

VILLAGE OF SHERMAN
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 6:00pm

The meeting was held remotely via videoconference. Mayor Meeder welcomed everyone and opened the meeting by leading everyone in the pledge of allegiance. Board members Colleen Meeder, Ryan Sanders, Donna Higginbotham, Kirk Ayers and Dennis Watson, Clerk-Treasurer Jeanette Ramm, Chief Operator Jay Irwin, resident Gary Emory, and the press were in attendance.

RES 2021-03-03.1:

Motion to accept the previous minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Village Board of Trustees held February 3rd, 2021, and the Special Meeting held February 17th, 2021.

Moved by Trustee Watson Seconded by Trustee Sanders

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

CODE ENFORCEMENT

There was no need for the Municipal Zoning Board to meet, but the mayor did report that our CEO Greg Gormley was still dealing with enforcement issues. We remain under executive order in terms of what we can and cannot do, with regards to code enforcement, and the Sherman court remains closed which further limits him. Mr. Gormley is trying to sort out complaints and concerns from residents and is working on two cases with the DEC, one also involves the Department of Health.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FROM CHIEF OPERATOR

- SEWER – Andrew Norton is waiting for a test date to take his wastewater certification test.
- WATER – There are now 169 new meters installed and operating. Kyle Rhebergen is now registered to do his water course and will then need a year of working in the field before he can be certified. The water heater at the Food Pantry has also been repaired.
- STREETS – Larry Meeder has patched the winter potholes in front of the office and along the alley next to Graham’s Market with stone. Mr. Irwin revisited the plan to change the Main Street lights for each holiday and requested funds to purchase some Easter themed lights. The mayor added that the budget for celebrations has been increased for the new fiscal year.

CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- CDBG COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT
This Community Development Block Grant application for \$50,000 is due on March 5th. We received multiple letters of support, including one from Jon Anderson, Deputy Commission of Chautauqua County’s Department of Health and Human Services, and from several community members, who are also interested in what happens to the buildings. These letters are part of the application process, and we really appreciate the support.
- CDBG/CDOL – HOUSING REHABILITATION GRANT
Jeanette has been working with Eileen Powers, (Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corp.) CHRIC’s Director of Housing Rehab Services. We have now submitted 21 preliminary applications for the 2020 grant cycle. This is good as we may have enough interested applicants to apply for the 2021 cycle as well, which is expected to follow soon.

The mayor restated that to qualify for the grant the applicant must own their single-family residence, live in the home, and qualify financially. Sherman is 1 of 3 municipalities from Chautauqua County that are competing for the 2020 grant. Once awarded, CHRIC is the administrator who will continue with more in-depth applications and determine the eligibility of each applicant. CHRIC will then select 9-10 qualifying dwellings for grants of approximately \$40,000-\$50,000 each, totaling up to \$500,000. This grant money is for necessary permanent construction, such as new windows, roofs, foundations, furnaces, and other structural repairs, not aesthetic improvements.

STORMWATER

- **USDA-RD APPLY**

There is nothing new to report on this as the application was only submitted last month.

SEWER

- **CDBG PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT**

This co-funded application for \$1.25m is due on March 5th and is looking very good. The USDA and CDBG are working on the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) which is another level of environmental review.

WATER

- The mayor was pleased to tell everyone that the water project will likely be 100% complete by the end of 2021.
- We will close on the EFC/SRF (Short-term Revolving Fund) March 4th, 2021.
- The request for Construction Bids will post on March 3rd and are due to the Village by 11am on March 30th, when our engineer will be present, and the bids will each be read aloud. The bids will then be considered, and the award will be made at the board meeting on April 7th. Construction will begin June or July and should be completed this 2021 year. That will completion the entire water line project.

BUDGET

2020-2021 REVIEW / 2021-2022 DRAFT COMPARISON

Mayor Meeder used a slide presentation to review the financials in comparison to previous years. She started by going over the current debt which includes a \$300,000 BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) for the Sewer Project Fund, a \$160,000 BAN for the Water Project Fund, and the General Fund has a \$216,600 debt which covers the streets equipment. She then detailed each line item of the budget. She started with the sewer fund, explaining that the old meters were only 70-80% accurate, depending on how old they were, and that is why the new budget has a higher amount for this line item. In the new fiscal year all the water meters will have been replaced providing accurate readings and eliminating all estimations. She highlighted that the sewer fund will be paying the general fund the last installment of the interfund loan in May. This \$40,000 includes 5% interest which will be noted in the resolution regarding this payment at the May meeting. She spoke about the \$4/month increase to the sewer base rate, which is stipulated in the Sewer Rents Law of 2020, and noted that it becomes effective on June 1st, 2021, and will show on the sewer bills going out in August. She explained that once the loan to the general fund was paid off, the sewer fund will continue to build reserves for the debt service of the WWTP upgrades. The "Reserve for SLA" line item is contractual, mandated by our grantors. There is a minimum amount we are required to save each year to replace our short life assets (SLA).

Mayor Meeder then covered the water fund. There were changes to the T&D (Transmission and Distribution) personnel expenses for work on the water project, which will decrease after we have completed putting in the water lines. The allocation of hours for water administration has increased because the clerk spends more time doing water related work than previously budgeted. There is also a mandatory “Reserve for SLA” for short life assets of \$18,000 and “debt service” of \$34,286 as stipulated by our grantors.

The mayor then moved onto the general fund, reviewing each line item. Property taxes have been budgeted at \$213,507, which is a tax levy increase of 2.75%, but because the assessed value has increased, the tax rate is decreasing 4%. What does this mean for taxpayers? This is positive as the tax rate is going down. Taxpayers will see an overall decrease of 43c/1000 to the tax rate. This is largely due to the increase in assessed value which is mostly new value. This means that anyone who has made no changes to their property will see a decrease in their taxes, i.e., if a resident’s assessed value is \$50,000, they will see a \$22 decrease in their taxes, if the assessed value is \$75,000 they will see a \$33 decrease, and if the assessed value is \$100,000 they will see a \$44 decrease.

| | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | 1.8% | 2.92% | 1.00% | 2.75% | |
| Tax Levy: | 199,894 | 205,735 | 207,792 | 213,507 | 5,715 |
| Tax Rate: | 10.913731 | 10.629224 | 10.754763 | 10.319275 | |
| Assessment: | 18,315,825 | 19,355,600 | 19,320,960 | 20,690,116 | 1,369,156 |

Mayor Meeder highlighted that we had budgeted \$30,000 conservatively for the street’s equipment project, but we received a \$50,000 grant. When discussing the sidewalk expenses, it was noted that some sidewalk and streets repairs will be covered by the water fund, as part of the water project. The mayor explained that the legal costs are predicted to go down next year in comparison to this fiscal year which included many hours of legal work on contracts and grant work. The “Shade Trees” expense will be partially offset by income from residents purchasing trees and the “Planning and Management Development” expense, although paid out now will be recouped through contracts with Solar Liberty. She concluded by saying that in this next fiscal year we will be in a position to begin creating proper reserves.

It was also noted that we have an employee retiring in the next few years and we may not replace him which will reduce future personnel expenses.

MAYORAL ADDRESS

Mayor Meeder said that if you were to read the minutes from March 2020 prior to COVID, we are at the same point today. We are picking up and are moving forward with the grants and projects that were scheduled this time last year.

SIGNS / RBDG

Mr. Irwin shared that the State’s right-of-way is very wide, which limits the available land for us to put signs up. We must put the signs on private property in order to qualify for the sign grant, but the right-of-way is too wide to make this effective. The mayor used the Chautauqua County GIS to show the trustees how wide the State’s right-of-way is. The only option for permanent signs would be on the Beatman property which could distract drivers putting children and pedestrians at risk. Signs could also block driver’s view as they enter traffic on Franklin. In response to a question, it was noted that we are leaning more toward mobile signs at this time. The restrictions on signs along I-86 are strict and expensive. The businesses must be open for a specific number of regular hours and the billboards can only advertise one type of business i.e., you cannot have gas stations and restaurants on the same billboard.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

FINANCIAL REPORT FROM CLERK-TREASURER:

General Checking Account: Balance (03/03/2021) is \$60,092.73 & book balance \$43,715.90

NYS Fund Bank Account: Balance (03/03/2021) is \$0

Sewer Project Bank Account: Balance (03/03/2021) is \$5,271.50

Water Project Bank Account: Balance (03/03/2021) is \$37.50

CD Account: Balance (03/03/2021) is A\$0, B\$0

CD Transfer: N/A

Account Adjustments: N/A

The clerk reminded everyone that the relevy of all outstanding water and sewer accounts, as per NYS law, will take place in the first week of April. The April utility bills will only go out after the relevy has been completed.

RES 2021-03-03.2: VOUCHERS #10

Motion to accept Voucher #10 for \$80,239.72 as presented for February 2021, of which \$0 is from the NYS Special Fund, \$41,397 is from the Sewer Project Fund and \$0 is from the Water Project Fund.

Moved by Trustee Ayers Seconded by Trustee Higginbotham

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Following the Public Hearing of the CDBG Applications for the 2020 Program Year, held by the Village Board on February 3rd, 2021, the Village received the announcement on February 10th of the opening of the CDBG Housing (*Rehabilitation and Improvement*) Projects Grant opportunity due April 9th, through CDOL (Community Development On-Line). If the Village is awarded the grant, then the Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation & Improvement Corp. (CHRIC) will interview each applicant and determine who is eligible. The Village is not involved in any applicant's finances and has no say on who is awarded funds, this is all done through CHRIC.

RES 2021-03-03.3: 2020 CDBG / CDOL HOUSING REHAB APPLICATION

Motion to approve the application through Community Development On Line (CDOL) to the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for 2020 Housing Project Grant Funds of up to a total of \$500,000 for 9-10 qualifying single-family homes in the Village of Sherman, a cooperative project administered by Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation & Improvement Corp. (CHRIC); and to authorize the mayor to sign and submit all related documents and contractual agreements.

Moved by Trustee Higginbotham Seconded by Trustee Watson

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

RES 2021-03-03.4: CREDIT CARD

Motion to approve the issuance of a Village credit card to James Irwin, Chief Operator and to authorize him to use the credit card in pursuit of Village business within the Village budget. James Irwin is approved for

the full limit of the Village credit card, limited to the combined \$10,000 amount shared amongst three cards issued to the Mayor, Clerk-Treasurer, and Chief Operator.

Moved by Trustee Higginbotham Seconded by Trustee Ayers

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

RES 2021-03-03.5: APRIL PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to schedule a Public Hearing for Wednesday, April 7th at 6pm via ZOOM conference, to present the following:

- 06/2021-05/2022 Annual Budget
And other agenda items including:
- Additional project/grant information if required.

Moved by Trustee Watson Seconded by Trustee Sanders

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

(It was later decided to reschedule the public hearing of the 2021-2022 budget and regular board meeting to April 14th, to be held in person.)

RES 2021-03-03.6: EASTER LIGHTS

Motion to approve the purchase of Easter themed lights for Main Street, not to exceed \$1,000.

Moved by Trustee Ayers Seconded by Trustee Sanders

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss a contractual matter for stormwater, with no action to be taken following the executive session.

Moved by Trustee Higginbotham Seconded by Trustee Ayers

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

Motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn the meeting at 7:48pm.

Moved by Trustee Higginbotham Seconded by Trustee Sanders

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Ramm

Clerk-Treasurer

**Next Meeting: Possible Special Meeting TBA
Public Hearing Wednesday, April 7th, 2021 at 6pm via Zoom**