

**Village of Walden
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
December 7, 2021**

Mayor Ramos called the regular meeting of the Village of Walden Board of Trustees to order at 6:30pm.

On roll call the following were:
Present:

Mayor:	John Ramos
Deputy Mayor	Willie Carley
Trustees	Lynn Thompson
	Brian Sebring
	Patricia Maher
	Cheryl Baker
	John Elliott

Absent:

Also Present:

John Revella, Village Manager
Marisa Kraus, Village Clerk
Dave Donovan, Village Attorney

Presentation – RBT 2020 Audit

Tom Kennedy: I'm joined by my colleague Donna Crowley. Donna is a senior manager. We're happy to report on the results of the audit. We have concluded the audit and this is for the fiscal year May 31st, 2020. We have issued our opinion on the financial statements, which is known as an unmodified opinion. An unmodified opinion is also known colloquially as an auditor's clean opinion. I'd like to report on briefly is the Village had favorable revenue and expenditure variances for the year, even as COVID was just getting started as May 31st year end was concluding. That contributed to general fund unassigned fund balance, increasing the fund balance by about \$600,000 for the year. That's a favorable thing to happen right at the time of the pandemic. The Village's unassigned fund balance, which is the free and clear money that you use for operations of the Village, ended the year at \$1.2 million. Which was approximately 17% of the current year's expenditures. In a given year, by any rule of thumb, anywhere from 10-20% unassigned fund balance is a healthy fund balance. Why? Because you need it in the event of contingencies. What kind of contingency beats a pandemic? That's what I wanted to share with you this evening. You have 2 documents that I've given you. 1 is the financial statement. That's basically a 60 page document and then you have a report to the Board of Trustees. I'll leave them for your review. What I'd also like to share with you is that we've submitted our engagement letter for May 31, 2021 audit, which I believe is with the attorney right now. Once that signed, we will be happy to come in and I think during our planning meeting about 2 weeks ago, we said we would expect to begin in January. Hopefully we conclude much sooner.

Manager Revella: Just so the public is aware the audit would have taken place a lot sooner, but the pandemic obviously thwarted that ability. That's why it's been delayed as much as Tom alluded to. The second audit for 2021 should be concluded within a couple of months of January, so hopefully by March, April and then we'll go back and forth making sure our reports are ready and then they'll present on that sometime shortly thereafter. Is there anything negative on our financials that you can report about?

Tom Kennedy: I don't really believe so. I mean, it took a couple tries to kind of get all the

information. But as John said, this was right in the thick of COVID and then COVID again. I heard today Westchester County declared State of Emergency, so we're not out of it yet. We issue a separate report known as a Board Report where we issue recommendations and findings, but there's nothing untoward in that.

Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries

Trustee Sebring made a motion to open Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Baker made a motion to close Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Manager's Report

Manager Revella: Went over some reports with the Treasurer, audits, budget prep. Went over the projects and status updates with the engineer for things going on in the Village. Also followed up with the DPW Super on those. Met with the Rec Coordinator and DPW Super on decorations and Christmas in the Square event. It went very well. Went through some staffing and project updates with DPW Super as well. Went over rehab loan updates and code enforcement with the Building Inspector. I met with the Chief a couple of times on staffing and FOIL requests that the Clerk had received. Attended the Association Towns and Villages meeting in Town of Wallkill along with the Mayor, Trustee Baker and Trustee Maher. Had a conference with the DEC, EFC, Village Engineer and the Village Attorney regarding the consent order and funding. Looks like we're in good shape to get funding through the EFC. Whether that'll be partial grant, partial loan or not, we're waiting to see. But the DEC seems to be working with us on the timeline coming from EFC. Went over some personal matters with special counsel for both PD matters and DPW matters. Discussed a PBA fundraiser for December that the Mayor will talk about in correspondence. Rec and Parks have been doing regular maintenance. I've been reviewing community center progress. They're still waiting for the bid for the waterfront park. Indoor soccer is going well. Indoor basketball will be starting right after that's done. Harvest Fest meetings are happening every month. The Building Department issued 6 COs, 30 permits, 33 fire and safety inspections and 5 certificates of completion since last meeting. I did want to report that Falcons Rest project has begun on North Montgomery Street. If you go by there, you'll see they're getting the site prepped. Housing court is tomorrow for some people on follow up. Clerk's been working on 207c and workers comp matters, foils, finished the bimonthly calendar, minutes and helping with water and garbage issues. Finance Department's been helping and getting ready for the next audit. Doing bank recs, cash reports, did a few ban renewals. The Treasurer attended a couple of webinars from the GFOA. She sent budget progress reports to the Department Heads. Water Department replaced 12 meters, updated 3 endpoints and 19 mark outs, 5 closing readings and 6 inspections. Updated the pumps at sewer plant. They had all the sewer stations cleaned. Highways cut back plow routes. Obviously, they helped a lot with Christmas in the Square and holiday decorations. They're working on a couple issues with some of the cars. The police have done a few more and still doing special details. They're trying to get more help, but the staffing has been a problem. They did issue 24 tickets. There had 634 blotters in the month of November and been staying busy. Courts are on regular schedule. Library is on regular schedule. Our attorneys help to review several FOILs and rehab loans and he's going over the RBT proposal and hopefully we'll get that finalized.

Trustee Thompson: I don't know anything here about code violations being given. Is that not happening or is it just left out of the report?

Manager Revella: Property maintenance? They are still updating property maintenance, but I didn't receive any violations, so I'm not sure how many they had. They didn't report on how many violations were submitted. I'll ask.

Approval of November 16, 2021 Minutes

Trustee Sebring made a motion to approve the November 16, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. 5 ayes. 0 nays. 2 abstentions (Trustee Maher and Trustee Elliott). Motion carried.

Public Comment on Business of the Board

Becky Pearson, Comment on audit. Would have been nice the board would have had info before meeting. Read it. And then have questions.

Action Items:

Intro to Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries

Trustee Sebring made a motion Negative Declaration. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Thompson made a motion to adopt Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion – Stewart's Sewer Trap

Manager Revella: This is in response to correspondence the board received from a November 2nd letter from Stewart's. They're asking to remove a house trap at the location. The board received correspondence from them to review. The DPW Super reviewed and gave a report on his opinion. The board can discuss whether they want to grant the waiver of the sewer trap at that location or not.

Trustee Thompson: After reading what was in our packet from Mr. Perna and speaking to someone that I know is retired from another DPW department and talking to a plumber. I do not think we should grant the variance. I think it's a potential for more issues. While the ongoing maintenance is going to be a pain in the neck with the property owner, the problem can be solved with routine maintenance unless they would like to excavate and go through whatever they would have to go through with the State to go back under the road and change the pitch of that pipe and reconnect. I guess at a higher point up to the main. I feel bad to say that because I think Stewart's is a very good neighbor and a good business to work with in our community. But I just don't think that the potential for the problems that would come are worth granting the variance.

Trustee Elliott: I also agree. I don't know a lot about plumbing, but I'll take the word from our DPW Supervisor.

Trustee Maher: I'm in the same mindset as well. I feel it's a tricky situation because if you do for 1, you have to do for everyone. So, by setting this precedence, it could open things up to be down the road. You have to do that with every business. With this particular situation, that can be remedied other ways, so I think that's the route we should go.

Trustee Baker: I'm in agreement with the other Trustees. I am not in favor of passing the waiver at this time.

Trustee Sebring: Yesterday, I was in to see the girls and I got a sheet on their monthly usage. Their monthly usage is approximately 400 gallons a day. Which not a large amount of water, but it's enough. In the code it calls for roughly 100 gallons per day to keep the line clear. So, with the 400 gallons, it's way over the use of the amount of water that's going through the line. Another thing that possibly that I've thought of is that last year, a year before they dug the tanks up and put in new tanks. They had to expose the line coming from the building and went through that deep pit, so could possibly be a bend in it where it wasn't totally put back to the 1/8 of an inch per foot for the

drainage. They have more than enough clean out in the building for the line. They have 1 in the bathroom, 1 mid-point in the store, then they have another 1 outside, maybe 4 feet from the curb. They have the vent that's right there on the wall, which gives it the flow. You never know what people put in the toilets there being a convenience store. So, with the use of the 400 gallons a day and possibly they would have to keep at this. I don't feel as though they should take the crap out either. For the simple fact that it keeps the sewer gas coming from the street in, that's the first stop right there. I would not recommend them taking it out for the simple fact it's easier maintenance for them, even though the building code allows it. I'm in favor of not allowing them to take out that trap.

Deputy Mayor Carley: I echo everything everyone else said. It was just that I did go through and it all speaks to everything everyone else was saying.

Mayor Ramos: I have a few comments to what traps are used for. It's to prevent sewer gases. It's a mechanical purpose for the trap. To hold water, to prevent sewer gases containing viruses and bacteria from entering the occupied areas. It could build up and harm people with oxygen depletion fixation. The gases that are contained within, hydrogen sulfide poisoning. Really highly explosive and extreme toxic. If anybody has seen the movie Christmas Vacation, you understand that the levels are extremely toxic and explosive. It can cause a fire, an explosion and illness and discomfort. Even at low levels. Sewer gases are a byproduct of the breakdown of natural human waste composed of hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, methane and ammonia. Those are serious health issues. I'm in agreement that we do not grant the variance for Stewart's just based upon those health issues.

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to deny variance. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion – Board Reports

Manager Revella: I just want to make sure that I gave some more detail on the departments in this report. Was that what you were asking for, Trustee Sebring?

Trustee Sebring: Yes.

Manager Revella: You did get the Treasurer, Clerk and my report in your packets. If there is any other details or information you want in future reports, just let me know and I'll provide that as well.

Discussion – Village Treasurer

Manager Revella: There was discussion last meeting about taking a formal vote on the Treasurer's salary.

Trustee Thompson: Are we approving the salary that was awarded?

Mayor Ramos: We are approving the salary that was budgeted.

Attorney Donovan: For clarification, the budget, I think, is different than what's being awarded.

Manager Revella: That's correct.

Attorney Donovan: Not to speak for any Trustee who made a motion, but if the amount for the amount that's been being paid now. If anyone has that handy, now would be the time to put it on the record.

Manager Revella: It's \$500 less than the budgeted amount.

Clerk Kraus: \$71,500.

Attorney Donovan: The record should reflect that Marisa came through in the clutch.

Trustee Maher made a motion to make the Treasurer's salary official for \$71,500. Seconded by Trustee Baker. 5 ayes. 2 nays (Trustee Sebring, Trustee Thompson). Motion carried

Resolution 7-21-22 – Budget Transfers

Trustee Thompson made a motion to approve Resolution 7-21-22 – Budget Transfers. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Outdoor Café Request – Franco's

Trustee Sebring made a motion to approve Outdoor Café Request by Franco's. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Becky Pearson: The Christmas tree looks great. Lights in the square, lights on the Main Street looks great. Can we leave the tree lit during the day? I know you leave the lights in the square lit during the day and it looks so pretty. Some days are cloudy. It's only up for a few weeks. Is that something we can leave on during the day sometimes? It looks nice. Such a beautiful tree.

Manager Revella: I'll check the timer on it. I think there's a setting to leave it on.

Becky Pearson: They're on in the square in the morning when I go to work still. On the main street, it would be nice to have them on during the day. They're so pretty. I think there's a light missing on the bridge.

Manager Revella: We had to order a new head. It's taking forever.

Becky Pearson: Let me apologize, Dave. I apologize for asking the questions. I don't mean to. I won't address you any longer. I don't mean to be that person. So, my questions will be to the Mayor and the Board. I think I was addressing more of the Board, but sometimes you might have kind of felt I was addressing you.

Attorney Donovan: Thank you.

Becky Pearson: I don't mean to be that person. I just would like to get answers from the Board and I don't get them. I'm looking online for the law that you did tonight and it's not online. I looked everywhere. I couldn't find it.

Manager Revella: It's in a new section on the website.

Becky Pearson: I went through sections and I sent you something I found, because I was going through the website.

Manager Revella: Yes, we're updating that now and the welcome packet.

Becky Pearson: Also, in the Rec Department, I'm looking at events. We don't have a public beach anymore because of COVID. We don't have the haunted house. Do we have the after school program any longer?

Manager Revella: Not this year because of COVID. But it could be next year.

Becky Pearson: It's still all listed on there. Youth leadership we don't have that either. Teen Center, is that open now or not?

Manager Revella: We're debating when that's going to reopen.

Becky Pearson: All of this 6K Race, we don't do that anymore. Adult gym, farmer's market, Zumba class, those are all listed on there. I think we really need to look at the website update.

Manager Revella: We actually had someone else ask about the local law issue. So, we made a separate section for just local laws now. It should be easier to find. We just got that today. It's under legislation.

Becky Pearson: Discussion. I didn't really have much discussion tonight. I know it's on here for discussion, but I don't understand why there is no discussion in this Board. Thank you. After 6 months, finally, we're doing the right thing. 6 months later, we decided we're going to do the right thing and vote on the Treasurer's salary. Thank you. Knowing and understanding your form of government. Hopefully that won't happen again. The Board is makes the decisions, not the Mayor. The Mayor can't just make those decisions. Now it's hard to go backwards. I know some people voted no, probably not wanting that salary, but you can't go backwards now. Thank you for finally after 6 months opening up and doing what's right for this Village. You put it on for discussion, but why didn't you just put on vote because you're just going to vote on it and not have any discussion anyway. I wanted to bring in one of my boys. I have questions on my FOILs. 2 things that I don't understand. I get back "exempted by statute other than freedom from information". Can somebody tell me what that means?

Manager Revella: That it's not FOILable.

Becky Pearson: Can you give me a reason why?

Manager Revella: I don't know what you're asking for?

Becky Pearson: I said I would like to see correspondence given to the Village Board on what constitutes confidentiality for Department Head reports and why they are not public. We are paying for them as long as they are not executive session material. Why can't a Village person see those reports?

Manager Revella: You were FOILing a question. You have to FOIL a document.

Becky Pearson: The attorney gave you people a memo or something that constitutes why they're not confidential or why they are confidential.

Manager Revella: So, you're FOILing the attorney's memo to the Board that is exempt as attorney client privilege.

Becky Pearson: How bad can it be?

Manager Revella: It could be mundane. It could be really detailed. Either way, it's not FOILable.

Becky Pearson: The other 1 was, I'd like to see a copy of the Treasurer's report from September

21st meeting. Again, those Treasurer reports, I don't know, have you finalized the confidentiality issue that was going on here?

Manager Revella: That wasn't a report. It was more of a personnel matter. That's why that wasn't FOILable. That document that you asked for.

Becky Pearson: It would have been nice to get that little bit of information. It says inner agency. It doesn't really tell me stuff.

Manager Revella: You were asking for a document that was almost like a self-evaluation and it's not really FOILable. Treasurer's report, a general one could be but we'd have to talk about it.

Becky Pearson: That would be nice to have that explanation. I'd like any information, minutes, emails of the Walden Board of Trustees votes on the Treasurer's salary that were approved on August 3rd. Of course, you didn't do that on August 3rd. So, of course I got back that there are no minutes. That's really the only 1 that I got back that I understood because there was no real vote at the time. I'm finally happy after 6 months that you did have a vote with no discussion, though, so not happy about that. I don't know if people were unhappy with what happened, they should be talking about it and not just voting no. Thank you for doing the right thing after 6 months. Your Board is your Board, not just the Mayor.

Mary Ellen Matise: 54 Gladstone. The 1st thing I want to talk about was this morning. At 8:30 in the morning, what used to be the Citizens Foundation, now it's Vision Hudson Valley. They had a pathways committee and they had a virtual meeting this morning. The 1 thing they did bring up was the Orange County Open Space Plan, which they're looking for input from municipalities. It is online. They're looking for the Villages and the Towns to participate. I don't know if any of the Board Members here are doing that. You can go on Orange County Planning Department website.

Manager Revella: They haven't reached out to us yet. That's strange.

Mary Ellen Matise: They talked about it this morning. They've already gotten replies to their survey, so they're looking for input.

Manager Revella: Yes, I didn't see a survey

Mary Ellen Matise: The survey is online. I think that we need to follow up with that. The Orange County Land Trust are going to hire a Community Conservation Manager. We have a lot of issues going on in the Town about conservation easements and so that might help with that. I'm sort of like Rod's replacement on the CAC, even though I'm not official on the CAC. I go to all their meetings. They're also we're talking about the tap grants. Alan Sorensen was talking about the tap grants coming up for 2022 and that there's going to be quite a bit of money available because it's also going to be under this new stimulus plan. There's going to be Rail Trail money and also other types of pedestrian and bike trail connection money.

Manager Revella: They paid a firm to go through the entire county to look at potential rail trails and connectivity of those and the bike trails.

Mary Ellen Matise: However, when I listen to the to this meeting and they talk about the O&W Rail bid, which comes through Pine Bush. But none of it comes close to us and we're kind of hanging out here. We're connected to Ulster County. We're connected to the Walkway Over the Hudson. But we're not connected to what's going on south and west of us. They're not even looking at us.

Manager Revella: They have us on the radar. We're secondary. Primary is a continuation of the heritage trail. The trail going from Middletown to Salisbury Mills and one from Middletown to Pine Bush, are the easier ones for acquisition issues. Then there are acquisition issues on 2 other rail beds that they're having issues with.

Mary Ellen Matise: Then there's some landowner issues and stuff, which is what we already went through. All the people on Wileman, some people complained and guess what? It turned out to be fine. But they really don't talk about connecting us to any of this. They're trying to connect Orange, Sullivan, Ulster through to the 209 corridor. They should be thinking about connecting us somehow. I just get kind of annoyed with that. They're going to make a presentation at the January 25th Town Association's meeting. Maybe you bring it up then.

Mayor Ramos: You want to come? I'll buy for you.

Mary Ellen Matise: Maybe. Let me know. Send me an email. They're going to make a presentation. They want to do a friends of the rail trails. Would that involve us too?

Manager Revella: Yes.

Mary Ellen Matise: The Parks Commissioner wants a friends group to do fundraising and maintenance. The Land Trust said they bought equipment for maintenance. I kind of missed the discussion about the Heritage Trail a little bit because I got some phone calls. My next item is the 250th commission meeting I think it's going to be this coming Saturday. Does anybody in the Village have any input for me? I keep coming here. I keep mentioning it to you. The Revolutionary War Commission, the Village want to be involved?

Manager Revella: Yes, we want to be involved.

Mary Ellen Matise: Is there 1 Trustee who would like to input with me because I'll bring that input to the meetings? Just let me know, anybody sent me an email. It's not until Saturday. I just want to know if there's things that the Village would like to do and then I can report back to you to what the commission is talking about. Johanna set up a whole topics per year and it's going to be multi-year, so there's lots to cover and lots to think about. For those of you on Facebook, the Arnott House. Brian set up a little committee and it involves Sean Arnott as the Town Engineer, Planning Board Engineer and Caesar Bobadilla to do construction work and Jim Farr and myself. Brian's idea is, there's 4 bedrooms upstairs. Upstairs isn't going to be handicap accessible, but for each room could be designated per Village for a history. Give me your concerns. Brian's convinced it's going to be a great idea. We'll take it from there and see where it goes. I'm on the committee, so let me know. This is kind of getting annoying because we brought this up many times now about Wooster's Grove and about the history of Wooster's Grove is inside the train depot. The train depots inaccessible. People don't go in there. The DOT said we had to have a welcome center. The previous manager said that there was going to be like a little shop and there was going to be this and that, but it was never open. It never functioned and then it became a store room. But on the wall 2009, I did the whole history of Wooster's Grove. How going all the way back to when Wooster bought the property from Woolsey and on and on and on and how he developed all the roads and the streets and lots around it and how he offered it to the Village and the Village kindly declined because they realized it flooded all the time. Until they finally got suckered into taking it. The history is there.

Trustee Thompson: I've seen them. They're very, very well done. If we can move them, I think it would be an asset to move them.

Manager Revella: They can move.

Mary Ellen Matise: Thank you.

Manager Revella: Just want to ask the Board, from one of the comments from the public and requested to leave the tree lights on during the day. I just want to make sure it's okay with you, it's a nominal electric bill.

All: Yes.

Brenda Adams: 31 Valley. Mary Ellen just brought up something. There was something I always would have liked to have seen. That hallway going up the ramp, is about as uninviting as any community could ever come up with. I don't think there's one worse. Why not take that this poster thing that she has and put it on that wall? Then people would see it. I was hoping we'd get a mural or some kind of history. We tried that, but it wasn't even the money, but we couldn't get a person either. But it would be nice to have something when you go up the ramp that shows some history of the Village of Walden.

Mayor Ramos: Are we good with the hallway?

Manager Revella: On the ramp, put some history there. Starting with the Wooster items.

Trustee Thompson: I'm fine with starting to think about what to put there.

Payment of Audited Bills

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to approve Payment of Audited Bills. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Correspondence

Trustee Thompson: I received a postcard from the Bruderhofs inviting us to a Christmas caroling activity on December 18th from 5-8 p.m. and I also received correspondence from a property owner here in the Village asking about leaves. Apparently, the way the cars are parked in the circle, she has great difficulty cleaning up the leaves in front of her building. I advised her to direct to you if there was anything we could do, so she could pick up the leaves properly.

Trustee Maher: No correspondence other than the Bruderhofs.

Trustee Sebring: None other than a Bruderhofs.

Mayor Ramos: I received correspondence from 56 Valley Avenue that I turned over to the Village Manager. I also have some correspondence from Chief Herlihy. The PBA recently requested permission to participate in an additional charity event in December 2021. The event will be called Double Down December. Each participating member of the PBA would donate \$75 to this event. The PBA will choose 3 families in need in the Village based on discussions they will have confidentially with school officials. The PBA will then donate a full Christmas meal to each of the 3 families, as well as a \$100 gift card. The members are very excited to be able to assist local families during this holiday season. I respectfully request approval from the Board so that the PBA can accomplish is very meaningful and charitable goal. Is everybody good with that?

All: Yes.

Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

Trustee Maher: I am on the Pathways Committee. I missed the meeting this morning, but I can forward the meeting minutes to the whole Board if everyone would like them. We can all stay on the same page and any other correspondence I get from Burt.

Trustee Baker: The Christmas in the Square was a lovely event. Thank you to all the volunteers and the Rec Department and DPW for all their work. Santa was a very big hit. Lots of lovely photos. Thankfully, nature held up pretty much to the end. There was some mad dash towards the end to get in from the buckets the rain.

Trustee Sebring: Christmas in the Square was a real success. There were more people there than I believe that we've had in any other year. All the groups that sang, the live nativity scenes were excellent. Everybody that was involved in it did a very good job of setting that up.

Mayor Ramos: I have to thank the Melville MacGyver family for donating this beautiful tree. I look forward to the next coming years of a few of them sitting on their property that they're willing to give us. Again the Park & Rec, DPW, the PD, even the Fire Department all joined hands in a team effort to get the lighting, the tree secured. I did have something to mention during correspondence. Supervisor Brian Maher is requesting the Board's presence. I hope that he's submitted to the papers of a Board meeting for the Ambulance District to be held at 7 p.m. at the Montgomery Senior Center. He's looking for a quorum from the Village of Walden. I would open up to if anybody has comment on that to give us some input on the Ambulance District. If we can't have a quorum, obviously the Village of Walden won't be represented. Let me know individually or let the Village Manager know individually if at least 4 can make it.

Attorney Donovan: What's going on?

Mayor Ramos: This is an Ambulance District meeting of the creation of an Ambulance District.

Attorney Donovan: Will the Village of Walden be requested to vote on something?

Mayor Ramos: Not there.

Attorney Donovan: The only reason I mentioned that is if you're going to have a quorum with the Board present to discuss business you have to advertise it.

Trustee Thompson: Don't we already have 2 members of our Board that were involved in that committee?

Manager Revella: Yes. The Deputy Mayor and Trustee Baker.

Trustee Thompson: Correct. So, why would we need more representation?

Mayor Ramos: He is asking because all the Boards are going to gather for that day. Montgomery and Maybrook. I'm just passing on the information.

Trustee Thompson: I would have to agree with Mr. Donovan. There should be a posted meeting, correct?

Attorney Donovan: If the Village Board is going to meet to discuss and even if you make a decision that evening, you're going to discuss Village business. You have to satisfy the open meeting requirement.

Manager Revella: When was the last time your committee met?

Deputy Mayor Carley: It's been several months. They had something today, but it was not for a committee. It was only for their exec committee and I didn't attend, it was at 4:30.

Manager Revella: It just seems odd that they're asking the full board to be there for a meeting when you guys haven't even had a meeting.

Mayor Ramos: I just got notified on it yesterday. I agree with our attorney and I will advise the Town Supervisor that the Village of Walden will not be representing.

Trustee Thompson: Our committee people can go.

Mary Ellen Matise: Brian brought it up at last week's meeting. This is a more of a public open meeting to discuss the creation of the district. Then it has to come back to the Board. You are going to have to have your own public hearing.

Attorney Donovan: If you all go there, that's great. I would advise you against participating as members of the Village Board and have any discussion or any conclusion. If you want to go for a fact gathering. That's great.

Manager Revella: I'm just concerned this will be a precedent for a public hearing that's needed and a quorum must be present for that. That's what I'm thinking. Otherwise, why would you need quorums unless it's a requirement?

Attorney Donovan: Or there's a joint public hearing. There's timing that that's involved.

Mayor Ramos: The members that are on the team for the Ambulance Corps, 7 p.m. If you can't make it, you can't make it.

Manager Revella: At the Montgomery Senior Center.

Mayor Ramos: I attended the Orange County Association of Towns and Villages. Our speaker, is an attorney for ARPA funding. He had mentioned to us that we are doing within our regulatory responsibilities for the Village of Walden. He's quite pleased for this local area, applying those ARPA funds justly. If anybody's not doing anything on Friday at 1 o'clock, I'm going to be meeting with Heather Bell, Chamber of Commerce. They changed their address. They are now on Homestead Avenue in the Village of Maybrook. I invited her for a nice little walk and talk within the Village and look at our streets. We'll be starting there at Lizzy's Good Eats first. If you see us walking around, come and say hi. Fox Hill had their craft fair on Saturday. Walden had their craft fair on Sunday. Very well attended. Tomorrow, 9:30 a.m. I'll be speaking for the DARE graduation for the 5th grade class. I also have a request if we can extend the leave pick up for a couple more weeks. If we can discuss that, maybe help out your neighbor there.

Trustee Thompson: It seems like the leaves dropped really late this year. I know a lot of my neighbors are still raking leaves. People have asked me also about that if we can extend it.

Manager Revella: I just have to ask if that facility is still open, where they bring them. If it's not, then we can't.

Trustee Thompson: Is there anywhere in the town that residents are allowed to go to take yard

waste?

Mayor Ramos: Maybe we should look at a farmer. That was just a request. Today was the senior luncheon. Very well attended. I think it was about 65 or 70.

William Ibberson: Town of Montgomery is taking leaves to Taylor until December 11th for Town of Montgomery residents.

Trustee Thompson: I did a webinar today called Protecting Wildlife Connectivity through Land Use Planning. It was very interesting, but I brought up a couple times now if we could consider Tri-Board meetings. And this webinar exactly addressed the reason why. There are some really challenging environmental issues with a lot of the development taking place and there are better ways to use the land to accomplish what developers and builders and communities need and doing a better job with conserving the environment. It's all about land use. I think it's something that would be beneficial for all 3 of our boards to talk about so we all know what our vision is. John, you had mentioned periodic review of the comp plan, which that would fall into this as well. We've talked about it several times. I'd like to see us try and get something scheduled. If we could have a little representation from everybody, I think it might be helpful to the entire Village. I meant to ask you, do we have any movement on our charging station? We got our grant. Is it in limbo?

Manager Revella: We were awarded, but we haven't received the documents, yet.

Trustee Thompson: Do we have any additional movement or information about the work that we were hoping to get done on the 3rd floor here in the office area?

Manager Revella: We're getting pricing for flooring still.

Trustee Thompson: I feel like we've been holding for pricing on flooring for a long time.

Manager Revella: There's not a lot available. It's hard to tell based on a price on what we can get and when. And then the Librarian wanted to talk about maybe doing something different on the 2nd floor. Waiting to hear back from her and what she wants down there and see if it's in our price range. I think that if we have everything lined up by the time the next ARPA round comes, I'd like to try to use some of that if the Board is okay with that. We have some money, but just in case it goes above and beyond.

Trustee Elliott: Thank you to everyone that helped with the Christmas tree in the square. It is a big undertaking. The Ambulance District, do they need our approval for that?

Attorney Donovan: My understanding from a year ago, it's a joint district, I think the Town wants the Town and the 3 Villages. That would require the Village of Walden, Village of Maybrook, Village of Montgomery's approval in addition to the Town of Montgomery.

Mayor Ramos: Referendum, correct?

Attorney Donovan: I think it's subject to permissive referendum, but not mandatory.

Trustee Elliott: Is there a problem with the way it is now?

Deputy Mayor Carley: They had several, several years not being able to balance their budgets and they've run into several problems just administratively. It was financial issues, some administrative issues and they're looking for assistance to cover some things through the Town. So, the Town

Supervisor entertain their requests. The Town of Montgomery has been giving them X amount of dollars to help fund them as needed as they've been going along for the last year or so. The goal is to create a district so that funding will come out of all three of the Villages.

Manager Revella: They pay that out of the A fund.

Deputy Mayor Carley: I believe so. I don't know exactly how much they pay and all that, but they do take money from there. Our issue, Cheryl and I, went to 2 meetings, had our initial meeting, just an overview of what's going on and then they had a meeting and a couple of months ago, kind of go over asking about covering their finances a little bit and we had some problems with that. It's just not very structured for me. Personally, they're asking for money from the Village, individually, from the homes. If you can't govern your finances now, what makes you going to govern them later? The issue is, does the Town take it over or do they just fund them to take over? Meaning that the Ambulance Corp stay to themselves and their district and we just finance them, which I don't like or do they give over authority to the Town, create the board and the Town runs it, which I prefer to see myself, because then we know that is structured and that the money is being utilized, maintained and good stewardship that way.

Trustee Baker: They would prefer not to have the oversight, but it's taxpayer funds and we feel that there absolutely needs to be an oversight and accountability for that.

Deputy Mayor Carley: It's just a problem they're having with their stewardship.

Manager Revella: They charge per ride, correct?

Deputy Mayor Carley: Yes. They have their challenges, which part of the business model, they should understand that. When you apply for Medicare and Medicaid or whatever and you go pick up somebody, the payment plan, the times of the 90 days, 60 days or whatever it takes to get your funds back, that all should be a part of it. When you tell me that, this is the problem, I said that should have been thought about when you did your business. So, if you don't have the funds to kind of help along the way for whatever reason, you're not making the budget. There's a problem. It's been not only like 5 years, I'm talking about 10, 15 years of problems they've been having. I went down and spoke to the Ambulance Corp in Stewart Airport, they kind of cover the region here. I asked them, if they ever go down and seek advice or anything to help them with their financial stewardship? Answer was no. Did they ever apply for any grants or anything or anything offered? Answer was no. I see some problems with that. That was kind of the reason why I have trepidation by allowing them to say yes. And then we start paying them money and then they misuse of funds or they're not using it appropriately. There's no real oversight. Then we'll just be wasting money, in my opinion. Hopefully on the 13th, we will get a little more clarity on what they want to do. We'll bring it back to the board like we did before. We brought back the results from our last meeting. Unfortunately they haven't been having meetings.

Trustee Sebring: Wasn't it in the paper that last year the Town gave them \$150,000 and most of that money was used to pay off existing bills that had been racked up.

Deputy Mayor Carley: I can't say exactly the dollar amount, but yes.

Trustee Sebring: Then they come back again, which I think was in the paper asking for another \$50 to keep the organization going. That should have been done before their budget was final.

Deputy Mayor Carley: That's what we're talking about oversight and stewardship. There's a problem there. You can't just say here's another \$200,000 or here's a free check. Then all of a

sudden you find them going back asking for more if you haven't fixed the problem. That's why the argument I have is like, give it to the Town, let the Town work it through and then manage it correctly.

Trustee Thompson: But this is not a problem that's just unique to our Town. This is happening all across the state of New York. I've been to 1 workshop, a dialog with fire districts, ambulance, Senator Skoufis. This is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed at a level higher than we are. It's not going to be an easy fix. But the district is certainly 1 way that some communities are funding. You're right, it's a very complicated issue.

Deputy Mayor Carley: Those comments were made about combining and working through and everybody wants to be independent, do their own thing. The problem is that you're not managing it correctly independently, so you need some oversight. Then other people don't want oversight because now you're taking control and you have a mix of passion versus business. You want to make sure things are done. But if you don't have the business side to take care of your passion, it's going to fall apart.

Trustee Thompson: I agree with you. You come up with a sound fiscal plan, but you also have to satisfy the needs of your community. It has to be a business model. I do believe.

Read Community Events into minutes

Executive Session – Personal History of a Particular Employee & Attorney Client consent order DEC

Trustee Maher made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personal history of a particular employee and attorney client regarding the DEC consent order. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Reconvene

Trustee Baker made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Elliott. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Village of Walden Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
December 7, 2021
Motions & Resolutions**

Approval of November 16, 2021 Minutes

Trustee Sebring made a motion to approve the November 16, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. 5 ayes. 0 nays. 2 abstentions (Trustee Maher and Trustee Elliott). Motion carried.

Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries

Trustee Sebring made a motion to open Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Baker made a motion to close Public Hearing Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Sebring made a motion Negative Declaration. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Thompson made a motion to adopt Local Law 5 of 2021 – Districts and Boundaries. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion – Stewart’s Sewer Trap

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to deny variance. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion – Village Treasurer

Trustee Maher made a motion to make the Treasurer’s salary official for \$71,500. Seconded by Trustee Baker. 5 ayes. 2 nays (Trustee Sebring and Trustee Thompson). Motion carried

Resolution 7-21-22 – Budget Transfers

Trustee Thompson made a motion to approve Resolution 7-21-22 – Budget Transfers. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Outdoor Café Request – Franco’s

Trustee Sebring made a motion to approve Outdoor Café Request by Franco’s. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

Payment of Audited Bills

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to approve Payment of Audited Bills. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Executive Session – Personal History of a Particular Employee Attorney Client

Trustee Maher made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personal history of a particular employee and attorney client regarding consent order. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Reconvene

Trustee Baker made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Elliott. All ayes. Motion carried.