

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF SOUTHAMPTON - BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PUBLIC SESSION I – March 12, 2020

Due notice having been given, the Public Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held via Zoom teleconference at 6:00PM. Present were Mayor Warren, Trustees Allan, Parash, Pilaro and Yastrzemski; Village Administrator Russell Kratoville, Village Attorney Brian Egan, Assistant Village Attorney Alexandra Halsey Storch, Police Chief Tom Cummings and Mayor’s Assistant Julie Fitzgerald.

Mayor Warren opened the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Pursuant to Executive Order 202.1 adopted by the Governor of the State of New York on March 12, 2020, Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (Open Meetings Law), is suspended “to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mayor Warren acknowledged the April Employee of the Month: Daniel Foisset, EMT – Paramedic, Ambulance Department, hired March 5, 2018. Mayor Warren thanked Mr. Foisset and read a letter of appreciation received from his department head recognizing his hard work. The Mayor extended sincere gratitude to Dan and the entire EMS dept.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Kratoville stated that no public comments had been received via email as of 5:45PM.

BOARD PRESENTATIONS: NONE

DISCUSSION ITEMS: NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. 2020/21 Village Budget:

Trustee Pilaro made motion to open the Public Hearing, Mayor Warren seconded, and unanimous vote followed.

Russell Kratoville gave a brief overview stating that the Budget is coming in under the tax cap and is not using any of the appropriated fund balance; in addition, the Mayor has taken into consideration the possibility of difficult times ahead. The tentative budget is online at the Village website for the public to view.

Mayor Warren thanked Mr. Kratoville for his work on the budget and stated that they stayed within the tax cap when developing the budget and have done a few things of which he is very proud: for the first time ever the budget includes a line for environmental special projects for clean water and Lake Agawam upwards of 350k. In addition there are allocated funds in a Mayor’s line item which will include items such as studies by H2M to update the sewer study; matching grants as the Village has hired a second grant writer to help with downtown revitalization and it will also help to fund the Volunteer Ocean Rescue program which has requested \$5,600.

In addition, they have created a Covid19 Contingency Fund with upwards of \$400,000 that can be used if needed. If not needed and if Village is reimbursed by FEMA for Covid expenditures, those funds could be used for special projects such as paving or put into the General Operating Fund. The Special Projects fund could also be used for updating the village master plan.

Mr. Kratoville said that the Village has a healthy fund balance and with its rating, agencies will look favorably upon the budget.

A lengthy discussion followed with the following questions and points being raised by the Board:

- Should the Village freeze expenditures on discretionary funding until we see how the pandemic affects us, for example revenue from beach passes, construction and building permits, etc.?
- The Mayor's Special Projects line has been increased by \$180,000 (1200%) and the Board of Trustees Special Projects line has been decreased by 74%. Several of the Board members voiced that they would rather have the funds kept in the BOT Special Projects line and work together to determine needs.
- Mr. Kratoville said that the Board of Trustees Special Projects line includes annual, renewal items including parking leases, SYS memberships and also have funded items such as Nugent Carriage House study, Pyrrhus Concer project, Dr. Gobler's studies on Lake Agawam, etc. Mr. Kratoville will provide a breakdown to the Board of past Board of Trustees Special Project line items and identify which items are renewable annual contracts.
- Village Attorney Egan said that bonding agencies don't like to see a lot of big transfers – they want appropriations to be for accurately planned expenditures. Restricted accounts have to be approved by the Board. Village Attorney Egan cautioned that all are projects would be subject to procurement regulations pursuant to Village code.
- When asked how many items are controllable vs. non-controllable expenses, Mr. Kratoville said that the Board could immediately freeze \$1.8-2million in expenditures and hold for 2021 should beach revenues and early permitting not be strong. He noted that the Village budgets conservatively and in years past has usually come in at \$1.6m above projections for beach revenues.
- Water Quality is something the full Board supports. What are the top 3 items to be addressed on the environmental area and is there an understanding of what grants are already approved and what grants could be expected?
- Regarding payroll costs, the budget is built on existing employees working for the Village right now; however, the Village is aware of pending and expected retirements which would save the Village as well. There are also still vacancies in certain departments.
- Mr. Kratoville said that he would like to start the year purchase orders that are contractual or are prudent to do. The Village could put a hold on discretionary funds as many of the expenditures happen in the fall or late fall (paving, curbing, etc.) so we would know where we are with revenues at that point since most come early in the fiscal year. It is an explainable and conservative budget, but the Village can be flexible and change quickly if a situation arises.

Following the discussion, Trustee Pilaro made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing and leave it open for written comment through Friday, April 17 at 5pm. Trustee Allan seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD:

- **Rob Coburn** – Residential Construction; Essential Business and Social Distancing

Mr. Kratoville stated that Mr. Coburn had expressed concerns regarding the amount of construction and landscaping being done and whether social distancing was being maintained.

- **Southampton Village Surf Committee** – Advisory recommendations for Social Distancing for Surfers/Beach Parking

Mr. Kratoville stated that an email had been received from Steve Delaney, Chairman of the Village Surf Committee regarding the seeming lack of compliance from surfers and other using the beaches.

The following further guidelines were suggested:

- Park in every other space.
If parking on the beach leave at least one car length between vehicles
- Do not surf near another surfer
- If possible, change into your wetsuit at home
- Leave the area immediately upon exiting the water

- **NYSDEC** – WQIP Grant Award

Mr. Kratoville stated that the Village had received a letter from Chris Miller of NY State DEC congratulating the Village for receiving \$186,714 for the Agawam Lake Green infrastructure project.

- **Brenda Simmons** – Opposition to Cell Towers in the Village

Mr. Kratoville reviewed multiple communications from Brenda Simmons, Executive Director of the Southampton African American Museum (SAAM), in opposition to the proposed addition of cell towers in the Village. Ms. Simmons voiced her concerns regarding potential health issues and referenced studies on the dangers of cell towers. She also expressed concern that this was taking place during the Covid19 pandemic when people are distracted and confined to their homes.

SUGGESTED RESOLUTIONS:

1. ***RESOLVED, that the reading of the minutes for the Public Session of March 24, 2020 and Special Meeting of March 31, 2020 be dispensed with and that those minutes be accepted as filed by the Village Administrator and that the actions taken at that meeting be and hereby are ratified and approved.***

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

2. ***RESOLVED, that the claims for the warrants dated April 9, 2020 totaling \$1,575,253.82 (Warrant # 14 - General Fund), \$172,221.98 (Warrant #11 - Capital Reserve Fund), \$591.00 (Warrant #4 – CS Trust) and the Village payrolls for the period from March 13, 2020 to April 9, 2020 be audited and approved.***

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed

3. ***RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby approves the attached schedule of budget transfers to eliminate line item overages for the period ending April 9, 2020.***

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

4. **RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees appoints Reverend Steven Peiffer to the vacancy of the Ethics Board for a term ending June 30, 2021.**

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

5. **RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees, at the request of the Chiefs of the Fire Department, reinstate James O'Neill as a member of the Southampton Hose Company in the Southampton Village Fire Department effective April 10, 2020.**

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

6. **RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby approves the Southampton Village Ambulance Inc. 2019 Length of Service Award Program List which has been reviewed and certified by Chief Christopher Epley.**

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

7. **MAYOR WARREN MAKES A MOTION; be it RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of Chief Cummings, that the Board of Trustees ratifies the hiring of Valin Gates and Joshua Zaino as part-time police officers in the Southampton Village Police Department at a rate of \$26.00 per hour effective April 4, 2020.**

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

8. **RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the Mayor to enter into a professional services agreement with H2M Architects and Engineers, subject to form approved by the Village Attorney, not to exceed \$40,000.00 from Trustees Special Projects.**

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

9. **RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby makes the below amendments to the Tentative Budget:**
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|---|----------------------|
| Decrease A3130.1 Radio Operators Personal Ser. | (\$49,395.00) |
| Increase A3410.42 Fire Utilities | \$21,225.00 |
| Increase A7110.42 Parks Utilities | \$ 8,000.00 |
| Decrease A1001 Real Property Taxes | (\$20,170.00) |

Mayor Warren made a motion to approve; Trustee Parash seconded, and a unanimous vote followed.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

Trustee Yastrzemski – said that what has been discussed is enforcement of the rules and regulations put forth by the Government. Enforcement is being done and as an example the Police were called regarding a group that was using the high school soccer field and they immediately dispersed the crowd. In addition, individuals have received tickets for littering when witnessed by the Police for disposing of gloves on the ground. Mr. Yastrzemski offered kudos to the Village crew, to Russell Kratoville and Julie Fitzgerald and to the Board and the Village's attorneys. He gave credit to Mayor for using the influence of his office to help procure funds to help purchase lifesaving equipment and stated that behind him the nucleus of the Board is taking care of the day to day operations. He concluded by saying the Village is well-prepared and he is proud to be a part of it.

