

**VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

April 07, 2020

Mayor Kerry Dineen
Trustee Nicholas Fahrenkopf
Trustee Michelle Ganance
Trustee John Scally
Trustee Dean Whalen

Patty Blackwood, Clerk
Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer
Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works, Absent
Kyle Haines, Altamont Fire Chief
Todd Pucci, Altamont Police Chief, Absent
Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel

General Public: 21

7:00 p.m.

Mayor Dineen called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Meeting was held online using Zoom Video Communications due to the Coronavirus.

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve resolution to adopt the proposed appointments, designations, schedules, personnel and financial procedures contained within the Organizational Agenda.

Roll Call: All in favor

Copy of Organizational Agenda included with Official Minutes.

PART I

One Year Term

Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Deputy Mayor

Five Year Term

Connie Rue, Member, Planning Board (2025)

Danny Ramirez, Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals (2025)

PART II

Official Newspaper

Altamont Enterprise - Primary

Spotlight - Alternative

Official Banks

First National Bank of Scotia, First Niagara Bank, Citizens Bank, J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, Kinderhook Bank, Pioneer Commercial Bank, NBT Bank, Bank of Green County and M&T Bank as official depositories of the Village of Altamont.

Authorize Mayor and Treasurer to invest Certificates of Deposit in any of the designated official depositories with a third party holding the securities.

Authorize Mayor and Treasurer to sign checks on behalf of the Village.

Time & Place of Meetings

Village Board – 7:00 p.m. First Tuesday of each month and third Tuesday as needed

-July 07, 2020 meeting rescheduled to July 21, 2020

- August 04, 2020 meeting, if needed
- November 3, 2020 meeting rescheduled to November 4, 2020
- Planning Board – 7:00 p.m. Fourth Monday of each month as needed
- May 25, 2020 meeting rescheduled to May 18, 2020
- Zoning Board of Appeals – 7:00 p.m. Second Tuesday of each month as needed

Mileage

Mileage rate coincides with Federal IRS approved rate per mile for reimbursement to Village employees when authorized to use their private vehicles on village business.

Bonds

For Officials and Employees to continue as last year
(\$50,000 Clerk & Treasurer; \$10,000 Employees)

Personnel Policy

To continue as written

Holiday Schedule

Approve holiday schedule for Village employees for FY 2020-21 per Schedule A.

Procurement Policy

To continue without change

2021 Organizational Meeting

First Tuesday in April 2021

Village Engineers

Barton and Loguidice, Laberge Group, Lamont Engineering, Adirondack Mountain Engineering, Insight Northeast Engineering, and Delaware Engineering as official engineering firms of the Village of Altamont.

Village Counsel

Designate Young/Sommer LLC to serve as Village Designated Attorneys for FY 2020-21.

PART III

Training

Authorizing Mayor Dineen to approve meetings, conferences, and training seminars for employees that would benefit the Village and could include the following schools, conferences and seminars sponsored by New York State Conference of Mayors such as: Annual Training School; Fall Training School; Public Works Training School; Legislative Meeting; Winter Legislative Meeting; Office of the New York State Comptroller; Office of Court Administration; Public Works Training and Licensing; and the Albany County Division of Management and Budget technology classes.

Advance Payment of Claims

Authorize Village Treasurer to pay, in advance of audit, claims for public utility services, postage, hospitalization, freight and express charges, claims for petty cash, Senior Entertainment/Trips, JP Morgan Chase Bank (Water Principal/Interest bond payments), Manufactures & Traders Trust (Sewer

Principal/ Interest Bond Payments), Wex Bank (Suntrak card), School & Property Taxes, NYS Municipal Workers Comp., Disability Insurance, Health Department Park Permits, MasterCard, and fees for officials and staff to attend meetings and schools approved by Mayor Dineen prior to the next scheduled regular board meeting.

Reports:

Mayor Dineen reported Village Hall is closed until further notice. Business will continue to go on as usual. You can make phone calls, email, and there's a drop box right at the door of village hall. We are working with a reduced staff and appreciate your patience with regular business. Water and sewer bills were sent out recently. There have been a lot of calls about payments. Payments can be made online; you can mail the office a check as usual or you can submit a check into the drop box right in front of the office. Your cancelled check will be your receipt. Department of Public Works is working with a rotating staff reduction. They are picking up bags and brush weekly. Community room is closed to the public until further notice. Generally, we have a no refund policy on deposits for events but this is a whole different situation. We have been refunding deposits or will be refunding deposits for some events that had to be canceled and they were mostly private events. We're also not taking new reservations at this time. We're hoping that some of the events can be rescheduled, and we will give them first shot at some dates when we start to take reservations again. Mayor Dineen asked everyone to do their 2020 Census. It's very important that everyone is counted for the Village.

Kyle Haines, Chief Altamont Fire Department, reported the fire department is taking the Coronavirus as seriously as everyone else. The firehouse is closed off to anyone outside the firehouse and fire department members unless there is an emergency incident or essential business. We've adopted some new procedures to disinfect the firehouse, apparatus, tools, PPE, etc. after every call and after conducting business inside the firehouse. We've also adopted some new procedures to limit the number of members interacting with the public when it's not necessary. When it's deemed necessary, we've adopted a PPE procedure when we need to interact with the public. How that affects the public is, if you have a fire alarm at your house, we're going to basically show up and trust everybody for the time being. Until things blow over, then we'll be back to our normal procedure. We have adopted a new online training platform similar to what we're doing now to keep us up to date on procedures and keep us trained so that we can keep things moving in the firehouse and keep everybody trained and up to date. That's internally in the firehouse. Then we've been working with the County who have been distributing some PPE and hand sanitizer. Very small amounts but enough to keep us going. Other departments are in a lot more need than we are. We're a lot slower pace than some other departments. I've been on a lot of conference calls with the County and Town departments to make sure that all the County departments we're all working in a similar fashion. Chief's written report for March has been submitted. Copy of the report included with Official Minutes.

Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works, submitted Department of Public Works written report for March. Copy of the report included with Official Minutes.

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to approve the Treasurer's report; #20, #21 and transfer of funds as submitted. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Public Comment:

Joe Burke, Altamont Free Library, stated Jim Gaughan, who is on the call, and I are basically the complete count committee for the Census. Altamont is doing really well in terms of its response rate. We've got a response rate at this point of 52.2%. The statewide is right around 40%. Albany County is just over 45%. We're coming out ahead of both the State at large and the County. We're in good shape. Most people have not received their paper questionnaires. At this point, everybody who has responded has responded through the web form or by calling in their responses to the Census. Both of those have had some problems with them because of the PO box issue and long wait times on the phone calls. But nevertheless, we have gotten to 52.2% response which is really great. The paper forms are going to be in the mail between April 8th and April 16th. I would expect to see another jump up in our response rates when that comes around. We're coming out ahead of where we were 10 years ago. The more data we get the less work that the Census Bureau is going to have to figure out how to do when it comes to going door to door. I've tried to put out as much information as I can and if anybody has any questions about the web form or anything like that, they can call the library and leave a message on the answering machine. We had planned to do a whole lot of outreach around the census, particularly with the Altamont seniors. That obviously has been put off. Nevertheless, we are getting some phone calls at the library for assistance and I'm responding to those as soon as I get them in. As far as the library is concerned, we are closed. That is largely out of our hands at this point. Both I and the staff are very anxious to get back to business and to open up those doors again. We're going to do it in as safe a manner. We have in the past talked and thought about having a staged reopening where we pivot back to curbside drop-off, curbside pickup, and delivery. We know with opening the building, the fear is that it would encourage gatherings which we don't want to do right now. We're still in the early stages of putting together that plan and we're going to be listening to input from the CDC, from the State Department of Health, from the County Department of Health and from the Upper Hudson Library System before we put a plan in place. When we do open, the information will be put out and I will certainly let everybody here know when that is going into effect. Mayor Dineen stated the Village would also post the announcement on the Village website and send out a Nixle advisory.

Ted Neuman, Lark Street, inquired why the appointment of Danny Ramirez wasn't on the agenda and voted on. Mayor Dineen stated the appointment of Danny Ramirez is listed on the 2020 Organizational Meeting Agenda. That's the one that lists all the things we do every year annually. New appointments for deputy mayor, Chair people of Planning Board and the Zoning Board, financial arrangements, etc. It's on that agenda.

Harvey Vlahos, Main Street, stated based on the last Zoning Board meeting at the very end Maurice said that he was not being reappointed. I was just wondering what the rationale was behind that. He would have accepted the appointment based on communications I've had, and that leaves the Village Zoning Board with 60% of its members having little or no experience. You've not appointed somebody who has been on there for like 20 years. It's not like he's arriving in a wheelchair or something like that. He's certainly very capable. I was wondering what the rationale was for not reappointing him.

