

Mayor & Board of Trustees

Village Board Meeting

December 5, 2017

PRESENT:

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker

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

Village Administrator Kevin Hay

Highway Foreman Bobby Wheeler

Village Board Secretary Susan F. Matthews

ABSENT:

Village Attorney Stephanie V. Porteus

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. She led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and informed them of the fire regulations.

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

October 24, 2017 Workshop Meeting: Trustee Zachary amended page 4, paragraph 1, line 7; add that in response to a question by Trustee Zachary it was about another building on White Street and Route 9A. A MOTION to approve these minutes as amended was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor and Trustee Funchion abstaining.

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

Eileen Absenger, Tate Avenue, asked that the Board go over New Business, Item (b) regarding the appointment of a part-time prosecutor, to let people know what that was actually about. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that would be explained.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a. 17-57 RESOLUTION DECLARING VILLAGE VEHICLES SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO REQUEST PROPOSALS.

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

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we do this occasionally. Whenever a vehicle is no longer functional or costs too much to repair, we put it out to bid. If there are no bids in 60 days, it goes to scrap. One vehicle was from 2005. It served us well. She commented that we get a lot of use out of our vehicles. It is time to move on.

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

b. 17-58 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AND APPOINTING THE POSITION OF PART-TIME PROSECUTOR.

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

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we have the Building Inspector working on Code compliance. We need someone in the court to be able to prosecute some of these Code violations. We did hire someone last month. After that they decided that it was not in their best interest. We have found another person. The Mayor believes that he is qualified for the position. It is on an “as needed” basis. He will be paid according to the time he puts in.

Trustee Zachary commented that he was sure this crossed the Mayor’s and Administrator’s minds but he requested that we have an Executive Session at the next Workshop because some of this enforcement could involve litigation. He feels that an Executive Session would bring the Board up to snuff on what is going on and potential legal issues we could have. He would also like the Building Inspector at that session. Mayor Knickerbocker agreed. She advised that she was thinking of asking him to attend the next Workshop because there are things that we have to discuss.

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

5. INFORMATION FROM OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS:

a) Justice Court Report – October 2017

Received and filed. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that reported receipts were \$1,368.00 and \$1,338.00.

b) Police Reports – September-November 2017

Received and filed.

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Monthly Call Statistics for November (*attached*). Trustee Funchion asked if we can get a yearly compilation of all of this. He commented that our Village is pretty safe compared to a lot of other places. He thinks it might be something of a positive

thing for people moving in to the Village. He wanted to know if this information is kept on a yearly basis or if there is one for all of Westchester County. If there is something, we could give it to real estate agents in the area to help attract people. Mayor Knickerbocker agreed that it is a good thought. She directed the Village Administrator to ask the Police Chief if he could compile that before the next Board meeting.

c) Fire inspector's Report – November 2017

Received and filed.

d) Planning Board Minutes – July 20, 2017; October 19, 2017

Received and filed.

e) Attorney's Report

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that Village Attorney Porteus is not able to be with us this evening.

f) Administrator's Report

Village Administrator Hay reported that Acocella Construction completed the curb work. He commented that they were great to work with. He commented that whenever we do sidewalks people ask "How about mine?" The Administrator advised that we are not neglecting anybody. We find the ones in the worst condition. We added a couple on Henry Street that could be potential tripping hazards. We are getting to the worst ones first. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that they did by the Post Office. It was dangerous because it was actually on the sidewalk. Acela did the renovation of the Circle in 1992. They did a great job then. They have not done any work for the Village for a while.

The Administrator announced that the Village is accepting letters to Santa up to December 16 to receive a letter from Santa in return. He reminded to put your return address on it. Our Police Department is collecting Toys For Tots for children in need. Toys can be dropped off at Village Hall between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM.

The Administrator advised that the leaf pickup will be continuing to before Christmas. He reminded to keep leaves out of the road ways. No overnight street parking from midnight to 7 AM started on December 1. There is no parking in the Village lots from 4 AM to 6 AM. This is so there can be efficient clean up and snow removal in inclement weather.

The Administrator advised that we received a Code update. He asked that the Board members drop off their Code Books and they will get them switched out.

g) Mayor's Reports

Mayor Knickerbocker noted that the Board members were all at the Tree Lighting ceremony on Sunday evening. It was a great event. She commented that it was so nice to see so many small children. It was very well attended. Our Recreation Supervisor did a great job. The Mayor thanked our Highway, Police and Fire Departments. The Beautification Committee and Highway Department did a lot of decorating in the Circle. Santa Claus came in on the fire truck to be with us for a little while. The Police Department raffled off two bikes, one for a boy and one for a girl. The kids were so excited. The Mayor commented that they make the holiday.

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that last night the Beautification Committee had their first wreath making class. There are some talented people. It was a lot of fun. Pictures are on the Village Facebook page.

Mayor Knickerbocker reminded that the Buchanan 2021 meeting will be next Tuesday, December 12 at 7 PM. It is their second meeting. The first was in November. She commented that it is off to a good start. It is a good group of people. We will focus on the game plan. The Mayor commented that it was a good meeting. She is waiting for a date from Entergy to have a walk-thru of the spent fuel casks at Indian Point. She wants the committee to see what it looks like.

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that the Town of Cortlandt will have a Pearl Harbor Day remembrance ceremony on December 7 at 1 PM.

The Mayor reported that on December 15 at 11:30 AM at the Cortlandt Town Hall, there will be a joint meeting with Riverkeeper about the \$15 million fund that was set up when Entergy announced the closing of Indian Point. The fund has not yet been set up. When the closing was negotiated, Entergy agreed to a \$15 million fund to be used for the community and environmental. This is the first meeting where we will be talking about how that \$15 million is going to be used. The meeting is for Board members. December 19 will be the next State Task Force meeting at the Cortlandt Town Hall. The Mayor will be looking to see if there are any updates. The State has hired a consultant to look at potential redevelopment.

Mayor Knickerbocker said that the Board looks forward to being with the Buchanan Seniors at their Christmas luncheon on December 19.

The Mayor commented that good things came out of that Buchanan 2021 meeting on November 14. The members were given a lot of information. Going forward they will be working on the spent fuel casks. They are going to look at how we can maintain the Village to be a viable community. On November 15, they met with Megan Taylor, Regional State Economic Development person and spent several hours with her. They went around the Village and showed her different properties that potentially could be redeveloped. We have been looking to replace the tax base that we are going to lose. The Mayor commented that Ms. Taylor has some interesting ideas. We will continue to work with her. She also will be at the next State Task Force meeting on December 19.

Mayor Knickerbocker reported that around Thanksgiving she had the opportunity to serve our veterans at the Purple Heart Society dinner. They had a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner. There were a lot of volunteers. The veterans had a great time. It was the Mayor's great honor to serve them because they have served us over the years. She will continue to go to those events.

Mayor Knickerbocker wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. She wishes health and happiness in the New Year. She said we have a lot of work ahead of us and to rest up. At the beginning of the year we will be ready to go again.

h) Trustee's Reports

Trustee Zachary commented about the public opinion survey that went out recently to gauge the public's sentiment concerning the Entergy closure and what adjustments the Village has to make. We are still receiving replies. He has tabulated several. There are general things that he could say based on what has been received to date. It is still being tabulated.

One of the questions is if there has to be a tax increase, would you rather see them phased in starting soon or in one hit in 2022. He commented that the survey is flawed to some extent because we have not yet figured out all that we might have to do; what properties might get developed and tax revenue received; what State aid there is; and what the tax situation is going to be at Entergy because while we lose most of the tax money there, we will still collect some taxes and some tax money based on the storage of waste material in the casks. It is temporarily being stored in concrete tanks. The Federal government has no place to put it. There could be some tax implication for that. He commented that we do not have all the answers to say how much taxes are going to come up. He noted that in the survey some people complained about how could they answer the question if they are not being given the dollar amounts? Trustee Zachary understands and agrees. He advised that it is still helpful to the Board to just get a general sense of residents' feelings. He advised that down the road when we have more information and facts and numbers we will certainly schedule Public Hearings and maybe take another survey. We will seek the public's opinion at that point. He noted that at this point it is pretty evenly split between those who would rather see tax increases gradually phased in starting in the next tax year and those who say do not increase anything until 2022 and then do it all at once. Trustee Zachary commented that he concluded that the prudent way to go is somewhere in the middle. He commented that we are not going to raise taxes without knowing what we are dealing with. We will only do it when we have to. Everybody will be apprised ahead of time.

We always welcome the public staying involved. He encourages everyone to watch and come to the Board meetings. Use the Village web site. The information will come out as the Board has it.

Trustee Zachary noted that 85 surveys came back in the mail and 45 came back on-line through the Village web site. He noted that there is a big difference between the people answering by mail and those answering on-line. When asked if we had to eliminate a department to save

money, the people answering by mail to a very large extent said to get rid of the Police Department. For the people answering on-line, that is the last thing they want eliminated. He wishes that we had included some demographic questions. We did not include questions about age. He commented that there is going to be an age component as far as people using computers. There is also going to be a component with older people who are more likely to be on fixed incomes. They are going answer questions one way. His conjecture is that everybody who is between 6 years old and 50 are probably using computers. They were more likely to be gainfully employed.

He noted that in general people do not want to see tax increases. When asked what kind of tax increase could you bear, not surprisingly people overwhelmingly responded “0-25%”. Some people pointed out the Village tax is only a small portion of your total taxes paid. Three quarters is the school tax, so what happens there has a much bigger impact on people than what could happen here with the Village tax.

Trustee Zachary read some of the comments received in the surveys. One suggestion was that the Village should start a mega-attraction like the “Blaze thing” in Croton which the respondent noted has been expanded and rakes in a lot of money. Buchanan could have a yearly event and use the money to replace the Entergy revenue loss. Mayor Knickerbocker invited residents with ideas to come to the Buchanan 2021 meeting. Trustee Zachary commented that he has come up with wild ideas. He said to come on down to our meetings and voice them. He commented that we could have a “mega-event” that brings in revenue. We do not have to replace all that tax money in one shot. Trustee Zachary commented that he loves creativity.

Another response castigated the Village’s mayors and Trustees going all the way back to former Mayor Bill Burke for not having anticipated and planned for the eventual closing of Indian Point. Trustee Zachary agreed that we would benefit from long range planning. He again asked that people come out and share their ideas, opinions and advice. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we always knew that there was an end date. It was supposed to be around 2034. Things change and now here we are. We have to deal with it.

Trustee Zachary noted that about 5 people said ditch the Village and merge with the Town of Cortlandt. Other people said to merge a department. He noted that it is a small percentage of people who would like to see the Village disbanded. Trustee Zachary commented that this Board is committed to do whatever keeps the Village intact and make it work economically.

One response questioned where the electrical power is going to come from. The person commented that no one is talking about that and feels that it is going to be an economic disaster. Trustee Zachary commented that the Village Board cannot seek alternative power sources. There are State agencies and other groups that are exploring this. At a recent meeting, Entergy did discuss some of the possible sources of power down the pike. There are a couple of gas powered plants in the works. One is close to being operational and one is not. The Mayor noted that there

are some problems getting the gas line because of the NYS DEC. Trustee Zachary commented that we do have 3 or 4 more years with Entergy up and running. There are other things in the works. Trustee Zachary commented that in that meeting he specifically asked the engineer from Entergy if it was possible if there was not enough power feeding into the grid when it is time for the plant to close would the plant stay open. The answer was basically not a very good chance of that. He commented that is not in the Village's jurisdiction. It is something that we are trying to keep aware of as are other groups involved with this.

Another response said that it is important that the Village of Buchanan stay as a welcoming and active community to potential new businesses and home owners. They felt that it was important that building owners, especially on the Circle, do whatever it takes to open empty store fronts. They felt that these empty spaces are eyesores and keep people away. Trustee Zachary commented that one property in the Village that has been vacant for a long time is soon going to be occupied. He commented that a lot has to do with the way businesses are developed over the last several decades starting with the malls and mega stores putting the small "Mom and Pop" businesses out of business. He commented that the business landscape has changed. It is part of what we are looking into, trying to find ways to develop and improve things.

Another response said that we need more of a town center to attract visitors and less speeding through town. One response said to fix the roads that the gas line diggers tore up. Trustee Zachary commented that we are doing that and that the last section torn up because of the gas line was fixed recently. Other comments wanted fewer trucks, an art museum, green space, and a museum for old ships like the Intrepid, a historical society and little stores. Trustee Zachary commented that it is a good picture. We are trying to talk to business people to get these little spaces occupied and businesses.

Trustee Zachary noted that one of the questions asked if we were going to close a Village department which one it should be? The sewage treatment plant was in there. He commented that while it would seem to be that it is just a sewage treatment plant and we could get someone to take it over, now that we are in a position to attract businesses the sewage treatment plant is one of our biggest assets. Our view has gone from it being a negative thing that we do not want part of to now, keeping it running and in good condition could be one of the biggest assets the Village has. He noted that even as we go ahead our perspective changes and what we have to look at constantly evolves.

Trustee Zachary wanted to encourage people to fill out the surveys. He commented that we welcome your involvement. If only a few of those people came to us or communicated with us regularly, there have been some good ideas.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that as she keeps saying there are a lot of balls in the air. We are working on a lot of things. Nothing is set in stone yet. That is why we cannot give anything concrete at this time.

The Mayor commented that Representative Nita Lowey came to Buchanan a couple of weeks ago. She is introducing legislation. She co-sponsored the Stranded Act bill introduced by the mayor from Zion, Illinois. The Mayor wants everyone to understand that it is not a tax on the spent fuel rods. It is compensating the community, giving the community back money that they have already paid into. Over \$500 million has come out of Entergy from the rate payers. It was to be used for a final repository. There is, the Mayor believes, \$36 billion in the Department of Energy fund to find a final repository. All that bill is asking for is that a community is compensated per kilo. The Mayor did not have that number. We need to know how many kilos would be stored over there. Representative Lowey is trying to get the waste stored somewhere else on an interim basis. So there are different things that she has introduced. The Buchanan 2021 Committee meeting had an overview of what has been happening in the last 11 months. It will be available on the Buchanan Channel for another month.

The Mayor commented that concerning some of the survey responses that maybe it is people who have not lived here for long but we do have access to the river. We have a beautiful park at Lent's Cove. We are talking about that in the future. If you have a kayak or canoe, you definitely have access to the water there. There is a trail. She thinks that maybe we need to put a together a booklet describing what Buchanan has to offer.

The Mayor commented that concerning the Circle, the building that has been empty for several years because the owner did not want to put a food business in there and was being very careful whom she rented it to. She had an offer from an adult store that wanted to open a business there and give her more rent than she was asking for, but she did not think it was appropriate. There have been offers over the years but she was very fussy about who she was going to put in there. The Mayor announced that on January 1 there will be an efficiency trainer there. It is basically a personal, one-on-one trainer. Concerning the other 2 businesses out there, noting that she is not getting into detail, it is the Mayor's understanding that where the former pizzeria was somebody had bought it. They were there for a few months. A sign went up saying that they were on vacation and now they are gone. She does not know about the other business. She thinks that all of us have to understand that if we want to bring business into our community the community has to support them so that they can make money and stay here.

The Mayor reported that the owner of the property on the Circle that she referred to before is herself. She noted that on some of the surveys people were disappointed. It was not because she did not want to rent it. It is because the right people were not looking to rent it. She commented that it is in the center of our Village and she was waiting for the right thing to move in. The Mayor noted that one of the things in our Code says that you could have a funeral home there too. She questioned whether we really want to drive into the center of the Village and see a funeral home. In addition there would be the question of parking.

Trustee Zachary advised that the Buchanan 2021 meeting is on the Buchanan Channel. On the web site you can watch meetings at any time and they are not coming off. The Administrator

will check to see if the Buchanan 2021 meeting is on the web site. Trustee Zachary commented that there are lots of people who do not rely on watching it on cable t.v. He advised that on-line you can use the cursor to move through it. He thinks it is a much more convenient way to watch it. You can also watch a past meeting.

Trustee Pasquale advised that you can also go to the Hendrick Hudson School District web site to see their school board meetings. He suggested that it might be a good idea to look at a few of them concerning the issues with the Entergy closing. The Mayor agrees that it is something to look at. She commented that the Village has our own focus. Buchanan's taxes are one thing, the school taxes are another.

Trustee Pasquale commented that we hit a milestone this year. Police Chief Brian Tubbs is the longest tenured police officer in the history of the Buchanan Police Department. He has been serving since 1982. As of August 1, he has 35 years and 171 days. He passed former Police Chief Bill Gilman who served for 35 years and 170 days between 1929 and 1965.

Trustee Pasquale commented that at last month's Village Board meeting he started reading some of the calls that our Police Department responded to. He sat down with Police Chief Tubbs and advised that he would like to do that every month so that our residents know what is going on in our community that our Police Department is responding to. Trustee Pasquale read a few calls that officers responded to. On November 9, a woman accidentally locked her child in her car and Officer Sean Farrell opened the car door. On November 23, there was a dispute between neighbors. Officer Anthony Palmetto responded to a dispute between neighbors that threatened to become physical. He separated them and had them quickly go back inside their homes. On November 25, Officer Farrell gave aid to a woman having a diabetic emergency. On November 26, Sergeant Mike Guida responded to a woman having cardiac arrest. He helped her until the ambulance transported her to the hospital. On November 30, Officer Budde investigated a report of a suspicious person not having a peddler's license going door to door on Craft Lane. A summons was issued. On December 1, Sergeant Guida and Chief Tubbs responded to a car accident with injuries on Westchester Avenue. On December 2, Officer Farrell arrested someone for unlawful possession of marijuana in an area where residents have reported problems.

Trustee Pasquale wished a Merry Christmas to everyone and their families and Seasons Greetings and a Happy and healthy New Year. He said we are going to have a lot to do in the new year.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that she likes to have the updates from the Police Department so that residents know what is going on.

Trustee Funchion commented that he was out of action for a while. He was glad that Trustee Zachary did all the work on the surveys. It has been really important that people get involved because 2022 is coming around very quickly. He thanked Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustee Zachary for working so hard. He hopes that everything will get done.

Trustee Funchion asked about a sign on the road right next to the entrance to the Village by the diner. It says "Caution. Radiation Area". He wanted to know if anybody knows what it is about. Trustee Zachary commented it is possibly not nuclear radiation. They have them at construction sites if they are using a laser. It was suggested that they could be x-raying the streets there. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that when Spectra came through it was offered to Con Edison to tie in and they said no. Her understanding is that now Con Edison has requested to tap into the Spectra gas line. She thinks that is why all the construction there. They put in a new metering station there where you see mounds of dirt. She advised that we will find out what that sign represents.

Trustee Funchion commented that each year at this time he gives his reminder to be careful with Christmas lights. LED lights stay cool. Older lights may not be as safe. People should never leave the house or go to bed with the Christmas lights on. You never know what can happen. The Fire Department has videos of situations with that.

Trustee Funchion wished everybody a very Happy Holiday and Christmas and great New Year. He commented to enjoy the family and have a great holiday and a safe one.

Trustee Jackson commented on all the Village residents who came out to the Christmas Tree Lighting. It was quite a showing. He looks at the Village as the cup being half full, not half empty. The amount of young people with young children who were there shows the vibrancy of the Village and that in his estimation it will continue to grow. He commented that we have a lot of young people moving into the Village. He has lived here for 24 years. There are others who have lived here longer and some less. He commented that we have a very good thing going on here. We have a great style of living, great housing stock and we are only 28 miles from New York City. It is a great suburban area. It is a piece of Americana, of a small town, small village, knowing your town, knowing your neighbors, knowing other children that your children are going to school with. Those are reasons why he moved here 24 years ago. He continues to be a keen observer of that.

Trustee Jackson referred to the comments in the survey about the Historical Society. He noted that they have done some very nice things in the community with the school district to let our young people know the history that they have. They hope to continue that effort. We are one of the few villages and towns that have a historical room. It is named after our esteemed former Mayor [Bill] Burke. They will be doing an Open House in the Spring with that.

Trustee Jackson commented that speaking anecdotally, on Lake Drive where he lives four new families moved in over the last 4 years. Everybody who came in did not have children. Now everyone has a child. He thinks that is a testament to what everyone is looking for.

Trustee Jackson commented that the crowd on Monday night was fantastic. The weather cooperated. He thanked all the employees of the Village for all the work they do here. He looks at our situation as the cup half full and feels that we will make it through the Entergy situation.

He commented that as the Mayor said, there are a lot of balls in the air and in the final analysis we will be okay.

Trustee Jackson wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our residents. He said to hug your children, love your neighbor and treat your fellow man the way you want to be treated. That's what we do in our Village.

Mayor Knickerbocker noted that the 90th anniversary of our Village falls on a Tuesday. There will be an event on the weekend before that. She would like the Historical Room to be open all day on that date. There will be cookies and it will be open all day.

Mayor Knickerbocker referred to Trustee Jackson's comments about new people in the Village. She commented that she met one of our new residents who was a year and a half old. He lives on Westchester Avenue. It is nice to meet some of our new neighbors.

6. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:

None

7. ADJOURNMENT:

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

The Mayor wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and to have a great Buchanan Day.

Note: The Mayor advised that there will be no December Workshop meeting.