

Village of Afton
Board of Trustees Meeting
Jack D. Bolster Community Center, Afton, NY
August 12, 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held August 12, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Susquehanna Room, 105 Main Street, Afton, NY

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm, by Mayor Gerry Matthews. Mayor Matthews read a state aloud to those in attendance, it is as follows:

“Our Community, The Village of Afton is in a crisis situation. There are many things that need to be done. We have said here “let the DPW do this and that”, along with their regular chores. I have written down a list of items that is expressed at each of our meetings. That list is at least several years’ worth of work. If we want this community to continue, all of us will need to step up and lend a hand. For some it may be mowing a little extra next door or some weed wacking in other places. Maybe you can’t do that. Please decide for yourself what that step is: Even if only to picking up a piece of litter as you walk past. We are all in this together. Thank you for the steps you have done in the past. And thank you for the ones you are going to do.”

Present: Mayor Matthews, Trustee Muller, Trustee Lawrence, Trustee Simonds, Trustee Humphrey, Clerk/Treasurer Palmatier, DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla, Village Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Butler and Officer in Charge Q. Wright.

Visitors: Tina Iaia, Renee Weeks, Melissa Matthews, Ryan Whitmore, Lori Petzack, Charles Torres, Sara Weeks, Jon Matthews, Linda Matthews, Richard Cuthbertson, Susan Weible, Jennifer DeCamp, David & Pamela Wylubski, Kathy Ryan, Patricia Stafford

- A motion was made by Trustee Muller authorizing Clerk/Treasurer to pay the following audited vouchers, Seconded by Trustee Simonds. All in favor, motion passed.
General Fund Vouchers # 57 - 93, Totaling \$38,124.86.
Water Fund Vouchers # 21 – 29, Totaling \$1,997.54.
- Motion to accept previous minutes with no additions or corrections was made by Trustee Muller, seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.

Monthly Report:

- **DPW/ Water:** Report Distributed. DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla gave a verbal account of his written report. He stated that the department had 2 emergency call outs. They repaired a service line strike on Main Street. They received 23 mark outs for Dig Safely of New York. They had a total of 32 brush debris and other picks. They worked on preparing East Main Street for the paving process, as well as installed pipe along with ditching. Catch basins and drainage have been installed at the following locations: Sunset Drive, Highland Ave. The department worked on the removal of old tires at Leggett Park to extend the playground area. Brush was trimmed along Spring Street, Sprint Street Extension, Evelyn

Ave, High Street, as well as the well head area. Mayor Matthews asked if anyone had any questions for DPW. Trustee Muller informed DPW Acla that she's heard nothing but good things about the paving on East Main Street. Visitor Richard Cuthbertson stated that he knows that he's going to sounds like a broken record, but what about High Street. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that we're halfway through August already, winter will be here before we know it. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that he's happy that the ditching on the west side of High Street has been cleaning up. Trustee Lawrence asked Andrew if he had a time frame as to when High Street will be addressed. Andrew stated that he's hoping for September.

- Police Department: Report Distributed. Officer in Charge Q. Wright stated that he'd need to speak with Broome County about the motorcycle group on Main Street. Mayor Matthews asked if anyone had any questions for the Police Department. Visitor Lori Petzack stated that she's living in Afton for about 4 and a half years now. She stated that her problem, concern and fear is the safety of the residents. She stated that on July 29th she was almost hit by an oncoming car in the crosswalk by Mirabito. She was 2 steps from the center of the road within the crosswalk. It's a state law that all traffic must yield to the right of way of pedestrians. Ms. Petzack expressed that she feels that this area should have a stop light to help combat with the potential of a serious accident waiting to happen. She stated that school is still out for the summer, plus we have many older residents who walk through our village daily. There is a lot of speeding vehicles traveling through Afton every day, either by Rt. 7 or Rt.41 when they come off the Hwy 88. Ms. Petzack informed that Village Board of Trustees that she had also witnessed a drug deal happening on this very same day. She stated that there is a guy on a motorcycle that drives around trying to sell drugs. Ms. Petzack stated that she understands that we have a part time police force, but she adamantly feels as though it's in the best interest of this community that we have a fulltime police force. She stated that she's called Troop C for complaints, they always say we'll see what we can do. Ms. Petzack stated that it's her understanding that the Police Force salaries was increased to double their salaries. Mayor Matthews stated that, no their salaries were decreased by the Mayor before him. Ms. Petzack suggested that perhaps a \$50 surcharge be assessed to be put towards the police dept. payroll to offset the cost of having more police force presence for our village. Ms. Petzack expressed she is trying to help give suggestions to help our Police Force coverage. She stated that we cannot wait 45 minutes to see if help will arrive. We have the means, we should be able to help ourselves.
- Code Enforcement: Code Enforcement Jeffrey Butler gave a verbal report. He thanked DPW for the dog signs. He stated that he feels as though they have helped. He's seen a big difference in the dog waste pick up and leashing. He's had a couple of complaints of unkempt lawns and unregulated vehicles. He stated that he and Trustee Humphrey along with Mayor Matthews met with the owner of the property located at 222 Main Street. He stated that he'd let Trustee Humphrey explain the details of that meeting.
- Planning Board: Trustee Humphrey informed the Village Board of Trustees that the Planning Board met with the property owner at 222 Main Street. The property owner has submitted for a 239 variance. The paperwork has been sent to the County Planning Board for review, once we've received it back, we'll set up a meeting with the Appeals Board. The County 239 Review meeting is expected to take place on August 13, 2019. Trustee Humphrey stated that the group HALos has bid for the old Great American building. They are expected to have their closing soon. They are hoping to place a small discount grocery store along with a possible deli, as well as office rental space. Visitor Pam Wylubski asked who was on the Appeals Board. It was stated that Mr. Richard Cuthbertson and Mr. Michael Lawrence were the Appeals Board Members.

