

**VILLAGE OF CASTLETON-ON-HUDSON  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING**

September 12, 2022

**PRESENT:** Mayor Joe Keegan (via Zoom), Trustee Sharon Martin, Trustee/Deputy Mayor Jenifer Pratico, Trustee Lissa D'Aquanni, and Trustee Erik Samarija

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Attorney Benjamin Hill (arrived 7:05), Foreman Daniel Lebrecht, Building Inspector Gary Ziegler, Library Director Melissa Tacke, and Clerk-Treasurer Padraic Ellis.

**PUBLIC:** 1 (in person), 7 (via Zoom)

**CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson was held at Castleton Village Hall, 85 South Main Street on September 12, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Trustee Samarija with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Trustee D'Aquanni moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to table the acceptance of the August 8, 2022 minutes until the September 26, 2022 Regular Meeting, so that Trustee D'Aquanni can further review them.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Suzanne Donnelly, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated that she was correctly cited by code enforcement for weeds on her property. She stated that the Department of Public Works has not cleared the weeds from properties on Main Street since COHMSA cleaned them up early this year. Foreman Lebrecht stated that it was the duty of the property owners to maintain their property and that the Department of Public Works is not able to clear weeds from private property. Ms. Donnelly said that the weeds in question were on public property, not private property. The question of if Village residents are required to remove snow from the sidewalks in front of their property then does the same requirement apply to weeds arose. The Mayor asked that code enforcement check the code to see what can be done about this issue. Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:**

- **Mayor Keegan:** Mayor Keegan reported that he and Clerk-Treasurer Ellis had met with Civic Plus regarding the Village website and that he would like to hear from some other web designers. Mayor Keegan reported that he is currently pre-screening attorneys to be interviewed with Trustee Martin. Mayor Keegan reported that he is interviewing for the Water Foreman position. Mayor Keegan reported that he attended the Comprehensive Plan meeting at Castleton Elementary School. Mayor Keegan reported that he spoke at Senator Paul Tonko's New York/New Jersey Watershed Act event at the Schodack State Park. Mayor Keegan stated that the new phone system will be ported over on September 14<sup>th</sup>.
- **Deputy Mayor Pratico:** Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that she will be meeting with a designer, Clerk-Treasurer Ellis, and Deputy Clerk Better on the welcome packet. Deputy Mayor Pratico

stated that she attended the Comprehensive Plan meeting and was on the downtown revitalization committee. Deputy Mayor Pratico stated that Suzanne Cecala and Michael Wiley were assisting with the NY Forward grant and she asked that the board allow her to spend funds to hire Helen Budrock, of Delaware Engineering, to assist with the grant writing. Deputy Mayor Pratico stated that she had spoken to many residents on garage day and some of their biggest concerns were sidewalks, transportation, and river access. Deputy Mayor Pratico reported that the Village's NY Forward group would be meeting with New York State in the next week and that the paperwork for the grant was due at the end of the month. Deputy Mayor Pratico moved, Mayor Keegan seconded, motion carried to spend no more than \$1,800.00 for Helen Budrock, of Delaware Engineering, to assist the Village in the writing of the NY Forward grant, with Trustee D'Aquanni recusing herself.

- **Trustee Martin:** Trustee Martin reported that she was assisting Mayor Keegan in the interview process for the new Village attorney.
- **Trustee D'Aquanni:** Trustee D'Aquanni reported that seventeen people attended the Comprehensive Plan meeting, at Castleton Elementary School, who broke up into four committees. The areas that the attendees stated as problems and/or opportunities were complete street connectivity, a community center, parks, downtown revitalization, and infrastructure. Trustee D'Aquanni reported that she met with the New York State Department of Transportation along with Mayor Keegan and Deputy Mayor Pratico to discuss bridge options for accessing Riverfront Park. Trustee D'Aquanni stated that she and Mayor Keegan would be meeting with the Estuary Grant attorneys within the next week to discuss the ALJ process and the next steps moving forward.
- **Trustee Samarija:** Trustee Samarija reported that she was assisting Mayor Keegan in the interview process for the water foreman position.

## **REPORTS:**

1. **Library Report:** Director Tacke reported the Summer Reading Program statistics and reported that the Library will be doing the Halloween costume donation program and the Halloween parade in conjunction with the Castleton Fire Department this year.
2. **DPW Report:** Mayor Keegan thanked Foreman Lebrecht for installing the new no parking signs on Ransom Avenue as per Local Law 1 of 2022.
3. **Water Report:** Absent.
4. **Wastewater Report:** Absent.
5. **Building Inspector:** No further report.
6. **Code Enforcement:** Absent.
7. **Fire Department Report:** The Firehouse breakfast will start back up on Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>.
8. **Clerk-Treasurer Report:** Clerk-Treasurer Ellis reported that a design for the Purple Heart signs will be sent to the Board this week for approval. The Village will need four signs for the four entrances to the Village at a cost of \$45.00 per sign. Clerk-Treasurer Ellis reported that the second floor windows of the Village hall are beginning to fall off and will need to be replaced before winter.

Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Samarija seconded motion to approve all departmental reports.

**BUSINESS:**

**1. Fort Crailo Proclamations:** The Daughters of the American Revolution asked that the Village support them by the Mayor signing two proclamations. Deputy Mayor Pratico moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried for Mayor Keegan to sign proclamations in support of National Constitution Week and National American Indian Heritage Month.

**2. Local Law 1 - Parking on Campbell Avenue:** Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried for Local Law 3 of 2022 to be put forth to public hearing on September 26, 2022.

**3. River Access Update:** At the meeting with the New York State Department of Transportation that Mayor Keegan, Deputy Mayor Pratico, and Trustee D'Aquanni attended, it was stated that the engineers for DOT would be willing to work on a new bridge design that would include a walkway along North Main Street and no elevators. However, if the Village was going to proceed with asking for a reopening of the ALJ decision that they would not proceed with the design process. It was stated by Mayor Keegan that a resident looked into the crossings in Illinois that had been referenced at past Board meetings and it was discovered that while previous at-grade crossings had been updated, any new crossings would be bridges. Deputy Mayor Pratico stated that any bridge designs would need to accommodate the fact that train speeds will not be reduced and that there may eventually be double-decker trains. Trustee D'Aquanni stated that the Village Board was not presenting a clear message by first voting to reopen the ALJ decision and then looking to have new bridge designs drawn up. Trustee D'Aquanni stated that she believes the Department of Transportation and Amtrak did not close the crossing legally. Mayor Keegan and Trustee D'Aquanni will meet with the Estuary Grant attorneys this week and report the findings back at the meeting. The Estuary Grant attorneys will be invited to speak at the next meeting. Attorney Hill suggested that the attorneys could speak about the ALJ process and refrain from speaking on legal matters in a public meeting.

**4. APPROPRIATIONS:** Trustee Martin moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion to approve payment of the abstracts.

Abstract # 5 – Vouchers # 153 - # 207 in the amount of \$ 65,261.01

General Fund: \$ 28,311.50

Water Fund: \$ 16,477.56

Sewer Fund: \$ 20,471.95

**ONLINE BANKING TRANSFERS:** Deputy Mayor Pratico moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion to approve the online banking transfers according to the schedule presented to the Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee D'Aquanni seconded, motion carried to open public comment. Suzanne Donnelly, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated that the Board broke Open Meeting Law by having three members present while meeting with the Department of Transportation at Riverfront Park. Trustee D'Aquanni apologized for doing so. Suzanne Cecala, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated her support for an at-grade crossing and for the Board to pursue reopening the ALJ decision. Steve Rivers, of the Castleton Boat Club, stated that the Boat Club supports either the at-grade crossing or the bridge concepts for river access and they would be willing to write a letter of support for the Village for the NY Forward grant. Mr. Rivers stated that no one from the Boat Club took the mural that the Main Street Association left by the Boat Club entrance. Carol

Stockman, of the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association, stated the COHMSA never accused the Boat Club of taking their mural. Ms. Stockman also stated her support of the Village reopening the ALJ decision. Mayor Keegan moved, Deputy Mayor Pratico seconded, motion carried to close public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:30 pm, Mayor Keegan moved, Trustee Martin seconded, motion carried to adjourn the meeting.