

**Mayor & Board of Trustees**

**Village Board Meeting**

**November 6, 2017**

**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

Chief of Police Brian Tubbs

Highway Foreman Bobby Wheeler

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. She asked Police Chief Brian Tubbs to lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Mayor informed every one of the fire regulations.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

June 27, 2017 Workshop: A MOTION to approve these minutes as read was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

September 26, 2017 Workshop: A MOTION to approve these minutes as read was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

October 3, 2017 Regular Board Meeting: Trustee Zachary amended page 4, second paragraph; change the word “duty” to “doody”. A MOTION to approve these minutes as amended was made by Trustee Zachary, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

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

Jim Raguso, 3098 Albany Post Road, commented on the recent residents’ survey. He wanted to know how they could put down savings of 25, 50, 75 or 100% if you do not have what it would cost to replace these people or the savings. He wanted to know how this could be filled out like that. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Board was looking for feedback to see what we should be going further into to look at. We are going to run the numbers on everything and look into everything and people will have a better understanding.

Trustee Zachary asked for the entire question to be read (which Trustee Funchion did): “How much of a Village tax increase would you be in favor of paying to maintain all current Village services?” Trustee Funchion commented that for certain people in the Village any kind of an

increase would be a burden. For others 50% or 75% would not be a burden. That was our intention. Trustee Zachary commented that it was a tough question. He understood Mr. Raguso's point. He commented that the Board is not looking to see if people say that they can tolerate 75% for example, so let us raise it by 75%. We are looking for every angle and trying to come up with the best compromises that we can over the next 5 or so years. He commented that it is a tough question to put to people. If people answered honestly, we are trying to get a sense of what people can bear. It is a hard one to answer.

Mr. Raguso commented concerning possible eliminations of Village departments. He noted that the Police Department was mentioned twice in the survey. He commented that it seems like they were picking on the Police Department. Trustee Zachary commented that the Board are not experts on preparing surveys. We did not want to hire an expert to do it. This one is not ideal. It was not intended to be redundant or biased toward anything. It was just to get people's opinions. Mr. Raguso commented that Ossining replaced their police department. They got the County in and promised that the officers who were in the Town could stay in the area. It lasted for 9 months. He commented that the Town of Ossining officers were spread out all over the place and the service was crap. He commented that we have a damn good police department in the Village. Trustee Zachary commented that we are giving everyone an opportunity to fill out and return the survey. We will see what we get back. He commented that as he and other Board members have stated, when you do mergers it does not necessarily mean that you save a penny. Sometimes it just means that you pay it to the Town or the State instead of the Village. He commented that the Board is well aware of this. But we are also well aware that we are in a situation right now and we need to look at every option. He commented that we may not have worded that survey the best way but we have to look at every option and we are looking to get public opinion. We are asking that everybody fill it out as best you can. If you have questions you can call the Village office or contact one of the Trustees.

Mr. Raguso addressed Trustee Funchion concerning something he said that really bothered him. He commented that at the last Board meeting Trustee Funchion trashed the Police Chief and his department in a way that Mr. Raguso felt was disgusting. Mr. Raguso commented that Trustee Funchion had said that out of 90 tours only 40 tickets were written and called that a disgrace. Mr. Raguso asked Trustee Funchion if that was correct. Trustee Funchion confirmed that was correct. Mr. Raguso commented what about the many other calls for service they went on. There is only one officer on the night shift and he cannot be in two places at the same time. Mr. Raguso commented would you rather have the officers set up radar in one place and then they cannot patrol the Village. He commented that they have to take care of our people. He feels that the residents of Buchanan are very lucky to have a dedicated police chief. Mr. Raguso commented that what he found disgusting [that night] was the way that Trustee Funchion threw the papers down and never talked to the Police Chief before the meeting. He asked Trustee Funchion if that was correct. Trustee Funchion confirmed that it was. Mr. Raguso commented that it is like scolding your wife in front of all her friends. He feels that Trustee Funchion owes a

public apology to the Police Chief and our Police Department and that tonight is the night to do that.

Trustee Funchion said that he agrees 100%. He commented that there is no excuse for the wording that he used. He could give an explanation of his emotions but it is not an excuse. He commented that the explanation is that he was coming from all the people who came up to him on Buchanan Day to complain about the speeding and the amount of people driving vehicles without mufflers. He commented that the quality of life has come down because of that. He reiterated that is the explanation, not an excuse. Trustee Funchion said that he was wrong. He is saying publicly that he was wrong. He has gone to the Police Chief and apologized. He commented that he should not have used that language. It was incorrect language. It came out of frustration. It was wrong to use that. He completely respects all the police. He felt bad that that word was applied to the people who do the job. He did not mean to call any of our officers a disgrace. He did not believe he wanted to call the Police Chief that either. Trustee Funchion commented that he worked for 35 years in law enforcement himself. He has been called a lot of things. He swore that he would never do something like that. He spoke out of turn. He apologizes to everybody. He fully supports the Police Department.

Concerning Mr. Raguso's impression about the police being singled out in the survey, Trustee Funchion wanted to give an example of what the Board is looking to do with this survey. For the services that we get in Buchanan, assume that somebody is currently paying an average of \$1,000 in taxes for example. If nothing happens, if we get no remuneration because of the plant closing and taxes double, there are some people who do not mind doubling their taxes to pay for the services because they think that every service we get, including police has been fantastic. Trustee Funchion felt bad about that too. He was not aware that he demonstrated himself by putting down the papers like that [at the last meeting]. He was frustrated. He heard so many people talk about what is going on in the Village. He is frustrated that our quality of life in Buchanan has gone way down because of people driving vehicles without mufflers and people speeding up and down Tate and Westchester Avenues. He noted that he happens to live on the corner of Tate Avenue and Kings Ferry Road and you can double that there when it comes to speeding. It is like the Indianapolis 500. He commented that Mr. Raguso is 100% right. Trustee Funchion hopes that he accepts the fact that he made a mistake and that we will move on from there.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Board will be meeting with the Police Chief in Executive Session after tonight's meeting and will work on better communication. The Mayor wants people to understand that we are losing half of our \$6 million in revenue. So we have to do our due diligence. She commented if everybody tells her that it is okay to double the taxes, then that is what we will do. There are retired people and Seniors on fixed incomes that we have to figure in. The Board has to represent everyone. She commented that maybe the survey could have been worded differently. The Board is trying to get a sense of what people's thoughts are. She

commented that there are a lot of things in the works which she will report on in the Mayor's Report. We are trying to figure out how to get through these challenges. The Mayor commented that for her personally one of the great things about being in the Village is the services that we have. We are spoiled. If you talk to other people, they do not have what we have. She and the Board have received e-mails asking if there is any way they can become part of the Village of Buchanan; can Montrose or Verplanck become part of the Village because of our services. We would love to have them because we are basically the tri-villages. But that is not going to happen. The Mayor commented that these are trying times.

We are going to have some tough meetings. One of them will be the Buchanan 2021 Commission next Tuesday night at 7 PM at Village Hall. She encouraged everyone who can to attend. She invited anyone in the audience who wants to join to be a part of the commission. They are going to look at how we are going to reinvent ourselves in the Village. She commented that for many, many years we were looked at as the smallest community with three nuclear reactors. That phase of our life is coming to an end. At one time we had a big amusement park here. She commented what is that going to look like in the future? We are going to look at the services. She commented that Buchanan 2021 is an interesting group of residents. One of the other things they will address is the spent fuel rods there. The group is going over to Entergy to look at the storage pads. We have to make sure that the safety is there. We are trying to get money for the storage of the spent fuel. The Mayor commented that when we go through the resolution that we expect to pass tonight, there are many things that are happening, many options. She thinks that if these options come together we will be okay. One is the Stranded Act. We are working with the State. They have put money into something called the Cessation Fund. Once a community loses over 20% of their revenue from a coal or nuclear plant, it is transition money that the Mayor asked for at the New York State Public Hearing. The Village would be compensated 80% for the first year, 70% for the second year, up to 7 years where it goes down to 10%. The Mayor commented that it is not the answer. It is a transition fund. When we talk about the spent fuel, there is legislation in the House of Representatives and going to the Senate. It is called the Stranded Act. The Mayor advised that she will read it later in the meeting so that people can understand it. It is not taxing. Other people in the area are calling it a taxation of the spent fuel. It is not taxation. It is basically getting back our rate pay money. With that we are probably looking at \$1 million. Plus we are still getting money from Entergy. We will not get the 100% that we are getting now but we will still get money from Entergy. Next Wednesday Megan Taylor, the regional person for economic development with the State is coming to talk to us about opportunities and what things they can do to help us. The Mayor encouraged any members of Buchanan 2021 who could be there. She and Village Administrator Hay have looked at potential properties in the Village that could be redeveloped. They will be talking with Megan Taylor about that. The Mayor commented that what must be understood is that we are doing that to see what potential can be developed to help our tax base but we are not getting \$3 million no matter what we do with development. So we have to figure out how we are going to

replace that money or mitigate the loss. We are looking at the revenue side to see what revenue we could bring in and on the other side what we can do run more efficiency. The Mayor commented that in the end it is not a decision the Village Board is solely going to make. If we get to a point where there could be referendums done, this is a democracy. The Mayor knows what she would like to see. Some people got angry with this survey. She thinks that is a good thing because it starts the conversation. The Board does not know what our residents are thinking. We need to know. We need people to come forward. The Mayor commented that we sit here at these meetings a couple of times each month. We need to know what the public is thinking. She commented that today she, Trustee Jackson and Village Administrator Hay were here at Village Hall on the phone with Representative Nita Lowey's office to find out different types of grants. There are no stones that will be left unturned. All the options are on the table. There is a lot going on.

But we need feedback from our residents. She commented that we are all in this community together. We want to get through this and have everyone live happily ever after. We want to keep this a viable community. This is a great community to live in. It is a good place for people. The Mayor commented that what we are seeing a lot of now is that the houses are going up for sale and are sold within a week. They are selling to young families. A lot of young professionals are moving in. The Mayor commented that Buchanan is a great place to raise a family. She noted that she has lived on Henry Street her whole life. She commented that when we were talking through all these meetings she was told, "You know some people are saying, especially in Yorktown with their school taxes that now you will have to pay what we are paying." The Mayor answered them by saying that we live here because we can afford to live here. We want to still keep our Village a viable community. If everybody wants a Police Department and all their services, that is how it is and we will have to figure out how that would work. We are going to have the Administrator running numbers on different options. She commented that the Board would not be doing our job if we did not look at all the options. Then we can come back to you and say that this is going increase your taxes by how much. She wanted everyone to know that there have been no decisions made. We are doing the job that we think has to be done. She commented that sometimes people are going to get angry. But people need to understand why we are doing this.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Raguso for coming tonight.

#### **4. OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF "NO THRU TRUCK TRAFFIC" SIGNS (*Adjourned*).**

Mayor Knickerbocker explained what this was and that it was going to be removed from the agenda without action because there are so many things on the Board's plate right now and there is more that must be done with this.

A MOTION to remove this Public Hearing from the agenda was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

**b. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE INSTALLATION OF “NO THRU TRUCK TRAFFIC” SIGNS.**

This was removed from the agenda (*See #4a above*).

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. 17-51 RESOLUTION AWARDING BANNON AVENUE WATER PIT PROJECT.**

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

The Mayor asked the Village Administrator to explain what happened with this bid. The Administrator advised that we bid this out last year, he thinks in October. Based on the Village Engineer’s estimate, we budgeted an estimated \$85,000-\$90,000 for this project. The bids at that time came in at \$146,000 and \$162,000. Because it was significantly higher than our budget, the Village Engineer recommended that he would re-look at the specs. He reached out to the DEC to get their thoughts. He reworked the specs and we re-bid it this year. We got a bid of \$46,000 less than the last time and closer to our bid. Part of this project is a Magmeter going into the pit, which is about a \$10,000 project. That is going to be reimbursed by the DEC. Trustee Zachary wanted to know if we have to apply to the DEC for that. The Administrator advised that the Village Engineer is working with them on that.

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

**b. 17-52 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AND APPOINTING THE POSITION OF PART-TIME PROSECUTOR.**

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

[*A member of the audience*] wanted to know where the money would come from and questioned the per hour fee. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that the price is fair for an attorney and is not that expensive. She advised that what is happening is that the Building Inspector has been very busy. He is out all the time. There have been people who received fines and repeat offenders. This will now go to court and they will be fined. This is something we need to do. At one time we had somebody that was on staff but was not on an hourly fee. This is not going to be court every week. It is as needed when we have somebody coming to court to pay a fine. The Mayor asked Village Attorney Porteus what some typical attorney’s hourly fees were. The Village Attorney advised it was \$450.

**c. 17-53 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF A VILLAGE VEHICLE.**

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

Trustee Zachary wanted to confirm that this will bring a new vehicle into the Police Department and the other vehicle that is a little worn for police duty will be shifted to the Highway Department. We will de-commission that car and it will be used for transport of personnel of the Highway Department. The Mayor confirmed that was correct.

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

**d. 17-54 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CAPITAL PROJECT**

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

Village Administrator Hay explained that this was a housekeeping item because this project has already wrapped up. We had our audit in September and this is something that the auditors would like to see from now on. If it is going to be a capital project and will be paid out of the Capital Fund, it will be set up by resolution, unless it was set up in the budget like we did with the paving which we do by resolution at that point. Going forward for any other projects to be paid out of the Capital Fund you will see a resolution and we should establish that account.

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

**e. 17-55 RESOLUTION ISSUING AN AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH AN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AUDIT.**

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

Mayor Knickerbocker wanted to confirm that this is the last phase before we will be obligated to pay anything. The Administrator confirmed that was correct. This is the detailed audit phase where they will look through everything in detail - our utility bills, our facilities and talking to our departments - to see what areas we can make some savings. At that point they are going to ask for input and directions from the Village Board. They will prepare a detailed audit for the Board's review. If we decide to move forward at that point, we can do it. If we decide that we do not want to do it any more then we would be responsible for some of the financial burden of the audit. Trustee Zachary wanted to confirm that would not be until we see what they would offer. The Administrator confirmed that was correct. We would then decide to execute those documents. The Mayor added and what the payback would be. The Administrator advised that we would have discussions with them on that. He thinks that there is flexibility on the time span for the paybacks. They guarantee that the savings pays for the capital project. Trustee Zachary asked if each item will pay for itself or will they put together a package where a couple of things are the big payers. The Administrator advised that it was a good question to ask them. He noted that when the Board looks through the RFQ, they gave us 6 or 7 examples of other places locally where they have done these energy audits. In every case, they exceeded the savings that they estimated. Trustee Zachary asked if once they come up with the proposals can we do it a' la

carte [meaning] if we see something that we want to do but think that a local company could give us a better price. The Administrator advised that we could. They have a large purchasing and could do the procurement. If there are vendors that we like they can include them in the bidding process. The Mayor noted that Siemens also did the school district here.

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

**f. 17-56 RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE STRANDED ACT.**

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

Mayor Knickerbocker explained that this is the legislation currently in the House of Representatives and will be going to the Senate. She met the mayor from Zion, Illinois. They are in a similar position to us but ahead of us [in what has been done]. They had a nuclear power plant on the shore of Lake Michigan on what is called their “Gold Coast”. It ceased operations in 1999. They are close to getting de-commissioned. They were getting close to \$19 million from Entergy. Suddenly they were not. There was economic devastation. They have still not recovered. Their mayor and one of the senators from Illinois and one of their Congressmen came up with the Stranded Act. The Mayor commented that it is a great thing. Representative Nita Lowey is a co-sponsor. The Mayor commented that we also have to get Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer to sign on. It is a nationwide problem. We are looking for support from our Congressional representatives. Trustee Funchion noted that the plant that the Mayor has referred to is very similar to ours. It is in a suburb of Chicago. It is a little further than we are from New York City. It is as close to us as probably any nuclear power plant within the United States. The Mayor agreed. She noted that the plant in Vermont was more rural.

The Mayor commented that there is so much information to get out so that people understand what is happening with this. After it is decommissioned some of the property can be released for redevelopment. But like us, they are going to be stuck with a lot of this nuclear waste. The Mayor read the resolution. The Mayor advised that in Illinois they are almost decommissioned. The problem is that there will be spent fuel on site. Yucca Mountain has been worked on for 30 years. They have not opened their doors. So we are not counting on that. Over many years the rate payers have been paying into a fund. The fund is in the Department of Energy. Entergy here in Buchanan has contributed over \$500 million to this fund. The Mayor commented that we are stuck with this nuclear waste that is going to be stored there. We do not want it stored here but there is no permanent repository. There is talk about one possibly in west Texas or eastern New Mexico as an interim. There is a potential that can be temporary storage. The question is how does the Department of Energy transport it there. There will be concerns. One of the ways being discussed for getting the spent fuel out of here is to put it on a barge, go down the Hudson River under the Tappan Zee Bridge to New Jersey and then by railroad to wherever. There are many concerns about the safety going by rail. There is “Not in my back yard!” The Mayor

commented that they have not figured out Yucca Mountain after 30 years so she does not see that happening. She commented that we are not supporting this because of the money. It is almost a de facto storage facility that we are going to have so as long as it is here the community should be compensated for it. She believes that there will be 2 storage pads at Indian Point with 115 storage casks on those pads. The Mayor advised that next Tuesday night she would appreciate as many people as can be here at Village Hall. She is going to give a complete update on everything she knows, all the meetings that she has gone to, where we are with the spent fuel and where we are with the property. We are also going to film it. It is a lot of information.

*[An unidentified man in the audience]* wanted to know what is the risk having that spent fuel over there. The Mayor advised that it depends on who you ask. They are encased with a foot of concrete around them. What some people are trying to say is to spread it out throughout the property. The Mayor is not in support of that. This is something that Buchanan 2021 is going to be involved with. The spent fuel is going to be kept on 2 concrete pads. The NRC continues to monitor it. They say that they are safe within those concrete casks. Trustee Zachary commented that it is not so much that there is a danger. There are extreme cases such as terrorism. It is not any more of a danger than any well operated nuclear plant. The issue is that that land which could be critical to our tax base cannot be redeveloped as long as there is nuclear waste there. It is going to be at least 10 or 20 years before anything can be done over there. It could be 50-60 years or more. This is to try to expedite the process so that at some point that land can be retired to some useful function.

The Mayor noted that there are 60 acres by Lent's Cove. There is the south acreage. Entergy also owns next to the cemetery. It is in the works. Entergy knows that we are interested in having them let that property go. They are not going to be using it to develop anything else. The State task force is looking at the potential for redevelopment. The Mayor commented that we have to be very clear in understanding that this is Entergy's property so whether they are going to sell it or not is up to them. We are not looking to buy it. What we are looking to do is to find a developer to start conversations with them to work it out. Some of the property can be reused. It is not nuclear. The Mayor commented that everyone thinks that the whole property is contaminated. It is not. She got into a discussion on that at a meeting in Garrison. Riverkeeper came out with a map. Basically the contamination is near the plant where the spent fuel was. It goes from east to west into the river. You can see the plume. When you are look at both other sides of it there is no contamination. Trustee Zachary commented that you can look on Google Earth. There are about 60-70 wooded acres that are very beautiful. It includes a pond. It is sandwiched between the plant and the thin strip where Lent's Cove Park is. The Mayor advised that the State task force has hired a consultant, D. L. English, to look at the potential for having that property developed.

The Mayor reported that the Stranded Act says that there are economic impact grants. The bill provides a non-competitive grant to provide financial assistance to offset the economic and social

impact of stranded nuclear waste in affected communities. The grant would equal \$15 for each kilo of spent fuel stored in the affected community. She thinks that we are looking at about \$1 million. There is a new market tax credit for first time home buyers. It is a one time, refundable tax credit up to 10% of the purchase price of the home up to \$8,000 for a home purchased in a nuclear affected community. She noted that what Illinois had seen was that people were not moving into the community. So they are trying to offer a tax credit. The program incentivizes private development in economically challenged areas by providing investors with a tax credit equal to 39% of the total investment realized over a 7 year period. It helps a new business come in by giving them tax credits. The Mayor commented that if this comes to fruition, it is a good thing. There are a lot of things happening. She wants to give a whole overview next Tuesday at 7 PM. There is a lot of information. She has been going to the Cortlandt Task Force meetings but they are mostly informational. We need to compile all this information and start making some plans.

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

## **6. INFORMATION FROM OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS:**

### a) Justice Court Report – September 2017

Received and filed. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that \$668 was taken in.

### b) Police Reports – September-October 2017

Received and filed.

Mayor Knickerbocker read the statistics. She noted that there were a lot of medical aid and alarm calls in September and October.

### c) Fire Inspector's Report – October 2017

Received and filed.

### d) Attorney's Report:

Village Attorney Porteus commented that the Mayor did a really good job explaining the Stranded Act.

Village Attorney Porteus reported that we have done the surveys on the White Street house. She will be putting together the summons and complaint and filing it down County. The Department of Social Services has a lien. She must find a way to serve this to them. She advised that this is going to take longer than it normally would. *[A lady in the audience]* commented that the house is a hazard and asked was it not falling down? Mayor Knickerbocker advised that this is something that we have been wanting to do but the legality of it has been unbelievable. The Village Attorney commented that there is a long history on this. It was filled with asbestos so we

have to be careful taking it down. It was getting expensive. We had asbestos surveys done. She advised that the Village can lien the house with the cost of litigation and removal but there is already a first lien which is Westchester County Social Services. They get all the proceeds from the sale. The house will be taken down but then you have the land which does not belong to the Village. She is unclear what we do with it after that. *[The lady in the audience]* wanted to know if there would be testing of the soil. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that she, the Village Administrator and Village Attorney have put in for a grant through the State for taking the house down. They are working on it.

e) Administrator's Report

Village Administrator Hay reported that the window treatments have been installed at Village Hall. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that we also have new windows and solar shades. The red curtains that have been here in Village Hall since 1976 have been taken down.

The Administrator reported that the leaf vac is out in full swing. He reminded people to not put their leaves into the street. The Administrator reported that we have the Cablevision sound back and working again on the Buchanan Channel.

f) Mayor's Report:

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that at a meeting last week she spoke to Assemblywoman Sandy Galef about legislation that she had proposed a long time ago. The Mayor noted that the Board had discussed it at that time. She commented that right now, our property taxes pay for school taxes and municipalities. We are one of only 7 states that still do that. The rest of the country did their taxes to pay for things differently. It might be a combination of things other than property taxes. She text messaged to Assemblywoman Galef. The Mayor reminded her that she had introduced this legislation before and that our Village Board has talked about this. The Mayor commented to her that she and the Assemblywoman would not have this conversation if we did taxes differently in this state. Assemblywoman Galef is going to look at it again.

Buchanan 2021 will meet next Tuesday night. The Mayor announced that Jeremy Basso will be joining the group.

The Mayor reported on the Halloween parade and party at Village Hall. She commented that we had a great group of kids. She joked that she came dressed as a mayor. The kids had a good time. It was a big group this year. She thanked the Police and Fire Departments. Every year at Halloween they come out and patrol the streets. It keeps down the mischief and it protects our children in the community. She thanked them for that.

g) Trustee's Reports

Trustee Jackson reminded that tomorrow is Election Day. He urged everybody to get out and do their civic duty and participate by voting no matter which side of the [political] aisle you are on.

He commented that over the last 240 years folks gave their lives to have one person, one vote. As a veteran, he wholeheartedly believes in the sacrifices of those who have gone before us and those who serve and place themselves in harm's way.

Trustee Funchion commented that it has been a quiet month for him. He reiterated what Trustee Jackson said, that it is very important to vote. He takes pride in Buchanan. The percentage of people who vote here far exceeds the national average. We are one of the better communities for voting. He noted that overall our national average for voting is one of the worst in the free world. It does not apply to Buchanan.

He hopes that everybody has a very nice Thanksgiving. It is a time to get together and appreciate what we have, what God has given us, and to appreciate our families.

Trustee Funchion commented that we are all trying to get through this together. All of the Board's attention is to do things together. He commented that we do not want to make decisions just on the 5 Board members alone. It is a big way forward. He commented that the Mayor has pointed out something that we should always keep in the back of our mind; that the big elephant in the room is the school tax. He noted that for all of us in the Village who pay property taxes, the amount we pay to the Village of Buchanan is relatively small in relation to what we pay to the school system. The school tax is the big one to be dealt with. He commented that hopefully since that seems to be as burden on most people in New York State maybe Assemblywoman Galef's proposal will get through. He noted that a lot of states take care of their schools through income taxes, a wealth tax, a use tax or various combinations. He commented that here it seems to be an undue burden to people who own homes.

Trustee Zachary commented that the tax thing is a little perturbing to him because there are too many easy ways to shift who you pay taxes to. He commented to keep in mind that while your school tax is the biggest part of your total taxes, the quality of the schools is probably the single biggest thing that affects your home value. It is also affected by your community, the safety, the programs in your community and the quality of life. Nothing is bigger than school quality. He commented that when people buy a house, especially young people with kids, they start with school districts that are good. He commented that New York is already one of the 3 highest taxed states in the country along with Connecticut and New Jersey as far as an amalgam of sales tax and income tax, which is almost 9%. He commented that the thought of taking it from property tax and shifting it to something else is not terribly appealing to him.

Trustee Zachary reminded that the Village Board meetings are now on-line. You can scroll through. You can speed through to see the parts that you want, which he thinks is a good thing. He noted that for people who do not have good quality on their cable t.v. at home there is a link to YouTube on the Village web site.

Trustee Zachary reported that this Thursday at 7:30 PM there will be a special Workshop for the Board to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. If anybody wants to come out, they are always glad

to have public input. The regular Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 21 at 7 PM on the second floor of Village Hall.

Trustee Zachary expressed his sorrow and sympathy for the people in Texas following the latest mass shooting. He commented that it has now become a way of life in America. He remarked to get ready for the next one because once again nobody in Congress is going to do anything. His heart goes out to those people.

Trustee Pasquale reported that he wanted to talk about our Police Department. He commented that all of the Board members have nothing but respect and admiration for our Police Department. Our police officers are not ones who look for praise or acknowledgement. They know who they are and they say, "It is part of our job". Trustee Pasquale wanted to read a few things that our Police Department does which he commented do not show up on the data sheets. He read some specific instances in the past 2 months (*copies attached*) including theft from a Senior Citizen by a home care worker, domestic violence, automobile break-ins and car theft, hit and run damage to a vehicle and other cases affecting Village residents, along with cooperative efforts with the Westchester County and Peekskill Police. He commented that some of the things that happened could have turned into a disaster if it was not for our police officers. Trustee Pasquale thanked our Police Department and Chief Tubbs for being there "24/7" including holidays. He thanked them for keeping Buchanan safe.

Trustee Pasquale wished everyone a Happy Veterans Day. He thanked the veterans for their service. He wished everyone a blessed and Happy Thanksgiving with their loved ones. He said to take time to be mindful of people who are less fortunate than we are.

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

In response to a question from the audience, Mayor Knickerbocker advised that there are 3 water pits. There is one by the diner on Albany Post Road but what they are doing there is the new gas line coming out. Con Edison is hooking up with Spectra. We have another water pit across from the high school. We have another at the bottom of Bannon Avenue. We get water from Peekskill and from the Montrose Improvement District. That is the one that needs a lot of work. The Mayor commented that you are seeing a lot of work on Bannon Avenue. She believes that Con Edison is doing more gas lines. She commented that she is not happy that they are ripping up our streets again but we have to make sure that people are safe. Trustee Pasquale advised that they are also digging up around the utility poles to reinforce them.

Jeremy Basso, 119 Bannon Avenue, commented that in the past 6 months he has seen a great increase in radar enforcement on Bannon Avenue. He has seen quite a few officers spending more time in the neighborhood. He appreciates them. He is a staunch supporter of the Police Department. He does not know if there is a better police department in Westchester County and the surrounding areas. One of the things he appreciates here is community policing. He knows the officers here and thinks that is so with most of our neighborhoods. He does not think that is

something you find in most other communities. He commented that they spend time responding to calls and sitting in their cars doing radar patrol which he thinks is rather impersonal and not the way he would like our Police Department to behave. He thinks that traffic enforcement is important from a safety perspective but that community involvement is far more important. He thinks that we have a fantastic team that works for our Police Chief who do a great job for us. He thanks them for that.

Mr. Basso commented that he has noticed something concerning speeding in the past couple of years that he does not think existed in this area before. Some of the most frequent speeding occasions that he sees are on Sunday mornings and on Monday to Friday during school hours. He commented that was because the gates to the church were closed and locked. He noted that he grew up in the Village and for his whole life the gates to the church were closed and locked. The entrance to the high school from Seward Street was closed as well. He noted that it was nicknamed “the Chain” and was where people went to smoke because it was off school property. When they did the redevelopment it was opened. Mr. Basso commented that now you have kids racing and it does not have anything to do with the police. It is the school district which is Montrose. Police Chief Tubbs advised that the church is in the Village, the school is in Montrose. Mr. Basso noted that when he was in school they could not park in the church so you had no reason to be back there because the chain was closed. He suggested that maybe the school district and church can work with the Police Chief to come up with an alternative arrangement to having people zipping through a residential neighborhood. He noted that they have already put No Parking signs in those areas to deter the high school traffic from going through. But by opening those gates they have circumvented those No Parking signs by reducing traffic.

Mr. Basso referred to the Mayor’s comments and agreed that Halloween was fantastic in the Village. He saw a massive presence of kids this year as well as last year. He commented that the Fire Department’s support is wonderful. He saw lots of people who do not live in our neighborhoods coming and learning how wonderful Buchanan is. He saw one of the police officers handing out candy to little kids which he thinks again goes to community policing in that it shows that these scary, uniformed people can really help you which adds a lot of value to the community. He thanked them for having an additional presence on that night. He commented that in his neighborhood they were really happy and it was great to be in their neighborhood with their kids.

Mr. Basso commented concerning the survey that went out to our residents. He understands that it was a feeler but to him, he could never answer the questions because it is just feelings. He does not think that feelings are what we are looking to put our pulse on. He thinks that what everyone is concerned about is simply the money that is potentially involved. He commented that this is not a slight or a dig to anyone who had any participation in it. He commented that it is someone else’s perspective to share for him to give you an honest assessment of the questions

being asked. Concerning Question 2, Mr. Basso thinks that none of these things being eliminated results in a zero sum gain. He thinks that if we axe the Police Department, we do not save the money budgeted to the police. The question is what is the cost to replace that budget item by finding an outside source? It does not go from having police or having no police. It goes from having police who work for the Village to having police who work for someone else whom we have less control over. He questioned how can we decide which of these is most important if we do not know what cost would be associated with elimination or not.

Trustee Zachary commented that he understands what Mr. Basso is saying. It is a sentiment survey. The Board and the Administrator still have a lot of work to do in doing studies of what kind of money these things would actually save us. He commented that he has been saying that a lot of times all you do is shift whom you pay the taxes to and do not really have any net savings. He commented that this is an opinion survey because the Board knows that we still have to do a lot of things. Mr. Basso commented that at this point he does not know that they are going to get an answer that matters. He thinks that it is almost a waste because there is going to be a cost to garbage and recycling. The survey asked if we want one day per week pick up provided by the Town of Cortlandt or twice per week from the Village. He commented just a simple matter of here is what they charge per household in the Village; here is what we pay per household on average in the Town of Cortlandt. He commented before we ask for a survey, we have a year down and 4 years to go. We have no idea of what is going to be the result of whatever aid we will get. But at the end of the day we do know that there is going to be a cost some place. Trustee Zachary commented that the Board has to do research and come up with a plan that is a fusion of the economic realities and what the public wants. So he thinks that it is valuable to get the public's input. Even if they are not directives as to how we should proceed, they do give the Board ideas of what people are feeling.

Mr. Basso commented that none of these can be eliminated so the only question is what is the cost to shift them elsewhere? He thinks that no one could answer the question. He commented that none of these go to zero. So you are not asking what we are willing to do without. What you are asking is what are you willing to pay someone else for? But looking at this, he has no idea what it is going to be either way. He thinks that before we even pay attention to the items, we should understand what it would cost elsewhere. He understands the question about the police part-time vs. full time or a mix. He thinks that you cannot pinpoint those. But we could pinpoint what the Town of Cortlandt pays for garbage per household on average. That is readily available. Trustee Zachary commented that for example the Board says that we are looking at all these numbers and now that we have everything figured out, we have to cut a half million dollars and judging from what people responded on the survey maybe we should do it from "here" instead of "there". Mr. Basso questioned how do they know? Trustee Zachary commented that there is a lot of work that goes along with that. Mr. Basso would like to see some numbers. Trustee Zachary commented that is being worked on. He said that nothing that the Board is

working on is being done behind closed doors. The Mayor commented that we are a transparent Board.

Trustee Funchion commented that part of the overall idea of the survey is to let the people of the Village know that the Board is not just sitting around. They are trying many different angles. This is one of many. He noted that the Mayor goes to dozens of meetings. We do not want anyone in the Village to think that the Board is just sitting here waiting for 2021 to come along. He commented that it is like a shotgun approach. We are throwing everything out there and seeing what comes back. Trustee Funchion commented that listening to some of the comments we are hearing constructive ones from people. We are hearing that this question should be worded this way or that way, what is the cost? Every comment that we get is constructive. Mr. Basso commented that concerning Trustee Funchion's comments it seems to him that this survey means that the Board does not yet have all the answers but they are putting this out to make it appear that they are taking the next step when they did not do the leg work necessary to get the appropriate information out so that we understand what these decisions would equate to. He commented that is not him; that previously was his personal sentiment. That component is what he gathered talking with people in his neighborhood. He commented that it is not a matter of disrespect. Maybe these numbers can be quickly pulled. He does not think that they can be hard to get. No one is asking for a "to the penny", budget line item; rather an average. He appreciates the effort that the Board has put forth. He does not envy them having this obligation to handle.

Mr. Basso commented on question 1 from the survey. From a personal standpoint he is not interested in anyone helping him budget his money. He remarked that when the tax comes, the tax comes and with all due respect he does not need the Board's help. He hopes that everyone else who owns a home in the Village has demonstrated a budget that gave them the opportunity to buy a home, that they know what the taxes are and if they can put their own money away instead of giving it because if it turns out that nothing changes because of all these grants coming in, he is sure that no one is going to get that money back. It is going to get used for something else. He commented that the return thing does not happen very much. He wants to manage his own money. His question is that assuming this is voted on and this is the route the Board is going to take, would that demonstrate to any of these government agencies that they need to offer less support because we have already demonstrated the capability to pay additional sums of money before this pending doom comes forth. He thinks that people should hold onto their money as they have always done and when the tax increase comes, you pay it. No one is unaware that this is happening. They have gotten a survey telling them. They know that there is most likely going to be a tax increase. The question is how much?

