

Village of Oriskany

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Oriskany Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2022

The Village of Oriskany Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 in the meeting room behind the Masonic Lodge at 701 Utica Street, Oriskany, NY. The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with a public hearing on Local Law #2 of 2022, a temporary moratorium on large scale solar installations.

In attendance were:

Village Staff: Mayor Clifford O'Connor, Jr.; Trustees John Kasprzyk, Paul Rieben, and Sean Fortnam; Village Treasurer Peggy Nugent, Village Clerk Alexis Albright; Asst. Highway Supt. Chad Miller, Police Sgt. Mike Colangelo, and Fire Chief Jeff Burkhardt. Later joined for the 7:00 meeting by Codes Officer George Farley and Village Attorney Steve Deery.

Members of the Public: Therese Hanna, John Zich, Glenn Block, Kenny Brown, Kathy and Allen Humphrey, Daryl Buornet, Jon Rueger, Adam Kernan, Ray Tarasiewicz, Jacob and Kelsey Mayo, Bill and Barb Panella, Dianne Sittig Fredsell, Jan and Jeff Midlam, McKenzie Mazor, Deb and Jim Miller, Len and Dolores Pugh, Patrick Lasher, Malissa Liddy, Eileen Couch, William McGrath, David J. Torrellas, John Dent, Jill Dangler, Peg Trinkaus, Carrie and Jeff Moulton, Christian Mercurio, Laura Cohen, Rebecca Vandewater, Amy A. Kaprzyk, Dee Zimecki, Mr. & Mrs. Pezdek, Judy Moore, Derek Rieben, and Joan Moore.

Absent: Trustee Christopher Burtch

Public Hearing of Local Law #2 of 2022

The solar moratorium hearing was opened at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor O'Connor. There were no comments or questions. The hearing closed at 6:15 p.m.

Public Grant Ideas Meeting

Immediately following, the public meeting for public input on potential grant funding was opened. The village is looking to apply to the NYS Downtown Revitalization Grant and NY Forward programs, among other funding opportunities that may come available. The goal was to assess the public's interest and priorities.

The meeting opened with general information and questions about the program and application process.

There were many questions about plans for the former Waterbury Mill. Mill representative Adam Kernan stood to address questions. Mr. Kernan said there are lots of ideas but not a specific set of plans yet. There is no dollar figure yet since the ideas are not on paper. The mill would like to partner on grants like this but is also seeking other funding. Original investors out of New York City are also still interested in the project. The property is currently in environmental clean up phase 1 and is waiting on the EPA.

There were questions about why the collapsed building was allowed to stay as it is. Cleaning it up seemed to be a priority for attendees.

Other concerns for the general commercial area of the village included:

- Parking, especially by Capri Pizza (Utica St near Marino St and Lansing St)
- Road resurfacing
 - Addressed by Asst. Highway Supt. Miller. The worst streets are done first and in rotation.
- Sidewalks and lighting near Eastern Star, in front of Trinkaus Manor apartments, near elementary school.
- More parking for village offices and the fire department.
- Sidewalks on Green St and Miller St corners need a ramp.

There were questions about “how far does downtown go?” The area is centered on River Street. Right now the grant extends up Route 69 to include properties currently zoned commercial.

Several people were interested in a Dunkin’ Donuts or coffee shop.

Moving on to infrastructure, there has been an intermittent sulfur smell at the corner of Elm St and Route 69 for decades, possibly due to an underground spring.

Street lighting was discussed. The areas of highest need were identified as in front of the former Trinkaus Manor (Route 69 from Elm St to Oklahoma Ave), Cider St by the cemetery, and in the park and village green.

Manor Lane needs to be oil and stoned. There are concrete bumps from former county sewer work that would need to be addressed by the county. This is outside the purview of downtown grants.

Moving back to downtown amenities, the following were suggested, especially for the mill property: coffee shop, meeting space, art gallery, apartments, and after-school activities. (Later mentions included a small grocery store and a fitness center.)

The potential of adding sewer access from Furnace Street to businesses on Route 69 was discussed. This could make parcels entering the village from the east more economically viable for businesses to move in. It could also help with planning stormwater runoff.

There was some discussion that traveling north into the village at River St and Route 69 can be difficult to see to turn. The traffic light that was installed there about four years ago has helped this and was viewed favorably.

Replacing water mains was discussed. Some areas have “old and inadequate” 4 inch lines. (Ray Tarasiewicz mentioned this and water pressure on Manor Lane.) The fire department is better off with 6 inch lines. The fire chief said the main line is 12 inches, which branches down to 6 inches and then 4 inch lines. The mayor said these pipes belong to Mohawk Valley Water Authority, not the village.

Patrick Lasher expressed concern that the village shouldn’t expand the fire house because of the additional expense to maintain and asked where the state was getting the money to fund these grants, stating it was taxpayer money and that his expenses were already rising. He was reminded that the state program already exists for these funds to be allocated for the grants. He ultimately agreed that energy efficient windows and HVAC could be a worthy goal to save money. He said that archival storage may also be a worthwhile project.

The grant idea meeting closed at 7:07 p.m.

