

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF RICHMONDVILLE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February 23, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Village of Richmondville was called to order at 6:13 p.m. by Mayor Kevin Neary. Present were Trustees David Hotzler and Natasha Foote. Trustee Milan Jackson was excused. Also present were Clerk Treasurer Joe Pizzo, Superintendent of Public Works Jim Swartout, Phil Butler, Vicki Swartout, Village Planning Board alternate Joan Sondergaard, Horst Fierek, Todd Sperbeck, Harold Loder, Matthew Loder, Dennis Handey, Lee Peterson, and Graham Fancher. Fire Chief Dennis Cole and Superintendent of Power and Light Jeff Van Deusen were absent. Attorney Marvin Parshall, Jr. previously indicated he would be late.

Privilege of the Floor

Horst Fierek was granted privilege of the floor by Mayor Neary. Mr. Fierek questioned why there was not a Joint Village and Town Planning Board. Mayor Neary said the Village tried twice during his tenure in office by e-mailing Town Supervisor Dick Lape without a response. Mayor Neary stated that the Village Planning board is doing a good job and is receiving training. Mayor Neary mentioned that the Town received an application for re-zoning land by someone who doesn't own the land which he said was not legal. Bohler Engineering gave the Town a \$50.00 check which was found months later in the Village office while it was being painted. Mayor Neary continued to say that when the Village Board held a public hearing, it was said planned that a date would be determined to hold a joint meeting with the Village Board and Village Planning Board in regards to the re-zoning. It has been difficult getting everyone together so Clerk Treasurer Pizzo is using Survey Monkey to set a date. Mayor Neary stated that the Village is not intentionally holding this meeting up. He mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document on how planning and zoning is done in the Village and it must be followed in the correct manner. Mayor Neary said that the Town wants to build an office on Podpadic Road- this will not help the Village. He also said that he has been in contact with numerous businesses to see if they have interest in setting up in the Village. Mayor Neary believes that if anyone thinks that the Village is turning around economic development because Dollar General here, they are living in a "pipe dream." The Village needs more than that. Mayor Neary suggested the idea of putting Town offices on Main Street. Mayor Neary said that the Village is just following the law to get a Dollar General here, not trying to delay it. Horst Fierek said he feels neglected because he is not getting enough support from the Village in dealing with Time Warner Cable. Mr. Fierek is also upset about the trailer that he can see from his house. Mayor Neary agreed with Mr. Fierek on the trailer issue. Mayor Neary said that the people Mr. Fierek needs to speak with in regards to Time Warner Cable is the state legislators. Time Warner Cable does not have to answer to anybody because of deregulation. They can raise rates anytime they want and the Village has no control over it. Attorney Marvin Parshall, Jr. entered the meeting at 6:31 pm. The Village will keep battling Time Warner Cable on this issue.

Mayor Neary then granted privilege of the floor to Todd Sperbeck. Mr. Sperbeck said that people that come to this area say Richmondville has too many "zombie" houses. Mr. Sperbeck mentioned that he has had his house on the market for well over a year. "Zombie" houses are houses that have not been lived in for several years and he asked what Richmondville is doing about that. Mayor Neary said these zombie houses are controlled by the banks. Mr. Sperbeck feels that the Village should "get after" banks to maintain these zombie houses. Mayor Neary said that the Village has been doing that better than the Town. Mr. Sperbeck said that he is at

the meeting to discuss why he is having trouble selling his residence. Code Enforcement Officer Don Clarke said that he was after the banks for 8 months to get them to get a zombie house cleaned up. The problem is that banks switch ownership often. The next problem is trying to get in contact with whoever owns the property. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke said that a property in Summit was owned by a bank in Ohio. Mayor Neary said that the Village would mow lawns and remove garbage in efforts to maintain the zombie houses. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke said it was a never-ending battle. He had the sheriff go to a house at least 10 times. Mr. Sperbeck feels the process takes too long and Code Enforcement Officer Clarke said that it's not the Village's fault because it must follow the law. Mayor Neary said that ultimately it's the 100% assessment that is hurting the seller's market. Mr. Sperbeck disagreed and said it was school taxes that was hurting the seller's market. Mr. Sperbeck then asked a question about Richmondville Power and Light. Mayor Neary spoke for Superintendent of Power and Light Jeff Van Deusen, who was absent. Mr. Sperbeck wants to put solar panels on his property but RPL can't run power back to the meters. Mayor Neary said the Village's power charge is lower than what they can sell it for. It makes no sense to have solar power because it is too expensive and not cost effective. Superintendent of Public Works Jim Swartout said solar panels would not be profitable unless the RPL went through National Grid's distribution line. He also mentioned that in order for RPL to have solar power in this district, special meters would have to be put in that would run backwards. Mr. Sperbeck wants to know how the Village can accommodate that. Mayor Neary said that it is just not profitable for the solar companies to do that. Mr. Sperbeck also said he is in favor of a Dollar General in the Village and predicts that in 10 years the Village will be a ghost town. Mayor Neary wanted to know from Mr. Sperbeck what the Town was doing about it.

Horst Fierek asked if the Village can have its own assessor. Mayor Neary said it would have to be put to referendum Attorney Marvin Parshall, Jr. said that it can be done, but not without following proper procedure. Matt Loder asked the meeting for the zoning change. Mayor Neary apologized for the slowness of the process. He stated that he and Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo are diligently trying to determine a date. Mayor Neary thanked all for coming and proceeded to adoption of the minutes.

Adoption of Minutes

Trustee Foote moved to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2016 regular board meeting as presented, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Resolutions

Trustee Foote moved to approve Resolution #01-16 Designating Election Inspectors; seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Department Reports

Code Enforcement Officer Don Clarke has requested to present his report in the interest of time as he had another meeting to attend. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke reported that there is a lot of training required for the new building code which will be put into effect on June 1, 2016. It is a very stringent code. He feels sorry for all that are building a house after June 1. Mayor Neary asked about pre-existing houses. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke said that if a person renovates his house more than 10%, they must meet the new code(International Village Code). He has about another 36 hours of training left. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke also reported that the church, propane building and glove factory were repaired. A couple of houses are going

up on Richmond Heights also. Code Enforcement Officer Clarke thanked the Village Planning Board for their diligence and hard work to try and make things go smooth.

Trustee Hotzler moved to accept the Code Enforcement Officer's report as presented, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Code Enforcement Officer Clarke left the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Clerk-Treasurer Joe Pizzo reported on January utility billing. Total utility billing in January was \$174,671.59, down from \$192,997.31. Completed Independent Nominating Petitions were received and Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo has been in contact with Schoharie County Board of Elections. Contact has been made with Denise Smith to set up a meeting to discuss letters to send to previous lifeguards and also to discuss budget items. The 2016-2017 budget spreadsheet has been prepared and is ready for numbers from department heads. Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo has been in touch with Linda Smith from Bowman/ Sheedy. Available dates for her are March 21, 22, 23 or the week of March 28th. Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo and Superintendent of Public Works Swartout met with Angela Kogler from Upstate NYIT and began updating the Village's website. Progress is being made with more changes to come. Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo also reported that the January Treasurer's Report was corrected to reflect December consumption which would be billed in January. The prior years' Treasurer's Reports showed November consumption which would be billed in December. Mayor Neary asked Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo not to include Water/Sewer late fees-just report on revenue. Trustee Foote asked who was running in the election. Clerk-Treasurer Pizzo responded that Milan Jackson and Vivian Thurber were running. Mayor Neary said that the Village is going to try and promote online electric payments. The payments must be complete payments. The Village Planning Board wants a spot on the website also. Superintendent of Public Works Swartout said the Village is changing its URL because when you want to find Richmondville Village, it defaults to Richmondville Power and Light. Mayor Neary said the Village would have to take that into consideration when preparing the budget. Mayor Neary also said that Quickbooks training is for the full staff and Excel training will also be included.

Trustee Hotzler moved to accept the Clerk-Treasurer's report as presented, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Superintendent of Public Works Swartout reported on streets, water, and sewer: The winter continues to be mild, lowering costs for labor and materials. The big dump truck is back and is working fine. The updates to the Firehouse are on hold until Superintendent of Public Works Swartout receives pricing on floor removal. The bi-annual First Aid/CPR course has been completed as well as other training. The ceiling and lighting in the records room has been finished. Superintendent of Public Works Swartout requested to surplus the 1986 Ford F7 and put it in the paper for sale. He has been chasing Ryan-Biggs for 2 weeks but still no final plans. The water plant is working fine. Mark Temp has been enrolled in the Water Treatment Plant Operator Grade A/B that starts March 30th. There still has been no approval to purchase air actuators or heaters to use in the plant from a grant that was submitted for 10 years ago. The sewer plant is running fine. The first meeting with NYRWA for the Wastewater Sustainability workshop was held and the next meeting will be March 8th at 6:00 pm at the Village Office. Superintendent of Public Works Swartout is still waiting on the DEC inspection report from their inspection 4 months ago.

Trustee Foote moved to accept the Superintendent of Public Works' report, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Trustee Foote moved to advertise the 1986 Ford F7, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Mayor Neary read Superintendent of Power and Light Jeff Van Deusen's report. Mayor Neary thanked all involved in the Village Barn project. Superintendent of Power and Light Van Deusen requested approval to attend the annual MEUA conference which is being held on March 23rd and 24th in Syracuse at Embassy Suites hotel. This will require a one night stay.

Trustee Foote moved to accept the Superintendent of Power & Light's report, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Trustee Hotzler moved to accept Superintendent of Power and Light Jeff Van Deusen's request to attend the MEUA conference, seconded by Trustee Foote, carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Dennis Cole was absent and did not provide a report for Board review.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Neary reported that he has been in touch with a representative from a real estate agency from Syracuse in regards to a grant for housing. Initially the grant was denied but Mayor Neary again met with a representative to retake a look at the housing grant application. He has spoken with Shane Nickel of Schoharie County Planning regarding grants for start-up businesses to help them get off the ground. No grants were available for buildings or fixing a building. Mayor Neary received a letter from the U.S. Census Bureau which he feels is extremely important to the Village because the greater number on the census, the more aid the Village receives. The Mayor encourages all to include themselves.

Trustee Foote moved to accept the Mayor's report as presented, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

New Business

Trustee Hotzler moved to change the Village Board meeting starting time from 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Trustee Hotzler moved to accept Village Planning Board alternate Joan Sondergaard's request to attend the NYPF Conference, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Mayor Neary made a motion to approve the Village Planning Board joining the Planning Board Association at an annual fee of \$250.00.

Trustee Hotzler moved to accept Mayor Neary's motion, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Audit of Bills

Trustee Foote moved to approve payment of General, Water, Sewer, and Electric Abstracts #9 seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Executive Session

Mayor Neary moved to enter into executive session at 7:39 pm for the purpose of a possible litigation, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Trustee Hotzler moved to return to regular session at 7:58 pm, seconded by Trustee Foote; carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Mayor Neary moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm, seconded by Trustee Hotzler; carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Pizzo
Clerk-Treasurer