

Village Board

January 7, 2008

Present: Mayor Robert Yerick, Trustees Suzanne LeBlanc, Michael Campbell, Kelly Myers, William Murphy, Michael Karashay and Mary Leahy  
Others: see the attached attendance sheet

Because of the anticipated attendance, the Village Board met in the firehouse

Mayor Robert Yerick called the Village Board to order at 7:00pm. Trustee Myers led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Yerick addressed the Board saying that he has received emails from David Radavanovic and Mike Harkavy regarding the lawsuit of Sydney and Amy Mills against the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy and regarding the Chrisjohn trial. The Mayor said they are two separate incidents and he wants separate comments on the issues.

David Radavanovic spoke saying he wanted to comments on the Mills lawsuit. He feels the lawsuit is a "personal affront" and could impact the Lighthouse. He questions the degree of integrity of Officer Mills and does the Village have a minimum physical requirement for Village Police Officers.

Mayor Yerick reminded the audience that Officer Mills has a legal right to sue according to NYS Law.

Gil Hales spoke saying he was upset by the Mills lawsuit. The Lighthouse is a treasure; Officer Mills' action is not proper and he cannot be trusted. He urged the Village to take any action it could regarding termination of Officer Mills' employment.

Susan Poretz read a letter from Steven Schafer condemning Officer Mills' lawsuit.

Ken Whyte spoke saying Officer Mills' action is a reason to combine the Town and Village Police Departments. He wants to know who is responsible for such a public servant and feels the administration has done a poor job.

Gary Bischoff spoke saying that the Lighthouse is a tremendous asset to Saugerties and that the Village should not settle out of court and wondered if there were any witnesses.

Mayor Yerick commented that the Village Board has no say in this lawsuit.

Tina Hackett said she thought Office Mills was under suspension at the time of the incident.

Susan Weeks read a letter she wrote that has been in the local papers. She wants Officer Mills removed from service.

Judith Spektor said she has questions about the facts of the incident. Was there really a boater in distress – could a friend have made the 911 call to stage an accident – was the injury caused by carelessness – should the police be better trained – what is Officer Mills motivation – is he looking for a golden parachute – should he be fired – should the police departments be combined – this will have negative consequences to the Lighthouse.

Glen Forman asked if the Lighthouse Conservancy has insurance.

Marjorie Greenburg Voss asked if Officer Mills was covered under Village medical insurance.

Dave Minch urged the Board to remove Officer Mills from the force. There is a moral issue involved.

Diana Bryant wants the Board to remove Office Mills from the force. She wants the Village Board to “take charge on this moral issue”. The Board should be more proactive in hiring.

Alan Fisher said a policeman’s job is to guard the community and risk is part of the job. The lawsuit is morally wrong and Officer Mills is a liability.

Vincent McGloughlin is just disgusted and wants Mills removed.

Josh Palmer said he works at the local mall. He had to sign a waiver before he was hired. He thinks the Village and Lighthouse are wonderful spots.

Charles Winters spoke saying he is a retired member of the Village Police, a member of the Saugerties Fire Department and former member of the Village Board. He feels that the Village Police are not at fault that Officer Mills is suing the Lighthouse – there are many hard working officers in the Department. Mills is suing the Lighthouse – let their attorneys work it out.

Joanne Cicale says there is a culture in the Police Department that needs to be investigated. This incident indicates a lack of leadership.

Dan W. suggests paying any settlement awarded out of Village funds.

Jamie Fine spoke saying she has been working in personnel issues for many years. She said the Village couldn’t legally terminate Mills. Officer Mills is probably looking at the deep pockets of an insurance settlement.

Ruth Hirsch spoke saying the Lighthouse was a gem and Alex Wade should be complimented for his role in its restoration.

Mayor Yerick said he appreciated everyone's comments however the Board could not fire Officer Mills over this issue. This is a civil matter and the PBA would take issue with the Village if the Board dismissed Mills from the force.

Many in the audience spoke at once with some asking how could they trust the Police Department.

