

Zoom ID # 4118425407

**VILLAGE OF CAYUGA HEIGHT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONTHLY MEETING**

**December 18, 2024
7:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton (arrived at 7:36 p.m.); Fire Superintendent Tamborelle, Treasurer Dolch, Police Sergeant Manning, Superintendent of Public Works Cross; Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder; Village Attorney R. Marcus; Village Clerk Walker.

1. Call to Order: Mayor Woodard calls the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2a. Approval of the November 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Exhibit 2025-075)

Resolution: 9717

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves the November 20, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion: Trustee Biloski

Second: Trustee Conway

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

2. Report of Fire Superintendent Tamborelle: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2025-076)

•Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that the probationary class of recruits has had several finished the required training.

•Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that they took delivery of the new air packs, and we will pay the vendor on the January Abstract.

•Mayor Woodard asks why the CHFD has been so busy this year.

•Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that they have seen an increase in the number of mutual aid calls with Ithaca, and Lansing. This year the system just saw more calls.

•Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that they have developed a survey and felt the feedback was positive. We still need to develop an overall training schedule that would not disrupt the current members.

•Trustee Conway states that he noticed in the monthly report the new engine truck will not be coming in until the

spring of 2026 how does the budget process work in this type of situation?

- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that this situation is different than in the past where we pre-paid to lock in the pricing. In this case, the delivery was so far out we did not see a way to do that.

- As a reminder the Town of Ithaca will be responsible for forty percent of that cost. See the old truck and that money would go back into the General Fund.

- Clerk Walker states that the Village also receives \$10,000 from Cornell University each year for four years to offset equipment costs.

3. Privilege of the Floor: No members of the public wished to speak.

4. Report of Treasurer Dolch: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2025-077)

- Treasurer Dolch states that the November bank-to-book reconciliations are complete.

- Treasurer Dolch states that she has shared the upcoming fiscal year budget spreadsheets with the department heads to begin discussions with committee members.

- Treasurer Dolch states that the only action item she has to present tonight is Abstract 7.

Resolution: 9718

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes Abstract # 7 for FYE2025 consisting of TA vouchers 48 - 55 in the amount of \$17,171.81 and Consolidated Fund vouchers 467 - 541 in the amount of \$437,701.12 and the Treasurer is instructed to make payments thereon.

Motion: Trustee Biloski

Second: Trustee Rennekamp

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

6. Report of Mayor Woodard

a.Six-Month Budget Update: Mayor Woodard states that we are six months into our fiscal year, and we are in good shape.

- Mayor Woodard states that she has been analyzing the water consumption and year after year we are in good shape to budget water rates.

- Mayor Woodard states that we have about \$400,000 in fund balance. This is not the case for the sewer fund. Rates will have

to increase in June 2025.

b. Cargill Salt Mine Resolution: The NYSDEC has given notice of a deadline for public comment on the Negative Declaration to Cargill as they seek to renew and modify its permit to dispose of 360 Million gallons of wastewater in the 6-level region of the mine.

- Mayor Woodard states that the deadline has now been extended to January 19, 2025.
- Mayor Woodard states that we are being asked to support a resolution extending the public comment period until February 18, 2025.
- Trustee Hubbell states that the NYSDEC and Cargill need to be more transparent with all the communities surrounding Cayuga Lake. The brine waste that they intend to flood the mine will erode the infrastructure under the lake and possibly create an environmental disaster.
- Mayor Woodard states that this does not make any sense why the NYSDEC would allow this to happen.

