

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

September 13, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor Joe Keegan, Trustee/Deputy Mayor Jenifer Pratico, Trustee Sharon Martin, Trustee Lissa D'Aquanni (via Zoom), and Trustee Erik Samarija

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Benjamin Hill, Foreman Daniel Lebrecht, Foreman Kenneth Meyer, Building Inspector Gary Ziegler, Code Enforcement Officer James Lance, Fire Chief Chris Carner, and Clerk-Treasurer Padraic Ellis.

PUBLIC: 5 (in person), 6 (via Zoom)

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 September 13, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Mayor Keegan with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Trustee Martin, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to accept the minutes of the August 9, 2021 Regular Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Carol Stockman, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated that one of the murals that the Main Street Association was going to hang at the Store was temporarily on hold while they determine if the Store has changed ownership. Arline Taylor, of Latham Road, stated that the Village should not street sweep or plow Brashear Place because it is not in the Village. Foreman Lebrecht stated that the Village maintains Brashear Place as part of a shared services agreement with the Town of Schodack. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

TRUSTEE REPORTS:

- **Mayor Keegan:** Mayor Keegan reported that he toured the Amsterdam pedestrian bridge along with Trustee D'Aquanni as reference from the proposed bridge over the railroad tracks in the Village. Mayor Keegan stated that the Village had received a quote of \$50,000.00 to stabilize the Noyes Engine House, he hopes to be will be funded by a grant from Assemblyman Ashby's office. Mayor Keegan stated that he and Planning Board Chair Carol Stockman have finalized the committee for the comprehensive plan. Mayor Keegan stated that he believe the Village picnic went well and thanked everyone that attended. Mayor Keegan stated that he would be attending the NYCOM fall conference next week.
- **Deputy Mayor Pratico:** Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that she believes that the Village

picnic is an important event and that it is a good chance for the Board to meet the residents. Deputy Mayor Pratico stated that there are complications with the land transfer between the Village and the Castleton Fire Company. There could be issues with the Village transferring the land on which the fire house pavilion is located for frontage on Green Avenue if there is park land involved. There should be more answers when the survey of the property is completed in thirty days.

- **Trustee Martin:** Trustee Martin moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to approve the Smith Control quotation for \$15,500.00 for the upgrades to the water system.
- **Trustee D'Aquanni:** Trustee D'Aquanni reported that she will be meeting with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on Friday regarding the Estuary grant. She is hoping to discuss closing the grant and how the remaining funds will be distributed. Trustee D'Aquanni stated that Haley Balancoff from the Capital District Regional Planning Commission will be presenting at the September 27th Board meeting regarding how the Village can become a designated clean energy community.
- **Trustee Samarija:** Trustee Samarija reported that he toured the water sites with Foreman Garavelli and spoke with a representative from Smith Controls.

REPORTS:

1. **Library Report:** Director Tacke reported the results from the summer reading program and highlighted other upcoming Library events.
2. **DPW Report:** Foreman Lebrecht reminded the Board that Village Clean-up Day is September 25th at the Brickyard and the hydrant flushing will continue Monday through Wednesday for the remainder of the month.
3. **Water Report:** Absent.
4. **Wastewater Report:** Foreman Meyer reported that the Village is still waiting on National Grid and Amtrak to complete the new electrical service at the waste water treatment plant.
5. **Building Inspector:** Absent.
6. **Code Enforcement:** Officer Lance will discuss the issue of an abandoned car in the Village with Attorney Hill this week.
7. **Fire Department Report:** Chief Carner reported the Firehouse Breakfasts will resume on Sunday, October 3rd and that the chief's vehicles would be getting lettered this week.
8. **Clerk-Treasurer Report:** Clerk-Treasurer Ellis reported that the Green Avenue Bond refinancing had been completed last week and thanked everyone that had helped on it.

Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion to approve all departmental reports.

BUSINESS:

1. **Amp Energy Solar Contract:** Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico

seconded, motion carried for Mayor Keegan to sign the contract will Amp Energy which will save the Village money and has been reviewed by Attorney Hill.

2. At-Grade/Overpass Crossing: Mayor Keegan presented a PowerPoint outlining the differences between at-grade and overpass crossings. Currently, \$14,900 of the \$50,000 Estuary Grant has been spent on attorney fees for the project. Mayor Keegan stated that the pedestrian overpass is the only option that the New York State Department of Transportation is offering. Currently, there is only one new at-grade crossing that has been recently ordered by the court for the Department of Transportation to construct. Trustee D'Aquanni stated there are two different types of at-grade: one with no gates and one with magnetic gates. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to open public comment to discuss river access options. Clerk-Treasurer Ellis stated that this project has been in development for over twenty years and that it does not progress because people always find a reason to stall. Susan Megna, of the Planning Board, had questions regarding the overpass to which the Board gave the following answers: The cost for the overpass would be taken care of by New York State but the Village would incur the cost of maintenance. It is unknown if the Village will have any input on designs and it is unknown how long the offer of the overpass is good for. Suzanne Cecala, of the Main Street Association, spoke about the Local Waterfront Revitalization Project inclusion in the project and that an overpass would be a large structure. Ms. Cecala stated that during the Scenic Hudson presentation they showed at-grade crossings from California. Kim Schlosser, of the Main Street Association, agreed the overpass would be a large structure and that she does not want the Board to move forward with it. Michael O'Neal, of the Planning Board, stated that Marianne Carner has been working on trying to obtain river access since 1994. Carol Stockman, Chair of the Planning Board, asked if the Village will lose the funds for the Estuary grant if they are not used by the end of 2021 to which the Board replied that they would not. Ms. Stockman stated that as the Village moves forward with the comprehensive plan there will be public hearings where Village residents can voice their opinions on river access options. Chris Carner, of the Castleton Fire Department, stated that he believes that the Village should take the overpass offer but try to figure out a new design that does not incorporate elevators. Allen Dillenbeck, of the Castleton Fire Department, stated that he believes the Village should take the overpass offer but should close it during the winter months due to inclement weather. Mr. Dillenbeck believes that the at-grade crossing is not a good idea due to the Fire Department having to clean up the bodies that have been hit by trains in the past. Suzanne Donnelly, of the Main Street Association, stated that she is in favor of the at-grade crossing and that the Board should not vote on the matter tonight. Ms. Donnelly stated that a structure the size of the overpass would permanently change the view for village residents and that residents should be able to voice their opinions at a public hearing. Anne Defiglio, Schodack resident, stated that she visited the Amsterdam bridge and found that the elevators were locked. Ms. Defiglio stated that she believes that magnetic gates would cost less than an overpass. Trustee Samarija stated that there have been less than 50 deaths on the Empire Corridor line in the past hundred years and stated that the Scott Avenue crossing should never have been closed to begin with. Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried to close public comment. Trustee Samarija stated that he would rather nothing change at the crossing rather than the Village building the pedestrian overpass. Trustee D'Aquanni stated that she would like

the Board to reach out to the Governor and the Department of State, instead of just the Department of Transportation, to come up with all possible options for the crossing. Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to discuss with the Department of Transportation the Village's need for a little more time to make a decision on how to proceed with river access at the crossing.

3. Online Access to Board Meetings: Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried for the first Board meeting of the month to be an interactive Zoom meeting, along with the Board attending in person, and the second Board meeting of the month be a streaming Zoom meeting, along with the Board attending in person, starting in November, with Trustee Martin and Trustee D'Aquanni opposed.

4. Speeding on Scott Avenue: The Village will be looking into placing speed limit signs at the Elementary School crossing on Scott Avenue like the ones that have been installed on Main Street to prevent speeding.

7. APPROPRIATIONS: Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion to approve payment of the abstracts.

Abstract # 4 – Vouchers # 140 - # 194 in the amount of \$ 154,048.43.

General Fund: \$ 126,784.12

Water Fund: \$ 9,244.78

Sewer Fund: \$ 18019.53

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Chris Carner, of the Castleton Fire Department, restated the need for an audio-visual helper for the Board meeting. Mr. Carner asked if any progress had been on the new MS4 coordinator to which the Board replied that they were still waiting on the contract to be signed. Susan Megna, of the Planning Board, stated that she was pleased with the interest and engagement at the Board meeting and is hopefully the Village can develop a positive political strategy moving forward. Anne Defiglio, Schodack resident, stated that the gates at the railroad crossing have a 15 second warning while magnetic gates have a 90 second warning. Suzanne Donnelly, of the Main Street Association, thanked the board for continuing with interactive meetings and suggested equipment that could help with the streaming process. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 9:22 pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded motion to move into Executive Sessions. At 9:41 pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion to exit Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT: At 9:42 pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded, motion carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Padraic Ellis
Village Clerk-Treasurer