Regular Meeting

Mayor O’Connor opened the regular monthly meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. The following reports were submitted:

Report	Motion	Second	Result
Minutes	Rieben	Kasprzyk	Approved
Treasurer’s Report	Fortnam	Rieben	Approved
Police	Kasprzyk	Fortnam	Approved
Fire	Rieben	Kasprzyk	Approved

Museum	Kasprzyk	Fortnam	Approved
Codes	Rieben	Kasprzyk	Approved
DPW	Kasprzyk	Fortnam	Approved

The mayor then addressed the trustees and department heads. The trustees had no new business.

Fire Chief Burkhart asked the board for a plan to address the airpacks that will expire in October. Without new airpacks, the fire department will be unable to fight fires from the interior. No grant monies have been received. The packs are about \$10,000 each. There is a slight discount for ordering more than 10. The fire department would like a dozen to be able to fully equip both trucks. The mayor doesn't want to borrow the money if the village doesn't need to. The fire department could use its \$60,000 (approx.) in reserve funds and the village could use its \$50,000 (approx.) remaining COVID money (American Rescue Plan). Trustee Rieben motioned to use the remaining COVID money, the fire department reserves and any additional funds the fire chief had available to purchase roughly \$110,000 worth of airpacks. This was seconded by Trustee Kasprzyk. All in favor. Motion carried. The fire chief will call to start the order tomorrow.

Sgt. Colangelo asked for the police department to create a new part-time, non-competitive officer position through civil service. Motion so made by Trustee Fortnam, seconded by Trustee Kasprzyk. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Sgt. then asked the board to approve the hiring of Connor Blovat, who has been interviewed. So moved by Trustee Kasprzyk and seconded by Trustee Fortnam. All in favor. Motion carried.

The police received a new radio base station in their office installed by JPJ Electronics. It will need 911/county programming. County records are going to a new system, so Sgt. Colangelo recommends holding off on the purchase of any new in-car electronics until the county decides on their requirements.

Next, Asst. Highway Supt. Chad Miller said the new police light was coming from Mills Electric and would be installed after the rain. The police cars would be going to rust proofing.

Mr. Miller requested permission to hire Josh King as DPW laborer after interviewing three candidates. Requested start date would be Sept. 26. So moved by Trustee Fortnam, seconded by Trustee Kasprzyk. All in favor. Motion carried.

Curator Albright said that planning is moving forward for the USS *Oriskany* shipmates to visit for their reunion in October 2023.

Trustee Kasprzyk reported for the library that library aid Theda Bower is “not doing good.” She resigned for retirement but is now in failing health. Therese Hanna (library board) said that mail for Theda can be sent to PO Box 119.

The meeting moved on to public comment. David J. Torrellas, resident of 217 Dexter Avenue, asked to speak about the condition of the brick block on Dexter Ave and the new demolition in the neighboring units. This work started over the preceding weekend. Units 219 and 221 were purchased at county auction this year after being burned out a number of years ago. The new owners started demolition over the weekend. The neighbors are concerned about the potential for asbestos, the structural integrity of the adjoining buildings, and the haphazard way the area was cordoned off. Mr. Torrellas and his neighbors submitted a number of photographs showing a rough metal pole supporting caution tape, a dumpster in the front yard, missing roof tree, debris, sheared brick faces, compromised mortar, falling bricks, etc. The residents described it as a “smorgasbord of physical danger” and a “grave danger.”

Codes Officer Farley said that a building permit for those addresses was denied. The Mayor told the resident that damage that extensive could lead to the whole brick block being condemned. The resident understood the possibility of it. After some discussion, it was decided that an engineer should look at the property, a cease and desist would be issued until stability was determined and the proper permits were obtained. The village would send a letter requesting the sites at 219 and 221 be fenced off immediately, front and back. The mayor said the village would “start there” and await the findings of an engineer.

There was no additional public comment. There were no police reform questions or comments.

Moving on to old business, there were no updates on the playground grant applied for through the Wadas Foundation.

The summer recreation program went “fairly well” according to Trustee Rieben. He held a meeting once with concerned parents after a social media complaint; seven parents attended. There were 60-70 kids in the program this year. Trips were limited due to the bus driver shortage. Chad Miller recommended ordering a pallet of water next year instead of by the bottle to save costs.

Trustees Rieben and Burtch will schedule to complete the court audit by the end of the month.

The library board has been interviewing candidates to replace Theda Bower as library aid. They put forward the name of Dina Anderson of Denbeigh Avenue, Oriskany. So moved by Trustee Kasprzyk, seconded by Trustee Fortnam. All in favor. Motion carried.

Trustee Fortnam motioned to promote Chad Miller to the vacant position of Highway Superintendent and thus promote Ken Dudeck to the position of Assistant Highway Superintendent. Seconded by Trustee Kasprzyk. All in favor. Motion carried.

After the public meeting, it was agreed to move forward with the NYS DRI/NY Forward application. The letter of intent was approved in August.

Trustee Rieben moved to pass Local Law #2 of 2022. Seconded by Trustee Fortnam. All in favor. Motion carried.

The fire department submitted the name of Derek Rieben of Ridge Road for auxiliary fire department membership, for information and approval. So moved by Trustee Kasprzyk and seconded by Trustee Fortnam. All in favor. Motion carried.

Vouchers were signed. Trustee Fortnam made a motion to close the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Trustee Kasprzyk seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Oriskany Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the village office.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis W. Albright
Oriskany Village Clerk
October 7, 2022

These minutes were updated following the October 11, 2022 regular meeting to clarify that Trustee Paul Rieben was in attendance and Trustee Christopher Burtch was absent.