Trustee Allan – thanked the public for tuning in for Village updates and said that the Board is still very active and thinking ahead. Ms. Allan made the following comments:

- The Business Revitalization Committee and Planning Commission are exploring ideas for when the shutdown ends and what can be put in place to help our Village businesses, noting that both the SBA and CARES offer a lot of programs.
- She and Trustee Pilaro are working on adding the cell device at Coopers Beach which addresses a public safety issue so that people can communicate, and Police can better respond.
- Seniors - the churches have all reached out to their members and are doing care calls and buddy calls and checking in to make sure that they are all okay.
- Senior Committee – Fr. Patrick, Judy Johnson and others have pulled together a program called: Cabin Fever Fireside Chats beginning Thursday, April 16th at 11am. The program is coordinated with the Southampton History Museum and details are available on their website.
- Many of our Village cultural organizations have great online offerings for the public to explore.
- The Rogers Memorial Library is exploring a senior technology hotline to pair techies with seniors and work with the Town and maybe put under the umbrella of their All Seniors Access Program (ASAP). Rogers Memorial Library has set up online tutorial to show people how to access Zoom which will be linked on the Village's website.

Trustee Allan concluded by saying she is Personally inspired by so many people's acts of kindness. She acknowledged the Mayor's work with the Hampton Healthcare Society to help raise funds for the hospital and encouraged the public to continue coming to the Board with their great ideas and suggestions. Ms. Allan gave a shout out to our Dispatchers during Dispatcher Appreciation week wished everyone a wonderful Passover week and Easter celebration.

Trustee Parash – said it was a great job on the Mayor's part helping to get donations. He said that a lot of people are looking for answers and the Board is searching for answers and ideas to help during this crisis. He commented that Friday's drive-by to honor the Hospital workers was very touching and that he had prepared 50 lunches for Hospital employees as part of an effort organized by Keira Gill to thank them. Trustee Parash commented on the daily calls with Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone that provide updates and statistics on Covid19 and said he was thinking of all those who are sick and who have passed and were alone at that time.

Trustee Parash thanked Officer Lubold for going out and cleaning up after people who were disposing of gloves and masks on the street and in parking lots. He questioned why people were choosing to litter and behave this way, putting Village employees at risk while having to clean up after them.

He said that each member of this Board has unique strengths to help the Village move forward and was confident that we will see positive growth. Trustee Parash asked the public to Be Smart and sent inner strength to all those on the front line and thanked them for their service and concluded by wishing everyone a Happy Passover and Happy Easter

Trustee Pilaro – thanked the public and everyone at Village Hall. He offered condolences to all the families that have lost someone in the pandemic and said this is a very sad time in our history and will define many and can shape an entire generation on how they act for and towards others.

Mr. Pilaro thanked the Hospital, Fire, EMS, Village staff, shop keepers, restaurants and all essential businesses saying that are the true heroes who are putting the needs of others before themselves. He offered prayers to them and to Ron Esposito who lost his mother to Covid19 and to Father Patrick who lost a very dear friend to the disease.

Trustee Pilaro commented regarding those who have reached out and want to ban gas leaf blowers, saying while he would love to do that, they don't understand what is involved and the time it would take. He had reached out at the start of the pandemic to local landscapers and some agreed to stop or lessen the use of gas leaf blowers and some did not. He noted that many work paycheck to paycheck to support their families and they are working right now because they can.

Mr. Pilaro said that the Mayor could sign an executive order banning leaf blowers but how could the Village enforce it, and if we can't enforce, then why put out the order? He said that he understands and sympathizes with those that are complaining but thinks this can be achieved at a community level without legislating. Mr. Pilaro suggested that others do as he has done: to pay their landscapers for the work they would normally be doing at this time but ask that instead they not clean the properties right now. Residents could do this and reach out to their neighbors and ask them to do the same to help alleviate the problem.

Trustee Pilaro concluded by wishing a Happy 16th Birthday to his son and a Happy Good Friday and Easter and a good Passover week to everyone.

Mayor Warren – said Trustee Pilaro's idea to help with the gas leaf blower issue was a good one and that letters could be sent out to residents to help support this.

The Mayor made the following comments:

- Thank you to the DPW staff who sometimes go under the radar and are putting themselves at risk simply by being out there.
- He referenced the Executive Order he had put into place mandating the use of masks or face covers for employees or anyone going into a grocery store or restaurant and said he was happy to have instituted it.
- Dr. Peter Michalos, through Hampton Health Society, has placed an order for 10,000 surgical masks which should be here in 2 weeks but hopefully sooner. In the meantime, people can also make their own.
- We need to see more happening from higher levels of government, such as rapid testing like in South Korea so they can isolate and quarantine those who test positive.
- There needs to be more plasma testing for antibodies, and we need to encourage our Federal and State government to make that happen.
- We happen to be in a good position in the Village where we have an excellent Hospital and care and residents who support that. There are many hospitals that don't have that support.

The Mayor concluded by wishing everyone a Happy Passover and a Happy Easter.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Trustee Pilaro made a motion to adjourn the Public Meeting at 7:06PM; Trustee Yastrzemski seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

Russell Kratoville, Village Administrator

4/9/20