

**Mayor & Board of Trustees**

**Village Board Meeting**

**May 1, 2018**

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker  
Trustees Richard A. Funchion, Duane M. Jackson, Cesare Pasquale and Nicolas Zachary  
Village Administrator Kevin Hay  
Village Attorney Stephanie V. Porteus  
Village Board Secretary Susan F. Matthews

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. She informed every one of the fire regulations. The Mayor asked Kiernan Outhouse to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. PRESENTATION: CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – MICHELE O’NEILL**

Mayor Knickerbocker presented the certificate to Michele O’Neill and thanked her for her 5 years of service to the Village including 2 years as Chairperson of the Planning Board. Ms. O’Neill thanked the Board and the Mayor. She said she was honored. She thanked the Mayor, the Planning Board members and Planning Board Secretary who made the meetings run smoothly. She thanked all the professional staff members, the Village Engineer, Building Inspector, Village Attorney and the planner for their insight and expertise, and the staff at the Village Hall. She thanked the Village Administrator for keeping them on track. She thanked her husband, son and daughter.

**3. APPROVE MINUTES:**

March 6, 2018 Regular Board meeting: Trustee Funchion had a correction on Page 2, first paragraph; change “Tubbs” to “Budde”. A MOTION to approve these minutes as amended was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor and Mayor Knickerbocker abstaining as she was home sick with the flu.

April 3, 2018 Organizational Meeting:

A MOTION to approve these minutes as read was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**4. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR: (agenda items only)**

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that usually these comments are for agenda items only but she knows that many people present have comments so she would not make people wait. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes each. She asked everyone to remain civil and to remember that we are all Buchanan residents and we all have to live here. She was happy to see so many residents

at this meeting. She does not see this many residents at our Buchanan 2021 meetings where a lot of things are discussed. She commented that as everyone knows changes are coming and it is important that everyone is aware of the things going on.

The Mayor noted that this is our first televised meeting since the announcement of a police officer retiring. The first time the Village Board got information was on April 4. She commented that the rumor is that the Village Board is trying to get rid of the Police Department through attrition and that potentially another officer may be leaving. The Board is not sure how this information is circulating. It is a personnel issue. There has been no official notification of this second officer leaving. Only one is leaving through retirement. The Mayor said that we all wish him well and thank him for his service. The Village Board cannot get rid of a police department because they may decide to. She emphasized that if and when that is done, it is by referendum. On April 9 we received an e-mail from Police Chief Tubbs. In it, he advised that he believes that with all that will be going on in the Village of Buchanan in the next few years it will be difficult to find a qualified officer willing to transfer here. Therefore if the Village Board wishes to maintain a Police Department, which the Mayor noted that we do, he suggested posting the job opening immediately. The Mayor advised that we have contacted the Police Chief and directed him to go forward with the hiring process. She asked Police Chief Tubbs to confirm to that he still feels that it will be difficult to find a replacement officer. Chief Tubbs advised that today some things came to light that might make it a little bit easier. He will discuss that later on. The Mayor commented that with this information received within the last few weeks about potential changes in the department, the Board started discussing a contingency plan if we were to be unable to replace officers. She advised that Trustees Funchion and Pasquale spoke to the police officers to hear what their concerns were.

The Mayor reminded that Indian Point will close in April 2020, two years from yesterday. Indian Point 3 will close in 2021. Their taxes provide 50% of our budget. We will be losing \$3 million, half of our budget. She commented that there are tough decisions that have to be made for our Village to remain viable and not become a ghost town with abandoned houses as has happened in other communities that face the loss of a large tax payer. We are working on ways to mitigate the loss. If anyone would like to meet with her to discuss the ways, she has held several meetings at the Village Hall where she only got a handful of people showing up. She wishes we would get as many people [as tonight] when we discuss the future of the Village. One thing is the Cessation Fund set up by the State and funded in this year's State budget. Another is the Stranded Act proposed under Federal legislation. Assemblywoman Sandy Galef is working on legislation to tax the spent fuel casks. We continue to look for economic development. Yesterday we had someone from the Federal government's Economic Development Corporation meet with us at the Village Hall. We continue to see if we can get funds from them and to see how we can provide services more efficiently. There are other things being worked on which the Mayor cannot discuss at this time. The Buchanan 2021 committee is an advisory committee consisting of residents. We want feedback from our residents. We also have the potential to renegotiate the PILOT with Entergy. The Mayor commented that to say that we are willing to just let things happen is absolutely untrue. If all the things being worked on come to fruition, all these conversations will be a moot point. She commented if our residents tell us that they want

to remain the same and continue all the services and that it is okay to double our taxes then that is what the Board will do.

The Mayor advised that the Police Chief has been directed to start looking for candidates. We will be hiring when a qualified candidate is found. We are not dismantling our Police Department through attrition. The Mayor commented that our residents are not being left in the dark in this transition or change. She commented that this Board has always been transparent. We are all aware of the benefits of having a police department. She is very disappointed with the lies and accusations. She asked everyone to remain calm after we had the first announcement. She commented that if we feed into lies and hysteria this Village will not be able to move forward and survive the challenge. We all need to work together.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:**

Barbara LaFemina, 201 Fourth Street, works at the B/V School. She commented about the Police Department being vital to our community. She described how every day the Buchanan Police officer comes there and walks around the school to minimize any fear with regards to safety issues and to develop good relationships between our students and the police. She described various specific situations and occurrences where Buchanan Police officers, whom she named, promptly responded and resolved. She hopes that moving forward the Board takes into consideration the on-going need for the Buchanan Police Department to continue in our community. She thanks our wonderful Police Department.

Trustee Zachary commented that everybody on this Board has to live in the Village. Everybody on this Board would like to have our Police Department the way it is. He commented everybody on this Board also has to take into account what that will cost. A lot of people say that is fine, to double their taxes. But a lot of residents do not want any tax increase. He commented that we sent out a survey. It was not done by a professional survey person. It was subsequently realized that it was not written as well as it might have been. He commented that if residents came to the Board meetings or viewed the meetings on t.v. or on-line, they would have seen him go through the survey results and explain what he thought was not valid in those results and what did give us something that we could look at and use in our actions. He commented that it may have been a flawed survey but one thing it pointed out was that a majority of people (62%) said that they would like to see the tax increase kept between 0% and 25%. A large number also said that no matter what the tax increase they want to keep our police. Trustee Zachary commented that it was like saying "Climb up the tree but stay on the ground". We have to take into account the people who can afford a doubling of their Village taxes along with the people living on a fixed income. He commented that the Board is taking our time and doing our homework and research. We have discussed different things. We want to be forthright with our residents. You do get a lot of the information if you come to the meetings or watch them on t.v. The Board has to hold back certain things because if you say let us just look at "options (x), (y), or (z)", someone will start running around saying, "Oh my God! They are considering option (x)!" He commented that we are looking at everything, comparing costs, breaking it down and doing our best to try to come up with what is best for everybody. Some people feel that they are only getting their information through rumors. He advised that ultimately nothing will be done without coming to

our residents. He is glad to see people paying attention. He encouraged everyone to come to the meetings and ask the questions as they come up so that the Board can explain if your information is complete or missing anything. It is a work in progress. He thanked everyone for expressing their interest but cautioned to not panic.

Jeffrey Faiella, 212 Craft Lane, commented that they moved here from Ossining because Buchanan has a police department and a volunteer fire department. He came tonight on a fact finding mission. He was glad to learn that to do anything a referendum would have to be passed by the Village residents. He described how the Town of Ossining went through the same issue. They could have gone with either the County Police or the Village of Ossining Police. They chose to go to the Westchester County Police. It cost them more. When there was an emergency, the officer on patrol was not there. He feels that if it becomes known that the Village is not being patrolled that there will be problems. He hopes that people in the Village keep an eye out to protect the Village of Buchanan.

Joseph Karas, 222 Ketchum Avenue, thinks that his neighbors as well as a lot of people are here at this meeting because we value our Police Department. He commented that we feel safe and secure and it insulates us from the areas around us. He knows that his family is safe. He knows that our Police Department is doing their job in the neighborhood and he does not have to worry. He commented that drug use is up and crime is on the rise. The Buchanan Police Department protects us and keeps our home values up. He knows that the Board has a hard decision to make. He was also glad that it would have to go to a referendum. The Village has to speak their mind. He does not want to see our Police Department eliminated. He has been here over 25 years. He would not give it away for the world. He knows that we have to deal with change but there has to be other ways. He told the Mayor that if she needs him to get involved to contact him. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that the more input that we have from our residents, especially the Buchanan 2021 Committee which is our advisory board from the residents.

Todd Horgan, 105 Burke Court, thanked the Mayor for squashing some of the rumors. He feels that the Mayor's response at the beginning of the meeting was directed toward him. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that he was the only one who wrote a letter. Mr. Horgan noted that he had received an e-mail response from her and thanked her for her reply. He read his letter aloud for the record. In it, he noted that he is a lifelong Village resident and cited the reasons he chose to remain and raise his family here. They included having a police department and how that adds to the sense of community in addition to a sense of safety and security. He commented on residents who for different reasons may no longer care about maintaining our small town feel. He felt that he was hearing things through rumor and not from our elected officials. His letter asked for the results of the survey which included a question about if we were to eliminate our Police Department. He felt that by asking such a direct question, the Board had already anticipated the results. He questioned why they did not ask what if the Highway Department was dismantled. He expressed his concern about what he feels was a lack of communication from the Village Board to the residents concerning the survey results and the retirement of a police officer and if there would be a replacement. He wanted to know what the plan would be to keep residents safe if the Police Department were eliminated and feels that the residents should be involved in it.

Mr. Horgan referred to the earlier comments about the experience of the Town of Ossining. He described why he does not believe we would get the same immediate response and police coverage from other police agencies as we do from our own Police Department. He asked if the Board had considered alternatives to allow maintaining our police force such as once weekly garbage pickup or the cost of our Highway Department versus merging them with the Town of Cortlandt's. He questioned the cost of our Fire Department versus consolidation with Montrose and Verplanck's, comparing it to recent measures taken by the City of Peekskill which he noted handles more calls. He acknowledged awareness of the monetary impact of the closing of Indian Point but feels that the Board has taken what he described as a "back seat approach" and is willing to just let things happen. He feels that by not replacing the current vacancy in the Police Department that the Board is sending a message to the officers that they do not support them which is why they are looking for other jobs.

Mr. Horgan noted that he is an active member of the Ambulance Corps and an active member of the law enforcement community. He is not willing to sit back and watch our Police Department treated with such disrespect nor let the Board put his children and the rest of the Village at risk by allowing this to happen. He asked the Board to reconsider and volunteered to join them in that.

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked him for taking the time to write the letter. She commented that there have been no decisions made. There will be some tough conversations. The Board needs to get feedback from the residents. She commented that she too has lived here all her life and has deep roots in this community. Her grandparents and great-grandparents lived here and her aunts and uncles were born here. She has lived here all her life with the phenomenal services we have had. She commented that we have been very blessed; that other communities do not have those services. We need to try to keep those services. She commented that with everything we are working on, this might be a moot discussion in the end. Mr. Horgan does not think that we need to hold on to Ulster County property taxes here in Westchester. The Mayor commented that we are looking at worse case scenarios without the other options coming into play.

The Mayor commented that she would love to know where these rumors are coming from but she does not feel that anyone will come forward and tell us. She commented that we have a lot of issues that we have to work through. People realize that the taxes are going to change a little. We are trying to be fair to everyone. Tripling their taxes is no big deal to some residents but to others it is. There are people on fixed incomes. The Mayor advised that we are looking for more money, other options. She would like to keep all the services. She referred to Mr. Horgan's reference to the Town of Cortlandt and their services. She advised that we do not get charged for a Highway Department at this time. We pay taxes to the Town but we really do not receive services from them. She advised that if we start adding that on, our taxes will go up. She will be showing the Buchanan 2021 Committee what the taxes look like for a property that she owns in Verplanck. She commented that we are not sitting here [quietly] waiting for 2020 to come along. We want to hear people's thoughts. The Board has been very transparent.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Village Board meeting was on April 3. We got the notification from the police officer that he was intending to retire in June. He has now changed

that time and is leaving in May. The Police Chief has advised that he has new information today. We want to hire a qualified officer. It is something that he is looking at. The Mayor commented that we are not hiding anything. The Board meeting was on April 3. The next meeting was a Workshop. The Village Board cannot meet other than an advertised meeting unless it is an emergency. We had some discussions and did talk about it at the last Workshop.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Horgan for taking time to write the e-mail.

Trustee Jackson commented that he moved here in 1995. He likes the small town feel of Buchanan. One of the things that happened when we were down one police officer a year ago was that the remaining officers worked overtime and did not miss a beat in covering the Village. He applauds them for that and what they continue to do. He commented that his basic feeling is that there is nothing like having our own. As long as he is on this Board that is where the direction will be. He appreciated the comments and everyone coming out today. He commented that what we have here is unique. It does not occur in a lot of villages and towns. We have the Christmas tree lighting, Halloween parade as examples and we hope to keep those things alive here in Buchanan as much as possible. He commented that there are hard choices to be made but with your help and the things in the works, we will get through this. He thinks that one of the great things we have is our proximity to the greatest metropolitan area in the world. That is a selling point. Our services are a selling point. He commented that where he lives on Lake Drive a number of couples came in without any kids and now have children. He believes that the Village is going to grow and continue to flourish.

Trustee Funchion wanted to let everybody know that he and Trustee Pasquale are ex-law enforcement officers. Trustee Pasquale was with the NYPD for 22 years and Trustee Funchion for 35 years as a supervisory Customs officer in the Federal government. He advised that on Wednesday, they had a very good sit down with the members of our Police Department, except for one officer who has the 11 PM-7 AM shift. He thinks that those officers went away happy with what Trustees Funchion and Pasquale said about wanting to keep our Police Department. Trustee Funchion told them that personally, as Trustee Zachary has said, he does not mind paying double the taxes. But the Board also represents everybody in the Village. There are people who do not want that. He commented that they left that meeting with the 4 officers feeling that they had a basis for when we go forward and work out the actual mechanics of keeping them here as a police force. He referred to the comments about overtime and said that many times there is a “win/win” situation where the Village saves money, the officers make more money and they work more overtime. He commented that if anybody works in law enforcement, overtime is the be all and end all because most salaries are not that great. Westchester and Nassau Counties are an exception. He commented that comparatively speaking the NYPD are the most underpaid. Trustee Funchion wanted to emphasize that we are working with the PBA that represents the Buchanan P.D. officers. He commented that the Board wants what our residents want and we are working with them. He does not know where these rumors get started. We are looking at rumors that say “this” while he and Trustee Pasquale and the officers are doing [something different]. So he does not know where those rumors come about,

unless the officers were lying to them. Trustee Funchion does not think that is the case at all. They came away satisfied.

Trustee Pasquale agreed with Trustee Funchion's description. Trustee Pasquale referred to the comment in Mr. Horgan's e-mail about treating our Police Department with such disrespect. Trustee Pasquale commented that he knows about the importance of community policing and response time. He noted that he spent half of his adult life working in probably the finest police department in the country, the NYPD. He commented that we have nothing but respect and appreciation for every one of our police officers here in Buchanan. We understand how difficult it is to be away from families and work holidays, crazy shifts and weekends. It sometimes feels that we do not say thank you. He commented that if you talk to police officers that is not what they are looking for. They will tell you that it is part of their job. He wants to keep our Police Department here. This Board is going to make sure that we explore every possible option. He and Trustee Funchion had a wonderful sit down with them. He walked away very optimistic and thinks that they did too. He commented that whoever is going around spreading these rumors should come and talk to the Board first. If you have questions, ask the Board members. He thanks every one of our police officers for everything they do. He thanked everyone for coming. It is nice to see a community that supports our police.

Trustee Zachary wanted to respond to a couple of things in Mr. Horgan's e-mail. On the question of why we did not ask what we would want if the Highway Department was dismantled, he commented that the opportunities for saving are very minimal in a lot of our services. Mr. Horgan mentioned that we already pay the Town taxes. Trustee Zachary noted that his Town taxes are up by around \$170 per year. He advised that we pay for certain things that everybody in the Town can use like parks, swimming pools and recreation. It is a small amount. If we were getting our garbage services from the Town, we would be paying them more taxes. That \$170 does not cover full services. The Town's tax rate to Village residents is adjusted for what we provide on our own so you would just shift whom you pay the taxes to. He commented that for 2 persons on a garbage truck you would end up paying about the same whether it was the Town or the Village. Any changes are fairly small. That is commonly the case with services. You just wind up shifting the cost to another municipality, not saving it.

Trustee Zachary agrees that if you went to all State Police that you would have lousy coverage. He does not mean to disrespect them. They are not going to be everywhere because they are spread thin. That would be a big opportunity for savings but clearly that is not what our residents want here or there.

On Mr. Horgan's feeling that the Board asked for the input of the community but failed to share the results, Trustee Zachary advised that while we do not send everything out to people, those results were shared in the Village Board meetings. He commented if you cannot get here, on the Village web site there is a link to those meetings on YouTube. That information is public. He commented that when we have some more specifics on the survey, it will take a little more time but we will prepare the survey more carefully because it will have some real information. Then we will get the public's input. He reiterated that as the Mayor advised any action would require

a referendum. He asked if the Village Administrator or Village Attorney could explain what requires a referendum and what does not.

Village Attorney Porteus advised that abolishing the Police Department would require a Permissive Referendum. She would write a local law and the Village Board would pass it. Normally it goes effect. This one is subject to a referendum. That means that it does not go into effect for 30 days. During that time, 20% of the residents who are registered voters may prepare a petition saying that they object to that local law. Depending on the time period, it goes to election. If it is close to the General Election it goes on that ballot; otherwise there would be a special election. She noted that technically we would be abolishing the Police Department the night that we passed the local law but the Village Administrator would have to post it and subject to a Permissive Referendum they would have 30 days. She commented that she would think that most of the residents would force that to a vote. The other way is that we can voluntarily do it by referendum. Instead of 30 days, the Board would say that we are going to put it on the ballot and look for a vote to be decided by ballot. She commented that people should not be afraid that the Board could just pass a local law and it is done tomorrow. Mr. Horgan wanted to know if it requires a simple majority to vote against it, 51%, or a specific percentage like three quarters of the residents for example. The Village Attorney advised that it a majority vote. To get on the ballot you need 20% of the registered voters to say to the Village Board that they are objecting and want to vote. Trustee Zachary commented that we would not be doing that if prevailing sentiment was against it anyway.

Trustee Zachary reported some survey results. We heard from 160 people. We asked if a department had to be eliminated to choose either the police, garbage & recycling, Highway Department or wastewater plant. Mr. Horgan wanted to know why the Police Department was first on that list. He felt that may have been suggestive. Trustee Zachary advised there was no hidden intention. The responses were that 33% chose the Police Department. 14% chose garbage & recycling. He reiterated that if we went to the Town for that we would be paying the same thing anyway. 13% chose the Highway Department. The largest number of responses, 38% chose the wastewater plant. Trustee Zachary commented that after the announcement of Indian Point's closing we discovered that the wastewater plant is one of our best resources for drawing and attracting new business. A lot of people do not want to build if they are relying on septic. He commented that while 38% said to get rid of the wastewater plant there would be complications to do that anyway. Trustee Zachary thanked Mr. Horgan for taking the time to write the letter.

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that the next Buchanan 2021 will be next Tuesday at the Village Hall. She announced that there is going to be a New York Times article in the Real Estate section. The date of that edition will be announced in the June Newsletter. She commented that reporter was quite impressed with our community.

Elizabeth Faiella, 212 Craft Lane, commented that she has lived in the community for 14 years. It is breaking her heart seeing how the Police Department is treated in her opinion. She commented that every few months we have to worry about losing the Police Department. She described her experiences with how Buchanan P.D. officers assisted her when she could not



locate her son. She talked about unwanted people in the Village and that we need a police department to protect our children. She does not want to have to worry about our children. She commented that people do not know how long we will have a Police Department. She thinks that they do an excellent job and cited various ways they look out for the community and our residents. She commented that if we lose that it will be very sad. She is a volunteer on the Ambulance Corps and does around 200-250 calls a year. Being a volunteer, she does not get paid but she loves it and wants to help her community. She commented that when she goes into someone's house on an ambulance call in the middle of the night, she is thankful that there is a police officer with them and thanked them for always being there. She commented that whatever help may be needed such as lifting a person for example, never once did a Buchanan Police officer ever say no, that it is not their job. It is important to her, her community and her neighbors. She hopes that all 5 of the Board members realize that they need to work together with our Police Department and show more support for them.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that she would like to think that this whole community works together. She cannot tell everyone how many e-mails and calls she got from Montrose and Verplanck asking her how they can become part of Buchanan. She commented that it is the Tri-Villages and we would love to have them but the problem is that we cannot. But they realize that the services we have are something that they do not and that is why they want to come here.

Ms. Faiella had a letter from her neighbor who could not be present. She did not read it but said that it also expressed her appreciation for our Police Department and wanting the Board to support them.

Jeremy Basso, 119 Bannon Avenue, is a member of Buchanan 2021. He noted that many of the things he wanted to address have already been mentioned. He thinks that community policing is a very important part of what makes the Village a place that we all know and love. He wanted to speak about some unintended consequences that have not been mentioned and some things that he thinks caused these rumors to be circulated.

Mr. Basso commented that he was out of town on Friday, March 2 when the big Nor'easter storm hit. A fairly large tree in his front yard went down completely blocking his driveway. Officer Farrell came in the middle of the storm and climbed over a stone wall to knock on his door to see if Mr. Basso's wife and children needed anything to be done or to get out. He commented that the police are doing a lot of things to stop incidents before they happen. He described an incident told to him by his cousins who own Little Bear Wheel Alignment in the Village describing how the Buchanan P.D. detected a person behind their building at a time of day when the shop was closed and there was no activity. The person told the officer that he was doing storm clean up. The owners were contacted and advised that there was no storm clean up that they had requested or were aware of.

Concerning the rumors, Mr. Basso thinks that there is no shortage of information and that is why so many people are present in support of the Police Department. He thinks that maybe not everyone is communicating clearly with their position or with the directions they are given. He commented that he was in the Police Chief's office today. He saw a letter on Village letterhead

indicating that at this time the Village was exploring all options and not hiring or promoting. He commented that is not a rumor; that the assumption is that it is a de facto cancellation of our Police Department. He does not think that was the intention of the directive. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Board has not sent anything like that out. Mr. Basso noted that he was reading it upside down. Mayor Knickerbocker found that to be strange because as she advised earlier, she had directed the Police Chief to start the hiring process. Promotions are an internal personnel issue which cannot and will not be discussed here. She noted that the Board had to meet together to have a discussion about things. Mr. Basso commented that he is not interested in discussing personnel matters. He is interested in understanding where these rumors started from. The Mayor agreed. Police Chief Tubbs asked if Mr. Basso wanted him to address this. Mr. Basso commented that he was not privy to it but that he would. The Mayor directed Mr. Basso to finish his comments first.

Mr. Basso commented that the Village is an employer. He was once an employee. He would not feel comfortable in a career in an organization that looked like it was a sinking ship, particularly if there was a document issued by the corporate headquarters, the Village in this case, stating that they are not hiring or promoting. He thinks that we can understand the recent rumor about the other police officer who is potentially leaving because they are younger and are making sure that they do not end up in a position that gives them no negotiating power. As a smart employee, they chose to find greener pastures because of what Mr. Basso concluded from the memo was a lack of support from the Village. He thinks it was promising to find out in the last 24-48 hours that there was a change and the directive reported by the Mayor to begin the hiring process. He thinks that if we are hiring that it would be very important to someone who might be considering submitting a resume' to the Village to know that the Village Board unequivocally supports the Police Department so that we can attract the best possible candidates. He is not saying that the Board does not but he thinks that the unintended consequence of the conversations and the statements about not hiring give that image. Mr. Basso commented that it is important to him to hear that the Board supports the police 100% and will do everything in their power provided that a referendum is not passed to indicate otherwise.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we have all said that we support the Police Department and would like it to continue. We are 2 years from the closure of Indian Point. We need to listen to the residents. She commented that as a smart employer this Board does not want to lose any of our police officers. But we are not going to stop someone who can better themselves by going to a larger department to perhaps be more promotable and advance their career. She commented that we wish that officer would stay. They have become part of the community. The Mayor knows that officer likes being here. Mr. Basso thinks that if you would do an exit interview with them he thinks it would be due to the recent lack of spoken support from the get go that drove the final departure. The Mayor advised that Trustees Pasquale and Funchion had a conversation with all of our police officers. Mr. Basso acknowledged knowing that. He commented that it is a rumor mill. There has been a series of information including this memo that he thinks must have circulated internally causing some people to think that what was said and what is going on are two different things. Trustee Zachary thinks that memo may have been where these rumors got started because he does not think that it came from anybody on the Village Board.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Board was going to have an Executive Session following this meeting and asked that Police Chief Tubbs be present.

Christopher DiSanto 213 Craft Lane, noted that he is a new resident. In the 2000s they rented on Lindsey Avenue with the option to buy but he was unable to purchase that home. He moved elsewhere and it has taken him 9 years to get back to Buchanan. He was originally from Ossining and owns a business there. It was his and his wife's goal to get to Buchanan because they knew this was where they wanted to live and raise their family. He feels that Buchanan is unique compared to all the towns around. He supports our police. As a new resident, finding a home here was not easy for them. They told their realtor that they wanted a house in Buchanan and they wanted a great deal. They were told that does not exist because Buchanan is such a great place that you will not find a deal where everybody wants to live. Mr. DiSanto described being welcomed to the Village right after they moved in by Officer Budde who gave him his contact information. When Mr. Di Santo told Officer Budde that he owned a local business and that if he ever needed anything from him to contact him in return, Officer Budde told him that was not why he was here. Mr. Di Santo's business in Ossining specializes in outfitting safety and security vehicles and works for many municipalities and agencies. He referred to Mr. Faiella's comments noting that he also lived through [the elimination of the Police Department] in the Town of Ossining. He does not think the end result there was great and that it is an on-going problem. He closed his shop early to be here to speak tonight. He commented that he heard the Mayor's comments about these being rumors. He heard them from his neighbors. That is why he and his wife are here tonight.

Mr. Di Santo described an incident while living in Putnam Valley before moving back to the Village. They had part-time Sheriff's coverage and State Police coverage through mutual aid. His home alarm had gone off and he described being on a conference call from his home security service with a State Trooper asking directions to his home because they did not know how to get there. He described the deep and lasting concern that left him with. When they found their present home in Buchanan, their realtor advised them to act on it immediately because it would not be on the market for long. He commented that at the time he could not have imagined being at a Village Board meeting discussing the possibility of losing our Police Department. He commented that as everyone has said tonight it looks as if we are working on fixing that problem.

Mr. Di Santo thinks that our services here are phenomenal. Within 2 days of owning their home, he spoke with our Highway Foreman to find out about the schedule for garbage pickup, etc. The Highway Foreman personally drove it to Mr. DiSanto's home. He agrees with the Mayor in that he and his wife feel blessed to be living here. He does not know the budget but plans on becoming as active as he can. If there is a need for cutbacks, he personally feels that based on other towns he is familiar with that there are more garbage and trash pickups here than is necessary for his home. He does not know the cost savings from that. He commented that he is not here to say that we should "trip over dollars to get to dimes". In Putnam Valley his bulk pickup was only once each year. He was amazed to find that we have it every month. He does

not want his taxes to triple but he is willing to invest in our Police Department. Mayor Knickerbocker welcomed Mr. Di Santo to Buchanan.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that everyone's point is well taken. They have heard from the Board. It puts more pressure on the Board to find more resources and money going forward to keep the services that we all want. Everything is still in flux. We have 2 more years before closure. She commented that potentially all this might be a moot point. We will better know where we are next year at budget time. She commented that she speaks for the Board in that we would like to keep the Police Department and our services. We will discuss our other services more with the Buchanan 2021 Committee. Everyone is welcome to that meeting. The Mayor commented that we cannot just say to people that we will do this or do that. We have to do our due diligence because it has to be fair to all our residents.

Bob Lupica, 169 Cortlandt Street, thanked the Board for the job they are doing. He realizes that it is a tough job. He complimented the Board for doing a great job getting the house on White Street taken down. It was a long time coming. The Mayor commented that it was a long legal process.

Mr. Lupica asked what it costs the Village to keep a police force. The Administrator advised it is \$1.4 million which is one quarter of our budget. Mr. Lupica wanted to know if that includes when they are providing traffic control on Broadway for traffic coming out of Entergy. The Administrator advised that comes in as Revenue and goes into the General Fund. Mr. Lupica noted that because it goes into the General Fund it does not offset their cost. He wanted to know if we took out of that \$1.4 million what Entergy gives us, what do they really cost us since that is overtime that is being included. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that our Village budget is a little over \$6 million. We figured out that the Police Department budget is \$1.4 million. The revenue from Entergy is \$65,000. Mr. Lupica noted that there was overtime from the Spectra pipeline in the previous year's budget. Trustee Zachary thinks that the benefits probably go up about \$65,000 per year. Mr. Lupica wanted to know if that budget gets significantly reduced with the retirement of a veteran officer. The Mayor advised that it does not because we will have to pay overtime. Mr. Lupica asked if we looked at trying to hire people and put them through the police academy. He has a family member who is trying to get in and he thinks the cost to be \$40,000 or \$50,000. Police Chief Tubbs advised that ultimately it will probably cost more. We do not do the high volume of diverse calls needed to train somebody. He commented that realistically a new police officer coming out of the academy would have to ride with an experienced officer for 18 months to 2 years to handle enough variety of calls to reach a point of being able to handle them on their own. The Mayor noted that our last officer who started that way was [then] Officer Tubbs, 36 years ago. Mr. Lupica wanted to know what the cost is to keep our Police Department in terms of our taxes. He asked what it would cost if we had to be covered by the County Police and State Police. The Mayor commented that we are doing our due diligence and those numbers will be out by the end of the year. She noted that we are assuming that we are not going to save money. Mr. Lupica commented that if it is going to cost us the same then this whole conversation is a moot point. But now we have to hire two officers. The Mayor advised that is only a possibility.

Mr. Lupica commented on how here in the Village residents develop a personal relationship and are on a first name basis with our police officers who take a personal interest in the community. He feels that would be very different with County or State Police. He likes seeing our police officers constantly patrolling the Village, which the County and State Police cannot do. He commented that we have a local law prohibiting overnight parking in the winter months. That will not be enforced. He thinks that if we get rid of our Police Department then we can get rid of our Village Court. He commented why do we even have a Highway Department. Then he remarked we would have to ask why do we even have a [legally incorporated] Village. He commented what functioning village does not have a police force. The Mayor commented that there are a lot who have part-time police.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that everyone has spoken. We are on the same page. The residents want our Police Department. What we have to do as a Board to mitigate the tax increase and the loss is to continue to work on these other options. She reiterated that in the end it might be a moot point. We are not doubling the taxes. Mr. Lupica feels that this should not even be in the conversation. The Mayor does not know how the rumors started. Trustee Zachary asked if Mr. Lupica thought that this Board would be a responsible board if for the last year we did not look into every option and try to assess the cost. He commented that the fact that the Board is looking at every option does not mean that we are choosing every option. We are here to do that. He commented that people are jumping to conclusions. Mr. Lupica commented that the Board sent out a survey. He thinks that many people saw the focus being on the police force. He thinks that it was not well written and not well taken, so the community got up and roared. Trustee Zachary reiterated that the Board has tried to explain that.

Mr. Lupica feels that many people want to keep this as a “Mayberry”. He commented that we cannot keep that. We are in one of the richest counties in this country and with that we need change. He does not think that this Board has embraced change enough. Trustee Zachary quoted from one survey response which said to raise taxes and that the Board did not realize that we are in Westchester.

Mr. Lupica commented that we had a Master Plan from 2005. He was on that. He believes that we have done less than 5% of it. He feels that Master Plan had a great blueprint and we do not want to accept it. Now we are doing another one. He had asked the consultant why we would do this again if we have done less than 3%. He commented that she replied we do not implement, we only recommend. He thinks that means that the implementation has to come from the 5 Village Board members. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that was in 2005. Things have changed. We are embracing change. Most of the Village Board members became Trustees after 2005. The recommendation is that every 10 years. That is what we are trying to get through now. On top of that is the Indian Point closure and economic development of that area. The last Town of Cortlandt one was the same thing. They hired other people this time around to help them implement the plan. They did not have a lot of implementation in the first one. She commented that a Master Plan is just a road map. Ours has very much changed from 2005. Mr. Lupica commented that residents can find the Master Plan on the Village web site. He thinks that it has great ideas. Trustee Zachary noted that some of the things were implemented. The

Mayor directed that we are not here to talk about the Master Plan. We are here to talk about keeping the Police Department and our services. We are veering off the subject.

Trustee Zachary agreed that the Master Plan has some good ideas but some of the things from 2005 no longer apply. Some was done, some was not. He commented that we are a small village. We do not have a Planning Department. We have limited resources. We cannot take a Master Plan and put it into effect the same way as a large municipality that might have whole department that can do just that. Because we do not have those kinds of resources things will get done but they might be slower. He commented that right now because of the situation with Indian Point we are actually getting more State agencies and groups coming and saying to take advantage of their resources. By working with these other agencies we might actually be able to start doing some of these things. He reiterated that it is not easy because we are a small town here without a lot of resources. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we are going to use those New York State resources to our best advantage.

The Mayor commented that the people on this Board who wrote the survey are not experts in doing that. It was just to get a feel for our residents' thoughts. That is all that it was. Trustee Zachary advised that the next one will be more specific and better designed. The Mayor reiterated that everyone is welcome to come to the Village Board meetings, Buchanan 2021 meetings and the New York State Task Force meetings to stay abreast of what is going on.

Mike Riecke, 223 First Street, noted that he grew up in this area and graduated from Hendrick Hudson High School in 1995. He described himself as a bit of a troublemaker back then and that the Buchanan Police made sure that he knew that trouble was not welcome in the Village. He moved here with his wife in 2009 and described getting the same personal welcome from the Buchanan P.D. as others have described. He commented that that encounter gave him a whole different feeling toward police officers in general. He described how when he first moved in, the area across the street was a dump. The police officers told him that if he saw something there to call. He does not believe we would get that from anyone else. He appreciates our Police Department and is hopeful that we will hang on to them.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that she wanted to have a conversation in Executive Session with the Police Chief concerning this memo that has been talked about tonight. She thanked Mr. Lupica for his comments noting that he was allowed to speak over the allotted time. Some members of the audience expressed a desire to hear about it now. The Mayor called on Police Chief Tubbs.

Police Chief Brian Tubbs commented that after the Workshop he had a conversation with the Village Administrator who advised that the Board will not be hiring another officer to replace the retiring sergeant. They discussed some other things. It was reduced to writing and the Chief was given a memo stating that the Village Board had decided in Executive Session that it would not be replacing the retiring officer. Chief Tubbs was not told that the information was confidential and he shared it with the police officers because he felt that they had a right to know that. He cannot say what they did with that information. Before the meeting with Trustees Pasquale and Funchion, they had a meeting with Chief Tubbs. They reiterated the same information. Chief

Tubbs received a text message on April 16 from the Mayor stating that they will not be hiring. He commented that in the conversation with Trustees Pasquale and Funchion he got a little heated because what he was told was that the Village Board was entertaining the idea of not having Buchanan officers but rather the State Police cover the midnight shift. Chief Tubbs feels that is a terrible idea and explained why. He advised that although he wanted to hear what would be said to his officers he was not welcome at the meeting with the PBA because they wanted the PBA to speak freely. The memo is from the Village Administrator. Chief Tubbs commented that it was poor placement leaving it on his desk. Mr. Basso saw it. Chief Tubbs is not denying that he left it there and that he did not snatch it out of his hand. It did happen.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we went through this once before when the officer that we are now losing through disability, whom she described as a hard working, excellent police officer, was going to leave. She commented that the Board knows the overtime we had to pay because we were missing an officer. If a replacement is not hired, we are going to be put back into the same situation with paying overtime. She commented that in fairness to the Board in order to have a complete discussion, we then had another discussion in Executive Session at the Workshop. At that Executive Session, we went through some things. She noted that Chief Tubbs knows what the overtime situation is each time we are short an officer. We were fortunate that the Chief was able to hire someone like Officer Loertscher. The Mayor noted that he advised that it would be difficult to hire somebody at that time. Chief Tubbs agreed. He advised that we had 4 applicants, 2 of whom were viable. He commented that fortunately for the Village Officer Loertscher turned out to be excellent. The Mayor agreed. She knows what the Chief Tubbs' thoughts are and she is hopeful going forward with these new candidates. The Mayor commented that with the Entergy closure people outside the Village know about that. Chief Tubbs advised that yesterday the Mayor did come to his office and direct him to start looking for a new officer. The Mayor advised that she had wanted to tell him last week following the Workshop but he was out sick. She wished him good luck with our new candidate. It will be a good thing in that at least he will have some people available if we lose another officer. Chief Tubbs advised that they would still discuss staffing at a later time. The Mayor agreed.

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked everyone for coming and for all their comments. Everything was very well heard. She called for a 5 minute break following which we will resume with the business on the agenda.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a. PUBLIC HEARING – ON A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 181 OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF BUCHANAN ESTABLISHING A TAX ON UTILITY SERVICES.**

At 9:21 PM a MOTION to open the Public Hearing was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

Trustee Zachary read the Local Law (*copy attached*).

Trustee Funchion requested that in consideration of how long this meeting has gone so far that this be read in summary. The Village Attorney advised that most municipalities do that because it is all available ahead of time. The Mayor directed that to be done.

Trustee Zachary commented that almost every village in Westchester County imposes this tax. It is the only tax that by law villages can impose other than property tax. It is 1.0%. It will show up on your gas and electric utility bills. It is fairly small. For example on a \$100 electric bill it would add \$1. Con Edison estimates that it would add \$80,000 per year to the Village. He noted that in terms of our tax levy, it is roughly 3.5% of our taxes. He commented that every little bit helps. If the Board approves, it goes to the State and it will be a few months before it shows up.

Trustee Funchion is totally opposed. He feels that it is unfair taxation. It taxes people who heat their homes with natural gas more than the other residents. People who use oil heat will not be taxed on this. He feels that every tax should be equal to everybody across the board. He knows that the other Board members feel differently but he is opposed to this tax.

Mayor Knickerbocker noted that we are one of only one or two municipalities in Westchester County that does not have this.

Trustee Zachary agreed with Trustee Funchion's statement that it is not ideal in that way but because of our current financial situation he feels that we need to take advantage of the income it would bring.

Trustee Pasquale reconfirmed that it will be added on to an electric bill. Trustee Jackson was unfamiliar with that aspect. He concurred with Trustee Funchion that if you have oil heat, you are not subject to this but if you do not then you are subject to it. Trustee Zachary noted that you are paying other taxes on your fuel oil bill. The Mayor noted that you pay taxes on all the utilities. Trustee Jackson reiterated that this is an added burden that only goes to some users as opposed to others. The Mayor wanted to know what it is estimated to cost per resident per year. Trustee Zachary commented that he has a two-family house. His electric bill would typically be around \$200 per month and \$300 per month in air conditioning season. So for him the tax would be \$2.30 per month. He thinks it is a very small amount per person but in our current budget situation the \$80,000 it will bring to the Village is not to be dismissed.

Eileen Absenger, 138 Tate Avenue, concurred with Trustees Funchion and Jackson. She is not in favor of this tax. She commented that we are an anomaly village in not having this and should stay that way. We do not know what will happen when Entergy closes in 2020. She asked if they will be contributing to this. Trustee Zachary advised that it is everybody who receives a bill from Con Edison. Ms. Absenger commented that Entergy gets a bill from Con Edison. She wanted to know how much does that estimated \$80,000 go down when they close? The Mayor advised that currently Entergy produces electricity but they also buy it. Trustee Zachary advised that Con Edison has given him a figure of \$40,000 per year based on their 2009 billing. The \$80,000 estimate is based on all of their electric bills in Buchanan in 2017. He thinks that even if Entergy represents 10% or 20% that over time increases will still keep it at around \$80,000. He does not have any hard figures. Ms. Absenger would like more concrete facts about what the change will be after Entergy closes. Trustee Zachary advised that Con Ed would give us a total



for the Village. He does not think that they would give us individual customer amounts. Ms. Absenger feels that is important to have because if this tax gets put in, it will stay in. The Mayor advised that Entergy is going to be a very small piece of it. Their consumption at that point will be minimal.

Trustee Jackson commented that the larger crux of the problem is that it is not equally shared by all residents. The Mayor commented that is the case throughout Westchester County. Trustee Jackson commented that does not mean that because everyone else is doing it that we should be doing it too. The Mayor wants this Board to figure out how we are going to get another \$80,000.

John Mattis, Tate Avenue, asked how much of the \$80,000 is from electric and how much is from natural gas. Trustee Zachary advised that about 75% is from electric. Mr. Mattis commented that to be fair, just do it on the electric. Trustee Zachary advised that it is a 1% Gross Utility Tax. We cannot split it up. Mr. Mattis commented that if Entergy generates electricity they do not just use it themselves. They pump it out to the grid and pay Con Edison for it to get it back. He agrees with Ms. Absenger's question on knowing how much that is. The Mayor advised that we will get that information. She advised that this is a Public Hearing and we will not be voting on this tonight. We will keep this Public Hearing open and get that information for our June Village Board meeting. Trustee Zachary reiterated that he did not think that we can obtain that individual billing information.

A MOTION to adjourn this Public Hearing at this time and keep it open until the June Village Board meeting was made by Trustee Jackson and seconded by Trustee Pasquale. The vote was 4 to 1 with Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustees Funchion, Jackson and Pasquale in favor and Trustee Zachary opposed because he feels that regardless of Entergy's percentage this should be enacted.

The Mayor commented that we had discussed this law a couple of years ago. It was tabled at that time. Trustee Zachary commented that was in 2011 and had we enacted it then we would have \$220,000 in our coffers now. There are the circumstances with the budget.

**b. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 181 ESTABLISHING A TAX ON UTILITY SERVICES BY THE VILLAGE OF BUCHANAN**

This will be held over until the June Village Board meeting.

**c. 18-18 RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2018-2019 VILLAGE OF BUCHANAN BUDGET**

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we must pass the budget for 2018-2019 today because it is the deadline date. We have had a Public Hearing and discussed it. She asked the Administrator for any further comments.

Village Administrator Hay reported that at the conclusion of the Public Hearing we were at a 9.94% budget. During the budget process we left money in the budget to take down the White Street house. That has now happened, so that money does not now have to be paid. He

recommended as discussed the most logical options for the Board to decide would be to put half the \$100,000 into Contingency and half to the paving line where it originally came from. We had discussed possibly putting the income from the Gross Utility Tax into Revenue. That is now in a holding period. Trustee Zachary does not think that it is safe to assume that income. The Administrator will take out the \$30,000. But we will also increase the Revenue from the insurance recoveries from the police officer who has been out on disability by the same amount. That would lower the percentage increase to 8.36%. If the Board is in favor of all this that would make the budget tax cap compliant. The new tax rate would be \$284.29. Those are the only changes.

Mayor Knickerbockers asked if the Board understands the Administrator's recommended changes. Trustees Jackson and Pasquale confirmed that they did. Trustee Zachary wanted to confirm that we are still within the tax cap even if we remove the Gross Utility Tax. The Administrator advised that we would remove it but would move the amount to the insurance recovery from Workers Compensation. He confirmed in response to Trustee Zachary that we will put \$25,000 into the Tax Stabilization Fund. The Mayor noted that there is more money going into the Contingency which frees it up instead of targeting it and not being able to use it if there is an emergency.

Trustee Zachary commented that a lot of work went into the budget. It is not going to be very easy. A couple of things are making him hesitant to vote in favor of it. The Tax Stabilization Fund is one. He commented that nobody on this Board wants to raise taxes; that it is painful when you think of doing it. But he is thinking that of those things that are going to happen in the next few years that might provide revenue, like business development or money that comes out of the decommissioning, are speculative. He thinks that there will be a gap while we are trying to transition before that money comes in. He thinks that there will be periods where we are going to be forced to raise taxes more than we want to and it will feel like a punch to the gut. He thinks that we need to put at least \$100,000 into the Tax Stabilization Fund to offset the larger increase in a number of years, whether it is a taking those increases from 50% to 30% or 40%. He feels that this budget is missing that and it does not fully consider a 5 year perspective which is important to him. Therefore he has to vote against it at this point.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we are now at 8.36%. If we add \$100,000 that is close to 5% more. Trustee Zachary noted that we have \$25,000 already so he is looking to add \$75,000 more which is between 3%-4%. The Mayor commented that 2020 is probably the first time we would have to use that Tax Stabilization Fund. Both plants will be closed in 2021 and that is when we would be losing 30%. Because of that she believes that the Cessation Fund would cover that at that point. She will confirm that. That fund is specifically for the Indian Point closure. It was funded at \$24 million this year. There needs to be more. Trustee Zachary thinks that maybe the Cessation Fund will cover half the tax revenue we will be losing. The Tax Stabilization Fund would cover another 5%. He thinks it is a prudent thing. He commented that we are not just going to raise taxes to pad the bank account. It is a dedicated fund that can only be used to offset future tax increases.

The Mayor asked for the Board's comments on adding another 3% into this budget.

Trustee Funchion wants to call for a vote. Trustee Jackson wants to split the difference and put in \$35,000. Trustee Zachary commented that we have already budgeted \$25,000. He is asking to make it \$100,000.

The Mayor advised that before we can vote for the budget she wants to know where the Board is coming from. She asked if we are going to meet the tax cap at 8.36% or go over it and do a 12% increase.

Trustee Funchion is happy with the 8.36%. Trustee Pasquale wanted to confirm that Trustee Zachary's proposed increase would make it 11.5%.

Village Attorney Porteus advised that we held a Budget Hearing which was closed with the budget at 9.95%. She advised that we have not reopened that Hearing. The Administrator advised that we can still continue it. The budget must be adopted by May 1 (today). The Village Attorney advised that we should open a Budget Hearing, decide on the budget, and then close it.

At 9:40 PM a MOTION to open the Public Hearing on the budget was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

Trustee Pasquale likes the budget as it is and to keep the tax cap. Trustee Funchion wants to keep it as is. Mayor Knickerbocker advised Trustee Jackson that if you split the difference as he suggested that it brings it up to 9.94%. The Administrator confirmed with the Mayor that we were starting from 8.36% which will make the tax cap. Trustee Zachary said to take a vote on the current resolution. He feels that if we are not going to fund it to a greater extent that we might as well be expedient and make a move on this budget. Trustee Jackson commented that he is just trying to compromise.

At 9:45 PM a MOTION to close this Public Hearing on the Budget was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

Trustee Funchion read the budget Resolution (*copy attached*).

A MOTION to adopt the Village Budget as presented was made by Trustee Funchion seconded by Trustee Pasquale with Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustees Funchion and Pasquale in favor and Trustees Jackson and Zachary opposed. The vote was 3 to 2 in favor.

Trustee Funchion wanted to know if we needed to override the property tax cap. The Mayor advised that we did not.

**d. 18-19 RESOLUTION SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING ON A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 211 OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF BUCHANAN**

Trustee Pasquale read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that the Board has really gone through this and updated this section of the Code. The Public Hearing will be next month. Village Attorney Porteus advised

that she changed one thing in paragraph 2(a). The only change was that the Board wanted language about no wrapping of a vehicle.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**e. 18-20 RESOLUTION APPROVING A VEHICLE USE POLICY**

Trustee Jackson read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that this is the policy for any Village employee who uses our vehicles. There is a list of requirements for the use of these vehicles. The Administrator advised that it is a general use policy. There are general rules and regulations and it will eventually be part of the Village Handbook. Right now, we will have it signed by anyone who drives a Village vehicle or equipment.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

**f. 18-21 RESOLUTION AWARDING THE WATER METER REPLACEMENT CONTRACT.**

Trustee Funchion read this Resolution (*copy attached*).

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we have this money in our Water Fund. She noted that there is quite a spread on the numbers with the bidding process. The Administrator has spoken with the Village Engineer who expects that pending approval of the contract that it could be completed by the end of summer. The Administrator commented that when this was done where he lives, a flyer was sent to everyone to make an appointment and the process goes quickly. Someone must be at home when this is done because they have to go into your house to access the water meter. The Mayor noted that we will be replacing over 700 water meters. Trustee Zachary asked why the bid with the other company was withdrawn. The Administrator advised that they did not include the cost of providing the meters.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**g. 18-22 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EMPLOYMENT OF SEASONAL EMPLOYEES**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that that we have 2 new employees for the summer. This is something we do every summer to help with the grass cutting and other work.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

**18-23 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UNPAID WATER CHARGES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE VILLAGE TAX BILLS**

Trustee Pasquale read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

Trustee Jackson asked if we charge a penalty when there is a carryover from one year to another. The Administrator advised that there is a penalty. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that when the bill is not paid by May 1 it automatically goes on their tax bill which is due at the end of June. The Administrator advised that it is for 2017 charges. Trustee Zachary asked if there have been any problems with adding this to the tax bills. The Administrator advised only if they do not pay their taxes. Some people do end up paying it in with their taxes.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

**h. 18-24 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF A VILLAGE FACILITY**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

The Mayor noted that this is a fund raiser and we always waive the fee for them. These are people who work very hard for us here in the Village. They do the planters and raise funds to pay for them and the plants without asking the Village for money. We thank the Beautification Committee. They do a lot of great work here and we support them in their fund raisers.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**i. 18-25 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF A VILLAGE FACILITY**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

The Mayor noted that the insurance certificate is attached. This is something we do every year. We waive the fee because it is for our area veterans. It is sponsored by the Town of Cortlandt.

A MOTION to adopt this Resolution as read was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

**j. APPOINTMENT OF A ZONING BOARD MEMBER**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

The Mayor has appointed Mary Funchion to this position. The Mayor commented that she is a very conscientious person. When we had the vacancy from the passing of Mike Cherico, several people in the Village were asked. No one came forward. Mary Funchion stepped up. The Mayor is sure that she will be an excellent addition to the Zoning Board and an active participant.

This was a mayoral appointment.

**6. INFORMATION FROM OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS:**

a) Justice Court Report – February-March 2018

Received and filed.

Mayor Knickerbocker noted that the amounts received were \$300, \$4,164 and \$2,390 for March, and \$1,089. She knows that residents want to know what fees are being collected in the court.

b) Planning Board Minutes – February 2018

Received and filed.

c) Zoning Board Minutes – February 2018

Received and filed.

d) Fire Inspector's Report – February-March 2018

Received and filed.

e) Attorney's Report

Village Attorney Porteus advised that everything she had for the Board this evening was for the Executive Session.

f) Administrator's Report

Village Administrator Hay reported that the White Street house came down. The Bannon Avenue water pit project is under way. It will take about 2 months to complete.

g) Mayor's Reports

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked the Village Administrator, the Village Attorney and the Building Inspector for all their hard work. She does not think that people understand the hard work that it took to get that White Street house taken down. There was a lot of legality involved. There was asbestos. We had to have the Department of Labor there and a water truck that hosed down the building because of the asbestos. She thanked everyone for being patient. But we finally got it done. Trustee Jackson thanked the Fire Department for their input in the clean up of the property.

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that yesterday she and Trustee Pasquale met with the Federal Economic Development Agency. The meeting was set up through Representative Nita Lowey who is one of the elected officials supportive of us and a co-sponsor of The Stranded Act. They went around the Village and showed them sites that have development potential. Potentially we can get grants for that 2 years before and after the plant closure. So we might be able to get money even if it is for planning. The Mayor commented that we continue to work on ways to mitigate the loss of Entergy.

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that on May 12 the Beautification Committee will have their Spring Fair at the pavilion from 10 AM to 4 PM. You can buy your plants in time for Mother's Day.

Mayor Knickerbocker was glad to report happy news. The Village of Buchanan is having a 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on Saturday, June 16. It is free to all Buchanan residents and \$20 for non-residents. There will be a picnic with hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage & peppers, salads and soda.

There will be games, raffles, a bouncy house and a dunking booth. It will be a fun day. Cindy Kempter and Sharon Murphy in the Village office and Colleen Murphy set a lot of this up. She commented that they are a small and mighty group. The Mayor thanked them. You have to come in to the Village Hall to get a ticket to allow you to attend. Tickets will not be available at the gate because we need to plan in advance for the food. The ticket will be used for the raffle. As you are leaving you will get a souvenir mug. The Mayor was able to get a grant from Entergy which made it possible for residents to enjoy this at no cost. June 19 is the official anniversary date. The Village Hall will be open that day from Noon-8 PM with coffee and cake. The Mayor invited everyone to stop by.

#### h) Trustee's Reports

Trustee Zachary reported that the benches and the plaque have been ordered. The front of the Village Hall property will be made into a park with the history of the former school building on the plaque. It will happen soon.

Trustee Zachary reported that along with the Mayor and other Trustees, he attended the D.L. English presentation. They are consultants hired by the State to assess the properties at Indian Point owned by Entergy and their possible re-use. They made some different suggestions. Trustee Zachary commented that nothing is going to happen too quickly because it is all owned by Entergy and they are going to put their decommissioning plan together before it all happens. So it will be some time before we see new tax revenue from those properties. He brought the proposal that if they go with some kind of development on the parcel bordering Lent's Cove Park, we need some kind of buffer. He feels that this report left a lot of things open without any clear answers and that there are so many variables out of our control.

Trustee Zachary commented that while we are talking about property maintenance, keeping the Village going, continuing our services and our financial situation, he does not want us to lose sight of the quality of life issues. He feels that something like a little Village park is a quality of life issue. So is property maintenance. He commented that he is driving around the Village and jotted down a few addresses. He commented that if the neighbors and residents will not complain, he will. He will relay that back to the Village Administrator and Building Inspector. Trustee Zachary commented that if you see a property that is run down and feel that it is running down the value of your property, you might want to contact someone in the Village office. He commented that anything to do with property maintenance often goes nowhere if no one complains. If someone wants to complain without doing it personally, they can contact him through the Village Hall and he will look at it and if necessary make the complaint for them.

Trustee Zachary commented that people keep talking about the real estate panic in Buchanan. He thinks that people are saying things that might suggest that people here are going start dumping their houses. He commented that nothing is farther from the truth. In this month's Westchester Magazine one reader wrote in that Buchanan is unlikely to be spared from the property tax increases after Indian Point closes and that people are already moving out in advance of the shutdown. Trustee Zachary commented that a few things tell him that people are not just jumping ship. The Building Inspector has noted that anything going on the market here

is instantly swallowed up. Trustee Zachary commented that he has driven the length of Tate Avenue over the years and seen 3, 4, 5 and in some years as many as 8-10 real estate signs out. This Spring he has seen only one sign of a house for sale. He thinks that other people are saying and realizing that this is an opportunity for Buchanan to reinvent itself. He agrees that we should be looking at a new sense of community and to change and evolve with the times. He described a recent chance conversation with someone who commented to Trustee Zachary that he thought that Buchanan was going to become a great place to live with the plant closing because they would be doing some new things. Trustee Zachary thinks that if there are a lot of houses on the market that there are a lot of people ready to swallow them up.

Trustee Pasquale noted that he missed the last Board meeting. He congratulated Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustees Funchion and Zachary on their reelection, even though they ran unopposed. He commented that it is a pleasure and honor to work with them. He wanted to continue to keep the community updated on some of the police responses. He personally thanks them. In the month of April, Officer Palmietto responded to a resident injured in a fall. On April 10 there were youths loitering on Burke Court and they increased police patrol. On April 11 summons were issued for after hours presence at Lent's Cove Park. On April 13, a call was received about suspicious subjects attempting to hide behind bushes at Tate Avenue and Valerie Court. It was determined that they were youths playing a game with water guns. On April 15, a resident reported a sick skunk at their door that could have rabies and the police euthanized and removed it. On April 21, a suspicious vehicle on Lindsey Avenue was asked to leave. On April 24 on a routine walk through the B/V School employees reported a suspicious person on the playground. The police officer determined that the person was walking their dog. He was instructed not to return to school property. On April 26, a call was received from school employees about an explosion at the Buchanan/Verplanck School. The children were brought inside and lockdown procedures were begun. Officer Farrell determined that it was fireworks from a funeral in Verplanck. On April 29, an officer responded to a call of a domestic dispute at a residence. Follow-up investigations continue.

Trustee Pasquale wished everyone a Happy Mother's Day. He commented that for those who are still lucky enough to have their mothers around them to give them an extra hug and tell them how much you love them.

Trustee Jackson reported that he had a conversation with the Superintendent of Hendrick Hudson School District. There will be a historical open house in the full re-enactment. He noted that he was a member of the Educational Committee working with the school district. Trustee Jackson commented that when we talk about the budget, the 800 pound gorilla in the room is what will happen with the school budget. The school tax is the majority of the taxes we pay. We are working with the Superintendent on ways to mitigate that impact. He believes that the \$24 million fund is a one-shot deal. The Mayor commented that it is a beginning. It has to be funded every year.

Trustee Jackson wants to bring back discussions about the illegal apartments. He talked to a couple of residents. He feels that we do not have a handle on that. Further investigation by the Building Inspector will give us more to work on. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that our



Building Inspector has caught up on a few of the illegal apartments. If people see or know of any, they should contact the Building Inspector.

Trustee Jackson reminded that our catch basins flow down to the lake. He said to be aware of trash on the street. Our Highway Department does a great job. When walking their dogs, people should remember to pick up after them.

Trustee Jackson wished everyone a “Happy Mother’s Day” and to have a “Great Buchanan Day”.

Trustee Funchion wished everyone a Happy Mother’s Day. He reported that he and Trustee Pasquale met with the Buchanan Police officers on April 20. He thought it was a beneficial meeting and that they all walked away happy. As reported, he went to the meeting with the State's consultant D. L. English. He thinks that we are getting non-partisan help from Representative Nita Lowey, State Senator Terrance Murphy and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef. He thinks that they have all done things to help out our communities. He commented that sometimes politicians get bad names but they are trying to get us a good bit of money. We are not alone in this.

Trustee Funchion attended the Veterans' meeting at the VA Hospital. It is always a nice meeting to go to. He does not know if people know it is the New York State Veterans' retirement home. It is run by very competent people and is a beautiful place. There is a waiting list. Most of the residents are male but the wives are also eligible to be there. Trustee Funchion commented that on Memorial Day our thoughts and prayers will be with those who did not come home from war and their families.

**7. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:**

None.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

At 10:25 PM a MOTION to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 10:27 PM a MOTION to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues was made by Trustee Pasquale, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that no decisions will be made and no monies will be spent.

At 11:40 PM a MOTION to exit and adjourn the Executive Session was made by Trustee Zachary, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.