

Village of Buchanan  
Mayor & Board of Trustees  
Village Board  
Organizational Meeting  
April 5, 2016

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker

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

Village Administrator Kevin Hay

Village Attorney Stephanie V. Porteus

Village Board Secretary Susan F. Matthews

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker opened the meeting at 7:30 PM, welcomed everyone, informed them of the fire regulations and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Mayor noted that because this is the Organizational Meeting no business will be conducted. This meeting is to set up for next year and make appointments.

**2. READ RESULTS OF THE MARCH 15, 2016 VILLAGE ELECTION:**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the results (*copy attached*). This was an uncontested election.

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

Mary Knickerbocker administered the Oath of Office to her daughter, Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker.

Mayor Knickerbocker administered the Oath of Office to Trustees Nicolas Zachary and Richard Funchion and welcomed them back.

Mayor Knickerbocker appointed Trustee Richard Funchion as Deputy Mayor. Trustee Funchion thanked the Mayor for the appointment.

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

None

**ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS: (continued)**

Village Justice Jennifer Daily administered the Oath of Office to Dan O'Neill, Acting Village Justice. Mayor Knickerbocker asked him to say a few words. Mr. O'Neill thanked her for her support and that of the Trustees. He looks forward to serving as Acting Village Justice. He hopes to serve the Village well.

#### **5. ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARD**

Mayor Knickerbocker noted that no one is being appointed to the Assessment Review Board this evening but that the vacancy will be filled by the next meeting.

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

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

A MOTION to adopt these appointments was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.

#### **7. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES:**

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

Mayor Knickerbocker added that she has appointed Trustee Zachary as liaison to the Master Plan Committee and thanked him for accepting that appointment.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that these are mayoral appointments and no vote is necessary.

#### **4. 16-12 RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH MEETING DATES, SPECIAL MEETING PROCEDURES AND ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE AND THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW.**

At the request of the Mayor, Trustees Zachary, Pasquale and Funchion respectively read the parts of this Resolution (*copy attached*).

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

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked Trustees Zachary, Pasquale and Funchion for reading the Resolution and said that she thought it was good for the audience to hear different voices. She said that next time Trustee Jackson would be the first to read.

## **5. MAYOR'S COMMENTS:**

Mayor Knickerbocker said that it has been a privilege and honor for her the last two years to be the Mayor of this great Village. She commented that we have gone through extreme challenging times from her first day in office. She commented that she is not complaining but it has been a difficult, different type of year than she has ever seen. It is like Pandora's Box opened up. We had the Entergy agreement that we had to deal with. There were contractual agreements to deal with. Spectra is still continuing a 42 inch pipe line. The Mayor commented that is not something that happens every day. We worked with other communities to block that construction but that did not happen. We worked very hard with rallies and resolutions. It was a tough fight. In the end we lost it. She commented that we did gain something from that for the Village. The Mayor read the accomplishments we have had in the past two years. We were fortunate enough with the money received from Entergy to do things for the Village that normally we do not have the money to do. She commented that the monies we received from Entergy and Spectra were used very carefully. We took care of things that were necessary. No money was thrown away. The Board all got together and thought about the best use. As for equipment, we got 2 new police cars that we needed, a truck for the wastewater plant, and the leaf vac which was a 1978 was replaced. We are trying to upgrade the wastewater plant. Finally, a new bucket truck is on its way. The Mayor noted that for years we tried to purchase a used truck. But that is not something usually found in the market because it is something that everybody is looking for. She commented that fortunately we had the money to buy a new one. It is our own which will be used for many different projects in the Village. She commented that the last time the Village Hall was renovated was 1976. She noted that you can see the different color schemes in the rugs and chairs. The rugs are still in good condition and are staying. There were repairs needed and things that needed to be replaced here. The air conditioning unit had to be replaced. We are currently doing the brick pointing. We were starting to have some problems with some of the bricks here. She noted that after a time you have to replace some of the cement otherwise you have deterioration of the brick. We will be replacing all the windows in the building because they are not energy efficient. They are 40 years old and some of them are very dangerous and need to be replaced. We were fortunate enough to replace the pool roof. We did resurfacing and resealing of the pavilion area. The blacktop has been redone to repair the cracks. Mayor Knickerbocker said her hopes are that over the winter we could [put water in and] refreeze the pavilion. She commented that years ago, they would freeze that area and then the kids could come in and skate. Lake Meahagh is no longer safe to skate on. This year we did not have a winter for skating. But next year if that happens, we will be on top of it. We also put in some new gates there.

Mayor Knickerbocker said that LED lights were installed. She commented that everyone loves how they light the street and how very differently they cover more of the street. It is going to be

approximately a 50% savings on our electric bill. Between PASNY and Con Edison, the rates continue to rise. It will be a cost savings.

A full-time Building Inspector was hired. The Mayor commented that he is working out wonderfully and is doing a fantastic job.

We will continue to do road work and crack sealing. The Mayor commented that not everyone is happy with the crack sealing and do not like how it looks. She commented that we do that so we can extend the life of the road until we can replace it.

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that tomorrow night is the Budget Workshop. We will be talking about the amount of roads that we will be doing and will continue to do that going forward because we have a lot of roads to do.

Mayor Knickerbocker talked about the Entergy agreement. She was able to get \$250,000 more for infrastructure from them. They are the largest user of our infrastructure. She was able to get additional money. The Mayor applied for a grant and the fire house got an ATV, which is a new emergency vehicle. It will be very useful in the wooded areas of the Village. The Mayor advised that currently she is in the process of getting a grant through Entergy for Code Red. The Code Red system is something that we have been talking about and trying to get funding for. We finally did. Entergy will be paying for it and we will be setting it up in the next couple of months. She commented that it is something we desperately needed. A couple of months ago we had a problem where there were helicopters all over. One of our judges called her and wanted to know what was going on. The Mayor commented that she could communicate with people who called her but she was frustrated at how she could get information out to everyone that they were not in danger, that there was a situation going on but that everything was okay. Some Village residents who work for Entergy wondered why we did not have a Code Red system. She had been trying to get it for a while. Entergy has graciously agreed to get that for us.

The Mayor thanked Village Administrator Hay. She noted that in the last couple of years there have been a lot of meeting and negotiations. She commented that a lot of extra time was spent going through what she described as a maze, one crisis at a time. We got through it and the Village is in a better place. She thanked him and thanked Village Attorney Porteus. She commented that both of them are employees of the Village but they treat the Village as their home. They take a very strong interest in our Village.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that the Village Board Secretary Susan Matthews is with us at every meeting. No matter how long it is, she is right through it with us.

She commented that this is a great Village Board. She wants to thank them. She commented that she has been on the Board in the past where things had gotten political and you do not get anything done. She commented that some of communities around us are dealing with political things and it just hurts the community. This Board has worked hard this past year. They have always done what they felt was in the best interest of the Village. She commented that is the best that we can ask of anyone who serves in our Village. She has enjoyed working with them. It has been a pleasure. She commented that sometimes they do not see eye to eye but that is okay. The Board members tell it like it is and they talk it out. She thanked the Board for the time they spent working for the best interests of the Village. It is always the bottom line for all their decisions.

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked her mother. She commented that her mother hardly sees her daughter. She says that sometimes even when she goes to the Post Office, she disappears for hours. The Mayor commented there are all the meetings she has. Her mother puts up with her. It is a good thing.

Mayor Knickerbocker thinks that we had had a lot of tough challenges. They are behind us now. There are still things ahead of us. We will be ready and able and prepared for them. She looks forward to meeting the needs of the Village. The Mayor commented that we are all public servants here, not politicians.

## **6. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:**

Trustee Zachary thanked Mayor Knickerbocker for her comments. He said that she covered everything and he cannot add much. He commented that it does sound like we went on a spending spree with the increase in the funding from Entergy. He wanted to make it clear that a lot of those things were neglected for years and even decades. There was no money for them. He commented so it was not like the Board went crazy in the toy store. They got things that are investments in the Village and will serve us for quite some time. These were things that needed to be done for quite a while. He thanked the members of the Board as well as the Village Administrator and Village Attorney for their work. He quoted the expression that “it takes a village” and said that he believes that it really does. He commented that he has a great deal of respect for everybody on the Board. These are people who are willing to serve in the interest of the Village. They have the best interest of the Village in their hearts. He commented that a lot of people are not willing to serve. He deeply appreciates those who are willing to take the time, including the Planning and Zoning Boards. He commented that as Mayor Knickerbocker mentioned, we do not always agree. We are here to think for ourselves. We are not “Stepford Wives” Trustees. He commented that he sometimes speaks his mind and does not agree but it does not mean any lack of respect for the Mayor and members of the Board. The Board members are doing a wonderful job and it is a pleasure to work with these people. Trustee Zachary thanked the public. He knows that it was an uncontested election. 99 people showed up

to vote. He does not know if a lack of opposition is a sign that they are doing a good job or that the Republican Party is in disarray. He commented that hopefully more people will be ready to be part of this Village in years to come. He thanked everyone.

Trustee Funchion thanked Mayor Knickerbocker for the honor of being appointed Deputy Mayor. He appreciates working with her. She has done an excellent job. He commented that like her predecessor former Mayor Sean Murray, she works very hard. He does not think that the people of Buchanan could really understand how much work both of them have done, the amount of hours and the impact on their personal lives. He thanked both of them. He noted that former Mayor Murray is one of the people who got him involved in this as well as former Mayor Dan O'Neill and former Trustee Gary Bell. He thanked them for allowing him to be in this position and thanked the public for their support to the entire Board. He commented that he has had nothing but good feedback from people. They speak their minds. There might be differences of opinion. He appreciates the fact that they let the Board know what is going on. He reiterated that the Board members do not always agree but they are always acting in the best interest of the Village of Buchanan. He commented that he knows that no one ran against them but when people do, he is proud of the fact that Buchanan has a much higher percentage of voter turnout compared to the rest of the country. He commented that unfortunately a lot of places in the country do not have that. Buchanan is way up there in the percentage of eligible voters who actually vote in elections.

Trustee Funchion thanked the Village Administrator and Village Attorney, both of whom do an awful lot of unseen work. He commented that he has worked closely with Village Administrator Hay in the Teamsters and police union negotiations. It is very time consuming. It is very burdensome on the people involved on both sides. He commented that it takes a lot to come to these decisions. He noted that he worked for 35 years for the Federal government. He commented that the State and local government bureaucracies far exceed the Federal government's. He commented that when you do your taxes, look at how many forms there are for the State versus the Federal government for the average person. He thanked Bobby Wheeler of the Highway Department who was on the other side in the Teamsters union negotiations. Trustee Funchion commented that Bobby Wheeler handled it extremely well for the employees he was representing. Trustee Funchion commented that it was good that they could come to a conclusion. He commented that Bobby Wheeler has been instrumental in helping him understand the actual down in the trenches workings of people in the Village. He thinks that is one of the hardest things for members of the Board to understand. He commented that he worked in law enforcement for the Federal government for 35 years. He never ran a backhoe or cleaned the streets with a snow plow, operated a leaf vac or dealt with broken pipe lines. Our Highway Department does that every day. Trustee Funchion commented that we have to have some connection with the Board to understand what their needs are and what we can give them

in money and equipment that would help, and for the Board to be able to make choices when there are decisions on which item to purchase.

Trustee Funchion thanked his wife and daughter who allow him to do this all the time. They ask him when he is going to retire. When he replies that he did retire 10 years ago, they say that he is always doing something with the Village. He appreciates their support.

Trustee Funchion wanted to point out how successful the Saint Patrick's Day Committee was in presenting the parade, the party and the amount of organization that went into that. He thanked the Police Department for their support of the Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Everybody enjoyed the parade.

He thanked the members of the Village Board. Trustee Funchion commented that the Board members are all professionals in their mannerisms. He said that the Board will hopefully continue to do the right thing by Buchanan in the future.

Trustee Pasquale said that it was a pleasure and honor to be able to work with all the other Board members. He thanks them personally. He said that he has learned so much from them. He thanked the Mayor for asking him to do this. He commented that for 16 years he lived 20 feet from Trustee Zachary and maybe 100 yards from Trustee Funchion and did not know who they were. He got to know the Board members and now considers them friends as well. He commented that they have helped him immensely and he thanks them.

Trustee Jackson thanked the citizens of Buchanan for coming out to vote in the last election. It exhibits their civic pride and being involved. He thanked the members of the Historical Society. He commented that they are continuing to bring it back to be able to teach the children in the neighborhoods and the local schools about the rich history of the Hudson Valley. He commented that they lost Larry and Lillian Stein. He mentioned Don Zern and Cheryl. He commented that they had a great Open House for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders from the B/V School that reestablished the legacy of Fran Stein and Bill Burke. Trustee Jackson looks forward to continuing that effort as they move forward. They made a short film where they went out and interviewed residents and former residents and employees like Joe O'Toole and different people here in the Village. It went very well and they are going to continue that effort for making sure that we leave a visual history of what has gone on in the Village and the residents who participated in that.

Trustee Jackson commented that his hat is off to our Fire Department. They are a group of men and women and professionals who continue to do their job in the dead of night, freezing rain and snow to make sure that we are safe and that everything in the Village is running smoothly. The fire company does a lot of things with the Explorer Program and their work in the community and he salutes them.

Trustee Jackson thinks that it is very poignant that as we welcome back our Planning and Zoning Board members and the fact that we have two former mayors back in the saddle to get involved in this community. He commented that very few communities in America have that “community-ism”. He thinks that we should all be proud of that.

Trustee Jackson said that the participation of Village Administrator Hay and Village Attorney Porteus and Village Board Secretary Susan Matthews in making things go is admirable. He feels that we are on the right track. He commented that there are ups and downs and bumps in the highway as Trustee Funchion said, but he knows that we will get through that. He congratulated everyone who took their Oath of Office and thanked them for keeping democracy alive in the Village.

Mayor Knickerbocker said that she had a few more people that she wanted to thank. She would like to see if they can come to the next meeting so we can give them a proclamation or thank you certificate. Jennifer Fleming was on our Planning Board for years and has now graciously said that she will be on our Master Plan Committee. The Mayor looks forward to her input on that. Bill Durr has been on our Assessment Board for many years. He could no longer do that. Mary Chapyak has been our judge here for over 20 years. The Mayor would like to ask all three to come in so they can be thanked publicly and given something for their service. The Mayor commented that what makes this such a great community is that we have so many people who live here who want to see the community prosper and actually take the time to come out. She thanked former Mayor Sean Murray who will again be on the Planning Board, and Michelle O’Neill who will be Planning Board Chairperson. She thanked former Mayor Dan O’Neill for coming back and serving the public again.

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

None.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:18 PM a MOTION to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.