

Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Newark Valley was held Tuesday evening, **December 13, 2022**, at 6:30 PM in the Noble Room of the Municipal Building at 9 Park Street, Newark Valley.

**PRESENT:** Mayor James Tornatore  
Deputy Mayor Scott Kasmarcik  
Trustees John Tomazin  
Ted Hardenstine  
DPW Supervisor Matt Seamans  
Clerk/Treasurer Pam Benthin

**EXCUSED:** Trustee Joe Mooney

**PUBLIC HEARING - To Exceed the Tax Cap:** This years tax cap is 2%, if we exceed the cap without filing the local law to override the tax limit we will be penalized by having to place the amount of funds that we exceeded by into a reserves account. Board preliminary voting perspectives consist of no comment from Trustee Tomazin, Mayor Tornatore and Trustee Hardenstine agree that with current inflation at 8% they will vote yes to exceed, with hope that we don't but understand the probable necessity to do so. Trustee Kasmarcik plans to vote no to exceeding the tax cap. Per Clerk Benthin, the resolution to pass or decline the local law must be done as well as submitted and approved by the state before the 2023-2024 budget is passed, budget must be approved by January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Guest input includes, concern that Trustee Mooney is not present to vote, dissolution of the Village, residents on the verge of facing foreclosure, tax increase driving more residents to leave the area, the board is out of touch with the community and don't face the same struggle, and would taxes be increasing if money wasn't spent on the MB window project. Public Hearing closes at 7:03pm.

**MINUTES:** Not available at this time.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Not available at this time.

**BILLS:** Presented. Approved in the amount of \$70,580.06 from abstract number 33-23, 34-23, 35-23,36-23 and 37-23, with a Motion by *Trustee Tomazin*, seconded by *Trustee Hardenstine*. Deputy Mayor Kasmarcik, opposed to and abstained from signing vouchers #9112121–2125 for Employee HSA Contributions.

**GUESTS:** Residents in attendance Jim Wurtenburg, Sandy Kasmarcik, Janet & John Frieman, Mark Lott, Philip Nedlick, Joe Onofrio, and Kim Frey.

**WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- **Code Enforcement Opening** – Interviewed Max Chandler for the CEO position. Resident of the village, confident that he has the time to complete the training in the required time frame as well as the required office hours for the position. Potential start date of Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. Previous CEO Marty Jerzak will continue to see through the ongoing Rewey Ave. court matter until resolved.
- **Joint Youth Agreement** – Submitted to Town after November 14<sup>th</sup> Joint Youth Committee meeting discussion, Town will submit to attorney, once updated will be sent out to municipalities for final review and signing. Further discussion regarding Village contribution, whether to be monetary or in-kind i.e accounting services, insurance etc. Trustee Tomazin fears if the Village ceases monetary contributions, the program will not exist in the future. Other comments include the program is an investment in our future, the need for youth programs is greater than ever, and families that participate in the program see the values it brings to living in our small community giving them reason to stay and raise their families.

- 2023-2024 Budget** – Factors causing the 7.9% increase include the loss of three properties from the tax roll, 6% increase to insurance rates, fuel costs, health insurance increases, employee raises, current inflation situation, decrease in equalization rate, increase to multi-year plan per state comptroller recommendation. Discussion of employee HSA contributions by village, changes to the 85%/15% insurance cost between the village and employees, removal of the third office staff position from the budget. Deputy Mayor Kasmarcik states that he is ok with the 7.9% increase as long as funds are better allocated. Trustee Hardenstine agrees that removing the third person from the budget is potentially a step in the right direction for the budget, but if we do and ask the employees to continue doing more with less, changes to wage increases, insurance coverage and HSA contribution should be tabled. Hardenstine also points out that inflation was 3% the past two years but the Village did not raise taxes to compensate, hence why we are at 7.9% this year. Mayor Tornatore agrees to cutting the third office position as long as the Board will agree to work with staff on timelines for projects and other requests due to workload. Discussion of CDL training cost line item in the budget, requirements, and the training necessary to obtain such license with the new federal requirements. Further discussion of employee health insurance, insurance year has already begun, no changes will be made to this budget, Mayor Tornatore assures that board will be more involved in review of insurance plan options going forward, will have representative from Partners attend future board meeting to better explain all plan options. Trustee Tomazin speaks on behalf of the budget committee, the concerns and requests of the residents and board have been heard and the committee will review the budget again to bring a final increase less than the proposed 7.9%.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> December Meeting** – Board agrees a second meeting to discuss the budget is not necessary. Budget Committee will consult, review all topics discussed tonight and bring a finalized budget to the January Board Meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- RESOLUTION #42-23** Local Law 01-2022 Override of the Tax Levy Limit (Copy attached) – adopted with a motion by *Tomazin*, seconded by *Hardenstine*. Roll call vote. Hardenstine, Tomazin, Tornatore - Yes. Mooney - Excused. Kasmarcik - No.
- RESOLUTION #43-23** To Hold a Public Hearing for the Purpose of Amending Local Laws (Copy attached) – adopted with a motion by *Kasmarcik*, seconded by *Mooney*. Roll call vote. Hardenstine, Kasmarcik, Tomazin, Tornatore - Yes. Mooney - Excused. 0 - No.
- RESOLUTION #44-23** To Hire New Code Enforcement Officer (Copy attached) – adopted with a motion by *Tomazin*, seconded by *Kasmarcik*. Roll call vote. Hardenstine, Kasmarcik, Tomazin, Tornatore - Yes. Mooney - Excused. 0 - No.
- RESOLUTION #45-23** To Increase Library Employees’ Salaries – NYS Minimum Wage Increase and Merit Increase (Copy attached) – adopted with a motion by *Tomazin*, seconded by *Kasmarcik*. Roll call vote. Hardenstine, Kasmarcik, Tomazin, Tornatore - Yes. Mooney - Excused. 0 - No.
- RESOLUTION #46-23** Authorize Mayor to Sign NYS Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program. (Copy attached) – adopted with a motion by *Tomazin*, seconded by *Kasmarcik*. Roll call vote. Hardenstine, Kasmarcik, Tomazin, Tornatore - Yes. Mooney - Excused. 0 - No.

## **REPORTS:**

- **Public Works** – see attached Supervisor report.
- **Clerk** – Clerk Benthin reads aloud a letter received from resident Patti Cawley regarding the Monday morning incident on Silk/Rewey/Clinton involving a person under the influence of a controlled substance, the DPW Crew and garbage truck and vandalism of several homes. Supervisor Seamans recounts the events for board members that were unaware.
- **Mayor** – Hope Cemetery seeking an organization to run funding through. Also working with Abby Ortu to seek funding to save the mausoleum.
- **Parks** – Trustee Mooney states that this year's Lowe's Hometown grant will be open to apply for soon. Supervisor Seamans met with TC Soil & Water about planting buffer area of trees at the Trout Ponds Park to help battle erosion from the creek, and the spread of the Japanese knotweed. S&W will create a proposal for best species, placement, and number of trees, as well as survey the project on an annual basis. Supervisor Seamans also working with Mike Jura from S&W to fix the walking bridge over the trout ponds. DEC and Cortland Soil & Water may be able to assist with repairs to the actual pond, if fixed they could become a stocking location for trout again. Mayor Tornatore meeting with Cornell Cooperative Extension about planting Milkweed at the Community Garden and the Trout Ponds for butterfly habitat. Supervisor Seamans will coordinate the two projects so as they do not encroach on each other.
- **School Districts** – Trustee Hardenstine states that the school district is still taking applications for the Superintendent position, interim Superintendent Todd Schaffer is expected to apply.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Executive session entered at the time of 9:42pm, on a motion by Trustee Tomazin, seconded by Deputy Mayor Kasmarcik, for the purpose of discussing personnel related matters. Exited executive session at 10:45pm

Motion by Trustee Tomazin, seconded by Deputy Mayor Kasmarcik to adjourn at 10:47pm. Carried

Jessica Moore  
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer