

**Village of Buchanan  
Mayor & Board of Trustees  
Village Board Organizational Meeting  
April 4, 2017**

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker

Trustees Richard A. Funchion, Duane M. Jackson, Cesare Pasquale and Nicolas Zachary

Village Attorney Stephanie V. Porteus

Village Board Secretary Susan F. Matthews

Village Administrator Kevin Hay

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker opened the meeting at 7:34 PM, welcomed everyone, informed them of the fire regulations and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. READ RESULTS OF THE MARCH 21, 2017 VILLAGE ELECTION:**

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

**3. ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

Mayor Knickerbocker administered the oath of office to Trustees Cesare Pasquale and Duane Jackson. Photos were taken with their families. They each thanked everyone who voted and everyone on the Board. They look forward to working together in the best interest of the Village. The Mayor commented that they would work their hardest to get through the challenges.

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

Trustee Jackson's wife Linda commented that her husband's conversations about the Village and the Village Board are always positive. She appreciated all that they do and all their hard work. She said that the families support them. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that the Board does spend a lot of time and effort doing what we do for the Village. It is a labor of love. They know that their families are behind them and supporting them. They appreciate the support because not everybody understands the commitment to this job. She commented that some people say it is only one meeting a month, a couple of hours, to which she answers "Where is that?"

**5. APPOINT DEPUTY MAYOR:**

Mayor Knickerbocker appointed Trustee Funchion. He thanked her and said it was an honor to serve.

**6. MAYOR'S ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS (including Planning and Zoning Board):**

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

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that we need someone for the Assessment Review Board. It meets one time per year for 4 hours. Anyone interested should contact the Village Administrator. Something will be sent in the next Newsletter.

A MOTION to accept these appointments as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

**7. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES:**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the appointment of Trustees of the Village Board to various committees. She noted that there will be other committees formed which will be added on as needed.

These are mayoral appointments and no vote was required.

**8. 17-15 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING MEETING DATES, ADOPTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE AND OPEN MEETINGS LAW, SETTING DATES FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TENTATIVE 2017-2018 VILLAGE BUDGET, DESIGNATING VILLAGE DEPOSITORIES, DESIGNATING OFFICIAL VILLAGE NEWSPAPER, ESTABLISHING THE MILEAGE ALLOWANCE RATE FOR REIMBURSEMENT, ADOPTING VILLAGE PROCUREMENT POLICY, AND AUTHORIZATION TO ATTEND CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS.**

Trustees Funchion and Zachary respectively read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

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

**9. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:**

Trustee Jackson reported that the Historical Society is planning an Open House and welcomed residents to participate. The date is still to be set.

Trustee Funchion congratulated Trustees Pasquale and Jackson and commented that they have done very well on the Board. They all work well together. He appreciates all that the Mayor has done. He feels that she has managed the Board very well and given us all a sense of freedom to say what we want to say. The Board is working very hard regarding the elephant in the room” which is Entergy saying, “Bye, bye!” to all us and taking all of their money with them. He commented that we will get to the Promised Land on this. It is a lot of work but we are going to get there with the least amount of impact on our Village as possible.

Trustee Funchion thanked all the people who put together the Saint Patrick’s Day Parade. He commented that he is on the committee but the other individuals on the committee do so much and put their hearts and souls into it. They do a fantastic job. He commented that as soon as that committee winds down we start with the Buchanan Day Committee. This year it will be held on September 23. They will publish the committee’s meeting dates and location in the next Newsletter. He welcomed anyone who is interested to join the committee. It is a lot of work but a lot of fun both on the committee and seeing the community enjoy coming together.

Trustee Zachary congratulated Trustees Pasquale and Jackson. He is glad to see them back on the Board. He commented that this Board is made up of 5 people who at times may have different or similar ideas but they always have the best interests of the Village at heart. Everyone on the Board works hard for the Village. He commented that whatever we have done in the past, we are now ratcheting it up because of the situation with the closing of Indian Point. He thinks that we are all going to be getting an education. There is a lot to look into and a lot to explore. We have to get the best possible solution over the next few years. It will be a process and will take a lot of work. He is happy that everyone on the Board is devoted to our Village and he will be glad to work with them. He thinks that we have to think a little more out of the box than we have at times because it is changing times. With the closing of Indian Point we have to look for creative solutions and keep this as a good place to live.

Trustee Zachary reported on the Comprehensive Plan Survey. He noted that we have a Comprehensive Plan Review committee working along with the Village Board. He commented that unavoidably that committee is very intertwined with the work. How do we do business development? How do we solve some of the issues in the Village? How do we improve the quality of life here and maintain the things that people like? Trustee Zachary read some of his tabulations from the responses to the survey sent to residents. Things that most people liked best about the Village were our services, low taxes, convenient location specifically mentioning commuting to New York City, river access and convenience to shopping. Other responses cited the friendliness and the peaceful, quiet nature of the Village. The survey asked to select from a list the most important issues on which the Village should take action. The top 5 responses were appearance and beautification followed by commercial development. Trustee Zachary noted that others wanted no commercial development but most people favored expanding it. Many

responses also wanted open space preservation which Trustee Zachary interpreted as wanting some balance. Also in the top 5 were river access, Code enforcement and sidewalks. Trustee Zachary commented that among the responses to the question on what improvements you would like to see, two people wrote to remove the billboards. He advised that the Village did that several years ago. The only remaining billboard that looks like it is in Buchanan is along side of the railroad tracks which is actually on Peekskill property and not within our control. The biggest response to that question was to bring businesses into the Route 9A and Village Circle areas. Next was to tend to the “ghost” properties, abandoned properties and poorly maintained buildings. Trustee Zachary advised that the Village is aware and is working on that. Another item that got several responses was fixing roads which he noted the Board has been doing every year to the extent that we can. He commented that we cannot repave the whole Village in one shot. Another item was bike paths. He commented that a fair number of responses were looking for expansion of recreation programs. In some cases they noted improvements to the pool. In some it was more parks, more arts and more Village events. Trustee Zachary commented that these are things that we are thinking about and it is always good to get feedback from residents. Trustee Zachary wants residents to know that they are always welcome to come to the Village Board meetings. They are on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. Their thoughts are also welcome at the Master Plan committee meetings which are on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Village Hall.

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked Trustee Zachary for his comments. She wondered about the responses on river access and whether people, especially people who are new to the Village, know about Lent’s Cove. Trustee Zachary commented that not everything that people mentioned in their responses is within the Village’s jurisdiction. For example some people said that they would like the Village to keep Indian Point open. He commented that the Board would like that but we do not have power over that. Some people responded that they would like the Village to eliminate Section 8 housing. He advised that we do not legally have the ability to do that.

Mayor Knickerbocker has spoken to the Comprehensive Plan Committee about their next venture if they chose to follow that road which she will explain shortly.

The Mayor congratulated Trustees Pasquale and Jackson. She is happy that they are back on the Board. She commented that everyone brings different things to the table. Everybody on this Board has their strengths. Right now with the challenges that we are going to go through for the next couple of years, we have a great team here. She is very thankful for that. They are a good team and will work together. She thanked them for their service to the Village. Mayor Knickerbocker wanted to clarify some things that she has heard over the last couple of months. She commented that in the last couple of months it was said that the Village would be spending \$80,000 on the Master Plan. That is not correct. She thinks they were alluding to 2005 when they did a total “right to the bone” Master Plan. That ended up costing the Village \$88,000. The

one that we are currently working on is just an update. The Mayor advised that the Village Administrator has put in for grant money. It is not going to cost \$88,000.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that it was said that this Board had knowledge of properties that were available in the Village and contacted the County Planning Board so that those homes could be used for affordable housing. She said that this is not the truth. She wants to get to the bottom of this because there are people living next to these houses who are very upset. The Mayor noted that the County is no longer looking for property. Last year the County was trying to fulfill their obligation for 758 units of affordable housing. Buchanan seemed to be an affordable place. The Mayor advised that she was told that Bronxville was not one of the communities that were chosen. The County purchased 5 properties in the Village. They renovated them and will be selling them to people who are working families. They have to be earning over \$80,000 and have to apply and be accepted for a mortgage. They will be paying taxes on their home. These are not Section 8 houses. This is home ownership. There are 5 properties. They are 230 Westchester Avenue, 176 Henry Street, 194 Ketchum Avenue and 208 Center Street. There is also one at 280 Bleakley Avenue which was a two-family and has been converted into a single family house. The Village Board had nothing to do with any part of that transaction. The Mayor called Norma Drummond from the County Planning Commission. She had come here to talk about affordable housing. The Mayor asked her how the County knew that these properties are available because the Village Board did not know until after they had been bought. Ms. Drummond advised the Mayor that the County looks at multiple listings and foreclosures. These are not Section 8. The Mayor does not want to see people upset. They should always feel free to contact the Mayor, the Village Board or the Village Administrator.

Trustee Funchion commented that what the Mayor just said is very important in today's world. In the future with Entergy leaving we have to make sure that the community gets the real facts and not just hearsay which can lead to panic in people and make their lives miserable. He repeated the Mayor's comments to contact us because this Board is transparent. We will tell you exactly what is going on. He is sure that as the Entergy closing goes on there will be thousands of ideas that people will have on why do we not do this or that. He noted Trustee Zachary's comments that there are certain things we are not allowed to do. For example, questions like why do we not have a gas powered plant? The answer is because it is not our property and we do not have the authority to go in there and say that we are going to put in something else. He encouraged everyone to come to the Board if they have questions and definitely if they have ideas.

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that last Tuesday Entergy had a Stakeholder's meeting. It was held here because there was an outage at the plant and they did not have a place to have it, so we offered our building. After the meeting, she and Trustee Funchion sat down with Entergy representatives. They advised Entergy that the Board is interested in any portions of the property

that could be redeveloped because we are looking to replace our tax base. The Mayor commented that they listened and understood our position. Discussion was held about different parts of the property, and the parts that could not be used for a while and those that potentially might be available. The Mayor commented that we planted the seed and went straight to the source. Entergy and the NRC will make the final decision.

Mayor Knickerbocker would like to set up a very Buchanan-specific commission to be called the Buchanan 2021 Commission. She asked the Master Plan committee to be part of it. Anyone who is interested should send their resume' or write a letter stating their interest and send it to the Village. The commission will meet once a month. The Mayor noted that there was another commission in the Village several years ago. A group of people with different backgrounds came together and came up with some very interesting thoughts. The Mayor advised that we are looking at life beyond three nuclear power plants and what this community is going to look like going forward into the future. We will start that once we get all the resume's. The Board will pick the commission. Trustee Funchion advised that the Town of Cortlandt has a committee and our Village Board is on it. This would be a lot more specific. He commented that the Board really wants to hear from the people because there are going to be some tough decisions to be made down the road and the more people that we have giving us input is so important. Trustee Funchion is very optimistic about this. He noted that every year the Village has a higher average of voters participating than any place in the United States. He commented that this community participates. He does not want to hear someone ask afterward why was this or that was done. We want to hear from people before these decisions have to be made.

Trustee Zachary advised that the Comprehensive Plan Survey can still be filled out on-line on the Village web site.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a) 17-16 RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY BILL A-711 EXPANDING COVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS.**

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that normally we do not do New Business at the Organizational Meeting. However our support for this bill before the New York State Assembly was requested by our Fire Department.

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

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

## **11. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:**

Diane Tangen, Catherine Street, congratulated Trustees Jackson and Pasquale and thanked the whole Board for their service. She wanted to know if Entergy will still have to pay taxes to us as long as they own that property. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we have the PILOT Agreement and that either party can request to come back to the table to renegotiate it. She learned in the process of going through this and speaking with the people in Vernon, Vermont that each one of the storage casks is assessed at \$1 million. We know that those are going to be at Indian Point for a while. Entergy will own them as long as they own the property. The NRC also has control and as long as they are on the property Entergy will have to supply security. The Mayor's understanding is that in the end there will be a total of 115 of them on the pads. There are a few more cycles to yet come out of the reactors. They will go into the cooling pools. She remarked that the Board will all become experts on decommissioning. They are assessed \$1 million for each one. Plus they still have structures. We will have to have someone come in and assess the property. There is a place in west Texas that stores low level radiation from nuclear power plants. The Mayor emphasized to understand that they do not start tearing it apart the day they shut down. Right now they have \$1.7 billion in a fund to decommission. That decommissioning has to be for three of those plants because Unit One also had to be decommissioned and taken apart. So if they do not have the money, the decommissioning process cannot start. Permission is being sought to allow the Department of Energy to store the high level radiation in that Texas facility. That is a possible alternative for those rods.

Trustee Funchion commented that this is where the whole PILOT Agreement protects us. He commented that the reality is that it comes down to a fight of lawyers. Communities go into PILOT programs because they do not have the money to fight huge corporations like Entergy. He commented that this is going to be a new fight. The PILOT provides taxation up to a point of their departure. He commented that what happens after that is new frontier. He commented that one thing that came out of the Town of Cortlandt meetings is that we are hopefully looking to have the State help with funding in getting a consultant, a law firm that specializes in the closing of nuclear power plants and the ramifications. Trustee Funchion feels that at that point it might be worth the effort to fight them in court over the appraised value.

Trustee Zachary commented that generally the way taxes are assessed is based on the assessed value of the property. The alternative to paying taxes based on the assessed value of the property taxing is the PILOT which is an agreed upon amount. Litigation can get very expensive so you agree upon a number. We are currently getting \$3 million per year, slightly less. When the plant closes the taxes will go down one third each year. After 3 years we will get 10% of that \$3 million, or \$300,000. He commented that \$3 million provides the Village with a decent amount of income. \$300,000 does not. He commented that while litigation may have been questionable when there was the chance of getting \$3 million in a PILOT, he feels that there is no doubt it will

be worth fighting it when that PILOT gives us only \$300,000. The Mayor advised that we are still petitioning the State for support. She is telling people to not panic. There are a lot of things happening.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that Ms. Tangen and other residents have contacted us about there being no sound for the Optimum broadcasts of the Village Board meeting on the Buchanan Channel. Village Administrator Hay has contacted them. They are having their engineers look at it. The Administrator explained that the broadcast goes out of the controller to a unit where it is split for the FIOS feed, which has no reported problems, and the Cablevision feed. The Administrator went through it with our videographer who is an A/V technician. He confirmed that the connections on the equipment at Village Hall were all good. He noted that the Cablevision equipment was several years old. We expect that they will send a technician and that the problem will be fixed shortly. Trustee Zachary would like the Board meetings put on the Village web site so people can watch and stop and start it as needed.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:35 PM a MOTION to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

Mayor Knickerbocker wished everyone a great Buchanan day!