

The official minutes of the Village of Waterville Board of Trustees board meeting held on April 1st, 2024. Minutes to be approved at the next board meeting on Monday, April 15th, 2024.

In attendance: Mayor - G. Ostrander, DPW Superintendent J. Bechy, Treasurer/Clerk - G. Barnes, CEO – W. Brown, Trustees: L. Stern, B. Bogan, A. Hilley

Not in attendance: Trustee A. Briggs, Fire Chief J. Waufle

Public in attendance: Patty Louise, Steve Aldridge, Phil Olin, Jim Younes, John Mariani, John Wright, Seth Woodward, Andrea McCartney, Devon Hilley, Ken Boone

1. Call to Order
2. Open Public Hearing on proposed sewer rate increase from \$95/unit to \$100/unit
 - **Motion to Open Public Hearing on Proposed Sewer Rates**
M - B. Bogan 2nd – L. Stern Carried Time – 7:08pm
 - Public Comment – J. Mariani asked the Board to table the sewer and water rate changes until Village residents had a chance to review the information. He stated that the letter announcing the Public Hearing arrived too late for people to review the information prior to the Public Hearing.
 - **Motion to Close Public Hearing on Proposed Sewer Rates**
M – G. Ostrander 2nd – L. Stern Carried Time – 7:12pm
3. Open Public Hearing on proposed changes to water rates – increasing rate to \$6.50/1000 gallons with a 5000-gallon minimum and eliminating the \$27.50 debt service charge
 - **Motion to Open Public Hearing on Proposed Changes to Water Rates/Debt Service**
M – A. Hilley 2nd – B. Bogan Carried Time – 7:12pm
 - Public Comment – Mayor Ostrander stated the Village Debt Service fee was originally implemented to pay for a water bond that has been paid. The Village’s proposal to eliminate the Debt Service and increase the water rate was to allow the Village to obtain a true number of what it cost the Village to fund the water department. The Debt Service is a \$27.50 flat rate that is charged to each water account regardless of the number of units on the property or the amount of water used. Additionally, the lower water rate with debt service does not accurately reflect what it costs the Village to process water.
Seth Woodward had questions regarding the hardness of the water. Others at the meeting stated that the water is undrinkable. Mayor Ostrander explained that the hardness of the water is due to the Village’s water source which are wells tapped into an underground aquifer. Any underground water source will be much harder than a ground source such as water from reservoirs. DPW J. Bechy stated that some of the “bad tastes” from the water that residents mentioned could be from the water service pipes coming into the residence. Old galvanized pipes can form barnacles inside the pipes and can affect the taste of the water. Another question asked to the Village was whether the Village could add a filtration plant and/or soften the water at the chlorinator plant. Mayor Ostrander responded that the Health Dept. would not allow the Village to soften water because the process would impart higher levels of sodium in the water which could be a health risk for people who have heart issues or high blood pressure. The Village did consider a filtration plant when the Village still used water from the reservoirs, but it was too costly and the Village did not have the volume of water that was needed for a filtration plant to work properly.

Former Village Mayor, Jim Younes, commented that the changes to the water rates were fair and that people needed to remember that the residents of the Village would be the ones to pay for any costly changes to how the Village processes water whether with higher taxes or higher water rates. He also stated that the Village is prohibited by the State to make money from charging more for water services than what is needed to fund the water account.

Other residents at the meeting stated that they liked the proposed change because they wanted to pay only for the water that they use and not subsidize higher water users through the debt service fee. Trustee Bogan spoke on behalf of Tom Eisenhut who owns the laundry mat in the Village. Mr. Eisenhut felt the proposed changes put the burden of funding the water fund on higher water users such as himself and the owner of the local car wash.

During the discussion, it was once again mentioned that the letter which was mailed with the quarterly water bill arrived too late for people to make plans to attend the meeting. Additionally, the meeting coincided with Easter school break and many residents were on vacation and unable to attend the meeting.

- **Motion to Close Public Hearing on Proposed Changes to Water Rates/Debt Service**
M – B. Bogan 2nd – L. Stern Carried Time – 7:58pm

The Board did not vote on the proposed changes to sewer or water rates. The Board will allow for public comment at the April 15, 2024 board meeting.

4. Motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2024 Regular Board meeting

M – B. Bogan 2nd – L. Stern Carried

5. Motion to approve Purchase Order(s)

M – L. Stern 2nd – B. Bogan Carried

6. Motion to approve Audit of Expense Abstracts for 4-1-24 GEN ABS and TA ABS

M – A. Hilley 2nd – B. Bogan Carried

7. Public Participation (5 minutes per person)

- John Mariani asked if the DPW could vacuum green waste in the spring. DPW J. Bechy stated that they do not vacuum green waste because of the number of twigs and branches mixed in with the leaves which the vacuum cannot suck up.
- Steve Aldridge informed DPW Bechy that there were some down trees that were hanging over Big Creek near the sewer plant. DPW Bechy said the trees were outside of the Village so the Town of Marshall should be contacted. Mr. Aldridge also said that the large pine tree in the park has branches that are pushing down on power lines. DPW Bechy said he would take a look at the tree.

8. Department Head's Reports

- DPW Superintendent J. Bechy
 - The Village received the new garbage truck.
 - Received an email from NYSERDA approving the \$10,000 grant for two car charging stations at the Village Hall. These charging stations are more powerful than the current station in the Village parking lot behind New York Pizza. The new stations will cost money to use.

- A proposal was received for General Code to work with the Village to review the current Village laws and re-write laws where necessary. The proposal will be emailed to all Board members. This cost was already approved in the 2024-25 budget.
- Presented the monthly DPW report.
- Codes Enforcement Office W. Brown
 - Presented the monthly Codes report

9. Trustee’s Reports/Old Business

- Brian Bogan – the next DRI Steering Committee meeting will be held April 16th at 6:30pm at the Village Hall. This meeting is open to the public.

10. Mayor’s Report

- The United Methodist Women asked permission to hold their annual pie/bake sale at the Village Hall during the General Elections held on November 5, 2024.

Motion to approve – L. Stern 2nd – A. Hilley Carried

- The next Oneida County Water Shed meeting will be held at the Village Hall in Waterville on April 18th at 4:30pm.
- The Village received a letter from the State approving the Village to begin drawing funds for the CDBG community housing rehab grant.
- Request the board’s approval to hire lawyer, Stephanie DiGiorgio, to represent the Village in place of retired Village attorney, Bill Getman.

Motion to approve – B. Bogan 2nd – L. Stern Carried

11. Adjournment, next meeting will be the April 15th, 2024 at 7pm.

- **Motion to adjourn – B. Bogan 2nd – A. Hilley Carried**
- **Time – 8:25pm**

Village Clerk’s Signature

Date