

Village of Canton, New York

VILLAGE BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes: June 15, 2020

Board Present:

Michael Dalton, Mayor
Beth Larrabee, Trustee
Klaus Proemm, Trustee

Carol Pynchon, Trustee
Anna Sorensen, Trustee

Others Present:

Gerald Ducharme, Village Attorney
Brien Hallahan, Superintendent
Cara Adams, Deputy Clerk
Leigh Rodriguez, Economic Developer
Cindy Brand, Assessor

Sally Noble, Clerk/Treasurer
Jim Putman, Recreation Director
James Santimaw, Police Chief
Jeff Murray, Code Officer
Linda Casserly, Historian

ORDER OF BUSINESS: The Mayor opened the regular meeting at 6:33pm via zoom.

- a. **Approve minutes of May 18 & May 29, 2020-** Trustee Pynchon made a motion to approve the minutes of May 18 & May 29, 2020 seconded by Trustee Proemm. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

ACCEPTANCE OF DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Superintendent Report- Superintendent Hallahan did not have anything to add to his report.

Trustee Pynchon asked for an update on milling of the roads and the timeline.

Superintendent Hallahan stated that the end of Sullivan Drive, Park Place, Pleasant Street, Haley Drive and Miner Street are being milled and will be paved next month.

St. Lawrence University is going to partner with the Village for the Miner Street project that will be started in July.

Trustee Proemm asked then the paving will be done by the EV Charger? Superintendent Hallahan stated that it will be done in the next week or two.

Trustee Sorensen asked about the river crossing project? Superintendent Hallahan stated that the item was on the agenda to award the project.

Treasurer/Clerk Report- Treasurer Noble stated that the COVID cleaning of the building has been completed. If anyone has any feedback to please let Sally know. She stated it was the first day to have everyone back in the Clerk's Office. Collection of Village Taxes has started. Treasurer Noble will send the Board the places where the Superintendent position has been advertised.

Code Officer Report- Code Officer Murray did not have anything to add to his report.

Golf Report- Mayor Dalton added that Karen Stowell will open the food service at the Golf Course on or before June 22 with deck/window service.

Trustee Pynchon asked about the Golf Course Clubhouse being cleaned? Mayor Dalton stated they spoke to the company but did not receive a price. Clerk Noble will get in touch with the cleaning company.

Economic Developer Report- Economic Developer Rodriguez updated the Board about the Launch Loan Program. She has been receiving calls from people outside of Canton and has been directing them to other resources. She stated that a directory has been created. She applied for a small grant and was awarded to launch the directory to small businesses and have a shared calendar. She stated that reimbursement requests are prepared and ready to be sent out. Waterfront grants are on hold.

Trustee Pynchon added that the Community Calendar is a great addition.

Economic Developer Rodriguez stated it will be free to businesses and they are ready to launch.

Historian Report- Historian Casserly informed the Board that she will be back to work tomorrow. She did interviews with Helen Kenyon (age 88), Frank White (age 102) and Renice Bisnett (age 87). Dennis Barr took pictures of the interviews.

Assessor Report- Assessor Brand informed the Board that she is finalizing the final roll, waiting for determination. She received the equalization rate. It went from 99% to 90%. Assessor Brand informed the board that she will be using the Data Collector from St. Lawrence County to help finish the data collection, to take pictures, update the data record cards and adjust assessments accordingly. Assessor Brand would like to hold an informational meeting with the Public.

Recreation Report- Recreation Director Putman stated that they are preparing Taylor Park for when they can open. Lifeguard interviews will be conducted at the end of next week. The Beach Plan is ready to send to the Department of Health and he is designing a Safety Plan for the Beach. Recreation Director Putman stated that they are repainting and replacing the tennis nets at Priest Field.

Police Report- Chief Santimaw stated that it is been busy and they have work ahead of them with the

Executive Order for the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. It directs that all Police Agencies in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer of all the Local Governments and with input from stakeholders regarding new policies or change policies to satisfy a number of bullet points. He stated that he wanted to discuss a few:

- Village Police Department is accredited and was reaccredited back in October. He stated they are the only agency in St. Lawrence County since 1993. New York State sent representatives up to go through our 109 policies and make sure they are up to standards. We had to send them Critical Standards for them to look at before they arrive. This included the Use of Force Policy. They want to know that we are doing everything to their standards or they are not going to send representatives.
- The Use of Force Policy is posted on the website. Chief Santimaw read the following sentence from the policy. "Members and employees shall refrain from applying any carotid restraint techniques."