- Finance/Insurance: New Policy just received.
- Christmas Parade Committee: Remains the same.
- Grant Committee: Trustee Muller stated that the Parks Community is working on a grant. With placement of the new playground equipment it is required by the disability law that a sidewalk be put into place. Since there is a blacktopped basketball court in place the sidewalk should be run from the basketball court to the playground equipment making it assessable to all.
- Parks Committee: Trustee Simonds informed those in attendance that the Parks Committee will be holding a yard sale on August 24th during the Sidewalk Day Sale. If anyone has any items that they wish to donate, she can pick them up. Also, the Park's Committee will be hosting a Halloween Party on October 26th and the 3rd Annual Valentine's Day Dance on February 14th. Both events will take place at the River Club, more information will follow as we approach these dates.
- Historian Report: Report distributed.
- Dog Control Officer: - Report distributed.

Old Business:

- Yard / Storm Debris pick-up – Tabled last month. Trustee Lawrence stated she had presented the Village Board of Trustees with her rough draft of the lawn debris and brush pickup. Trustee Lawrence expressed that she had given a copy to DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla with no real input. Mr. Acla stated that they have given out flyers. Trustee Lawrence asked if they were speaking with residents when handing out the flyers. Mr. Acla stated no, that one was home, he had written on them. Trustee Lawrence expressed that she would need to get together with Mr. Acla to discuss what day of the week picks will be taking place. Mr. Acla expressed that the DPW crew does not have the time to continuously pick up brush. Trustee Lawrence asked do we have any less employees than in the past, no. We have had a County worker in the past. Mr. Acla stated that the current County worker has been out for the last 3 – 4 weeks due to a neck injury.

New Business:

- The Village received an email from Melissa Matthews – Greater Afton Area Chamber of Commerce in regards for plans for a Holiday Gift Shop to be held on November 23, 2019. A Small Business Saturday is scheduled for November 30, 2019. They are requesting that the vending fees be waived for both of these events. Trustees Simonds asked Ms. Matthews where these events will be held. Ms. Matthews stated that the Holiday Gift Shop will be held at the school. Mayor Matthews expressed that Ms. Matthews may want to contact the school to make sure that there is no scheduling conflict. As the school usually does a Holiday Auction at the same time. Ms. Matthews stated that they have already received the

approval from the school for the use of the building. She has already spoken with Kathy Decker about combining the 2 events together. If in door facilities are required during the Small Business Saturday, due to weather, the Chamber will reach out to local area businesses and organizations to secure indoor spaces.

- A motion was made by Trustee Simonds to grant the request to waive the vending fees for the Holiday Gift Shop and the Small Business Saturday to be hosted by the Greater Afton Area Chamber of Commerce. Seconded by Trustee Muller. All in favor, motion passed.
- Due to scheduling changes the Greater Afton Area Chamber of Commerce is requesting to hold a Sunday Summer Concert Series outside the Village of Afton Community Center on August 18, 2019, from 6 pm to 9 pm. Which would include the use of the restroom facilities and electric.
- A motion was made by Trustee Simonds to allow for the use of the Village of Afton Community Center on August 18, 2019 from 6 pm to 9 pm to hold a Sunday Summer Concert Series. Seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson stated that it is a shame that not more people are attending the Sunday Summer Concert Series. It's been enjoyable to hear the music and have refreshments made available while doing so. It would be nice to see more residents participate, and to see the hard work that goes into making this happen.
- Village Clerk requesting to close office from January 27th thru January 31st, 2020.
- A motion was made by Trustee Simonds to allow for the Village Office to be closed from January 27th thru January 31st, 2020. Seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.
- Village Clerk requesting to close office at 1 pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2019.
- A motion was made by Trustee Simonds to close the office at 1 pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2019. Seconded by Trustee Lawrence. All in favor, motion passed.

Recognition of Visitors:

- Visitor Pam Wylubski explained that when a ticket is issued it is a state regulated surcharge of \$93.00, regardless of who writes it. That the Comptroller's Office decides how much will be paid out to the State, Town and Villages. Mrs. Wylubski stated the village dissolved their local Court. She stated that everyone in our area needs a fulltime job. That we live in a poor stricken County. That it's our County Government Board of Directors which is made up of our Town Elected Supervisors that set the rules. We need to get staffing that wants to work, but not at \$14 - \$15 hourly. We cannot rely on the Chenango County Sheriffs or the State Police. They have 1 to 2 cars on at night, they are short staffed. We need a Police Force. We've let a lot of things go for so long it's time to move on.
- DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla asked about the Police Force Committee. Who are they, what's happening, what they are doing. The Committee was formed for the

feasibility and sustainability to revamp the police force. When there was considerable sentiment to abolish said Police Force. Those members are Martin Petti, Charles Torres, Mayor Matthews and Trustee Lawrence. The Committee has had held a few meetings. Visitor Charles Torres is glad that Andrew brought this up. We need to ask ourselves how much is the safety of this community and its children worth to us. He stated that we need to make to financially worth their while to want to risk their lives to want to come here to protect us.

- Visitor Lori Petzack asked what we can do to get a stop light, who do we contact. Mayor Matthews explained that in that intersection there are 2 State Highways that are not the Villages' jurisdiction. State Highways are under State jurisdiction. Ms. Petzack stated that it's not her responsibility to look out after everyone and their property. That if she calls, no one will get there fast enough, but that if the Village contacts them we may see results. She stated that we need a stop light and we need Police Force patrolling behind the Afton Inn and the School. Mayor Matthews stated that he will make some phone calls for more information about a stoplight possibility.
- Visitor Richard Cuthbertson asked why we can't just put up pedestrian signs. Mayor Matthews explained that he has signed an agreement with NYSDOT to receive free in-street and overhead pedestrian crossing signs. We are waiting for them to arrive.
- Visitor Pam Wylubski expressed to the Village Board of Trustees that Mr. Jeff Butler, the Village Code Enforcement Officer is in of need direction on how to write tickets for violations. Originally Mrs. Wylubski stated that Mr. Butler would be unable to write any ticket violations due to her being the Town Judge that hear the cases. Because they are related. But that she was wrong, that he can indeed write them she just cannot hear them. She'll have to recuse herself from trying the cases set forth by Mr. Butler.
- Visitor Renee Weeks asked Mayor Matthews if the cleaning of Bumps Creek next to her home will be done before the issued permit expires. A permit was obtained by the previous Mayor. The Village Board of Trustees was not made aware that a permit was obtained and issues for this cleanup process. Mayor Matthews explained that information needs to be gathered for the scope of the project before it can be placed out for bids. Mayor Matthews stated that he's made phone calls to DEC to find out more information on the next steps to move forward. Mrs. Weeks expressed that this needs to be taken care of. It will happen again, it's happened in 2006, 2011, 2014 as well as September of last year. She stated that if we have another wet season, it will happen again. We need to address it before it does.
- Visitor Pam Wylubski stated that it's a drainage issue on Caswell Street as well. When we receive a heavy rain the water flows down the street from Park Ave. She stated that the State should be responsible for the correction of this issue. Mrs. Weeks stated that when this happens it also floods out the school fields that are used for the sports events.
- Visitor Loir Petzack asked if the DPW are cleaning the storm drains on Spring Street and Main Street. She stated that water runs over the drains and in the roadways. DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla stated that they make a point to clear the catch basins. He stated that the biggest problem that they have is homeowners mowing their grass clipping into the streets. He explained that the catch basin on Spring Street is of poor design. That there only 2 catch basins at the bottom of the street.

