

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

April 13, 2009

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held in Village Hall, 303 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on April 13, 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 James DiSalvo
Trustee June L. Gunza
Trustee Joseph McCormick

Member Absent was:

Trustee Harold Brown

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor
Village Treasurer, Ralph J. Walters
Police Chief, Peter Miller
Police Officer, Steven Bookstein (6:45pm)
Detective John Might (6:45pm)
News of the Highlands Editor Emeritus, Fred Brennan

Trustee McCormick motioned that rip- rap needed around the 9W Valve replacement project to aid in the drainage around the area be approved for \$3,326.00. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

The Mayor told the Board that National Metering Company has offered to sell the Village the metal storage container that was used to store the replacement meters and is located at the Water Plant for \$2,858.00. The Board decided not accept this offer and to have Mr. Hurst check around for a less expensive solution.

Discussion was held on labor issues relative to the budget talks. The Board would like David Hurst to transfer to the Wastewater Treatment Plant as soon as possible so that he can train under Mr. Murphy before he retires. They are looking for an April 30th effective date. The Village Clerk will work with David to ensure proper paperwork is completed in order for this to happen.

The Mayor reported that he had met briefly with Anthony Solfaro, negotiator for the Highland Falls, PBA. He is waiting to hear back from Mr. Solfaro. The Mayor reported that he had spoken to John Jones the President of the DPWEA and asked him to take back to the union some numbers that would be possibly savings of approximately \$6,000.00 or \$7,500.00 depending on which numbers are accepted, in their negotiation of the expired contract. The Mayor is waiting to hear back from Mr. Jones.

Trustee McCormick stated he believes the supervisors should have fixed salaries, no overtime. Compensation should be commensurate with performance and that all employees should have to contribute to the health plan.

The Board would like to eliminate overtime for the Department Heads as of June 1st.

Discussion was held on weekend clean-up of Main Street and watering of gardens. Suggestions made included community service or getting community groups involved. No action was taken at this time.

Discussion was held on the Police Department possibly using Orange County 911 for dispatching services for the 11pm – 7am shift. Chief Miller reported that currently the hand held radios are not capable of reaching Orange County because of our location and lack of cell tower power. This creates a dangerous situation for any officer who must leave the vehicle to investigate a complaint. Orange County has said they are looking to put a tower across the river and if that happens, it's possible the handhelds would work. The Chief would like to keep a dispatcher on until the Village is sure that things are working

satisfactorily. If a full time dispatcher is let go, the position would be filled by part-time dispatchers and eventually eliminated when the system proved successful.

Officer Might responded that the 11pm – 7am shift is very important to the community. The Chief also reminded the Board that their first priority is to ensure the safety of the officers and the community. The Police Union gave a proposal to the Village Board that would eliminate a dispatcher position but it would be covered by an Officer. The total savings of the dispatcher position would be \$54,000.00, the cost of salary and benefits.

Officer Bookstein asked the Board if they could look into increasing fines or fees as a way to help raise revenues.

The Mayor responded that he does not want to eliminate a Dispatcher or an Officer, but the economy is forcing some hard decisions to have to be made. The Mayor set April 23rd at 6:00pm for another budget workshop.

A motion was made by Trustee McCormick to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gunza and unanimously carried.

The meeting closed at 7:43 pm

Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk