

Village of Oriskany

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Oriskany Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2020

The Village of Oriskany Board of Trustees met by teleconference on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 by provision of Executive Order 202.1. This meeting was hosted with Google Meet, providing web and toll free phone access to the public.

In attendance were Mayor Clifford O'Connor, Jr.; Trustees John Kasprzyk, Sean Fortnam, Paul Rieben, and Christopher Burtch; Village Treasurer Peggy Nugent; Village Clerk Alexis Albright; Police Chief Richard Zabek; Fire Chief Jeff Burkhart; and Highway Superintendent Brian Moulton. Residents in attendance were Bill Bergen, Carrie Moulton, and Bill Panella.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:02 p.m. A statement was read outlining the pandemic exceptions to the Open Meeting Law and all participants were notified that the call would be recorded for the public record.

The minutes for the meeting of May 12, 2020 were submitted by Clerk Pro Tem Dolores Pugh. Trustee Rieben motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Trustee Kasprzyk. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's report was submitted. There was a short discussion regarding budget shortfalls due to low sales tax revenues statewide. Trustee Fortnam motioned to approve the report. Trustee Rieben seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Police Chief's report was submitted. Chief Zabek reported that the new police car has still not been manufactured due to pandemic shut downs. Trustee Kasprzyk motioned to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Trustee Fortnam. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Fire Chief's report was submitted. Chief Burkhart reported that calls have been slow. The Fire Department has also been delivering letters of recognition to Oriskany graduates. This effort is still in progress, but has so far been a success with students and families. Trustee Rieben motioned to accept the report. Trustee Burtch seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Museum Curator's report was submitted. The museum is considered a Phase IV reopening by the state pandemic plan. When Phase IV is reached, the museum will open for visitors by appointment to limit attendance in the building and allow for cleaning between tour groups.

The Code Enforcement Officer's report was submitted. Trustee Burtch motioned to approve the report. Trustee Rieben seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was opened to public comment. Mr. Bill Bergen posed a question regarding neighborhood lawn heights and gardening in the right of way. The village has been in contact with the homeowner in question. (See below.)

There was no old business to discuss. Proceeding to new business, the board addressed the garden being curated in the right of way on Maple Street. A letter defending the garden had been submitted by the homeowner and distributed to the mayor and trustees. The board concluded that gardening could not be permitted in the right of way due to state limits on grass height and the potential damage to garden plants if the right of way needed to be disturbed for utility repairs. The right of way must be uniformly maintained. A letter will be sent to the homeowner giving her seven days to transplant the garden.

A zoning board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 16 at 6:00 pm in the back room of the Masonic Lodge at 701 Utica Street to discuss the widening of a driveway on Clinton Street.

A new bank account needs to be opened to collect the money from the sewer user fee that was approved in April. Treasurer Peggy Nugent and Clerk Alexis Albright would be primary signatories on the account Trustee Kasprzyk made the motion to open said account with the aforementioned signatories. The motion was seconded by Trustee Rieben. The mayor will be the backup signatory, as on other accounts. All in favor. Motion passed.

A motion was also made to send a letter to homeowners village wide informing them of the new fee before they receive their quarterly water bill. The motion was made by Trustee Rieben and seconded by Trustee Burtch. All in favor. Motion passed.

Pending CHIPS roadway funding and any stimulus relief, the village DPW is looking to prioritize the most urgent paving projects with the money available. Trustee Burtch informed the board that CHIPS money may be reduced to 80% due to budget shortfalls.

Trustee Rieben put forward a motion to approve two new Fire Department members. Samantha Dombroski was put forward for full membership and Hanna Wright was submitted for provisional membership. The motion was seconded by Trustee Burtch. All in favor. Motion carried. Letters to this effect will be sent to the department.

Trustee Rieben addressed the summer program cancellation, which resulted from a combination of pandemic restrictions and budget cuts. He has been in contact with Christine Gauthier, who usually directs the program. A notice will go out to parents on the program's Facebook page.

Trustee Fortnam said that he's looked into concern from residents about gunshots on the Oriskany Flats. State Forestry may look into designating the area as a no shooting preserve, but otherwise there is no prohibition on using the flats for that purpose and it is outside of village limits.

Superintendent Moulton informed the group that he has a teleconference with FEMA regarding funding for the Halloween 2019 flood damage. Any CHIPS money will hopefully go to road repairs on Utica Street and adjacent side streets. The mayor hopes to pave as much as the funding will allow. Moulton also informed the board that replacements have been ordered for the Elm St and Maple St signs that recently went missing from that corner.

FEMA funding for the Little League fence damage from the Halloween flood is still pending.

The tennis courts in Oriskany are now open, per state guidelines. The playground equipment will be cleaned to await reopening guidelines. The Fire Department's backpack fogger may need to be utilized for regular cleaning.

Bill Panella made the board aware that Wendy Morris, postmaster for Oriskany, will be retiring this week. The board moved to send her a letter of commendation.

Vouchers were approved for payment by two trustees prior to the teleconference.

Trustee Kasprzyk motioned to close the meeting. Trustee Burtch seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Oriskany Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Location (physical or digital) to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis W. Albright
Oriskany Village Clerk
June 12, 2020

June 9, 2020