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Westfield, New York

Sherman's wastewater chief receives award

By David Prenatt

editorial@westfieldrepublican.com

SHERMAN – While on vacation, Sherman Wastewater Chief Operator Jay Irwin received a call from Mayor Colleen Meeder who, in the presence of the entire Board of Trustees, told Irwin: "I'm not sure if you're aware, but I got a letter about you the other day."

Most people in this situation would be bracing for bad news. However, Meeder was calling to inform Irwin that he had been selected to receive the 2018



Sherman Wastewater Chief Operator Jay Irwin. Wastewater Operation Specialist of the Year Award by the New York Rural Water Association board and staff.

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Meeder called Irwin during the regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Trustees on April 4 so that they could congratulate him together on receiving this award.

Irwin will be honored by NYRWA on May 22 at the Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York during the 39th Annual Technical Training Workshop and Exhibition.

NYRWA is the state organization that represents small water/wastewater systems throughout the state, usually serving a population of less than 10,000 each.

The recipient of the Wastewater Operation Specialist of the Year Award is selected based on the individual's commitment to protecting the environment, demonstration of leadership, and dedication to the community.

"We are really excited about it," Meeder told Irwin. Water and Street Superintendent Doug Crane added, "This is a huge award. It pretty much includes everyone in the state, except the cities."

In another matter, Crane asked the board to set the date for spring clean-up. April 23 was selected, and Crane noted that items such as refrigerators, tires, batteries and hazardous materials are prohibited. He said the list of excluded items is the same as last year.

Board members also voted to approve a tentative budget of \$411,976 for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Property taxes are expected to increase by 1.84 percent, generating an additional \$3,612 in revenue. Residents will vote on the budget in May.

In other business, Meeder recommended that the

village look into signing the Climate Smart Pledge from the New York State Department of Environmental conservation. The pledge requires a community to strive for 10 elements, including setting goals and a plan for climate action, decreasing community energy use, increasing the use of renewable energy, and realizing the benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices.

Meeder noted that no community in Chautauque County has yet made the pledge.

"In fact, people seem to be going away from anything green," she said.

Meeder said that taking the pledge would open the village up to DEC money to pursue a climate-smart plan. Meeder noted that the village has already undertaken such environmental friendly practices, such as efficient lighting and sewer upgrades.

"Every single thing that we are already doing is on that list, so there's no reason not to do it," she said.

Meeder spoke to the trustees about the distinctiveness of Sherman having a fire company.

"It's a unique situation that is good for the village and good for the fire company," she said. "Fire departments and fire districts are more common."

Meeder also told the board she met with Matt Zarbo of Barton & Loguidice. Zarbo told Meeder that he could pursue funding for the village's program to replace the water meters and water lines.

"There's a lot of funding out there for water," Meeder said. "We could possibly get 90 percent funding for the meters."

Meeder and the board also spent a good amount of time reviewing revisions to the employee handbook. They covered such areas as resignations, holiday hours, compensatory time, vacations, sick leave, disabilities, as well as employee use of computers and cell phones.

"This thing is a monster," Meeder said. "I definitely have to work on job descriptions." Meeder said the revisions would not be complete in time to be approved at the May meeting.

The board also reviewed the village's policies.

"Our purpose, vision, and mission statement remain the same," Meeder said.

Meeder made note of the addition of a statement that village employees believe in respecting and listening to the concerns of the public, which we serve.

"I believe a large part of our job is to educate," Meeder said. "Basically, it's a nice template for 'why are we here,'" she added.

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The mayor added that the shared service arrangement will continue on a trial basis for at least six months to see how smoothly the solution works out, and the topic had been discussed at the Brocton/Portland Shared Service Committee meeting to hammer out the best and most sensible solution for all involved. The mayor reiterated that this agreement exists for streets employees only and that other departments will operate as normal.