Diana Bryan said she has seen a good police force but this police force abuses its power. She said she knows of many incidents where the police abuse their power but the incidents are never reported.

Mayor Yerick said that the email by David Radavanovic contained misstatements and the Village Board must abide by law in any action it may take.

Marjorie Greenburg Voss said she read the "transcript" and Officer Mills is not the kind of person she wants of the Police Force.

There was much discussion between the audience and the Clerk could not take minutes with everyone talking at once.

Jamie Fine spoke again saying that the only way for the Village to dismiss Mills and Chrisjohn was to offer them a retirement package "to make them go away".

Mike Harkavy asked that the Mayor let David Radavanovic know his correspondence was not factual.

Dick Gardner asked what made Syd Mills think he could get away with this behavior. If the Chief and Mayor have better communication could this all have been avoided.

Tina Hackett said she feels sorry for the decent officers on the force. She has sent all the information regarding her stepdaughter to the State and they are now investigating. She did report an incident and was never contacted by the Police Chief. Someone needs to be held accountable. It is not appropriate to use children as confidential informers.

Jamie Fine suggested hiring an outside consultant to evaluate the Police Department in an effort to give the public a more comfortable feeling.

Mayor Yerick said the Board is happy to listen to the public comments but all of these matters are in the hands of legal counsel.

Dave Minch ended by suggesting giving Officer Mills a desk job to get him off the street.

The Board took a 10-minute break before continuing with the regular meeting.

Mayor Yerick welcomed the Board into 2008 and thanked them for a great job in 2007.

He presented the minutes of the December 17, 2007 Board meeting. Motion was made by Trustee Leahy, seconded by Trustee LeBlanc, to approve the minutes. Carried.

Trustee LeBlanc presented the Abstract for January 2, 2008: General - \$64,003.05; Water - \$23,212.53; Wastewater - \$19,435.99. Motion was made by Trustee Karashay, seconded by Trustee Campbell, to approve the abstract. Carried.

Trustee LeBlanc advised the Board that she sent a memo to all Department Superintendents asking them to conserve energy. She asked that everyone take a look at his or her Town tax bills to be sure the highway tax has been eliminated. Trustee Karashay suggested all building be checked for insulation.

Trustee Leahy advised the Board that the Planning Board will meet on January 9<sup>th</sup>. She asked that residents remember that sidewalks must be shoveled within 24 hours of a snowstorm.

Trustee Campbell presented his report (copy attached). He showed the Board a 19-page document that details the events to be held in Saugerties in 2008.

Alex Wade advised the Board that his preliminary work on the 2010 census is complete. There is a significant increase in the number of dwellings in the Village. The NYS DOT has set the date for the "Wall" reconstruction for the fall of 2008 and the repaving of Route 9W to 2009.

Trustee Myers praised the DPW for their work of removing the snow from the business district. She advised the Board that she would meet with the CWA on January 16<sup>th</sup> and the PBA on February 4<sup>th</sup> for contract negotiations.

Trustee Murphy advised the Board of a problem with the intake pipes at the Water Treatment Plant on December 24<sup>th</sup>. The intake pipes were clogged and divers were dispatched to open the clogs.

Fire Chief Brian Martin advised Trustee LeBlanc that the SFD will respond to her energy memo and he has begun work on the budget for the SFD. He and Trustee Karashay will attend a FASNY EMS seminar on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Yerick advised the Board that Youth Awards would be presented at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting.

Mayor Yerick presented Resolution #1/2008. This resolution names the Village Offices as the Polling Place for Village Elections to be held March 18, 2008 from the hours of 12noon to 9:00pm. The resolution was seconded by Trustee Karashay and carried unanimously.

Trustee LeBlanc reminded the Board that budget numbers were due by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

The previously cancelled Economic Development presentation by Peter Fairweather has been rescheduled for January 17 at 7:00pm at the Town Hall.

Motion was made by Trustee Karashay, seconded by Trustee Campbell, to adjourn. Carried. The Board adjourned at 9:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Frank  
Village Clerk