reported that he and the Mayor have discussed restructuring the Village's long term debt. Trustee Samarija reported that he is looking into improvements to the Village website. Trustee Samarija reported that the Main Street Association would like to know the status of the proposed crosswalks on Main Street and the proposed boardwalk by the nautical flag pole. Trustee Samarija reported the Main Street Association would like the Village to distribute welcome packets to new residents. Clerk-Treasurer Ellis will work with Trustee D'Aquanni to develop welcome packets.

## REPORTS:

1. **Library Report:** Director Tacke reported that as of May 3 the library has reintroduced a computer station and will be increasing the number of people allowed in during the upcoming months. Director Tacke reported that she has not heard any further information from Attorney Hill regarding the use of drone photography at the Village Hall.
2. **DPW Report:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried to approve sidewalk improvements as detailed in the quote from Bob Talham Inc. and to split the cost between the Department of Public Works and Water budgets. Foreman Lebrecht reported that Veterans' banners would be going up this week. Foreman Lebrecht reported that Clerk-Treasurer Ellis is working on getting the new DPW truck insured and registered. Foreman Lebrecht report that he will have the Famers' Market and benches delivered to River Rest before the beginning of June and will work with the Main Street Association on the location of the benches.
3. **Water Report:** Foreman Garavelli reported that safety training had been completed for the DPW and Water and Sewer departments. Foreman Garavelli reported that quarterly PFOA sampling had been completed. Foreman Garavelli reported that service has been scheduled with Spectrum and Doyle Security to run service to the water sites. Foreman Garavelli reported that hydrant

flushing has been completed for the spring. Foreman Garavelli reported that the Village staff would be participating in training through the New York Rural Water Association during the next week.

4. **Wastewater Report:** Foreman Meyer reported that he was waiting on a permit from Amtrak for National Grid to start work on the electrical upgrade to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Foreman Meyer reported that the Department of Environmental Conservation had given the Waste Water Treatment Plant a satisfactory review.
5. **Building Inspector:** Inspector Ziegler reported that three permits were scheduled to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances. Inspector Ziegler reported that clean-up had begun on 21 Green Avenue by Rensselaer County.
6. **Code Enforcement:** Absent.
7. **Fire Department Report:** Chief Carner reported that the Fire Department had switched to non-ethanol powered generators and that they were preparing for the Memorial Day Parade.
8. **Clerk-Treasurer Report:** Clerk-Treasurer Ellis reported that relevy amounts had been sent to Rensselaer County for the 2021-2022 tax bills and that he, along with the Mayor, had a conference later in the week to discuss short term financing for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion to approve all departmental reports.

#### **BUSINESS:**

1. **Library Tent on Village Hall Lawn:** Director Tacke reported that she is still in the process of attaining a certificate of liability insurance for the tent on the Village Hall lawn that named the Village as also insurance. The matter was tabled until the next Board meeting.
2. **Urban Forestry Grant:** The Village has been awarded \$21,250.00 by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for the Urban Forestry Grant to survey and inventory the trees in the Village. Trustee Martin will be the primary contact for the grant and Clerk-Treasurer Ellis will be the secondary contact. The Board wished to formally thank former Trustee Gina Giuliano for applying for the grant for the Village.
3. **Village Hall Tree Removal:** The Village Board agreed to remove the pine tree from the front lawn of the Village Hall. The possible replacement with a new tree will be discussed at a later date after conference with the Village's Tree City Committee.
4. **Village Tree Removal – 21 Van Buren Avenue:** A resident located on Van Buren Avenue reported that a branch from a Village tree fell and broke her windshield. She is asking that the tree be removed as it is a hazard to her property, it which the Village Board agreed.
5. **Comprehensive Plan Discussion:** Mayor Keegan and Carol Stockman, of the Planning Board, met with Mary Beth Bianconi, of Delaware Engineering, who discussed Delaware Engineering creating an updated comprehensive plan for the Village. Ms. Bianconi stated that the current comprehensive plan for the Village, which was completed in 2005, is not extensive enough for the grants that the Village hopes to be applying for in the future. The cost of Delaware Engineering completing to entirety of the comprehensive plan would cost \$48,000.00. This amount was considered to be difficult for the Village to justify by the Board, even with payments

spread out over the next two fiscal years, due to the uncertainty of the proposed bridge project to the Village park land. Trustee D'Aquanni will contact the Capital District Planning Commission to see if they can complete part of the plan or suggest funding options, and Ms. Bianconi to acquire more information to present to the Board. The Village Board will determine a plan on how to proceed with the comprehensive plan for the next Board meeting.

**6. Public Hearing – 2021-2022 Village Budget:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to open the public hearing for the 2021-2022 Village Budget. Trustee Martin asked for clarification on increases to the tax levy, and legal and engineering costs. Clerk-Treasurer Ellis stated that the tax levy increase was due to there being additional room under the tax cap and that the increases to the legal and engineering lines were due to setting aside funds for the proposed bridge project to the Village park land. Marianne Carner, former Mayor and Trustee, asked about the fund balance for the upcoming budget year. Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija, motion carried to close the public hearing. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to pass the 2021-2022 Village Budget.

**7. APPROPRIATIONS:** Deputy Mayor Pratico moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion to approve payment of the abstracts.

Abstract # 18 – Vouchers # 599 - # 648 in the amount of \$ 40,659.28.

General Fund: \$ 24,628.62

Water Fund: \$ 8,236.21

Sewer Fund: \$ 7,794.45

**ONLINE BANKING TRANSFERS:** Deputy Mayor Pratico moved, Mayor Keegan seconded, motion to approve the online banking transfers according to the schedule presented to the Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Matt Carner, of the Castleton Fire Department, stated that he has seen people fishing across the tracks from the Amtrak crossing. Suzanne Donnelly, from the Main Street Association, stated that the Main Street Association would be holding a Main Street clean-up day on Saturday and that the Friends of the Castleton Public Library would be holding a plant sale on the same day. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** At 9:25 pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to move into Executive Session. At 9:52 pm, Mayor Keegan move, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried to leave Executive Session.

**BUSINESS:**

**8. Village Social Media Policy:** Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to turn off comments on the Village Facebook page, with Trustee D'Aquanni against. Mayor Keegan will speak to Clerk-Treasurer Ellis about email addresses as a way of records management. Trustee D'Aquanni spoke about the need to keep Village business records in paper and digital form. The use of tablets was discussed by the Board with Trustee Samarija stating that he would like use of a tablet if they are available. The Board will speak with Clerk-Treasurer Ellis and Attorney Hill about amending the Village Social Media Policy to include this motion.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 10:03pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Padraic Ellis  
Village Clerk-Treasurer