



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
243 MAIN STREET • JOHNSON CITY, NY 13790
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Village Board

Gregory Deemie, Mayor

Richard Balles, Trustee Deborah Fuller, Trustee
Martin Meaney, Trustee John Walker, Trustee

Minutes of a Work Session of the Johnson City Village Board held at 5:30pm on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 in the Municipal Building, 243 Main St., Johnson City

Present: Gregory Deemie, Mayor
 Richard Balles, Trustee
 John Walker, Trustee
 Deborah Fuller, Trustee
 Martin Meaney, Trustee

Absent: None

Also Present: Cindy Kennerup, Village Clerk/Treasurer
 Jeff Jacobs, Attorney for the Village
 Dai Newman, Grant Writer

The Board met with Andy Chadwick and Julie Beard from the JCHS Music Department to discuss holding an Arts in the Park Festival at CFJ Park in June of 2017. Mayor Deemie asked if they are looking to use all three of the pavilions. Mr. Chadwick commented that it may be better to use all 3. Mayor Deemie explained that the park staff doesn't start until noon and the Village will work with them to open the bathrooms early and suggested they hire crossing guards instead of relying on school staff. Mr. Chadwick explained how they will display the artwork from the students. The Mayor asked about serving food. Mr. Chadwick explained that the school has a mobile food trailer that they would like to use. Mrs. Beard stated that 100% of profits will go to the music department. Mayor Deemie explained that they could leave the school's equipment trailer parked in the park during the event. Trustee Walker suggested contacting the Broome County Arts Council for funding and stated that the JC Partners are always looking for ways to move the community along. Mayor Deemie asked about a rain date. Mrs. Beard explained that the superintendent also asked about that and they thought that having an alternate location for the rain date would be better. They suggested using the library. They could have the performances on the porch and display the artwork inside. Mayor Deemie explained that they would need to speak with the library director. Trustee Walker mentioned the portable band shell that the county owns that is used at the Field Days. Mayor Deemie stated if they were interested they would need to contact the county.

The Board discussed the grant funds for Lights on the Carousel through Walmart. The Board gave permission to fill out the paperwork for the funds.

The Mayor reminded the Board that the holiday parade is December 1, 2016 at 7pm.

The Board discussed the issue with the signs on Nassau Street. Mayor Deemie stated that he has spoken to some of the residents as has Trustee Balles and Trustee Meaney. Mayor Deemie explained that the signs were taken down because of the reconstruction done on the road. After, Bob Bennett looked into the Code to make sure he was putting the signs back correctly and he found out that the



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

signs on the east side were not listed anywhere in the Code. Following some research it was discovered that in 2006, during a Village Board work session, they passed a resolution to put the signs up on the east side. Mayor Lewis sent a letter out to the residents. The process for a local law was never followed at that time. Attorney Jacobs explained the local law that the board is considering for this tonight. Trustee Fuller asked is this means that Nassau Street would be the only street in that area that would prohibit parking on both sides. Mayor Deemie stated that is correct. Trustee Fuller stated that she is looking for consistency. Trustee Meaney also stated that the streets in the neighborhood are all the same with what they allow for parking.

The Board met with Grant Writer Dai Newman to discuss the \$100,000 grant the Village was awarded for zombie properties. Ms. Newman explained the processes on bank foreclosures and discussed lack of maintenance on these properties. The funds are for outreach so that we can inform and teach homeowners of the options and programs available to them to keep them in their homes and avoid foreclosure. The funds are also to help create legislation for registering and maintaining these vacant properties. Ms. Newman explained the dangerous situations that these properties create and the Board discussed a few specific properties. The Village will also be creating a part time clerk position paid through the grant to maintain the database of these properties. The position will become self-sustaining through fines imposed on these properties. This grant has no matching funds required. The first \$50,000.00 will be released soon. Trustee Walker asked approximately how many zombie properties there are in the Village right now. Ms. Newman said probably 80 – 90 and reviewed the neighborhoods and spoke about the programs that are available to avoid foreclosure which many people are not aware of. Trustee Walker asked if the new position is civil service and also asked about benefits. Mayor Deemie explained that since it is a part time position it is not civil service and there are no benefits. Ms. Newman explained that the Village has, as a part of this, also requested new software that is user friendly and will allow property owners to register their properties and make complaints to code enforcement through their computers or mobile phones. Trustee Meaney asked if the majority of the zombie properties are multi-family and are they owned by absentee landlords. Ms. Newman explained that no they are not. A few are absentee landlords but not the majority. Trustee Meaney asked about the parameters for deciding what is considered a vacancy. Ms. Newman explained that the Village will set that. Trustee Balles asked about how the Town of Union would fit in with this. Ms. Newman explained that because they are our partner in Code they would work with us but they were not invited to apply for this grant. Daria Golazeski is working on vacant property legislation and has been speaking to her about it. Mayor Deemie explained that he asked Ms. Golazeski to work on this a year ago. Trustee Walker asked if new hardware was needed. Ms. Newman said just a computer for the part time employee and that was accounted for in the grant. Mayor Deemie stated that Binghamton and Endicott received funds as well.

