

Village of Owego Board of Trustees Meeting
Minutes of May 18, 2009

The regular Village of Owego Board of Trustees Meeting was held on Monday, May 18, 2009, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the DPW Annex, 20 Elm Street, Owego, with the following people in attendance:

Deputy Mayor:	Grace Thomas
Trustees:	Michael Phelan Connie Sternberg Jane Woody
Clerk-Treasurer:	Lynne A. Mieczkowski
DPW Supt.	Jeff Soules
Police Chief:	Rick McCulskey
WWTP:	Ron Horton
Village Attorney:	Irene Graven
Fire Chief:	Tom Taft
Absent:	Mayor Arrington Trustee Jung Trustee Barbuto-Lewis

Deputy Mayor Thomas opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

A presentation was made by Kelly Hopkins regarding the Emergency Medical Services Staffing concerns for the Village of Owego.

Clerk Treasurer

The following resolution was made by Trustee Sternberg and seconded by Trustee Woody at the regular Village of Owego Board of Trustees meeting held on Monday, May 18, 2009, DPW Annex, 20 Elm Street, Owego, NY 13827. The resolution was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Village of Owego will be applying to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development for a Pre-development Planning Grant, and

WHEREAS, a condition of the grant is that the Village of Owego needs to authorize the receipt, use and disbursement of the grant funds, now

VBM-05-18-2009

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Village of Owego Board of Trustees does hereby authorize the receipt, use and disbursement of the grant fund, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor of the Village of Owego be authorized to sign any and all documents related to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Pre-development Planning Grant.

Unanimously Approved

Motion by Trustee Phelan seconded by Trustee Woody approving the Village enter into a subordination agreement with Tina Marie Strohl of 94 Paige Street a CDBG recipient.

Unanimously Approved

Motion by Trustee Sternberg seconded by Trustee Phelan approving the parade permit application for 5/25/09 – Memorial Day.

Unanimously Approved

Member of the Village Board will participate in the Memorial Day Parade.

Request for a tractor parade September 4, 2009 thru the Village of Owego “Rudin Old Time Farm Days” (consensus of Village Board was to have Levi Frisbee attend Village Board Meeting to discuss particulars of event.

Department of Public Works

Trustee Sternberg discussed a proposed change to the Village Code pertaining to fences. Currently the fences cannot exceed 42 inches; this change would read:

A building permit shall be required for the installation of all yard fences that exceed forty-two (42) inches in height. All yard fences shall be erected with the finished façade of the fence facing the outside perimeter of the area being fenced and shall comply with all other relevant rules, regulations and laws not inconsistent with this provision.

Motion by Trustee Sternberg seconded by Trustee Phelan to consider the proposed Local Law and schedule a public hearing.

Unanimously Approved

- List of completed tasks reviewed
- Status of Riverwalk given by DPW Superintendent

Trustee Woody

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Phelan for the village to hire (2) full-time ALS providers; as well as not only three but no more than five part-time ALS to be supervised by the Fire Department subject to the provisions and requirements based on Civil Service.

Unanimously Approved

Trustee Phelan

- Economic Development conditions/appearance of the village also friendliness of shop owners
- Draft of letter to go to businesses Trustee Phelan to e-mail draft to trustees
- OHPC letters of support sent to Broome (Vestal) organizations
- Natural gas issue attended County Task Force “Tioga Investigates Natural Gas” Seminar – at this time task force is in early stages they are working on the Road Preservation Law
- Will be attending seminars on Road Preservation Law in Athens, PA
- Cemetery Grant discussion

Trustee Sternberg

- Student Art Work Recommendation
- No flood mitigation information
- Code discussion on 495 East Main Street
- Code discussion on property at 42-44 Temple (Lumnah property)
- Petition submitted against 122 Green Street
- Fox Street concerns progressing

Sewer Department

Motion by Trustee Sternberg seconded by Trustee Woody to accept the proposal from Bernier & Carr in the amount of \$34,000.00, for the engineering study for the improvement to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility.

Unanimously Approved

Trustee Woody

- No activity on Planning and Zoning Board
- Repair to showers at Marvin Park
- Meeting with water company to be scheduled – hydrants

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Phelan to accept the letter from the Owego Fire Chief and his recommendations as described in said letter (i.e., fire members, lifetime members, members who will be terminated).

Trustee Woody stated the Owego Fire Department is way over in head count in each fire company. There are individuals who have remained on the fire companies books for years; they do not participate, nor do they meet the requirements as far as OSHA training or living within 5 miles of the village or having the 40 hours as village employees. One of the ways looked at to reduce the numbers, is the chiefs met and came to the agreement of individuals categorized as life members, active members, etc. The Chiefs worked at getting the number of members down in each company to 40 members plus lifetime members. This is the initial step in the process. Some things required will eventually have to go to the Charter (for amending).

Trustee Sternberg questioned the many proposals in Chief Taft's letter/which proposal are we working on? Trustee Woody stated the total information in packet given to each trustee.

Trustee Sternberg questioned how many of the life members would also qualify as active members?

Responses of the Chief Taft was less than ten. Per Chief Taft, with the exception of the life members, each company is below 40 members. A couple of companies are at a total of 35 or 36 and a couple at 28 or 29.

Trustee Sternberg asked if the Chief were to include those life members that would qualify under active, then will the numbers still be okay with each company.

Chief Taft responded that there might need to be a member switched to another company. But if it is under 200 for the departments (the life members, and active) are part of the number of 200 and still find a way to keep it to the 40 per company. Trustee Sternberg voiced she would be more open to that process. Trustee Sternberg stated that she would prefer not to have life members, active life members inactive.

The correspondence from Chief Taft also pertains to what active means in voting. The chiefs did not want to get into the problem where it was looked upon as people who were not voting were all life members – it clearly states what active is and some of the life members are active and they are able to vote so it wouldn't be if you are a life member you can't vote – but you have to be active too. It was put this way to show no prejudice to any groups.

Trustee Phelan stated that he feels that it is reasonable to say "as long as you're an active member" you are able to vote. Chief Taft has no problem with that statement. Chief Taft is trying to show no prejudice to any group. Trustee Phelan feels it is a clear line – active members vote; non-active – no vote. Chief Taft spoke to the By-Laws of the Fire Department.

Motion rescinded by Trustee Woody and Trustee Phelan.

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Phelan approving the Village Board adopt the recommendation of the Fire Chief; designating life members per company as indicated in correspondence from Fire Chief; also to approve termination of those members as per attached correspondence by Chief Taft. Trustees Phelan, Woody, Thomas voting aye. Trustee Sternberg nay.

Motion Denied.

Motion by Trustee Sternberg seconded by Trustee Woody to accept the completed listing from Chief Taft of life members, terminated members, active members with the exception that we move active life members from the category of life into the category of active.

Unanimously Approved

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Phelan approving the Village Board go forth and change the Charter to read: the Company rosters cannot exceed 40 with an exception given to life members, military personnel, college attendees, junior firefighters, individuals on medical leave and those serving in other service organizations out of the area. Life members will be defined as those individuals that have 25 years of service to the Owego Fire Department. Junior firefighters will be defined as those between the age of 16 and 18. When they turn 18; the Fire Department will need to decide if they have showed adequate interest to remain as an active member of the Fire Department. Active members will be defined as those people that participate in at least 5% of the Fire/EMS calls, 6 trainings and also participate in 2 fundraisers per year. I would also like to change the Charter to ensure that only those deemed as active firefighters vote in elections for department officers. The inactive members such as life members who do not meet the above criteria would still be eligible to vote in matters brought before their companies and issues that pertain to the fire board. Life members who do meet the active criteria would be able to vote in department elections. This being contingent upon review to insure it is in compliance with New York Fire Laws.

Prior motion rescinded by Trustee Woody and Trustee Phelan.

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Sternberg approving that under advisement, by the letter from Chief Taft, the Village Board go forward to change the Charter to read “company rosters cannot exceed 40 members with an exception given to life time members, and any other member the Village deems exempt.

Unanimously Approved

Motion by Trustee Woody seconded by Trustee Phelan that the motion go forward with the proposed changes to the Charter to address life time members, active members and voting powers of the OFD.

Unanimously Approved

- Further discussion on fire Department By-Laws

Village Attorney

VBM-05-18-2009

- Resolution on requiring permits and provision for financial security as to damage to local roads by vehicles involved in natural gas exploration

Privilege of the floor was offered to those in attendance.

Kelly Hopkins, Owego EMS, spoke to all the work that has been done on the Owego Fire Department By-Laws.

Jim King, Owego EMS, thanked the Village Board for the time and discussion on the Fire Department issues.

Budget -"Working Meeting" to review "Sewer Fund" budget followed the regular Village Board Meeting.

Motion by Trustee Sternberg seconded by Trustee Woody approving the 2009-2010 sewer budget as submitted by WWTP Superintendent Ron Horton.

Unanimously Approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.