

Minutes of the Village Board Meeting held at Town Hall on November 25, 2013 at 7PM

Present: Michael Queenan, Mayor
Neil Crouse, Thomas Flood and David Sutz, Trustees
Absent: Timothy Egan, Trustee
Also Present: Robert Weyant, Highway Superintendent; Maria Hunter, Planning Board

I. Administrative Business:

a. Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion was offered by Trustee Crouse, seconded by Trustee Sutz, to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held November 14, 2013.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
NOES 0

b. Approval of Abstract:

Motion was offered by Trustee Flood, seconded by Trustee Sutz, to approve Abstract 12 containing vouchers 130752 – 130805 (voiding voucher 130783) and totaling \$69,290.46.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
NOES 0

c. Fire Department Equipment Requisition:

Motion was offered by Trustee Crouse, seconded by Trustee Sutz, to approve Fire Department Requisition 2013-25 for the purchase of various pieces of equipment for the saw totaling approximately \$528.43.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
NOES 0

II. Old Business: *There was no old business to discuss.*

III. New Business:

a. Request from Highland Mills Fire Company (HMFC) – Construction of Garage:

Mark Morea, member of the HMFC, stated the Company owns a 1964 Mack Fire Truck that they restored about eight years ago and has been housed in the HM Firehouse. When the Chiefs reorganized the apparatuses recently, the Mack was required to be removed from the bays. It is currently being stored at the Middletown fairgrounds. The HMFC would like permission from the Village Board to construct a 10' by 30' storage unit behind the Village Hall next to the generator, but not blocking it. When asked how the storage unit would be paid for Mr. Morea stated he hoped the Village will contribute towards some of the cost since Department equipment will also be stored there. Mr. Morea was asked if the truck could be stored at CVFC and Gary Weyant, President of the CVFC present at the meeting stated permission was denied because the company feels their bay should only be used for Department equipment. The Board discussed this issue in great detail and it was determined that Mayor Queenan will speak to the Village Attorney to obtain a determination on the following issues: 1) can the Village permit a private entity (HMFC) to construct and erect a structure on Village property; 2) can the Village allow a private entity (HMFC) to store their privately owned equipment/apparatus on Village property at no charge; and 3) what liability would the Village incur by approving this request.

b. Authorize Mayor to Enroll in Demand Response:

Motion was offered by Trustee Crouse, seconded by Trustee Sutz, to authorize the Mayor to sign the "Demand Response Enrollment Agreement" with Demand Response for three of our electrical accounts. Mayor Queenan explained that this program will enable the Village to earn money by utilizing our generators during specific high-peak times (reliable of electric grid is in jeopardy and rolling brown outs at eminent).

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
 NOES 0

c. Schedule Public Hearing – Harvesting Permit:

Motion was offered by Trustee Sutz, seconded by Trustee Flood, to schedule a public hearing to be held on December 12, 2013 at 7PM to entertain public comments on the application for a harvesting permit for Arden Properties.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
 NOES 0

IV. Board Member/Department Comments:

The Board wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

V. Public Comment:

Ben Meyers, Editor of the Woodbury Gazette, stated there is public concern about the status of the two fire companies and the rescue truck being moved to HMFH. He has received many phone calls and emails about the article he wrote in the recent issue of his newspaper. The doors at the CVFH are open and the Chief told him that there are five-six sets of personal gear at the location but he was told that there is only three old, rejected fire coats and no turnout gear. He asked how the CVFH is considered to be open when all members are required to respond to the HMFH. He would like to cover the issue fairly from both sides. Mayor Queenan stated Mr. Meyers is bringing up issues he is unaware of and that Trustee Egan, Liaison of the Fire Department, was not able to attend this meeting due to surgery. He suggested that Mr. Meyers speak with a Fire Chief about the issue and maybe a tour of both firehouses could be arranged which he would attend as well. To the best of his knowledge, the CVFH is open and the Village continues to pay rent for the storage of equipment and apparatuses there. Mr. Meyers asked if the CVFH is operational as a firehouse and Mayor Queenan again suggested the question be addressed to the Fire Chief. Trustee Sutz noted that both companies are private social entities and the Village has no control over the operations of each company. The Village has control over the Fire Department only. He believes the goal was to try to improve the response time and that is why the move was made. Trustee Crouse stated understands Mr. Meyers need to respond to people but feels such individuals should be directed to the Fire Department with their questions. Mr. Meyers stated he feels the last Board meeting created a lot of confusion in the public. Mayor Queenan stated he will request that one of the Chief's attend the next meeting. He stressed again that as far as he is concerned the firehouse is open but if it can be proved to him that it is closed then the Village Board will need to look into the issue. He feels that due to the existing rift between both companies they are now playing semantics. An attempt has been made by the Fire Chief to increase manpower when calls are received to meet the needs of the public, regardless of the type of call. He feels this new procedure needs to be given an opportunity to see if it works.

Gary Weyant, President of the CVFC, stated there are currently no sets of turnout gear at the CVFH. There is only four sets of orange jackets. If the brush truck needs to be used, the members must first respond to HMFH to get dressed then go to CVFH to get the brush truck. Regarding the request by HMFC for the storage shed, he wants to know why HMFC has not paid rent to the Village for storing

their privately owned vehicle on municipal property. He then invited the Board to come to CVFH to see what gear is or is not there. Trustee Sutz will go after the meeting is closed this evening.

Sarah Blum stated she is a taxpayer and is strongly against building a garage for a private entity on Village property. She feels that the rescue truck should be moved back to CVFH and then there will be room for the Mack Truck again. She also feels that a private entity should not be able to store their property on municipal grounds. She also does not understand the reason for the move that was made when 80% of the calls received occur in Central Valley. Mayor Queenan stressed the Board is looking at the move objectively and it will be monitored. He understands there are issues between the two companies but the Board needs to be above that dispute. Mrs. Blum stated she feels that individuals should not be referred to the Fire Chief with their concerns on this issue because she does not feel that it will resolve anything. Trustee Sutz stated the Boards primary concern is what will be best for the Village and the residents. If the information as time goes on proves this is was not a successful move it will be reviewed to see what can be done to make it better. Mrs. Blum then noted that Asa Blum was suspended for 30 days because he appeared before the Board at the last meeting to stress his concerns. Mayor Queenan stated he believes Mr. Blum was suspended for violations of the Department By-Laws.

Maria Hunter asked if the letter Mr. Blum received regarding this suspension is subject to FOIL and she was told it was not as it is a personnel issue. She then stated on November 14 she and her husband were invited to the CVFH and witnessed the removal of the rescue truck and gear. This was done by the young firemen and no Chief was present to oversee the transfer. She acknowledged that there are problems between the two companies but feels that it was wrong that Mr. Blum was suspended for speaking his opinion. She does not believe the statement that the CVFC is a social entity is 100% correct as they are also a branch of the Woodbury Fire Department. She noted she feels it is hard for her not be emotional over this issue as she has been a friend to both companies for years. Trustee Flood stated he understands it is a very emotional situation but it comes down to mechanics. It is a very serious issue to the Board and they will look into it. Mrs. Hunter then noted that at a Planning Board meeting about 18 months ago Greg Hatzis appeared wearing a uniform and he was not suspended for doing so. Mayor Queenan stated again that the Board will try to have a Chief present at the next meeting so these questions can be addressed. Trustee Sutz stated he is hopefully that between now and then things will change for the better.

VI. Adjournment:

With no further comments received or business to discuss, a motion was offered by Trustee Sutz, seconded by Trustee Crouse, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50PM.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Queenan, Crouse, Flood, Sutz
 NOES 0

Desiree Potvin, Village Clerk