

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

September 17, 2012

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held in the Community Room of the Highland Falls Library, 298 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on September 17, 2012.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 7:00 P.M.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio
Trustee Harold Brown
Trustee James DiSalvo
Trustee Patrick Flynn
Trustee Joseph McCormick

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor
Police Chief, Ken Scott
Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, John Jones
Building Inspector, John Hager
News of the Highlands Editor, Mary Jane Pitt
Representatives of Joseph E. Mastrianni, Inc. – James Mastrianni, Greg Gallucci
Approximately 35 Village Residents

Trustee Brown motioned to approve the below listed minutes as written:

a) Regular Meeting – September 4, 2012

The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

An overview of the Section 8 Program was presented by Mr. James Mastrianni and Mr. Gregg Gallucci from Joseph E. Mastrianni, Inc., the administrator of the Section 8 Program for the Village. Mr. Mastrianni, handed out a summary of statistics that included a Program Background and Current Program Statistics. Mr. Mastrianni explained that the program is a Federally sponsored program and the funding and rules are decided by Congress, not his company nor the Village of Highland Falls. Mr. Mastrianni stated that the Village currently has 84 vouchers, but funding only allows 63 to be currently used. He further explained that the company has certified inspectors that make sure a unit is acceptable before it can be a Section 8 unit and it is inspected annually thereafter. Any deficiencies must be corrected immediately, before the landlord receives the next month's subsidy. Mr. Mastrianni commented that the goal is to maximize the program.

Mayor D'Onofrio stated that he will make a recommendation to the Village Board that the number of vouchers be reduced from 84, which the Village currently has, to 63, which is currently being used. Mr. Mastrianni commented that he does not know that there is a mechanism in place with the program to reduce vouchers once they have been allotted. The Mayor also spoke of possibly letting the County run the Section 8 program which could result in fewer units being used in the Village. Mr. Mastrianni commented that under Mastrianni's administration of the program, Village residents have priority status for vouchers, the County would fill the vouchers on a county wide need.

Fort Montgomery resident, Mr. Brian Suchanyc, passed out to the Village Board a handout that supported the position that Section 8 is ruining neighborhoods. He asked Mr. Mastrianni if ex-convicts are permitted to be on the program. Mr. Mastrianni explained that sex-offenders and those arrested for manufacturing methamphetamine, on the premises of federally assisted housing could not be on the program, however, ex-convicts could move in with relatives in Section 8 or public housing. Mr. Mastrianni reminded everyone that the rules are made by Congress.

Other concerns from Village residents included the additional cost to the school district and if there is oversight on illegal occupants in a Section 8 unit. Mr. Mastrianni explained that Section 8 subsidizes housing costs, and that there is a dedicated phone line for anyone who wishes to report any suspected fraud in the program. There is a Program Integrity Coordinator that investigates all calls seriously.

Mr. Gus Koustourades, 156 Main St., asked if the Village receives any financial incentives with the program. Mr. Mastrianni explained that there is revenue sharing as part of the program, however, the amount generated must go to administrative costs to run the program, for example, preparation of the annual Village audit and telephone assistance or processing of paper work done by the Village staff. The Mayor pointed out that these funds cannot be used for any reason the Board wants, for example, filling pot holes. He stated the money must go back into the program.

Mr. Suchanyc questioned the Board on whether they think the criminal element has increased because of the Section 8 Program and so many rentals. He asked if the Board thinks we should hire more police and detectives . The Mayor responded that many people perceive that everyone hanging on the streets are in the Section 8 Program. He stressed that this is not the case.

Mr. Koutsourades asked if the income levels increase, would the number of vouchers decrease. Mr. Mastrianni reiterated that it is a federally funded program and if income levels increase, the Federal subsidy could support more vouchers. If incomes decrease, more subsidy is needed and less people are helped.

Mr. Jason O'Dell asked what set the initial number of vouchers. Mr. Mastrianni answered that it was the original application submitted twenty years ago, and that there was increase sometime in the nineties. The amount of the budget is set by Congress.

Mr. Mastrianni also highlighted a new program, Family Self-Sufficiency. The number currently participating in this program is 28. The idea is to set up an escrow fund to assist the participant in getting off the Section 8 Program within 5 years. Trustee DiSalvo asked what happens if they don't become self-sufficient in 5 years. Mr. Mastrianni explained that they are currently allowed back in the Choice Housing Program, but not the FSS program. The difference between a participant's income increase and his/her subsidy decrease is put into an escrow account. Upon graduation from the program, the escrow amount is given to them.

Mr. Mastrianni concluded by stating that there will be low income residents with or without the Section 8 Program. He also reminded the Board that as long as Mastrianni administers the program, Village residents are helped first. Mr. Greg Gallucci referred anyone to the HUD website for further information regarding the Section 8 Program and the rules and regulations that govern it.

Trustee Flynn asked Mr. Mastrianni to give a report to the Board that outlines the benefits of the Program and explain why Mastrianni, Inc. should continue as the administrator of the program locally and not the County.

No Board action was taken regarding the administration of the Section 8 Program.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve the Mayor to sign the Annual Civil Rights Certification for the PHA.

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

5 Ayes 0 Nays

motion carried. (a true and complete copy of the Annual Certification and Board Resolution is appended to these minutes)

Trustee DiSalvo motioned the following:

Resolution
Vehicle and Traffic
Village of Highland Falls

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

5 Ayes 0 Nays

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

The Building Department Report for August 2012 was presented to the Board for review.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to approve the Police Chief's request to purchase a new Police Vehicle to replace a 2002 Ford Crown Victoria Interceptor that has over 100,000 miles on it, with General Reserve Funds, the amount not to exceed \$30,000.00.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

Trustee Flynn motioned to approve the Police Chief's request to begin the process to fill the Sergeant's position and request the list from Orange County Civil Service.

The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve the request from the Mayor/Village of Highland Falls to sponsor a Homecoming Parade to support O'Neill students, on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, starting from 521 Main St. and ending at Memorial Park.

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

4 Ayes 1 Nay (Flynn)

motion carried.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to approve the request from the Mayor/Village of Highland Falls to sponsor a Dog Social on the Little League Field, on Sunday, September 23, 2012 at 2:00pm .

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

4 Ayes 1 Nay (Flynn)

motion carried.

Trustee Flynn commented that he voted no because of insurance concerns and did not believe the Village has proper coverage for these events.

The Mayor responded that he had checked with the Village Insurance Company and was assured the coverage was adequate for these events.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve TEK Occupational Services to perform annual physicals for the fire department members on the recommendation of the 1st Assistant Fire Chief, and the conclusion of a Request for Proposals.

The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve the Mayor to sign Gas Line Right of Way Agreement with Central Hudson to provide service to the Town Hall, located at 254 Main St.

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

5 Ayes 0 Nay

motion carried.

Trustee Brown motioned to approve the bills and claims for \$98,115.31 from the following listed funds:

FY 12-13	General Fund	\$70,097.80
	Water Fund	\$12,804.71
	Sewer Fund	\$15,118.60
	Capital Fund	\$ 94.20

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

5 Ayes 0 Nays

motion carried.

Public Comment:

Mr. Norman DeYoung, 11 Walker Rd., asked if the Board had done any more about the local law regarding Motel Stays. The Mayor responded that the Village is waiting to see how the law suit in Warwarsing turns out and if the Village can use it to our benefit. Mr. John Hager, Building Inspector, commented that he has not had any official complaints, only verbal.

Mrs. Laura Milsom, 105 Center St., asked for an update on 109 Center Street. The Building Inspector commented that there was no update.

Mr. David McCutcheon, 49 Ft. Putnam St., asked what can be done about illegal conversions of single family homes into two family. The Building Inspector commented that evidence is needed to begin an investigation. The Mayor commented that if a claim is substantiated, a property owner can be made to undo it. Mr. Hager explained the process. The Mayor commented that in order to begin an investigation, a complaint must be initiated.

Fort Montgomery resident, Daniel Malarky, asked the Board to recognize a tree near the top of Station Hill Rd. as a Sequoia Tree and that it should be protected and maybe a plaque near it that explains the history of it. Trustee McCormick commented that he had researched the tree and found out it is a Bald Cypress. The Board thanked Mr. Malarky for bringing the tree to their attention.

Questions were asked by Mr. Gus Koutsourades, 156 Main Street, regarding the calendar that was recently distributed to every household. He asked who was in charge of it and who was responsible for obvious omissions in it. The Mayor responded that the calendar was able to be produced through a grant received by the local LDC. The Mayor praised the calendar and commented that he only heard of a few people who didn't like it. He commented that many of the enclosed surveys have been returned and the LDC will review them. The Mayor stated that the LDC apologizes for any omissions in the calendar.

Mr. Ray Deveraux, 48 Ondaora Pkwy, asked if the LDC was a function of the Village and commented that the calendar could have been more complete. The Mayor responded that it was not a function of the Village.

Board comments:

Mayor D'Onofrio:

Informed the residents that on September 29, 2012 at 9:00am there will be a tour given of the Water Plant and on October 6, 2012 at 9:00am there will be a tour given of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Offered his support and wishes the Town success with the Ft. Montgomery Marina project.

Reminded residents that the Police Department would be holding a "take back" program for prescription drugs on September 29th in the lobby of the Police Department.

Thanked all who participated in securing the steel beam from the WTC and those who participated in the memorial and the 9/11 ceremony.

Distributed draft copies of an Amendment to the Property Maintenance Law, Waterfront Overlay District and Consolidated Planning Board Agreement, to the Village Board and asked the Board to review and get any comments back to the Village Clerk.

Provided an update on the FEMA monies received to date for the damages incurred by Hurricane Irene last summer.

Informed that Board that upon completion of the Center Street Park rehabilitation, there are still funds available through the Community Development Rehabilitation Program and he would like to bring in an arborist to research for trees to plant on Main Street.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve the Mayor's request for an Arborist to be hired to research trees to be planted on Main Street, with funds from the Community Development Rehabilitation Program. The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

Trustee McCormick gave a report on the water tank painting project. He updated the Board on the status of FEMA projects around the water tanks, Bog Meadow road and Jim's Pond Dam. Trustee McCormick reminded residents to maintain their properties.

Trustee Flynn congratulated the My Town Marketplace on its first year anniversary and thanked Mr. & Mrs. Milsom for taking care of the stray cats in their neighborhood, the residents who came to tonight's meeting and the representatives from Joseph E. Mastrianni, Inc. for their presentation of the Section 8 Program.

Trustee DiSalvo reported that the DPW has been kept busy this month with repaving of streets, fixing sewer lines and the rehabilitation of the Center Street Park.

Trustee Brown reported that the Wastewater Treatment Plant meets all NYSDEC permits and reminded everyone of the re-dedication of the Center Street Park on Saturday, September 22nd at 11:00am.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to enter executive session to discuss a specific individual in a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and on a roll call vote, the results which follow:
5 Ayes 0 Nays
 motion carried.

The Village Board entered executive session at 9:21pm.

Trustee Brown motioned to come out of executive session. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried. The regular meeting reconvened at 9:28pm.

The Mayor reported to the Board that the opening of bids for the Grit Chamber Rehabilitation Project was changed to Monday, September 24th at 10:00am.

Discussion was held on a request to reimburse Mrs. Gathers at 17 Fostoria Street for camera work that was done for an inspection of a clogged drain that appears to have been broken by the contractor of the street paving project done last fall.

Trustee McCormick motioned to approve reimbursement of the camera work upon a copy of a paid receipt or cancelled check of the associated cost being submitted to the Village Clerk. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

Trustee McCormick motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

The meeting closed at 9:36pm.

Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk