

REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND FALLS  
December 6, 2021

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held at the Village Hall, 303 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on December 6, 2021.

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

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio  
Trustee Brian Aylward  
Trustee James DiSalvo  
Trustee Melanie Guerrero  
Trustee Gary C. Phillips

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor  
Village Attorney, Alyse Terhune  
Camera Operator, Sean Lackhan  
News of the Highlands Editor, Mary Jane Pitt  
Approximately 9 Community members

Mayor D'Onofrio opened the meeting and remembered our service members and Community members who have passed away since the last meeting. The meeting was held under the CDC and Orange County Department of Health recommendation to wear masks inside buildings & for public gatherings whether a person is vaccinated or not, due to the rise in the Covid-19 & the delta variant.

Mayor D'Onofrio commented that he would be the presiding officer for tonight's meeting.

Mayor D'Onofrio opened a public hearing on the Introductory Local Law To Opt Out Of Licensing and Establishing Retail Cannabis Dispensaries and On-Site Cannabis Consumption Establishments at 7:03p.m.

Co-Owners of the local smoke shop, Matthew and Yazz, spoke in favor of opting in to allow the sale of cannabis and having consumption establishments. Matthew, who lives at 323 Main Street, commented that marijuana is legal, like cigarettes and alcohol, and like them, should be allowed to be sold in stores. Yazz, read off statistics to the Board that shows the profit margins for retail stores and how the town could profit as well. Yazz commented that CDB's are a healthier alternative to hard drugs which can be addictive. Yazz commented that allowing retail stores would help to bring in more businesses and consumer traffic which would help other businesses. Yazz commented that this is the future of medicine and refusing change will be bad for the future.

Mr. Joe Cyr, 30 Drew Ave., spoke in favor of opting in. Mr. Cyr remarked that marijuana is legal now and it is the future. It will help eliminate empty stores on Main Street.

Dr. Ryan Erbe, 17 Regina Rd., a health education teacher in Rockland County and a Professor at West Point, spoke against opting in. Dr. Ryan commented that he does not see huge profit numbers for the Village. Dr. Ryan commented that the potency level of THC is much higher today and making it a legal drug does not make it a benign drug. Dr. Erbe commented that it is detrimental to the development of the adolescent brain. Dr. Ryan asked the Board to consider the social message that is being sent if they opt in to the retail sale of cannabis.

Roland Carey, 22 Regina Rd., spoke against opting in. Mr. Carey commented that his concerns were the effects on property values and crime if retail sales are allowed. Mr. Carey commented that he doesn't believe it will destroy the Village to opt out and that it is not needed in the Village at this time to have retail sales.

Pete Meindl, Highland Falls, commented that he is a Doctor of Psychology and his concern is the effect of marijuana use on long term memories or learning. Dr. Meindl commented that he thinks allowing dispensaries could have a negative effect on the economics of the Village and could be a deterrent for families with children.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Trustee Aylward and unanimously carried. Mayor D'Onofrio closed the public hearing at 7:29p.m.

Trustee Aylward motioned to approve the following minutes:  
Regular Meeting November 15, 2021

The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned the following:

Village of Highland Falls  
Resolution Enacting Local Law 03-2021  
Opting Out Of Licensing and Establishing  
Retail Cannabis Dispensaries and On-Site Cannabis  
Consumption Establishments

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

5 Ayes 0 Nays

The Mayor declared this resolution adopted. (A true and complete copy of this resolution is appended to these minutes).

Trustee DiSalvo motioned the following:

Resolution  
Village of Highland Falls Board of Trustees

Resolution Authorizing the Submission of an Application To The New York State Department Of State 2021 Local Government Citizens Re-Organization Empowerment Grant (CREG) Expedited Assistance Program For Grant Funds To Support Costs Associated With The Development And Dissemination Of Information Regarding The Impact Of Dissolution Of The Village of Highland Falls

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

5 Ayes 0 Nays

The Mayor declared this resolution adopted. (A true and complete copy of this resolution is appended to these minutes).

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to approve a vacation buy-back request for 10 vacation days from Deputy Clerk Ana Sierra. The motion was seconded by Trustee Phillips and unanimously carried.

Trustee Phillips motioned to approve a vacation buy-back request for 10 vacation days from Sargent Robert Ruger due to the staffing shortage in the Police Department. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and on a roll call vote, the results which follow: 4 Ayes 1 Nay (Trustee Guerrero), motion carried.

Trustee Aylward motioned to appoint James Ramus to the Consolidated Zoning Board of Appeals with the term to begin January 1, 2022 and expire on December 31, 2026. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and on a roll call vote, the results which follow: 4 Ayes 1 Nay (Trustee Guerrero), motion carried.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to approve the Mayor’s appointment of Ronnie Coffey to the position of Village Historian. The motion was seconded by Trustee Phillips and on a roll call vote, the results which follow: 5 Ayes 0 Nays, motion carried.

Trustee DiSalvo motioned to cancel the 7:00p.m. Village Board meeting on December 20, 2021 and schedule a 9:00a.m. meeting for the Board to pay bills and claims. The motion was seconded by Trustee Aylward and on a roll call vote, the results which follow: 4 Ayes 1 Nay (Trustee Guerrero), motion carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Aylward to approve the bills and claims for FY21-22 for \$645,756.66 from the following listed funds:

General Fund	\$463,282.49
Section 8	\$68,094.00
Water Fund	\$66,241.50
Sewer Fund	\$46,273.67
Capital Fund	<u>\$1,865.00</u>
	\$645,756.66

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. Joe Cyr, 30 Drew Ave, commented on recent problem with large trucks driving on Village side streets. Mayor D’Onofrio responded that he is working on trying to resolve the problem.

Mr. Edward Falta, 437 Main Street, asked if a Board member is not at a meeting are they able to approve the bills and claims by zooming into the meeting. The Village Attorney responded that it is not a proper vote.

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

The meeting closed at 8:30 P.M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk