

REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND FALLS

January 20, 2009

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held in the Village Hall, 303 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on January 20, 2009.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 6:00 P.M.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio
Trustee Harold Brown
Trustee June L. Gunza
Trustee Robert Mellon

Members absent were:

Trustee Michael Bosch

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor
Street Superintendent, Gary Boyce
Police Chief, Peter Miller (7:00pm)
Fire Chief, William Lee
News of the Highlands Editor, Mary Jane Pitt
Planning Board Member- Jim DiSalvo, (6:30pm)
Village Resident, Jean Sharp, 11 Homestead Ave. Mr. Iftakar Malik, Mr. Malik (son) & Ms. Malik (daughter) – 41 Main Street

A motion was made by Trustee Brown to approve the below listed minutes as written:

a) Regular Meeting – January 5, 2009

The motion was seconded by Trustee Mellon and unanimously carried.

The Fire Department Year End Report for 2008 was presented to the Board for review.

The Fire Chief recommended to the Board to accept the application of Ellen Connors and an active member of the department. He said the Fire Company has already approved her and would like the Village to approve her as well.

Mayor D'Onofrio motioned to approve Ellen Connors as a member of the Highland Falls Fire Department upon the Village Clerk receiving all the necessary paperwork.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Mellon and unanimously carried.

A public hearing, as duly advertised, was opened at 6:10 pm, for the purpose of receiving public comment to consider adoption of Introductory Local Law entitled "Penalties for Property Maintenance Violations". Mayor D'Onofrio presented for the record the Notice of Hearing and Affidavit of Publication. He explained this law was a result of the Village having repeat offenders for property maintenance issues and the Village becoming the property maintenance company for these repeat offenders. The increase in penalties will hopefully encourage people to maintain their properties.

Jean Sharp, resident of 11 Homestead Ave. asked the question – "What is the process?"

The Mayor responded that once a complaint is heard from the Code Enforcement Officer, he goes out to verify the complaint. If there is a violation, he gives the property owner a Notice to Remedy the Violation and if the property owner does not comply with correcting the violation, then the penalties come into play. Ms. Sharp thanked the Mayor for responding.

All comments being heard and no further questions, the public hearing closed at 6:15pm.

Trustee Gunza motioned the following:

Village of Highland Falls
Resolution of Adoption
Local Law No. 1-2009
"Penalties for Property Maintenance Violations"

The motion was seconded by Trustee Mellon and on a roll call vote the results which follow:

3 Ayes 0 Nays 2 Absent

motion carried. (A true and complete copy of the resolution is appended to these minutes)

A memo from Tim Doherty, Code Enforcement Officer, was acknowledged by the Board. The memo asked Board members to remind residents that sidewalks are the responsibility of property owners to maintain, especially during snow and ice season. He had received numerous complaints from Mountain Avenue residents that children were forced off the sidewalks or were forced to walk over dangerous conditions.

Gary Boyce, Street Superintendent, reminded the Board that the Village agreed to plow the sidewalks on Mountain Avenue because of the school children. Although the plow gets the bulk of the snow off the sidewalks, residents are still responsible to keep them passable.

The Board mentioned that the Chief of Police sends out notices every year and the News of the Highlands reminds residents about the code. The code is also posted on the local TV channel.

Discussion was held on how to enforce the code. The Mayor responded that the chapter in the code book on Property Maintenance will be used to enforce the regulations. The Code Officer will continue to respond to complaints.

A proposal for Website development was presented to Board. Mr. Tony Donato of 1st Responder provided a cost of \$1,695.00 to do the initial set-up, host, maintain and administer for one year, the website. After that the cost would run approximately \$850.00/year.

Trustee Gunza made a motion to accept the proposal with the stipulation that the site is up and running within three months or the Village has the right to cancel the agreement and get the deposit returned. The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

A letter from Fatsis & Associates, PLLC. was acknowledged by the Board. Mr. Fatsis has requested that the water meter at 237 Main Street, acct # 51-1040803-0, be tested for accuracy. Mr. Fatsis disputes the validity of the meter reading and the resulting water & sewer bills for 2008.

The Village Board agreed to have the meter tested, however, because new meters are being installed in every Village property within the next two months, they asked the Chief Water Plant Operator, Kevin Hurst to send the meter out during the changeover. If the meter is found to be correct, Mr. Fatsis will be responsible for the cost of testing. If the meter is found to be incorrect, the Board will decide how to proceed.

A letter from Arden Hill Speech & Hearing was acknowledged by the Board. The letter was submitted on behalf of Allonna Mouton a 3 ½ year old child who resides at 82 Center Street in the Village. She is deaf and the family would like signs posted in the neighborhood to warn vehicle traffic.

Trustee Mellon motioned to approve the sign request and have Street Superintendent Gary Boyce follow up and do whatever is necessary to get signs installed.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Mellon to approve the bills and claims for \$37,988.83 from the following listed funds:

General Fund	\$21,775.25
Water Fund	\$ 5,230.18
Sewer Fund	\$ 7,466.92
Capital Fund	\$ 3,516.48

The motion was seconded by Trustee Gunza and unanimously carried.

The Mayor reported that he had spoken to Ron Broas, HFFMCS D Roads and Grounds Supervisor and he has agreed to allow vehicles to use the Fickens Field parking lot during snowstorms. The Mayor pointed out that parking is allowed near the Little League field on the south side of the pond.

Trustee Gunza made a motion to transfer the 1998 Jeep to the water plant to use as a second vehicle with the stipulation that no major funding will be incurred and once the jeep dies it will not be replaced.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Mellon and unanimously carried.

Trustee Gunza reported that she had spoken with Senator Larkin about any possible funding for sewer plant repairs. She said he told her the Village should submit a letter so that in case any funding were to be available, the Village would be one step ahead in already having submitted a letter.

The Mayor said he would work on making sure a letter, that all Board members could sign, be sent out as soon as possible. He said he also has asked the Water Department, Sewer Department and DPW to list any major infrastructure projects, in priority, that they think will need to be done in the next one to two years. He wants the Village to be prepared to submit for any simulation monies the new administration in Washington D.C. may be handing out to improve the economy.

Mr. Iftikhar Malik, 41 Main Street, (US Academy Motel), presented a letter to the Board that explains his reasons why the proposed Master Plan zoning for his property needs to be changed to B2 in order for him to make improvements to the motel. He told the Board that he believes discrimination is the reason his neighbors object to the zone change and that the Board has no courage to stand up to them. He said he is not going to sell his property and all he wants to do is to be able to build a better and safer motel that will not only benefit his family, but also bring in more revenue to the village, town and school district. Mr. Malik explained that he tried to meet with his neighbors to discuss all their concerns and no one would respond. They only complained to the Board.

The Mayor responded that he believes the Village Board is still considering more dialogue about this matter.

Street Superintendent Gary Boyce and Police Chief Peter Miller had some discussion with the Board about cooperation between their departments during snowstorms. Gary would like the Police Department to be more proactive in getting cars off the streets so that his department can get the job done. Peter contends the Police do the best they can during snow events and will continue to do so.

A motion was made by Trustee Mellon to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

The meeting closed at 7:40 P.M.

Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk