



VILLAGE OF SAUGERTIES
43 PARTITION STREET
SAUGERTIES, N.Y. 12477

Village Board Meeting Minutes April 1, 2024

Present: Mayor Murphy, Deputy Mayor Mayer, Trustees: Don Hackett, Brian Martin, Andrew Zink

Absent: Terry Parisian

Others: Bill Kemble, Dave Gordon, Ed Quirk, Bill Barr, David Radovanovic, Kevin Leahy, Mary Leahy, Michelle Meyers, Mary McNamara, Brian Donoghue, Terry Massardo

Mayor Murphy opened the Village Board meeting at 5:30pm.

Trustee Buono led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Hearing for 2024/2025 Budget

Mayor Murphy made opening remarks to start the Public Hearing for the 2024/2025 Budget and the latest report from NY State Comptroller's office on the Fiscal reporting of the Village of Saugerties. First time in many years we have had people show up. What has been seen and read in the past couple weeks has got people stressed and concerned. I am stressed and concerned like everyone else. Then the report from DiNapoli's office came out and added fuel to the fire.

I would like to put in context where we are, the Village Budget the spend is up for various reasons, contractual salaries, health care went up \$120K. The overall tax increase is .21 on \$1,000.00 if you own a home and a \$300K, your increase would be \$63.00.

Why we got the fiscal negative report, in 2014 – 6.3213 per thousand, 2015 -6.36.02, 2017- 6.1837, 2022 -5.5335, 2023 – 4.7924. Over the course of 10 years the tax rate went down \$1.53 per thousand, assessments went up and the Village decided to lower the tax rate. The fund balance was affected by the lowering of the tax rate which in turn we ended up on DiNapoli. The increase for the Village Board Trustees, they haven't had an increase to since 2008. The amount equates to \$9K in total for all. We are fiscally sound, the budget is mostly contractual, the bonds we are looking at are so the burden is not put on the taxpayer. I respect everyone that showed up here tonight and would now like to turn it over to the Public who would like to address the Village Board.

Dave Radanovich – You're doing a good job with the budget. There are some concerns, like the elephant in the room. According to what I have been reading we are talking \$800K, we are in the hole for. It's completely unnecessary. Seems we are generating income from my neighbor; I don't believe it's viable and sustainable. I am here as a taxpayer, whether the headlines were correct or not and then the statement from DiNapoli. Mayor responded that the \$800K debt is for the fire truck. Dave asked about having two firehouses, which we do. The Mayor commented that there are two fire houses, but only one set of trucks. Dave said the Village is the epicenter of Saugerties. Mayor stated that the budget we have we will have fund balance and we believe we are in a good place. I would love to find other mechanisms for revenue and open to suggestions.

Brian Donoghue – Ellenville went to the County to get help to bail out, Ellenville qualifies. Mayor Murphy stated the Village of Saugerties did not qualify. The Village of Saugerties back taxes were \$170K a while back, Ellenville's was in the millions. What trickles down, we are not getting our just do. We have done this for a long time and if can get assistance, we will take it. Mortgage and sales taxes are we getting our fair cut? I appreciate you being proactive. Consolidation of services? The Court system, merging it's more of logistical, there isn't a lot of money to be saved. DPW,

Parks we looked at seven or eight years ago. The Town Highway Dept. is only highway. The DPW department does leaf pickup, brush pickup, sidewalks, trees. There is not great savings in the consolidation. We do a lot of share services with Town Highway department as well as the Town Parks Dept., we have a great rapport with Fred and Gregg, helping each other out when needed.

Andrew Zink stated that we have been looking at this for a while. One thing that is important to me is for the Court merger, if we would be starting from scratch these would be merged to begin with. We will have to work with the Town, we will have to negotiate. The Justices, I really don't feel that there should be a salary increase for the Town Justices for the potential merger. Mayor Murphy stated we recently brought into the Village Court, had no prosecutor present. Rather cases being dismissed. We brought in John Greco as the Village prosecutor and now we are getting an increase.

Michelle Myers – this is coming from the paper, large increase for in the Parks and Buildings and from I understand it's for a lot of that is going towards Seamon Park. Mayor Murphy stated when the Supervisor was there living that was part of his salary. Kevin Brown, Supervisor for Parks, and Buildings, he is also a building inspector, and an electrician and his salary does not include living at Seamon Park house. Kevin has increased the budget to cover renovations to be done. Mayor Murphy would like to rent or Air BnB, use for wedding or a destination sport, the Seamon Park House. The Park Budget, under budget in prior years, and looking at getting revenue from the investment.

Kevin Leahy, I live over by Seamon Park, what will the Village do to protect the Seamon Park house investment; will there be checks and balances. Mayor Murphy stated once we are at the point of renting, there will be people going in after rentals and cleaning, Kevin Brown will continue to be doing inspections of the Seamon Park House. Mary Leahy to piggyback off of that, one of my concerns is that is a lot of money to invest, and we do have a Trustee tasked with oversight Parks and Buildings and also Seamon Park Board and clarity on their roll? Mayor Murphy stated we sat down with Seamon Park Board, and they are investing in the first round of renovations. Mayor wants by the end of summer the outside to be completed and the first floor will have work being done. Kevin Leahy asked that a light be put on the flag. Mary asked, "Will there be security at the Seamon Park house? Mayor Murphy said Kevin Brown's plan is to have cameras and security in the park. Kevin Leahy asked a second question and the home that separates the Park from my house, and I have spoken to Eyal and Mayor Murphy. That house has been emptied since 2018, there are people in there. Lights come on occasionally, someone is going to die in that house. My home is 20 feet from that house and if that house is on fire my home was built 1900, it will be a tinder box. What I got so far is, Eyal said go to the Police Dept., and Police stated its Building Inspector issue honestly, I am being put in the middle. I am concerned for Police or Fire Department going into the building. I am looking for help to get something done. Mary stated I have been in touch with the owner of the property and if the Village is going to invest that much money into the Seamon Park can we get legal proceedings started, I know the Village doesn't want to spend the money for lawyer fees. Mayor Murphy stated it's not the money, it's the process and length of time.

Bill Barr asked about parking meters, Mayor Murphy stated that they are not going away. The up tick in the budget is from Covid to now there was much more traffic in the Village. Michelle Meyers asked about the parking lots, so it's not a storage of a vehicle that can sit there for a year. Mayor Murphy explained there is work to be done, they are being watched and vehicles have been towed.

Mary McNamara asking about the Beach, Mayor Murphy stated that we would like to get a bulkhead to stop the loss of sand every year, which we have to purchase and replace. We are going to purchase a new harvester for the maintenance of the progress that we have already made.

Brian Donoghue asked about the grants, there are a lot of options out there. I am offering to help. Mayor Murphy suggested that he get in touch with Mike Karashay to assist him in the grant writing.

Bill Barr mentioned the amount of Villages that did not report and did not get a rating in the NYS Comptroller's report.

Mayor Murphy, I appreciate everyone's input, happy that you all came tonight. I am conscious Mayor and so is this Village Board.

Trustee Zink mentioned he was happy to see Terry Massardo show up. One thing I learned to show specifics, there is beach line item 23 – 24 was \$18K, now it's \$48K for 24-25. It's a line item, what is that? How are people supposed to know what is being spent. Mayor Murphy stated the Budget meetings with the Supervisors is what determines the Budget lines, debates and discussions occur then. Trustee Zink makes a good point for the back up to be made available. Weekly abstracts show what is being spent and are reviewed at the Village

Mayor Murphy makes a motion to close the Public Hearing for 2024/2025 Budget. Trustee Buono seconded the motion to close the Public Hearing for the 2024/2025 Budget. All in Favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Murphy decided to take a break, will resume the regular session following.

Regular Session

Trustee Buono led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Privilege Of The Floor

Mary McNamara handed out the *Draft Lower Esopus Creek Implementation Program*. Mary asked for input to be submitted by April 9th. It currently has 42 projects, read this with a grain of salt. Please someone of get together to discuss. There is lots of room for comments. I mentioned improvements to the Village Beach. There is a \$2 million dollars, there are grants and money. Mayor Murphy asked where can you put comments? Do we have to apply for this funding? Money is coming from New York City, it can be used for State or Federal grants, if you need to match for a grant, it can be used. Funding whether through the Village or through the Lower Esopus Creek. A certain process would be in place, it's still being worked out. The County has overseen this phase of it. This will be an ongoing long-term program, still to be figured out. This will be shared with seven communities. Mayor Murphy suggested having someone from the working with you directly, Mary, so we don't want to miss out on any funding. Discussion on the bulkhead Plan – how can we prevent the erosion of our beach sand at the Village of Saugerties. It will be completed by June; July will start the applying for grants. The sooner the better. Trustee Zink asked the about the priority scoring, is 1 low / high or 50 low /high? Any of the projects relates to private property, septic systems to replace on home on the Esopus. Mayor Murphy suggested that Trustee Hackett and Kevin Brown. Mayor Murphy thanked Mary for providing the information.

Trustee Buono made the motion to approve the Village Board Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2024. Trustee Zink seconded the motion to approve the amended Village Board Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2024. All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Buono presented the Abstracts for April 1, 2024.

- General \$ 60,402.73
- Water \$ 14,799.07
- Wastewater \$ 18,341.54

Trustee Hackett made a motion to approve the Abstracts for April 1, 2024. Deputy Mayor Mayer seconded the motion to approve the Abstracts for April 1, 2024. All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Reports

Trustee Zink – Report on a couple of things that residents have asked me about the budget. The profit and loss of general funds, can we have the previous year's budget? Paula stated it's under the 23-24 Budget. Abstracts to be put out on the website? The reason being it's hard for residence to access the abstracts. The last thing someone mentioned about talking about the wastewater plant the water level rise around the plant, should we put in money into a plant that maybe

damaged down the road. Mayor Murphy said that is good idea, and that goes along with any engineering plans for the future. Trustee Hackett mentioned that Supervisor Mike Hopf is looking into those issues along with the engineering at this time with the grants that are being worked on.

Deputy Mayor Mayer – I did not attend the Chamber meeting at the Dancing Tulip, Art Commission date was changed, the next meeting is the 16th of the meeting at the Dutch 6PM – 8PM. Chamber Board meeting this Wednesday. Have had two Zoom calls for

Trustee Buono – Nothing to Report

Trustee Hackett – A couple of things, I try to listen to the people at the Public Hearing, the Building Departments are different for the Town and the Village, run differently. I have found over the years I realize it would not be a good idea to merge the two. The Building Department's Budget actually went down on the 2024 /2025 budget. I see great changes on the sewer plant that is building a great foundation for the future.

Trustee Martin had to excuse himself from the meeting. Left the following for Trustee Hackett.

Trustee Hackett makes the motion to accept have Johnattan Lent RA Synder House Member application has been submitted. Trustee Martin made the motion to approve the application for Johnattan Lent RA Syner House Member. Deputy Mayor Mayer seconded the motion to accept the Johnattan Lent RA Syner House Member application. All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Hackett made a motion to Adjourn the Village Board Meeting. Trustee Zink seconded the motion to Adjourn the Village Board Meeting. All in favor, the motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:04PM.

The next **Village Board meeting is April 15, 2024, at 5:30PM**

Peggy Melville Village Clerk April 9, 2024