

Zoom ID # 4118425407

VILLAGE OF CAYUGA HEIGHT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONTHLY MEETING

March 20, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton; Police Chief Wright; Treasurer Dolch; Attorney Marcus (arrives 7:28 p.m.); Superintendent of Public Works B. Cross; Director of Public Works M. Wiese; Clerk Walker.

1. Call to Order: Mayor Woodard calls the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Approval of the February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Exhibit 2024-142)

Resolution: 9545

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves the February 21, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion: Trustee Salton

Second: Trustee Robinson

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: Biloski

Motion Carried

3. Report of Fire Superintendent Tamborelle: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2024-143)

- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle was absent from tonight's meeting.
- The Village Board of Trustees accepts Fire Superintendent Tamborelle's submitted report.

4. Privilege of the Floor: Mayor Woodard states that Privilege of the Floor will be held at the Property Maintenance discussion. No members of the public wish to speak at this time.

5. Report of Treasurer Dolch: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2024-144)

- Treasurer Dolch states that the Feb 2024 month-end bank-to-book reconciliation is complete and has been signed off by Deputy Treasurer Rennekamp.
- Treasurer Dolch states that she along with B. Cross haave a meeting with Tompkins Community Bank to discuss financing the WWTP project in the new fiscal year.
- Treasurer Dolch states that she needs a resolution approving her to sign the engagement letter for INSERO to perform the Annual Village Audit.

Resolution: 9546

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes Village Treasurer L. Dolch to sign the INSERO engagement letter for the 2023-2024 Village Audit.

Motion: Trustee Hubbell

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•Treasurer Dolch states that she has a budget modification resolution for an unforeseen expense in the sewer account.

•Treasurer Dolch states that she will need to move \$34,291.79 from the Sewer Contingency (G1990.400) to Sewer Lines Contractual (G8120.410).

Resolution: 9547

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves Village Treasurer L. Dolch to move \$34,291.79 from Sewer Contingency (G1990.400) to Sewer Lines Contractual (G8120.410)

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•Mayor Woodard states that during the process of re-lining some Village sewer manholes the DPW staff discovered some sections of sewer pipe that had collapsed so they decided to line that section as well this resulted in an over-budget in that account.

Motion Carried

•Treasurer Dolch states that the last thing she needs approval for is Abstract 10.

Approval of Abstract 10:

Resolution: 9548

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves Abstract #10 for FYE2024 consisting of TA vouchers #70-77 in the amount of \$14,915.77 and Consolidated Fund vouchers #690-772 in the amount of \$362,096.63 and the Treasurer is instructed to make payments thereon.

Motion: Trustee Hubbell

Second: Trustee Biloski

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

6. Report of Mayor Woodard

a. Schedule a Public Hearing for Proposed Local Law B of the year 2024 – Property Maintenance Law

-Clerk Walker inserts the following correspondence received from committee members and members of the public.

My comments follow and are attached. I am sorry I am unable to attend any of the forthcoming scheduled meetings.

My comments on the proposed local Law B of the year 2024 which takes property maintenance out of Zoning and creates a new chapter of the Village’s Code to be entitled “Property Maintenance.”

My comments apply solely to Section IV Property Maintenance and not to how it will be enforced.

First, I think it is very poorly written, confusing in places, and requires property owners to refer to other documents to fully understand what it means. Because the definition of Front Yard is in the Zoning Laws doesn’t mean someone reading this document knows what a Front Yard is. It should be included in the document. The wording should be consistent throughout the document. Do the words Lot and Yard mean the same thing? If so, use the word Yard at all times. If they do not mean the same thing, two definitions are required.

Section IV Property Maintenance

209-1. Purpose We need to agree on the following:

“...public health, safety, and welfare by establishing minimum standards governing the maintenance, appearance, and condition of all property in the Village of Cayuga Heights.

209-2 Definitions – This seems a crucial part of this law and these definitions need to be agreed on before their use can be accepted and the law is written.

Where is the definition of a front yard?

(All definitions need to be spelled out in this document and not somewhere else such as Zoning law. A homeowner shouldn't have to do lots of research to find out what they can and can't do to their property.)

209-2 B. Meadows definition is needed.

C. & D. link needs to be provided to NY State and Tompkins County definitions of weed. One person's weed is another person's wildflower or culinary treat.

Property owners need to easily be able to get information about what plants, grasses, ornamentals, etc. are indigenous to this area or not.

Why doesn't planned natural landscaping include gardens?

H. Unmanaged plant growth

What is the definition of other offensive vegetation?

May I grow dandelions and hairy bittercress in my vegetable garden because I like eating them?

H.4 What is the definition of the protective buffer area

H.5 Can my entire yard be planned with natural landscaping as long as it does not exceed my property lines

209-3 Maintenance of exterior lots.

I assume the exterior lot means the yard. Terminology needs to be consistent throughout the document. Is a lot a yard or any area with no building on it? See B (2) below.

A (5) Accumulation of stormwater – where does flooding come into this?

A (6) Sources ofrodents – Does this include Groundhogs living under garden sheds and back and front porches?

B (2) in any front yard (as "front yard" is defined in the Village of Cayuga Heights Zoning Law) of any lot: This implies that the yard is not the same as the lot. Please explain.

B (2) (a) how long can unstacked firewood remain in the front yard and why does firewood have to be stacked to remain in the front yard

B (2) d, e & f what is the definition of an unimproved surface

B (2) h What is wrong with a meadow in a large yard such as at Kendal and many other front yards in the village? (These currently require heavy weed killing and fertilizer to maintain pristine green lawns as advocated by Fred Olmstead and eventually result in weed killer and fertilizer flowing into the Lake.

209-3 C (2) (a) what does the following mean (a) man-made improvements or structures (including driveways and parking areas that are paved or made of concrete, but not including gravel driveways or parking areas),

And (h) any area on which has been allowed to grow wildflowers, noxious weeds, or unmanaged plant growth, (i) any gravel driveway or parking area, and (j) any area occupied by a driveway, parking area, path, or patio that is constructed with slabs of rock placed at grade, each of which is aligned with the adjacent rock.

The whole of section 209-3 C(2) is confusing and needs to be rewritten, so we know what you are talking about. Is a gravel driveway unimproved? What is meant by slabs of rock placed at grade? What is wrong with wildflowers if cultivated flowers are allowed? Do wildflowers become cultivated flowers if one plants them in a garden? Etc.

C (3) drainage systems – does this apply to Public Works as well as property owners?

Additional Comments

This law appears to apply only to front yards but what about side and backyards when they impact neighboring yards? And what about side yards on a corner?

Are there going to be any controls regarding invasive species such as Japanese Knot Weed which requires constant control and if one's neighbor doesn't also control it, this plant is impossible to eradicate? We are also experiencing spread, throughout parts of the Village, of lesser celandine. Can I require my neighbor to control these weeds in their yard so that I can control them in mine?

Sally

Sally Grubb

Hi folks,

I agree with the suggestion to include front and yard definitions in the law to make this more user-friendly.

I see our definition of native plants is restricted to those native to Tompkins County. This seems too strict. Bea, would it be appropriate to scale that up to the Finger Lakes Region or New York State?

Also, I'm wary of a law that specifically restricts a native vegetation type (meadow, as defined in this draft), particularly at this time when much attention is focused on the sustainable properties of native vegetation. I believe the Village can achieve its goals by restricting unmanaged plant growth (as already included in the law) without including "meadow" in the law at all.

--Geri T

Dear Linda and all,

I continue to think we need to include front and back yard in our lists of definitions; having pulled in the definition of street right of way, doesn't that make sense?

And I don't understand the wording in the final two lines of the meadow definition. Is it necessary to qualify woody plants?

Meadow means an open habitat or field, 0.1 acre or larger, often moist, and low-lying, composed of one or more herbaceous plant communities consisting mainly of grasses and other non-woody plants, with woody vegetation frequently being present but not dominant, native to, or adapted to, the State of New York, not including noxious weeds.

*with thanks,
Bea*

I finally got a break to look at this. Sorry. Here are my concerns for the next draft.

Definition of meadow

“... ~~often moist and low-lying~~, composed of one or more herbaceous plant communities consisting mainly of grasses and other non-woody plants, with woody vegetation frequently being present but not dominant, native to, or adapted to, the State ~~if~~ of New York, not including noxious weeds.”

So long as “adapted to” is left in, this would cover regional natives without having to specify regions.

Native definition

“...native to or naturalized to Tompkins County, New York....”

Very tricky. Native means native not naturalized. And the county is appropriate. Again, so long as what is allowed specifies “plants native to the New York region”, that will work.

29.3 A(2) says to me that I can't leave dead limbs on trees in case someone wanders “in the vicinity thereof”. We decided against this several times. Same with 29.3 (3) Change that person “in the vicinity thereof” to persons “in the public right of way”.

29.3 A(4) Are contracted workers included in "used by persons having access to such premises"? if so, can you not have dog poop anywhere in your yard?

20.3 C(2) Meadows are not specifically excluded, and they should be. So far, the term meadow has only been used in a negative sense – to exclude them from front yards. Why can't the phrase

“...but not including gravel driveways or parking areas), (b) trees or shrubs, (c) ornamental grasses, such as any variation of fountain grass, and groundcovers (d) vegetable gardens and rain gardens, nor...”

Be changed to “...(d) gardens and other planned natural landscaping”? Especially since fountain grass is given explicit blessing despite many fountain grasses being invasive.

Hi,

I am unable to attend the BOT meeting but would like to provide feedback regarding the draft code changes. Specifically, the definition of “front yard” should be updated to reference Section 305-19 which would utilize the uniform setback rules already set forth for a shed. Section 305-19 would require brush piles be placed

with 25 feet of their property line which should accomplish the notion sought after by the village. The more general definition of "front yard" in Section 305-5 would require brush piles to be placed no closer than where each individual house sits. This would be an undue burden for homes that sit far back from their property lines and also would create inconsistency with the setback rules for sheds.

*Thanks---
Geoff Callander*

To the honorable Mayor Woodard,

Mayor I write to you today in regards to the proposed local law B of 2024 for Cayuga Heights, aka, Property Maintenance law.

I hope that this message can be entered as part of the privilege of the floor, if this is the wrong format I ask that you please direct me to the correct forum.

Let me first send my regrets as I am unable to appear before the board for our March 20th session to deliver these remarks in person, my grandmother who I live with was just admitted to Hospice and requires intensive care which demands my complete time.

I believe that we can all agree that property maintenance is a critical aspect of village life and that setting the bar correctly helps us keep the balance of our "rural suburban" community feel. I commend you on your efforts to strike a balance between voices demanding laws that push us to highly manicured and completely wild outdoor spaces.

My main ask for this evening, and one that I believe you've already indicated that you'll pursue, is that we have a dedicated public discussion about this law as it's being lifted out of the zoning ordinances. Aside from holding the meeting I'd ask that you and the board both ask for and encourage public input on the process by announcing the meeting in the village eNewsBlast and on social media.

More generally on the law itself, I'd ask yourself and the board to consider if the more highly specific items that are being outlawed in the newly added text of the law are actual systemic issues that exist in our village and thus need to apply to our entire community or if the law is targeting specific properties. Please consider rejecting any clauses which restrict a homeowner actions or property usage based on cosmetic considerations alone.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Your neighbor and constituent,

-Jake Gribschaw

- Committee member R. Parker states that she feels that many of the points that they worked out got twisted as the committee got into developing legal definitions. There is still a lot of work to be done on definitions.
- Mayor Woodard states that the task force has been utilizing definitions taken from the National Wildlife Federation Guide to Passing Wildlife-Friendly Property Maintenance Ordinances.
- R. Parker states that we cannot use the term native plant as native or naturalized to a region. She suggests we change the language associated with that and find another workable term. She also suggests that the language used in this draft representing “in the vicinity” needs to be clarified. It should state in the public right of way.
- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that all those suggestions are helpful, and the language put into this draft was intended to reflect the committee’s suggestions.
- Committee member G. Tierney states that this law wants to encourage the intentionality of management of vegetation, and we should stick to the term’s nature landscape and unmanaged vegetation and remove meadow from this law and regulate that.
- Mayor Woodard asks if the definition of Meadow fits into this draft.
- B. Szekely states that we might want to leave Meadow in since it is such a commonly used word for a type of landscaping.
- Mayor Woodard states that she believed strongly that the definition of a front yard should be mentioned in multiple locations and show other areas in the Village Zoning law where this definition is found.
- B. Szekely states that Planning Board Chair F. Cowett is in favor of keeping those definitions the same in both this proposed stand-alone law and the Village Zoning Law.
- Village resident E. Mount asks the Board if they could give a summary of how this proposed law came about.
- Mayor Woodard states that last summer we had several people who didn’t mow their laws and the Village issued several violations. Some complied but others stated that they were developing a Meadow or other types of landscaping. She then formed a committee to develop a property maintenance law outside of the Village Zoning Law.
- Mayor Woodard states that there is a misconception about our local laws, if something is not listed in our law then it is prohibited. The goal of this proposed local law is to relax what is allowed versus tighten the restrictions.
- Committee member R. Janis states that there are two questions that this boils down to. 1. What are you doing with your property, 2. Where are you doing it? If we have clear definitions, then we will be a little closer to having something manageable.
- S. Garner via Zoom reads her father’s letter to the Village Board of Trustees.

My name is Lowell Garner, and I reside in the Village of Lansing. I wish to provide feedback on the proposed public law concerning property maintenance. My interest stems from being a property owner in a neighboring village and wanting to support my friends in Cayuga Heights who seek more natural landscapes. While I hope many will discuss the benefits tonight, I seek to convey that this law might lead to more problems than it solves.

I appreciate your effort to consider various viewpoints, but some of the definitions concerning terms like "weeds," "planned and intentional," and "offensive" are not only problematic but seem to suggest bias from the outset toward a manicured village. The problem arises because the law exempts lawn areas with planned and natural landscapes from the 10-inch mowing requirement, while it applies to what you define as unmanaged plant growth, including weeds (not just applied to invasives) and other potentially offensive vegetation.

Having taken an in-depth course on weeds a few years back at Cornell taught by Professor Toni DiTomasso, we devoted the entire first lecture to defining weeds. Essentially, a weed is a plant that is considered undesirable in a particular context it is subjective. Is the coltsfoot with the April flower a weed? How about the dandelion? Or maybe you love trout lilies if you're lucky enough to get a flower or two, otherwise, they look like heck to some people. Perhaps you like bird's-foot trefoil for the impossible areas that won't grow grass or the forever creeping purslane with their tiny white flowers or purple henbit. None of the examples are on the noxious weed list or are particularly tall to require mowing, but if you happen to live next to someone who loves them and you don't, you may have to use more Roundup if you are willing to do so.

But what about a "weed" that would require mowing, taller than 10"? Do you like the violet-flowered chicory or the maligned goldenrod mixed in with some Queen Anne's lace? I think you get my point. I find none of the species that I mentioned offensive, but I bet there are a lot of people here who do. And to complicate matters further you are expecting the code officer to be the judge and jury.

Finally, the term "planned and intentional" warrants scrutiny. Using my property as an example, it may appear unmanaged from the roadside, but I argue that it is quite intentional. While I may mow certain areas in May, I refrain from doing so in June to provide cover for nestlings of nearby nesting birds and other animals. This approach supports a diverse range of wildlife and insects, which brings me immense pleasure to be a part of. Although it may seem unmanaged during the initial few seasons it takes to become established do many landscape redesigns- biodiversity ensures the area's maintenance far more effectively than my efforts.

In conclusion, I believe that enacting and enforcing this law may lead to unforeseen challenges. Thank you for your time and consideration.

•Trustee Salton states that he has seen the committee make a lot of progress. He would like to see some

clarification of the penalty section of this proposed local law.

- Trustee Salton states that in section 209(4) Penalties D the language is made out to say that there will be a civil and criminal assessment for these violations.
- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that is a mistake and should not have been carried over into this draft.
- Trustee Salton states that the goal here is to have a rule that allows people to be heard and allows people to work with the Village Code Enforcement Officers in a friendly way to add clarity to what is allowed or not allowed with property maintenance.
- Mayor Woodard states that she would like to schedule a Public Hearing at the April 17, 2024, Board Meeting, hold another Property Maintenance Committee Meeting followed by a public input meeting and if we need to carry the Public Hearing into May we will.
- Trustee Salton states that he would like to generate the purpose and intent section of this proposed local law.
- Committee member R. Janis states that the Village also needs to be clear and precise on what is the difference between negligence and neglect. The burden needs to be on the property owner.
- A Village resident states that her concern is not just lawns, but with "stuff" lying around yards that makes things look unsightly and will this law address these issues as well?
- Mayor Woodard states that yes, we are addressing those issues as well.

Resolution: 9549

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby schedule a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law B of the year 2024- Property Maintenance on April 17, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Biloski

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, and Robinson

Nays: none

Abstentions: Salton

- Trustee Marshall states that his concern is if there is enough time before the Public Hearing to have a final draft of this proposed local law.
- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that depends on when the committee can finalize these changes.
- Mayor Woodard states that they will meet on March 28, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Motion Carried

b. Schedule the Annual Organizational Meeting: Under New York State Village Law, the first opportunity after the Village Election the Village Board will meet to establish the positions and roles of the Village Government.

•Mayor Woodard states that she would like a resolution setting the Annual Village Organizational Meeting, a Public Hearing on the Proposed FYE 2024-2025 Village Budget as well as a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law C of the year 2024 – Property Tax Cap.

Resolution: 9550

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby schedule the Village Organizational Meeting for April 9th, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Motion: Trustee Rennekamp

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

c. Schedule a Public Hearing on the Proposed Village FYE 2024-2025 Annual Budget:

Resolution: 9551

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby schedule a Public Hearing for the Proposed Village FYE 2024-2025 Annual Budget Village for April 9th, 2024 at 7:10 p.m.

Motion: Trustee Biloski

Second: Trustee Rennekamp

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

d. Schedule a Public Hearing for Proposed Local Law C of the year 2024 – Property Tax Cap Limit:

PROPOSED LOCAL LAW C OF 2024

DRAFT

A LOCAL LAW TO OVERRIDE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW §3-C

Be it enacted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Cayuga Heights as follows:

Section 1 Legislative Intent: It is the intent of this local law to allow the Village of Cayuga Heights to adopt a budget for the fiscal year commencing in 2024 that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the tax levy limit as defined by General Municipal Law §3-c.

Section 2 Authority: This local law is adopted pursuant to subdivision 5 of General Municipal Law §3-c which expressly authorizes a local governing body to override the property tax cap for the coming fiscal year by the adoption of a local law approved by a vote of sixty percent (60%) of said governing body.

Section 3 Tax Levy Limit Override: The Board of Trustees of the Village of Cayuga Heights, County of Tompkins, is hereby authorized to adopt a budget for the fiscal year commencing in 2024 that requires a real property tax levy over the amount otherwise prescribed in General Municipal Law §3-c.

Section 4 Severability: If a court determines that any clause sentence paragraph subdivision or part of this local law or the application thereof to any person firm or corporation or circumstance is invalid or unconstitutional the court order or judgment shall not affect impair or invalidate the remainder of this local law but shall be confined in its operation to the clause sentence paragraph subdivision or part of this Local Law or in its application to the person individual firm or corporation or circumstance directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

Section 5 Effective Date: This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Resolution: 9552

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby schedule a Public Hearing on Proposed Local law – C of the year 2024 on April 9th, 2024 at 7:20 p.m.

Motion: Trustee Salton

Second: Trustee Robinson

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

e. Tompkins County Parks and Trails Grant Support: Each year Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability awards \$5000 grant for sets of local municipalities. In the last few years, the Village of Cayuga Heights has received this grant and used it for updating Sunset Park.

•Mayor Woodard states that for the last two years, we have used that grant money for stone repointing at the park. This year if successful we will be updating the sidewalk through Sunset park.

Resolution: 9553

WHEREAS the Village of Cayuga Heights owns the property known as Sunset Park, which is a municipal park wholly located within the Village; and

WHEREAS the Village desires to improve the infrastructure of Sunset Park by repairing and repointing the existing stone structures within the park; and

WHEREAS the cost of such repair is estimated to be \$5,000; and

WHEREAS the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability is making funding available to the improvement of municipal parks and trails through the Towns and Villages Parks and Trails Grant Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees supports and authorizes the submission of a grant application for up to \$5,000 to the Tompkins County Towns and Villages Parks and Trails Grant Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the grant application is successful, the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes the Village Mayor to execute the contract with Tompkins County to implement the project.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the Village of Cayuga Heights of Tompkins County, New York, this 20th day of March 2024.

Motion: Trustee Marshall

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

f. Village Annual Historians Report: Village Historian Bea Szekely presents her Annual Village Historians Report to the Village Board of Trustees.

•B. Szekely states that she would like the Board and Village staff to consider what should be done with some of the historical records that need to be archived properly either here at Marcham Hall or deposited at the Cornell University Archives Library.

•B. Szekely states that she discussed this at the NYS Conference of Public Historian's, and they suggested we find a way to keep those records in house. However, there is no suitable place to store them here at Marcham Hall.

•B. Szekely states that the other option is to turn them over to Cornell which has a climate-controlled, totally secure, world-class archive and one in which the records of the two developers of the Village already exist.

•Trustee Salton states that his concern is that at Cornell Library they have the right to go through documents and dispose of things.

•B. Szekely states that from past experiences we would be able to draft a Memo of Understanding (M.O.U) with Cornell University. She is presenting this tonight in hopes that for the upcoming new year, she can work on this arrangement.

•Trustee Hubbell states that he wonders if these records could be digitized and kept here at Marcham Hall and also stored physically at the University.

•B. Szekely states that we have digitized all records from 1921 on. The founding meeting minutes binders from 1915-1921 are kept in glass binders. The first President (Mayor) Tracey Stagg stated that those papers should be kept forever.

•The Board agrees that a resolution supporting Village Historian B. Szekely to pursue a M.O.U with Cornell University to store these valuable historical documents.

Resolution: 9554

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves Village Historian B. Szekely to enter into discussions with Cornell University Archivist to store Village of Cayuga Heights historical materials.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

g. Glenn Galbreath and Pat Kannus Resolutions: Justice Galbreath and Village Court Clerk Pat Kannus will be retiring at the end of March. The Board presented resolutions thanking them for their service.

Resolution: 9555

**RECOGNITION OF THE PAST AND CONTINUED OUTSTANDING
PUBLIC SERVICE OF GLENN GALBREATH**

WHEREAS, Glenn has served in the U.S. Army as a First Lieutenant and taught interrogation report writing to Special Agents at the U.S Army Intelligence School; and

WHEREAS, Glenn before finishing Law School worked as a legal intern at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland Ohio, then became a staff Attorney and later the Deputy Director of Litigation at the Advocates for Basic Legal Equality Inc. from 1976- 1986; and

WHEREAS, Glenn then came to Ithaca to start a career as the Clinical Professor of Law at Cornell University where he taught several courses and even lived on campus as a Faculty In Residence Profession from 2000-2006;

and

WHEREAS, Glenn was asked to become the Village of Cayuga Heights Village Justice in 1991 and has been re-elected to this position for 33 years seeing over 1500-2500 cases a year; and

THEREFORE, The Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees Village Police Department, and Village Staff publicly state their appreciation for all the years of service to this community and the professionalism and integrity Glenn has instilled in all of us with his leadership and compassion,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby commend Glenn for his dedication, commitment, and outstanding past and continued public service to the Village of Cayuga Heights and the community.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

Resolution: 9556

**RECOGNITION OF THE PAST AND CONTINUED OUTSTANDING
PUBLIC SERVICE OF PATRICA (Pat) KANNUS**

WHEREAS, Pat has served the Village of Cayuga Heights since 1993 and

WHEREAS, Pat has brought respect, honor, and integrity to her role within the Village Justice Office; and

WHEREAS, Pat quickly learned and grew in her role as the Village Court Clerk under Village Justice Galbreath; and

WHEREAS, Pat is responsible for maintaining court records and assisting Justice Galbreath in trial proceedings, preparing legal documents, completing summonses for small claims, and performing a variety of related legal clerical duties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby commend Patrica (Pat) Kannus for her dedication, commitment, and outstanding past and continued public service to the Village of Cayuga Heights.

Motion: Trustee Biloski

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none
Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

h. Pete Potter Resolution: Pete retired at the end of 2023 from the Department of Public Works after 16 years of service.

Resolution: 9557

**RECOGNITION OF THE PAST AND CONTINUED OUTSTANDING
PUBLIC SERVICE OF DANIEL (PETE) POTTER**

WHEREAS, Pete has served the Village of Cayuga Heights since May 2007; and

WHEREAS, Pete has brought respect, honor, and integrity to his role within the Village Department of Public Works; and

WHEREAS, Pete was quickly promoted to Motor Equipment Operator in the summer of 2007; and

WHEREAS, Pete was part of an important team that managed Village services; and

WHEREAS, Pete has consistently applied his skills to meet the standards in the Village of Cayuga Heights,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby commend Daniel (Pete) Potter for his dedication, commitment, and outstanding past and continued public service to the Village of Cayuga Heights.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Salton

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

i. Jim Marshall Resolution: Trustee Marshall did not seek re-election and will be officially done on April 1, 2024.

•Mayor Woodard states that it has been a complete honor serving alongside Trustee Marshall, and he will be truly missed.

Resolution: 9558

**RECOGNITION OF THE PAST AND CONTINUED OUTSTANDING
PUBLIC SERVICE OF JAMES (Jim) MARSHALL**

WHEREAS, Jim Marshall has served the Village of Cayuga Heights with distinct honor and dedication since starting his public service in 2015 filling a vacancy for Village Trustee

WHEREAS, Jim has been a vital contributor to the Villages Public Works Committee since 2015, and served as the Village Planning Board Liaison in 2017, Ithaca Tompkins County Trans Counsel policy committee in 2022,

WHEREAS, Jim has served on the TCCOG subcommittee on Community Choice Aggregation beginning in 2018,

WHEREAS, Jim has made substantial contributions over the years to the Village Shade Tree Committee and was instrumental in the village revitalization plans for Sunset Park

WHEREAS, Jim has also served the Village as a member of the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant Committee and he has been invaluable to the plant upgrades and decision-making process,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees does hereby commend Jim for his dedication, commitment, and outstanding past and continued public service to the Village of Cayuga Heights.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: Marshall

Motion Carried

•Trustee Marshall states that he was grateful for the opportunity to serve on this Board. He also states that there is a lot of criticism about government these days and the team here around this table, and all the Village staff model the way a local government should be.

7. Report of the Trustees: Non-Binding Resolutions

•Trustee Salton states that for the last 2-3 years we have been receiving annual assessment increases from the County.

•Trustee Salton states that one of the things missing from the County Assessments Office is stability. Our municipality needs stability and without it, taxpayers will keep getting “socked” with property tax increases.

•Trustee Salton states that he would favor a resolution to the Tompkins County Assessments Department to halt increases and explain the reason for continued assessment increases with no justification.

•Trustee Biloski states that she would like to know what other counties do in terms of assessing properties.

- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that Tompkins County and Nassau County are the only two counties in New York State that have a county-wide assessment. Every other county in the state has a municipal-wide assessment that is by township or city.
- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that the county assessors are supposed to maintain assessments at current fair market value unless there is another method he is not aware of.
- Trustee Salton states that the Tompkins County Legislators need to get a handle on the assessor's department and find a different way to control what is happening with our assessments. People will not be able to afford to stay in their homes.
- Trustee Hubbell states that there must be another remedy to this problem than to object to the method the county assesses have in place currently.
- Mayor Woodard states that we need to remember that there are two parts to this equation. There is the assessed value of a property and then there is the tax rate. So even when we lower our tax rate it is not enough to offset the assessment increase.
- Mayor Woodard states that the Board is considering passing a resolution stating the way that assessments are being done is not fair.
- Trustee Hubbell states that he wants to know how we expect to keep services and run a sound government if we do not bring in enough money. We would have to raise taxes. That is the same thing.
- B. Cross states that the Village properties received assessment increases the smallest increase was 42% and another was 120% which seems very strange.
- B. Cross states that another way of looking at it is if my house was worth \$1,000,000 as told by the assessor's office that would be great from an asset value but that doesn't mean I have the ability with my income to support the taxes with that new assessment.
- Trustee Marshall states that the Village was in a unique position during COVID, but it is clear to me that there is a variety of increases, and he has personally seen smaller percentages that we are talking about here.
- Newly Elected Trustee S. Conway states that if you bought a home recently you bought it at a higher price, but the market has a way to evening it out over the years. Ultimately the Board has the final say in determining what the taxes are going to be.
- Trustee Marshall points out that we will be paying more because the Village of Cayuga Heights values are so much higher than the rest of the County.
- Trustee Salton states that the County Assessment Office needs to find a way to be more efficient and not increase assessments so often.

8. Report of Superintendent of Public Works Cross:

•B. Cross states that the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Phase 2 is getting close to completion. We currently need to approve a change order for the general contractor Blue Heron Construction.

•B. Cross states that when the digester tank covers were removed it became clear that little shelves called corbels needed to be replaced and that was not built into the original contract.

Resolution: 9559

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes Mayor Woodard to sign the Blue Heron Change order #G-004 for Phase 2 of the General Contractor in the amount of \$28,276.00.

Motion: Trustee Salton

Second: Trustee Robinson

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•B. Cross states that recently he became aware that Howard LaFever who was the partner in the original Stearns and Wheeler Engineering Firm and now with GHD Engineering is retiring. He has been involved with some level of every WWTP project the Village has completed.

•B. Cross states that he will be attending the luncheon on Friday and present a resolution honoring him.

Resolution: 9560

**BY THE VILLAGE OF CAYUGA HEIGHTS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
TO HONOR HOWARD LAFEVER FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO VILLAGE WWTP**

WHEREAS, Howard LaFever has been a long-time employee/partner of GHD Engineers (formerly known as Stearns & Wheeler, LLC), and

WHEREAS, Howard has been the senior staff person for GHD/S&W on several projects involving sewer collection and sewage treatment in the Village of Cayuga Heights, including drafting of a new sewer use ordinance, evaluation of a headworks study, guidance through an 6 party inter-municipal sewer agreement with associated environmental impact study, expansion of two trickling filters, addition of tertiary phosphorus filtration, replacement of the entire WWTP headworks, reconstruction of primary/secondary sludge digestors and miscellaneous studies of inflow and infiltration, and significant industrial discharges, and

WHEREAS, Howard has always provided guidance to the Village (including his staff) positively and thoughtfully throughout all aspects of his involvement with Village projects, and

WHEREAS, the Village has benefited tremendously from his long-time engineering and construction knowledge, and

WHEREAS, the Village has become aware of Howard's upcoming retirement,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees is hereby grateful to Howard LaFever for his over 40 years of dedicated guidance and advice on all things related (listed above and more) to the Village's sanitary sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant, and The Village Trustees and Staff want to wish Howard a long and enjoyable retirement, wherever it may take him!

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried.

9. Report of Police Chief Wright: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2024-154)

- Chief Wright states that he has two updates for the Board tonight. One, the patrol room and Sergeant Manning office remodel are completed. The department is appreciative of the ability to update the department. Two, the department is ready to move forward with interviews for two part-time vacancies.

- Trustee Hubbell states that he would like to know more about the MVA at the Kline Rd. intersection.

- Chief Wright states that there have been several at that intersection, the two MVAs that happened this month were related to note-using care when entering or exiting that intersection.

10. Report of Director of Public Works Wiese: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2024-154)

- Director Wiese states that it was a somewhat quiet month. The crew only had 20 hours of overtime for snow this month.

- Director Wiese states that he plans on hiring a seasonal worker for the summer and he also has a Motor Equipment Operator vacancy that is up on the Tompkins County Human Resources page right now in hopes of finding someone by June.

- Trustee Robinson states that the Kline Rd By-Pass had to be opened because of the amount of rain that had fallen. There is a chance we might exceed our daily limit and therefore we decided to use the By-Pass and send some sewage to the IAWWTF.

11. Report of Clerk Walker: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2024-155)

- Clerk Walker states that he neglected to ask for a resolution at the February Board Meeting approving the Village Justice Annual Report as presented by Justice Galbreath.

Resolution: 9561

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves the Village Justice Report for 2023 as presented by Justice Galbreath at the February 21, 2024, Board of Trustees Meeting.

Motion: Trustee Salton

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•Clerk Walker states that he also has received an email from the Tompkins County Assessment Office notifying the Village that New York State will be updating the property tax reduction for senior citizens and people with disabilities for next year.

12. Report of Attorney R. Marcus: No report at this time.

13. Executive Session: Mayor Woodard asks for an Executive session at 9:20 p.m.

Resolution: 9562

WHEREAS: The NYS Open Meeting Law §105 prescribes matters for which a public body may conduct an executive session; and,

WHEREAS: Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting under a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered; and,

WHEREAS: The conduct an executive session for these enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that noaction by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public money:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT An Executive Session of the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees is conducted for subsection (F), the medical, financial, credit, or employment historyof a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion,discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Marshall

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•The Board of Trustees exits Executive Session at 9:22 p.m. and returns to an open meeting.

Resolution: 9563

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes Mayor Woodard to sign the 2024 White Buffalo Inc. contract for services this April.

Motion: Trustee Marshall

Second: Trustee Rennekamp

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, Marshall, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

14. Adjournment: Mayor Woodard adjourns the meeting at 9:22 p.m.