

Village Board Meeting
September 11, 2023, 7:00pm
Village Municipal Center

Attendance: Village Board: Mayor Paul Labas, Trustees Dean Hyatt, Daniel Brown and Denise Davies;
absent: Deputy Mayor Gordon Smith Jr.

Village Key Staff: Police Chief Ernie Bassett Jr., Fire Chief Michael Zinn, Deputy Fire Chief Keith Seebode,
Local Ordinance Officer Curtis Pedone, DPW Superintendent Scott Mackey, Ass't Sup't Josh Hayes, Village
Justice Roger Forando, and Clerk-Treasurer Rick Roberts

Press: Doug La Rocque, *NYVT Media*

Others: Mr. George Demas and Mr. Erik Pekar

Mayor Labas led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance and then called the Meeting to Order at 7:00pm. The Mayor then paused and requested for a moment of silence to honor the 343 Firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice some 22 years ago at the World Trade Center in New York City. He also noted the passing of over 2,900 civilians during the 9/11 attacks across the country on that day.

Ratify Meeting Minutes: Trustee Brown moved the ratification of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 7th as posted to the Village website. Trustee Davies seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Monthly Reports: The Mayor reviewed the following monthly reports with the Board of Trustees: Fire Dept., Police Dept., Water Dept., Village Court (2 reports), and Local Ordinance Officer. Trustee Davies moved acceptance of the reports as submitted. Trustee Brown seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Appropriations: The following claims were submitted to the Board for review and in consideration of payment:

General Fund:	\$29,444.19
Water Fund:	\$8,894.10
Sewer Fund:	\$17,379.50
Senior Shuttle:	\$1,222.93
Unaudited	
Vouchers:	<u>\$7,410.17</u>

Total Claims: \$64,350.89

The Board audited the claims and Trustee Hyatt moved their approval for payment. Trustee Davies seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Consider Ratification of RERC Final Report: Mayor Labas advised that the final report for the RERC grant had been received through the consultants assigned to the Village (EPR, PC). He thanked the community members who had served on the Steering Committee and the many Federal and State Agencies who visited Granville and had participated in the Planning Process. He then asked the Village Clerk to provide the Board with a brief summary/overview to the Board. The Clerk advised that the Village had been one

of 25 communities across the Country selected for this grant in 2022. The aim of the grant is to improve access and use of the recreational and cultural assets in the community in order to improve the quality of life for constituents, as well as to spur additional economic development locally. The Clerk reported that the steering committee had met for nearly a year to brainstorm, plan, and set goals. Those ideas were then advanced to the public in a two-day Community Workshop held in April, which was also attended by representatives from Federal Agencies (including the EPA, Northern Region Border Commission, National Forestry Service, and USDA) and NYS Partners (NYS DOH, NYS Homes & Community Renewal, NYS DOS, and NYS DOT) as well as NYS Assemblyman Matt Simpson, and various County, Regional, and Local Officials. The public was also invited to attend the work sessions and there was good participation seen at all events. Following the workshop, a series of Zoom calls were held (again well attended) and the information and priorities identified from the workshop were then integrated into the final plan. The Clerk advised that the plan had been received last week and that the next step would now be for the Board to consider ratification of the same. This should allow the Village to seek monies and grants based upon the actions/priorities identified. The Board thanked all those who were involved with the planning process. A brief period of discussion ensued and Trustee Davies moved ratification of the final plan as presented. Trustee Brown seconded the motion and it carried 3-0 with one abstention (Hyatt).

Authorize Mayor and Village Clerk to Attend NYCOM Conference: Each year, the NYS Conference of Mayors conducts a training seminar/workshop for public officials in the Fall. Training is provided on a wide range of subjects—Open Meetings Law, Village Elections, The Freedom of Information (FOIL) statutes, Vital Records, Retirement System updates, etc. In addition, the conference provides a valuable networking opportunity where information can be exchanged, and best practices shared. This year's conference is Sept. 18-22 in Lake Placid. Trustee Hyatt moved authorization for the Mayor and Village Clerk to attend the conference. Trustee Davies seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mayor's Reports: Mayor Labas briefed the Board in the following matters:

- A. Fall Leaf & Brush Collection: The Mayor reviewed the proposed Fall Leaf & Brush collection schedule. He advised that the leaf vacuum would be operating from October 2nd thru November 17th per the DPW Superintendent. November 17th is a Friday and the reason that the vacuum will not be used beyond this is to allow the DPW to remove the leaf box from the truck and place the sander/plow for the winter season during the week of Thanksgiving. While the DPW will continue to take bagged leaves and brush after this time, the vacuum service will terminate on November 17th. Mayor Labas also advised that the dates in the advertisement placed in *The Granville Sentinel* (predominantly Mondays) will be the primary pick up days and that the DPW will not be available at all times for this service as they do have other duties to tend to as well. While efforts will be made to accommodate additional requests for pick-up, he stressed that these requests are in addition to normal pick-up dates and above and beyond the normal service provided. The Mayor asked that those making such additional requests be patient and respectful of the DPW's other duties and priorities.
- B. Review NYS Retirement Contribution Rates: Mayor Labas advised that the municipal contribution rates for the NYS Retirement System had been released for 2024. These rates will apply to salaries paid from 4/1/23-3/31/24 with payment due on December 15th, 2024. Unfortunately, the news is not good on this front, with all rates increasing 14-18% due to a loss seen in Fund as a result of negative returns in the stock & bond markets. The Mayor advised

that this will make the Budgeting process more difficult in the coming year, and likely will require the Village to raise taxes and/or rents in response to the increases seen.

- C. Risk Assessment—NYMIR: The Mayor advised that as a result of switching insurance carriers (due to a large proposed premium increase), the Village was subjected to a risk assessment by our new carrier, NYMIR. NYMIR has recommended several actions following their site visit, and the DPW Superintendent is working to affect any changes requested. The Mayor advised that he feels that most of the items requested to be addressed will be handled within 60 days, with any remaining items in process. He advised that the Village will seek to provide full compliance at the most reasonable cost as soon as possible.

Mayor Labas opened the Meeting to public comment at 7:20pm.

Village Justice Roger Forando addressed the Board concerning the Village Court. He expressed concerns regarding the potential elimination of the Village Court's services. He presented the Board with fiscal information, guidance from NYS concerning court revenues/expenses, etc. The Judge advised that he has not sought a raise for several years as he sees the falling revenues seen thru the Court. However, NYS has made changes that forbid the Court from suspending someone's license if they do not pay a fine or traffic infraction, and thus the Court has no leverage when defendants do not pay. Other changes in discovery, evidence, etc. associated with bail reform also make things more difficult. The Judge advised that there are 22 town and Village Courts in Washington County and that 10 do not cover their expenses. The Mayor thanked the Judge for the information provided and his comments. He advised that he does feel that the Court should cover its costs, and advised that the Court has not done so since 2016. He stated that with the budgetary pressures that Villages/Towns are facing with inflation, rising retirement, salary, and benefit costs, this requires that the Board examine all appropriations to remain tax cap compliant and serve constituents well.

There was no further public comment.

At 7:40pm, Trustee Davies made a motion to convene an Executive Session concerning a matter involving contract negotiations with the Police Department. Trustee Hyatt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

At 8:10pm, Trustee Brown moved that the Board return to regular session. Trustee Davies seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The Mayor advised that the Board had discussed a potential Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that would amend the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Granville Police Department during Executive Session. The main component of the MOA involves a retention bonus for full time officers, as well as future salary increases for full- and part-time staff. In exchange for these salary adjustments, the Union members will agree to remain in the employ of the Village through June, 2024, and an additional officer will matriculate to the Village. The Department will also have a stated goal of providing at least 20 hours of coverage to the Village daily, and part-time officers agree to provide at least two shifts per month in order to qualify for any pay increase. The Mayor advised that he supports the Police Department, and following a review of the rates seen in the Whitehall Police Dept., Washington County Sheriff's office and the Cambridge-Greenwich Police Dept. that he feels that certain salary increases are necessary to keep the Village competitive and to retain good officers. Following the Mayor's comments,

Trustee Davies moved adoption of the MOA as ratified by the Union. Trustee Hyatt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mayor Labas advised that based upon the passage of the MOA, the Department was able to attract a lateral candidate for full time service. The candidate's name is Brian Greco. Trustee Brown moved the hiring of Mr. Greco to the position of Police Officer, effective October 11th, at the 10-year rate as specified by the Collective Bargaining Agreement/MOA. Trustee Hyatt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Trustee Brown then moved the re-appointment of Joshua Whitney to the position of Police Sgt. (provisional), to allow Mr. Whitney an opportunity to complete/pass the Sargent's exam as offered through Washington County Civil Service. Trustee Hyatt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

There being no other business, Trustee Hyatt moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:15pm. Trustee Brown seconded the motion and it carried without objection.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard H. Roberts
Clerk-Treasurer