Resolution: 9719

Resolution Regarding Cargill Incorporated’s Permit Application for the Cayuga Salt Mine

WHEREAS, Cargill Incorporated has submitted a permit application (0-9999-00075/00001) to renew and modify its Mined Land Reclamation Permit for the Cayuga Salt Mine, which includes plans to flood the abandoned S3 Zone of the mine beneath Cayuga Lake with wastewater, potentially impacting the environment and the community;

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has declared itself the lead agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and issued a Negative Declaration despite the application being classified as a Type I action, which typically requires a more thorough environmental review;

WHEREAS, significant concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of Cargill’s application, including compliance with the Mined Land Reclamation Law, monitoring and treatment of waste materials, the potential for groundwater pollution, the stability of the mine, and the long-term reclamation of the affected areas;

WHEREAS, the proposed flooding of the S3 Zone raises serious questions about the safety and environmental integrity of Cayuga Lake, particularly in light of prior instability noted in this area and the implications of storing not-fully-saturated brine beneath the lake;

WHEREAS, various stakeholders, including environmental groups and local officials, have expressed concerns regarding the potential adverse impacts of Cargill’s proposed activities, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive environmental impact statement and public engagement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Village of Cayuga Heights formally requests that the DEC:

1. Deny Cargill's permit application or rescind the Negative Declaration and require the preparation of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement to assess all potential environmental risks associated with the proposed activities.
2. Conduct a public hearing to allow for community input and address the substantive concerns raised by residents and stakeholders regarding the application.
3. Ensure that Cargill's Reclamation Plan and accompanying bond are revised to adequately address environmental protection and public safety, and that sufficient measures are implemented to prevent potential pollution and ensure the long-term stability of the mine and surrounding areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Comment.CayugaSaltMine2023@dec.ny.gov, DEC Commissioner Dereth Glance (dereth.glance@dec.ny.gov), OGS Commissioner Jeanette Moy (officeofthecommissioner@ogs.ny.gov), and DEC Permit Administrator Jonathan Stercho (jonathan.stercho@dec.ny.gov) to ensure that the voices of the Village of Cayuga Height's residents are heard in this critical decision-making process.

Motion: Trustee Hubbell

Second: Trustee Robinson

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

c. Cayuga Heights Sidewalk Project:

- Mayor Woodard states that this project is running into delays and material costs have escalated. The project will break down into segments based on the results of any bids we receive.
- B. Cross states that Hunt Engineers has completed the twenty five percent cost analysis and has determined that the project is much higher than expected.
- Mayor Woodard states that she would like Board input on where to go from here.
- B. Cross states that the Village would be on the hook for all the engineering costs and believes we should continue with the project.
- Trustee Robinson states that a sidewalk on Cayuga Heights Road has always been a high priority for Village residents. We must move forward but mindful of how much we can do with our own DPW staff.
- Mayor Woodard states that we will need to set up a reserve account for this project and budget extra money from the General Fund to support this project.

- Trustee Hubbell reminded the Board that we discussed reducing the fund balance over the next several years.
 - Trustee Rennekamp asks if we needed to complete a certain amount of the project to receive the two-million-dollar grant.
 - B. Cross states that this is very similar to the Walking Safe Cayuga Heights Grant where as long as we spend the dollars, they are awarded then there really is not a concern about the scope of services completed. We will need the NYSDOT to confirm this question.
 - B. Cross states that he and Trustee Biloski were at a county transportation meeting earlier this month and gave NYSDOT a heads-up that this project was going to be over budget.
 - Trustee Conway asks for clarification on how the Village would divide the work between the contractor and the Village DPW on this project.
 - Trustee Robinsons states that he suggests that the contractor complete the whole project with our DPW staff taking sections that the contractor might subtract out.
 - B. Cross states that we are still a year out before bids would be accepted. One idea the Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder produced would be to have the contractor complete everything and then we would contract with the cement company to fill the walkway.
- d. February and April Village Board Meeting:** Both meetings fall on school breaks and Mayor Woodard wanted to make sure we will have a quorum.

- Trustee Salton arrives at 7:36 p.m.

- Mayor Woodard states that it looks like we will be fine for February and can revisit the April meeting when we get closer to April.

6. Report of the Trustees:

- Trustee Salton states that the Executive Committee for the Health Consortium met, and net income shows a loss of two million dollars. Pharmaceuticals rebates are going to be over six million dollars. The result is claims were much higher than budgeted.
- Mayor Woodard asks if the Consortium is still growing in membership.
- Trustee Salton states that yes, in fact, ten more municipalities are looking to join in the upcoming year.
- Trustee Salton also states that more and more municipalities are mandating that members join a Medicare Supplement plan once eligible.
- Clerk Walker states that the Village made that language change last year.

a. Village Administrative and HR Committees Update:

- Trustee Biloski states that Deputy Clerk Jacot is looking into the costs of supplying a Village cell phone versus paying employees a monthly stipend. The committee requested more information on insurance, type of phone, and terms of service.
- Clerk Walker noted that they did find out there would not be any insurance on the phones.

b. Village Wastewater Treatment Plant Committee Update:

- Trustee Robinson states that Phase 2.1 trickling filter arms have been repaired, and we are waiting for the parts to complete the work on the rail system in the spring.
- Trustee Robinson states that the WWTP roof preparation for the solar panel project will take place in the spring as well.
- Trustee Robinson states that GHD is working up cost numbers for some other “phase 3” projects that will have to be budgeted and will be setting up reserve accounts for those projects.
- Mayor Woodard states that the Plant-to-Plant Agreement is due to expire, and we still do not have a City of Ithaca representative for these discussions.
- Mayor Woodard states that one of the reasons we have this agreement is so we can send sewage down the Kline Road Bypass, so our plant does not go above the NYSDEC requirements of a maximum capacity of two million gallons a day.
- Mayor Woodard states that after discussions with NYSDEC we have learned that number is not a concern for them anymore. The only concern with the Village plant going forward is instantaneous inflow that the plant may not be able to handle.
- Mayor Woodard states that is great news for us and gives the Village a better sense of when we need to open the Kline Road bypass and with negotiations with the Plant-to-Plant Agreement.
- Trustee Robinson states that when NYSDEC stated we did not need to expand the plant, and that the recent WWTP upgrades, I & I exploration, and Kline Road Bypass were viewed positively.
- B. Cross states that NYSDEC’s has more focus with the annual average flows and not the monthly flow numbers. The concern is when we reach 95% of our capacity annually which would mean 1.9 million gallons and annually we have never have passed 1.2 or 1.4 million gallons.
- B. Cross states that this news will allow us to issue permits without fear of too much capacity. It turns out that we have half a million gallons of capacity to work with.
- B. Cross states that NYSDEC's main concerns are the regionalization of plant agreements for municipalities, and we are already ahead of others.

- Mayor Woodard states that we met with grant writer, Michelle Palmer, and she is going to submit a grant application for land acquisitions for municipalities. If awarded this would be used for the land next to our WWTP.
- A. Cowder states that one of the things NYSDEC stated was to increase the permit fees for commercial users of the WWTP.
- Mayor Woodard expanded that to say it was also recommended to put surcharges on those who were not assisting with I & I reductions.

c. Village Public Works Committee Update:

- Trustee Robinson states that the Walking Safe Kline Road project is complete.
- Trustee Robinson states that the committee is investigating putting a lighted sign down by the cemetery crosswalk.
- Trustee Robinson states that the Kline Road Sidewalk will be a high priority for the DPW this winter. We are looking at the idea of salting the steep parts.
- Trustee Robinson states that T. G. Miller is still evaluating the condition of the Renwick Brook Culvert Pipe.
- Trustee Robinson states that the oldest garbage truck is now in the shop which has delayed the new garbage truck conversion.

d. Village Finance Committee Update:

- Trustee Rennekamp states that the finance committee discussed how to get additional information from department heads for forecasting three to five years out on big purchases. This could help us set up reserve funds.

8. Report of Superintendent of Public Works Cross:

- Village Engineer B. Cross states that the only action item he has tonight is asking for the Board to approve reimbursing the owner of 174 Pleasant Grove Rd. for the cost of sewer cleanup.
- B. Cross states that during the NYSEG gas line replacement project on Pleasant Grove Road, the contractor dug through two or three sewer line laterals. We now know that one of them did not get fixed correctly (174 Pleasant Grove Rd.) and sewage backed up into the basement floor of that location.
- B. Cross states that the homeowner is asking for a refund of services in the amount of \$826.92.
- B. Cross states that he reached out to NYSEG, and they informed us that the homeowner would have to file a claim with them in order to get reimbursed for the cleanup. In the meantime, B. Cross has filed that claim for the Village to be paid but in an effort to satisfy the homeowner's inconvenience he would like approval to pay the homeowner now.

- Trustee Salton states that he needs more details on why this failed.
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works A. Cowder states that the pipe was fixed but joint or firm connection rubber fitting created a ridge in the internal line which backed up the system.
- B. Cross states that in the future we will collect a deposit of \$1000 for any projects that are in the Village. This would allow us to have the money ahead of any damages caused by the contractor.
- Village Attorney R. Marcus states that the lateral was in the Village Right-of-Way so why would not it have been the homeowner's responsibility for the damages?
- Trustee Salton states that he had the same situation twenty years ago, once the lateral meets the main sewer line in the Village right of way is the Villages responsibility.
- B. Cross states that as with water lines, the Village has always taken responsibility for the maintenance and repair of lines in the Village right of way.

Resolution: 9720

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves the payment of \$826.92 to the homeowner of 174 Pleasant Road for services expensed for the sewer lateral blockage that backed up and the Village will file a claim for reimbursement from NYSEG.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Hubbell

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

9. Report of Police Chief Wright: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2025-079)

- Chief Wright was absent from tonight's meeting and Sergeant Manning was present to answer Board questions.
- Mayor Woodard asks Seargent Manning about the MVA involving a deer.
- Seargent Manning states that the accident happened on Pleasant Grove Road near Pleasant Grove Lane. The deer did run off and complaints of an injured deer were received which led to one of our part-time officers dispatching down behind the Village DPW.

11. Report of Clerk Walker: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2025-080)

- Clerk Walker states that he has some year-end updates to mention.
- Clerk Walker states that all employee and retirees' healthcare contributions have been updated and charged.
- Clerk Walker states the Village HRA expenses have been good again this year leaving around \$40,000 left over.
- Trustee Hubbell asks if there is a reserve fund for these monies.
- Clerk Walker states that we could create a reserve fund, and we could open that discussion at the Village Finance Committee.
- Trustee Robinson states that the expenses are measured as real dollars but is not sure the savings can be calculated as real dollars.
- Clerk Walker states that BRI is the HRA manager, and these numbers represent what the Village did not have to expense to Village employees for 2024. The premium savings on the Excellus side is a different number.
- Trustee Salton suggests that the Village Finance Committee take a look at where the true numbers are on savings outside of the HRA side.
- Clerk Walker states that on the topic of sump pump inspections, we finished out the year with twenty-seven inspections.
- Trustee Robinson states that he would like to know the number of illegally connected sump pumps we have encountered since 2021.
- Clerk Walker states that we have only found two or three illegally connected sump pumps in the last three years.
- Trustee Robinson states that originally, we thought this would be a source of our I & I problems and it has proven not to be.
- B. Cross states that unfortunately the effort we are putting into tracking this has not produced any real results and at some point, we might want to decide if this is worth continuing for the long term.
- Trustee Conway asks if this was a way to see if underground gutters or basement pumps were not connected to the sewer main in the house.
- B. Cross states that yes, since we have so many older houses we might find numerous connections, which has proven not to be the case.

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

13. Executive Session:

Resolution: 9721

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 no action 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 and (F) the medical, financial, credit, or employment history of 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 Biloski

Second: Trustee Conway

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•The Board returned to an open meeting at 9:20 p.m.

•Clerk Walker presented a resignation letter from current Deputy Clerk A. Jacot as she has accepted a position at Tompkins County Workforce Solutions.

Resolution: 9722

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes accepting Deputy Clerk A. Jacot's resignation letter as of January 3, 2025, and wishes her the best in her future endeavors.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Rennekamp

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

•Clerk Walker states that current part-time Deputy Clerk K. Perkins will come on board full-time to take over this vacancy.

Resolution: 9723

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves and authorizes appointing current part-time Deputy Clerk K. Perkins to full-time with benefits as of January 2, 2025. No rate of pay changes at this time.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Biloski

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

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

14. Adjournment: Mayor Woodard adjourns the meeting at 9:21 p.m.