Trustee Zachary commented that one of the problems here is that a lot of opinions are expressed and then we have allegorical information. We are trying to find a way to quantify things; that a certain percent think "this" and a certain percent think "that". A lot of the opinions we are getting are allegorical. Mr. Basso commented that the Board could quantify a lot of his positions

once he had something to quantify which would be what is it going to cost and what is the tradeoff? It has to be risk vs. reward. Trustee Zachary noted that 25 people have completed and returned the survey. Mr. Basso wanted to know how many people are in the Village. Trustee Zachary commented that the Comprehensive Land survey went out to 850 households and we got 113 back. He advised that by the end of this week this survey will be on-line on the Village web site.

Mayor Knickerbocker replied to Mr. Basso's comments on the possible effect on potential aid. She advised that the Stranded Act will not affect that because it is about stored nuclear fuel. Even if we came up with \$2 million it does not affect that. The other thing is the Cessation Fund from the State. It kicks in at 20% of the revenue lost from Entergy because it pertains to coal and nuclear plants closing. The Mayor commented that we were not fortunate to get subsidized like Oswego upstate where a nuclear plant was closed. That money has been budgeted. There was \$30 million in there. Last year because of State Senator Murphy and Assemblywoman Galef, it was increased by another \$15 million. The school district is also eligible for that pot of money. The Mayor commented that people are asking what is the bottom line. She cannot answer that right now because there are so many balls in the air at this point and every week there is something else. She noted that the grant with Representative Nita Lowey is not financial, it is more for planning. Every week there is another piece to the puzzle. The Mayor commented that the more we have to work with, the better the outcome.

Eileen Absenger, 138 Tate Avenue, commented that this all goes towards the police. She is much in favor of that. She commented that down in Croton and on Trolley Road in Montrose they have the speeding boxes that tell you to slow down. She commented that they cost around \$2,000 per box. Croton had them up all over. She noted that one on Riverside Avenue is a solar powered speed box. She did not know what the cost was. She commented that in lieu of buying or borrowing the machines, they bought more brackets. The non-solar box is run on rechargeable batteries that go about 2 weeks. Their mayor has instructed their police department to move them to different places. She commented that thinking of places like Westchester, Tate and Bannon Avenues, you do tend to slow down when you see these boxes because you do not know if it is going to take a picture. She would like to know if our Police Chief and Board think this is a possibility if they were purchased with extra brackets so that they can be moved.

Ms. Absenger asked about the monthly calls [on the Police report] if the mental health calls end with hospitalization more often than not. She also wanted to know, thinking of the recent shooting tragedy in Texas, if our Police Department is allowed to run the name of the party reported in the mental health situation to check on guns, along with any other criminal activity. Police Chief Tubbs advised that there are certain laws that mandate whether we can or cannot run checks on people. He advised that more often than not the officer is working by themselves and does not have time to do that and deal with the emotionally disturbed person. There are different types of calls and different types of emotionally disturbed people. Some people are just

distraught over a loss or something of that nature. Some people are actually emotionally ill. There are a lot of variables. Ms. Absenger commented that you hear about mental illness and gun violence, so when she heard the number of calls in the police report she wanted to ask. Chief Tubbs advised that they were not all mental cases. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that “mental” and “medical” health calls were reported as one total on one line of the report. Chief Tubbs advised that most of the calls are ambulance or medical emergencies.

Ms. Absenger wanted to know if our Police Department is coming across fentanyl mixed with marijuana. Chief Tubbs advised that he has not heard from our officers that they have come across that combination. Ms. Absenger commented that 2 school members are here and that if anything, they can tell you anything on the agenda that can be picked up in any high school including ours. She is sure that we have the same need for [the drug] to bring them back. She commented that even though marijuana is more expensive than heroin at this point, it is still a viable drug. She commented that people who smoke it do not know who the supplier is or what the end game is. Ms. Absenger asked if the Police Chief could write something in the Newsletter or give updates on what is being seen in the Village or the surrounding area or the schools. She commented that she went to the project held at the library. There was no one representing the Village. The Mayor advised that she has not been invited and did not know about that meeting. Ms. Absenger noted that they have a committee that deals with the opioid and drug issues down in Croton. It has been in existence for about 9 years. The Town of Cortlandt has a committee that deals with it. She commented that the meeting was well done but sparsely attended. She would like some type of reminder to tell parents or grandparents not to forget to get rid of their unused prescription drugs. Mayor Knickerbocker reminded that our Police Department has a drop off here in the Village Hall. Ms. Absenger commented that as part of being a community based police department something could be added to the Newsletter. Chief Tubbs commented that they put it in from time to time.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we looked into the movable speed detectors. Police Chief Tubbs looked into quite a few. The Mayor did not recall any being \$2,000. They were more in the range of \$16,000. Chief Tubbs recalled that they were very expensive and it was felt that they were cost prohibitive to purchase at that time. The Mayor advised that it can be looked at again.

#### **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 9:11 PM a MOTION to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Pasquale with all in favor.

#### **9. ADJOURNMENT:**

At 9:45 PM a MOTION to return from Executive Session and to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