- Crowd Management is listed by the Governor. This policy the Village does not have. The State has not directed the Village to have this policy before.
- Village Police have been a part of a number of small protests through the years. Policy has always to help people cross the streets and to make sure everyone is safe. Never have any problem or complaints with the Police activities and want to continue.
- Community Policing- have a policy that may need some tweaking.
- Implicit Bias Awareness Training (Fair & Impartial Policing)- every Officer has had the training. Refresher training is being held on Wednesday. All Officer's will be going through the training.
- De-escalation Training- add Verbal Judo, tactical communication form of training. SUNY Canton or Village of Potsdam Police Chief will help with this.
- Transparent Citizen Complaints- Will be adding to the website. Currently have a policy in place.

Mayor Dalton stated that there will be guidance that will be issued with the Executive Order from the Division of the Budget and Criminal Justice Services. Response is due back to the State by April 1, 2021.

Trustee Larrabee thanked Chief Santimaw for the clarification and the updates. She stated that keeping up with the rapidly changing environment, both nationally and locally. Appreciates what Chief Santimaw and Officers are doing.

Chief Santimaw stated that they want to do the right thing. He stated that the Police are part of the Community and they want to be able to keep their head held high and want to do what they can do to make this right.

Trustee Pynchon thanked Chief Santimaw and told him to hold his head high.

Trustee Pynchon made a motion to approve the Department Head Reports; seconded by Trustee Proemm. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Trustee Larrabee stated that Trustee Sorensen and Trustee Larrabee met with Chief Santimaw to discuss policies including communication with students when they come back. To keep the public informed.

Communication & Technology Committee- Trustee Sorensen stated that they are working on a memo to circulate to the Boards regarding what direction and questions they would like to hear from on the Department Head Reports; improving communications going forward.

Committee is discussing integrating Zoom going forward to increase Public engagement.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **EV Charger Update-** Trustee Proemm informed the Board that he is applying for the rebate to National Grid. Should cover all or close to all of the electrical usage for the EV Charger. He suggested keeping the EV chargers free until next meeting, when he should know what the usage will be.

Trustee Sorensen asked if he has received data points from other Communities.

Trustee Proemm stated that it is hard to predict. He stated that he likes it will almost cover the faster charger. He stated it is a nice service to provide.

- b. **Superintendent Retirement-** Mayor Dalton stated that the retirement of Superintendent Hallahan was accepted at the last meeting but he wanted to thank Superintendent Brien Hallahan for the last 15 years.
- c. **Miner Street Upgrades-** Mayor Dalton stated the St. Lawrence University has agreed to partner for the Miner Street upgrades.

Trustee Pynchon stated that this was a process that eventually worked out really well when they were able to get everyone to the table to have a conversation. She stated it is a good partnership.

- d. **SRO Position at Canton Central School-** Mayor Dalton stated there is a strain on the Canton Central School Budget. There was a three-year contract between the Village and Canton Central School for the SRO Position. Canton Central School chose to violate the contract.

Mayor Dalton stated that this will put the Village over budget for a period of time until a Police Officer retires.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Authorize payment of vouchers & transfer of funds** – Trustee Larrabee made a motion to authorize payment of vouchers & transfer of funds for abstract # **01 of 2020-2021**. Trustee Sorensen seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

General Fund	\$99,373.86	Golf Course	\$38,901.80
Water Fund	\$21,992.32	Joint Activity	\$5,534.35
Sewer Fund	\$26,211.50		

- b. **Approve Hiring Two Temporary Workers for Trail Sign Installation-** Trustee Proemm made a motion to approve hiring Daniel Laddison as a temporary worker for trail sign installation at a rate of \$11.80 an hour. Trustee Larrabee seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carries.
- c. **Discuss Reopening of Municipal Building-** Mayor Dalton stated that he spoke with Town Supervisor Ashley and they are discussing reopening the building on June 29, 2020. Mayor Dalton stated that he will be having another meeting with the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Supervisor to discuss. He will let everyone know when the reopening will be.

- d. Discuss Penski Staffing Contract-** Mayor Dalton stated that Clerk Noble circulated the Penski Staffing Contract to the Board. Attorney Ducharme stated that there will be changes to the contract; he is not sure if they will resubmit a revised contract or an amendment.

Mayor Dalton stated that this will be for staffing for the Golf Course Maintenance. He stated he recommended contracting with Penski for the flexibility of when we need more or less workers as we move forward into the season and to keep employees off the Village books.

Clerk Noble stated that Penski will prescreen and they have a pool of people.

Trustee Larrabee stated that this is a good solution and thanked Clerk Noble and Mayor Dalton.

Trustee Pynchon asked how many people will need to be hired?

Mayor Dalton stated 2 or 3 people.

Trustee Sorensen asked what the reason would be? Convenience, time, and effort with interviews?

Clerk Noble stated that this will give Skip the flexibility to have temporary workers when he needs them.

Trustee Proemm informed the Board that this would take the unemployment liability from the Village.

Trustee Pynchon made a motion to approve to move forward with the Penski Contract with Attorney Ducharme's approval of the contract. Trustee Proemm seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

- e. Discuss a Leasing Program for Vehicles-** Mayor Dalton stated that he and Clerk Noble have been working with Enterprise Fleet Management to discuss leasing vehicles. Mayor Dalton stated the following good things about leasing vehicles; would free up and save substantial amount of money, vehicles would be newer, less maintenance and lower mileage. Mayor Dalton sent the board the Planning Analysis. Leasing program would save money by spreading out the expense for a period of time and vehicles would maintain a higher value. The leasing program would be for Police cars and pickup trucks.

Clerk Noble stated that the New York State Financial Advisory Committee recommends leasing for financial stressed municipalities.

Mayor Dalton stated that this could help the Village with the problems in the next year or two with the lack of funding coming from the State. He stated he is trying to be proactive.

Trustee Pynchon stated that she appreciates the effort but she needs more time to understand and suggested a presentation from Fleet Management.

Trustee Sorensen stated that she is happy for the cost saving measures but wanted to know the potential downsides to the leasing program.

Mayor Dalton stated that he will work on getting her an answer. He stated that cash flow issues could be an issue in the future.

Mayor Dalton is going to send the Contract to Attorney Ducharme to review and set up a presentation with Enterprise Fleet Management.

- f. Discuss Burning Law Change** – Trustee Sorensen, Trustee Larrabee and Fire Chief Bob Crowe had a conversation to discuss the Burning Law Change. Trustee Sorensen stated that they have an idea of changing the burning laws to with certain parameters. They will circulate to the Board and Attorney Ducharme.

Trustee Larrabee stated that she would like to do this sooner than later. A Public Hearing would have to be set for the law change.

Fire Chief Crowe stated that the current law bans open burning except for cooking purposes. The idea is to allow permitted open burning with untreated wood; not allowing burning of pressure treated wood. Allows burning but law would outline the regulations of what can be burned and the size. He suggested adding in celebratory bon fires into the law. Fire Chief Crowe has sent Rouses Point Burning Law to Attorney Ducharme to review.

Attorney Ducharme asked Fire Chief Crowe to send him the changes and he will put together the Local Law to be discussed at later meeting.

Trustee Larrabee stated that there will be a provision in the law that allows the Fire Chief and Police Chief to “put out a fire.”

- g. Discuss Setting a Joint Village/Town Meeting-** After Board discussion Trustee Pynchon will be sending out a survey to the Board members and Clerk’s for the dates/times they are available.
- h. Accept Bid and Authorize Work to Proceed on the Remington Ave/Tallman Road Water Project-** Mayor Dalton stated that they received a range of bids from \$583,804 to \$1,530,000. The low bidder backed out, which is appropriate. The next lowest bidder was Manfred Construction out of West Point at \$720,000. The next bid was JD Sheehan and North Country Construction, three of them fell within thousands of dollars. The review was done by Aaron Jarvis at Tisdell Associates with the recommendation of Manfred Construction.

Trustee Pynchon asked if anyone has worked with Manfred Construction and has experience with them?

Mayor Dalton stated that the references were checked.

Superintendent Hallahan stated that Aaron did a thorough background check.

RESOLUTION

In Support of Black Lives

Whereas, the killing of a Black 46-year-old father of two, Mr. George Floyd, by a police officer has sparked protests in the Village of Canton, our neighboring towns and villages, and across the nation, and

Whereas, these protests remind us once again that for centuries our nation's social institutions, including education, healthcare, business, government, and criminal justice, have systematically and disproportionately discriminated against Black people, and

Whereas, our nation's laws afford everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, the right to equal protection and equal justice under the law, and

Whereas, we recognize that People of Color who live, study, work, and recreate in Canton experience incidents of racism on an individual and systemic level, and

Whereas, the people of Canton wish to welcome and include people of all races and ethnicities and to create a community where everyone can thrive.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Village of Canton Board of Trustees condemns all acts of racism and discrimination against People of Color and affirms that Black lives do matter, and

Be it further resolved, that the Village of Canton Board of Trustees recognizes that it is the responsibility of all elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, and law enforcement personnel, to commit to making the Village of Canton a welcoming, inclusive, and safe community in which people of all races and ethnicities can thrive.

Trustee Larrabee made a motion to accept bid from Manfred Construction and authorize work to proceed on the Remington Ave/Tallman Road Water Project. Trustee Pynchon seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

- i. Resolution Addressing Systemic Racism-** Trustee Pynchon made a motion to approve the Resolution addressing Systemic Racism. Trustee Proemm seconded the motion.

Trustee Larrabee stated that this was an important discussion and hopes this is an invitation for the community to have open and honest dialogue with each other.

Trustee Sorensen stated that she appreciates what Trustee Larrabee stated and thanked Trustee Pynchon and everyone for working on the Resolution. She thanked everyone for giving input and for supporting this. She stated that it is deeply important because of the things that she has heard in the Community whether it is online or in a personal conversation that these are problems that happen elsewhere and doesn't happen here. She stated that she wanted to make it clear that she does not think a person is in danger of being killed by the police and on Main Street in Canton. She stated that she does believe that she has listened to people of color, black people in the Community who have expressed the ways that they have experienced racism and discrimination in our community. She stated that she does believe that it happens and that it is

their experience and she believe that people of Canton are good people who want to in fact create a community like the Resolution says it is one where everybody can thrive. She stated that she believes this to be true and she stated that for her the killings of Mr. George Floyd and Brianna Taylor and so many other people of color, whose families have not received justice from those killings have opened up a conversation at a national level and right here in our Community. She stated that this is an opportunity for Canton to engage in a difficult conversation and identify where racism rears its head in our Community and work together to address those. She stated that she is pleased to be part of the Community and having a team of people that are able to work with Chief Santimaw and to be able to have conversations. She stated that she believes that there is good intentions of the people of this Community and that if they engage in dialogue they can discuss these things and will find a better way. She thanked everyone for the support.

Trustee Pynchon expressed a shared commitment to put an end to racism and appreciates taking action.

All voted in favor. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eileen Raymond, 63 East Main St., Canton read the following:

My name is Eileen Raymond. I want to thank you for the resolution you have just adopted. I love our village and am glad I live here. I have been a resident of Canton for 26 years, and active in a variety of social justice and governance activities over that time. In particular, last fall I chaired the Justice for All conference at the UU Church, where 125 folks considered a wide range of issues related to criminal justice, through guest speakers, conversation leaders and 15 breakout sessions. Some of you were in attendance!

At this time in our country's history, we are finding those conversations even more relevant than we could have imagined. These are devastatingly troubled times in our country, with multiple attacks by police and vigilantes on unarmed black Americans, each one piling horror on horror ... and they don't seem to stop!

I come here tonight to talk with you about the Governor's Executive Order 203 from last week on Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative in New York State. This order came after the passage of important legislation aimed at curtailing abuses by police in our state... but I, like you, know that tinkering around the edges of a broken system is not likely to bring our country together.

As we consider how to respond to the Governor's order, we need to recognize that we have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to consider what our communities look like now and what all of our citizens need. We are being directed to hold an intensive community dialogue on what works and what isn't working in our village and county – **and for whom**.

The Governor's Order has positioned policing at the center of the conversation as the element of our collective life that is currently **not** working for some in our community and state.

However, as I see it, the issues are not solely at the police station, but more importantly they are about the mix, functionality and integration of all of our protective and social services.

Too many of our citizens struggle with poverty, drug addiction, discrimination, and mental health, as well as issues related to transportation, family relationships, schooling, health care and disability among others.

Too often our police are called to respond to the outcomes of their failed struggles, tasks that police units are generally ill-prepared for or under-resourced to address by themselves.

Too often, problem incidents become criminal events and even fatal police interactions because they were left untreated – when the outcome could have been very different had folks experiencing these challenges had access to more appropriate early interventions and if police had been helped to see that their oath is to protect and defend all of us.

In far too many instances, we have seen on the news how these interactions can result in arrests, convictions, injuries, and deaths... negative outcomes none of us wants to see.

Over the next 9 months, we have been given the opportunity to imagine a different Canton, a different St. Lawrence County. What might be different –

- if we were to shift some resources and energy away from enforcement and containment to providing supports designed to address the social problems at their sources,
- if we were to shift funding to help prevent problems that too often can result in the negative effects of policing,
- if we were to change the way we prepare new recruits for our police units so that they clearly see that their obligation is to de-escalate conflicts using a variety of options rather than going directly to arrests, or as we have seen too often in the news, the use of lethal force.

I am looking forward to participating in these community dialogues, in hearing from all of our citizens, in getting the information I need to do my job as a citizen.

I encourage you to begin creating a listening process that brings more voices into the process. Make sure that all in our community find a place to share their needs, regardless of age, economic status, education level, political affiliation, citizenship, gender, employment, religion, or racial or ethnic diversity.

We need to hear from and listen to EVERYONE! Then we will be able to create a Canton that will serve all of us well in the future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION- Trustee Proemm made a motion to enter into executive session at 8:13pm for a purpose as identified in Public Officers Law §105(1) (f). Trustee Pynchon seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Trustee Larrabee made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:46PM. The motion was seconded by Trustee Sorensen. All voted in favor. The motion carries.

Trustee Sorensen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47PM. Trustee Pynchon seconded the motion All voted in favor. The motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Adams
Deputy Clerk