Mayor Deemie asked if Ms. Newman had an update on the \$100,000 parks grant. Ms. Newman explained that we have been awarded the full amount but we need to submit more 3rd party estimates for the tennis court fencing. She is waiting the companies to get back to her.

Mayor Deemie stated that a work order has been submitted to trim the weeds along the parking lot at the south side fire station.

Mayor Deemie stated that the amount the Village received from the Broome County auction was \$17,500.00. He told Mike Sherba to go ahead with the truck he spoke to the Board about.



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

Mayor Deemie reported that the air conditioning units in the Justice Building are shot. It was over 80 degrees in the building today so we will be looking at some major costs to fix those. Trustee Walker asked how old the building was. Mayor Deemie stated 2002. Trustee Walker stated he would like to know what income the Town of Union makes on renting their building to the state police. He could not find it in their budget. Mayor Deemie and Trustee Meaney suggested asking Tom Augostini.

Moving the WWII Monument on Main Street – Mayor Deemie explained that he asked the Legion to look into moving the monument and he also made a call but no one got back to him so he asked the Binghamton – Johnson City Monument Company. They said it was too big for them to move and we would need to bring in a rigging company and should bring in a professional that knows monuments to see what it would take to move it. It will most likely not happen this year. The specialist alone would be approximately \$4,000 - \$5,000. In reality it doesn't belong to us, it belongs to Justin Marchuska so we can't expend Village funds to move it. Justin said he would contribute \$500 towards the move. Since it's going into a Village park we are willing to pay for the concrete pad it will sit on. Mayor went to an online calculator for moving granite.

Trustee Meaney asked why the Board is not meeting in November. Mayor Deemie explained that past practice was that there was only one meeting in November because the first Tuesday is usually Election Day. It wasn't noticed when we did the 2016 schedule.

The Board reviewed the agenda and the resolutions.

Trustee Meaney asked about the cell phone bills. There are 4 cell phones that we are paying \$40.02/month and they were not used for any calls or texts and the data usage was minimal. Another one at \$13.14, 3 at \$16.15 that we didn't use at all, 12 phones that we are paying \$16.15/month that total 10 minutes or less for usage and asked if this is a good expense. These are grossly underutilized and he feels we should get someone from Verizon in and review the plan. For a call out for a storm why can't we send a text to their personal cell phones – the hospital and Fire Department do that. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that the water department is looking into consolidating some of their phones. As for the other ones, she doesn't know but she and Kim Cunningham can have the Verizon rep come in and look at that. Mayor Deemie explained that when we switched from Sprint, which had the push to talk feature, to Verizon we just kept the same number of phones.

Trustee Meaney asked about the issues with the Verizon phone bills. Mayor Deemie explained that we have been working on that for years. Trustee Meaney and Trustee Walker said then let's switch to someone else if we are not satisfied. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup explained that it's not that we are dissatisfied with the service. It is with the way they are managing our payments. Trustee Walker said then that is a problem and we need to get Verizon in here or find another carrier. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that another carrier may be the same problem. Trustee Fuller asked if all of the Verizon bills are paid with separate checks. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated no and explained that it is one vendor and the departments are all listed separately on the check. Trustee Fuller explained that she has experience in this and the problems are happening because it is one check and when it is entered into the system it is allocated by the system. She sees separate bills for each department and even though it would be more work, a separate check for each department would eliminate that problem. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that would cost the Village a lot more money in checks. Trustee Fuller asked if we are incurring late fees and/or penalties by doing it the way we are. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that there weren't a lot of late fees. Just one from a payment that was somehow missed in May. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup explained that every one of the Mayor's secretaries from



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

Judy on down has been on the phone with Verizon and that is what they are told. We are now being told that we can't speak to a person. Mayor Deemie stated there is a problem. The accounts are now balanced and going forward we need to make sure it's done right.

Trustee Meaney asked about a Rubbermaid contained that was purchased for the Police. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that all she knows is that it was purchased in June for the Police Department.

Trustee Meaney also asked about an invoice for Coughlin and Gerhart and asked about the building inspectors issuing appearance tickets. Attorney Jacobs explained a recent state department of service determination. For purposes of enforcement of the state building code they will not permit building inspectors to issue appearance tickets. He was speaking with Daria Golazeski about what that impact was because the Village Code as a section that allows anyone we say to be authorized to issue the tickets and explained the validity of the tickets for our court.

Trustee Meaney asked about DPW/Water clothing reimbursements and tax exemption. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup explained that if the employee goes to certain vendors they are not charged sales tax. If they go elsewhere on their own we do not reimburse them the sales tax. Trustee Meaney asked how that factors into the CBA. Trustee Walker spoke about his issues with items that the employees are purchasing with their clothing allowances such as tools. Someone in the Water Department purchased a technical auto rescue tool. Trustee Fuller stated that she doesn't have an issue with that. They have a clothing allowance so they are properly clothed to do their jobs and if they spend the funds on a tool and need a pair of pants, then that has to come out of their own pockets. Trustee Meaney asked if the tool is part of their job. Mayor Deemie explained that he had issues when he first came on board. Police and Fire are the same way except they get a check and can spend that on whatever they want. For this, Laurie keeps track of each one and when they are out of money they don't get any more funds. They know that they are not going to get reimbursed for sales tax. Mayor Deemie stated that the Board sees what they buy with their money, but doesn't see what Police and Fire buy. Trustee Walker stated but that is how the CBA are written. Trustee Fuller stated that it doesn't matter as long as they are properly dressed.

Trustee Meaney asked about a Tri-County Communications bill in the Water Department and the conversation that the Board had with Bob Bennett about radios in the Water Department. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup thought it was for the monthly agreement for the radios in the trucks. Mayor Deemie said they will check with Mr. Bennett on that.

The Board discussed Resolutions #184 and #185. Trustee Meaney asked about the bill for Floral Avenue where the fire was and why are they being charged if the water isn't on. Mayor Deemie explained that is past practice. There is a minimum charge as long as there is a meter there. Trustee Fuller disagrees with it and feels it is not fair. Trustee Meaney asked if we are charging the zombie properties. Mayor Deemie stated if there is a meter we are. Attorney Jacobs stated the only exception was during the flood. Trustee Fuller stated that in her time as a Trustee she doesn't remember seeing so many requests for forgiveness and asked what is causing this. Mayor Deemie stated that he doesn't know. People are told that they need to write a letter to the Board if they are asking for forgiveness. Trustee Walker stated that the one for Reynolds Road went up substantially. Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that often it is a toilet running.



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

Trustee Meaney asked about the new computer for the Police and what are happening to the old computers. Grant Writer Newman explained that the computers are in the patrol cars and are not in good condition. We have 11 cars and are getting 5 computers so any computers that are still usable may be passed around to the other cars.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #1

A motion to enter into executive session at 6:53pm to discuss Fire Department Personnel was made by Trustee Walker and seconded by Trustee Meaney. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

A motion to exit the executive session at 7:58pm was made by Trustee Meaney and seconded by Trustee Walker. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2

A motion to enter into executive session at 6:59pm to discuss the contract with the Fire Department was made by Trustee Meaney and seconded by Trustee Walker. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

A motion to exit the executive session at 7:11pm was made by Trustee Meaney and seconded by Trustee Walker. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #3

A motion to enter into executive session at 7:12pm to discuss the contract with the Police Department was made by Trustee Meaney and seconded by Trustee Fuller. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

A motion to exit the executive session at 7:16pm was made by Trustee Meaney and seconded by Trustee Fuller. The motion carried with all those present voting in the affirmative.

Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup stated that the first round of SAFER money has come in. Trustee Walker asked about how the new firefighters are doing in the academy. Trustee Meaney explained that this academy is excessively hard and told the board about a situation that occurred with one of the recruits at the academy.

Trustee Meaney asked about the e-mail Bob Bennett sent about FEMA and the DPW facility. Attorney Jacobs explained some the details surrounding the situation and spoke about the building at 59 Lester Avenue. Mayor Deemie stated that we are trying to clean up Main Street and downtown and want businesses. Go look at DPW now and see what it looks like - do you really want DPW in the middle of town? Trustee Meaney said it's not like it is right on Main Street. Mayor Deemie commented on what would be able to be seen from Lester Avenue and CFJ Blvd. Mayor Deemie stated that developers have recently been looking at that site. You would have the garbage trucks coming out onto Lester Avenue and coming through and around Village Hall and the small streets surrounding the area. Trustee Meaney stated that the trucks go up and down Brown Street now and those streets every day to pick garbage. Mayor Deemie stated that where it is now, it is out of sight, out of mind. He told the Board to go look at it - it is a mess and he is afraid that if you put that there you would end up with this disaster. Trustee Meaney stated that where it is now has flooded twice and if we can get the money to put something new up. Mayor Deemie stated that he understands and we can look at it. The thought



VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

was that if we got the Volunteers of American building we could tear that down and put in a parking ramp or lot and make the site shovel ready. Trustee Meaney thought we lost that. Mayor Deemie explained that the County is holding on to it for now. Right now the DPW is not in the middle of a residential area. Maybe it does need to be looked at again. The Mayor and Trustees Meaney and Fuller were discussing a site owned by the hospital. (At the same time this discussion was going on Clerk/Treasurer Kennerup and someone else were having a discussion about credit card usage. The conversations overlapped and voices were covered over).

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned at 7:26pm.

Cindy Kennerup
Village Clerk/Treasurer

CK/db

Recordings of the Village Board meetings and work sessions are available for review through the Village Clerk/Treasurer's Office.