- Visitor Patricia Stafford asked why it was that the DPW Crew was working 4 -10 hour days. DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla stated that it's in the Teamsters Contract. Mrs. Stafford asked when the Village got mixed up in the Teamsters. Mayor Matthews explained that a Teamsters Contract was negotiated by the previous Mayor. Visitor Loir Petzack stated that the Village needs a police force more than the union. Mrs. Stafford stated that she does not think the quality of work performed by the DPW crew working 10 hours day shifts is the same in the last 2 hours worked in a 10 hour period.
- Visitor Patricia Stafford asked if there was damage done by the property owner located at 222 Main Street when they decided to dig without permission. Mayor Matthews stated that yes there was and that the Village intends on billing the property owner. Visitor Pam Wylubski stated that this homeowner should have been taken care of over a year ago. Mrs. Stafford stated that no it's a camp trailer not a homeowner, meaning this is a property owner.
- Visitor Patricia Stafford how many hours per week is the police department allowable. It was stated that they have 60 -80 to fill between them. Mrs. Stafford stated that if it was budgeted for 60 hours then they should be working those hours. Mrs. Stafford stated that back in the day the Officers worked a total of 107 hours. Trustee Muller state that our Officer in Charge has been working to bring our Officers back to our Village. Trustee Muller stated that not all time slots are being filled currently. If the Officers want to work, they should, but if not, they should hand in their resignations. Trustee Muller explained that Mayor Matthews needs to meet with the Police Committee and the Officer in Charge to ensure that we have Officers willing to fill those time slots. Visitor Lori Petzack stated that the residents have the right to feel safe, we need police protection. Officer in Charge Q. Wright stated we have 2 Officers who have not worked in sometime due to the treatment they received from the previous Mayor. Visitor Charles Torres stated that our police force was met with animosity by our pervious Mayor. That she chopped the salary section of the budget set aside for our police force. The Officers need to know that they have the backing of the Board as well as the person in charge- The Mayor. They are endangering their lives to protect this community. We need to make it worth their while by giving them a little more money and respect by offering \$19.00 to \$24.00 hourly to allow for them to want to service us and stay here.
- Visitor Sara Weeks stated that when her daughter, the pervious Mayor signed the paperwork from the Comptrollers Audit she stated that she would make the Villages budget based on historical fact due to pervious board oversight.
- Trustee Lawrence asked Mayor Matthews of it was the Village Board who would ask for the resignations for the current police force or the Officer in Charge. Mayor Matthews stated that he'll set up a meeting with the Officer in Charge to discuss the next phase of revamping the police force.
- Visitor Loir Petzack asked how much money was in the Community Beautification budget line. That perhaps we could take money from there to be placed towards the Police Force budget to increase their salaries. Mayor Matthews explained that not all current officers were hired at the same time nor do they make the same hourly wage.
- Visitor Charles Torres asked DPW Superintendent Andrew Acla where we were on the not so tall playground equipment. Does he have a time frame as to when the footers will be placed. Mr. Acla stated they have removed old tires from the location to begin the

footer setting. Mr. Acal stated that once the footers are placed they must sit untouched for 48 hours. They plan on placing the footers within the next few weeks.

- Visitor Kathy Ryan asked about the speed limit sign that was discussed at the last board meeting. She stated that she realizes that the sign in which John Lawrence spoke about can be quite costly. That perhaps we could place a sign at the Town / Village line with either a 55 mile an hour to begin or End 30 mile an hour.
- Visitor Renee Weeks asked Mayor Matthews if the bids for the Bumps Creek cleanup will go out once he gets a hold of the DEC. Mayor Matthews stated that once the scope of the project is set we will need to get everyone that's involved to work together as to when they are available to help proceed.
- Visitor Loir Petzack asked Code Enforcement Officer Mr. Butler about the placing signs throughout the Village for dog owners to pick up their poop. Mr. Butler stated that this has already been done. He's seen where it's making a difference. Ms. Petzack was happy to hear that.
- Visitor Tina Iaia asked the Village Board of Trustees who she would contact to help her with the riverbank along her property line. She stated that she's lost a good amount of trees as well as 10 feet of her bank. Trustee Muller stated that we have had the Army Corps of Engineers in the village in the past to assess prior damage. But that it's not cost effective for them to repair our banks. It was suggested that Ms. Iaia look into a Federal Grant through FEMA for flood control.
- There were discussions of the placement of a possible of a caution light within the Village. Mrs. Safford stated that the way the parking on Main Street is angled, the State in the past would not allow for such placement. Plus one question that has been asked by the State DOT in the past is "how many people have died in that intersection?" Ms. Petzack stated that we need to do something to keep everyone safe. That people drive like crazy through this Village. It's obvious that a stop sign is not working, people just ignore them. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that these roads in question are State run the Village has no control as to a light placement. What people need to do is call or write letters to their local legislators. Start with Fred Akshar and Clifford Crouch.
- A motion was made by Trustee Humphrey to adjourn regular meeting at 8:45 pm. Seconded by Trustee Simonds. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted
Ann Palmatier
Clerk / Treasurer