Mayor Dineen stated I know that you already spoke to Trustee Whalen about this and he explained, I think parts of it or all of it to you. Maurice and I had this conversation when it came up quite some time ago when he had talked about it at meeting about how many years a few of the members had served on the Zoning Board. Some folks asked me about appointments and how do people get appointed and do we ever rotate? I conferred with council; Don Cropsey, former Building Inspector; and Dean Whalen. I think what especially brought it up was with people's interest in Stewarts. A lot more people are involved and others want to be involved in these boards. We've been appointing as we go and people want to get involved and we'll have new appointments for the remaining seats in May. I talked to Maurice all about this and we had a great conversation about it. This way we get more people trained. The people that are on there now, some of them, have had two years of planning actions. We've adopted a new in-house policy of training, bringing in specialists for the boards. We have council attending both meetings, Planning and Zoning and guiding us. I've had the same conversation with somebody that is on the Planning Board and has been with us a really long time and they absolutely agree that it's time to let some people come in and learn what they know. That's the rationale. It's not here for debate. This is an appointment that I make and the board confirms it. I think he was very valuable but we're trying to rotate people out and let some new people be trained. Maurice has been on for over 22 years. It was great and hopefully we can come back to him in the future.

Harvey Vlahos, Main Street, stated as Dean has mentioned to you that we had a conversation, I think one of his big points was that there's a lot of institutional knowledge in there. To get rid of somebody that has that and to have 60% of the board be inexperienced, it seems like the transition should have taken a bit more time over a longer period of time and brought people in if you wanted to do that. But again, you've got someone that's got a lot of experience that's very good. I just think to leave the board with 60% of new people with no experience is just not appropriate.

Trustee Ganance stated I really think I understand what you're saying Harvey and I get your opinion, but I really feel there has been a lot of interest in this village. There are people that have knowledge, we have training in place and there are people that are interested and want to get involved. Maurice was very valuable when I was on the Zoning Board. We are never going to get everyone that wants to be involved. Everyone that can be trained and everyone that has that knowledge. As Kerry said, we can go back if we need to. I'm sure in a pinch we could get Maurice to contribute or do whatever we need. I think it's very important that when the community voices that they want to be more involved, that we let everybody have that opportunity.

Harvey Vlahos, Main Street, stated we can probably leave it at that, but frankly the optics are that anyone who opposed Stewarts is gone.

Mayor Dineen stated I would disagree completely, but I'm going to stop with that there and move on.

Trustee Scally stated I agree that it gives somebody else a chance to take the helm for the Zoning Board.

Public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Patty Blackwood, Village Clerk, opened public hearing with reading of the Legal Notice to consider 2020-2021 Village Budget before final adoption.

Mayor Dineen stated I just have a few comments on the budget and then I'll ask the Board members if they want to make comments and then we'll open it up for folks to do that. If you had a chance to review the materials in front of you. We basically start the budget process in January and February. Catherine, our treasurer, works with our departments to develop what their needs are for their departments. They work up the numbers. Actually, I think I'm going to mute everybody just while I talk and then I'll unmute after that. Okay. We had budget workshops on February 26 and March 11th, 2020. They were open to the public as many of you know, we basically come in and we work with the departments on those evenings trying our best to balance the budget. I'll tell you that a couple of highlights from this one, if you haven't had a chance to look at it, the budget does a few things. It provides a 2% cost of living increase to our employees. We felt very strongly about the work that they do. There are not many of them and they keep the village running very nicely. It continues the same level of savings to all our reserve funds. What I mean is some years we have to cut back. We have reserve funds for things like the fire department, police department, capital projects, things like that. We try to keep a consistent level because we generally have plans for when we purchase things, and then the savings after so many years adds up to what we were saving for. We were able to keep that level where we were last year. We did put money in for Public Works projects coming up. We have some more sidewalk projects, paving of another street and working on drainage and completing the village parking lot that we started last year. This is part two of that to finish that up. We had a lot of necessities for our park's programs, some things that needed to be afforded to fix down at the camp. One different thing this year is we were able to add \$18,000 of revenue to our water fund because of the cell tower revenue coming in. That was a very helpful for a fund that needed that. One thing you will see the difference on, is a first in quite some time, is we have a tax increase up to the tax cap in this budget. This is the first or second that has happened in the last 16 years or so. We really felt that we can continue giving the services to the village that we need to give you, but the costs have gone up and we have not raised taxes and this is a relatively small increase. I know others can talk on this, but Catherine did a great example for us to understand the tax increase and she took five random houses and looked at the new assessments in relation to what this tax increase would do. Three people's houses went down \$20 on their taxes and then others were increased anywhere from \$20 to \$40, and that was on various houses and sizes. Levels of contributions for departments were held steady at what we put into each department. We know that we're going to have some interesting sales tax revenue probably the next quarter. It may not be what we usually get from that. We're a little worried about that. We did not want to overextend ourselves. Any Board members have something they want to add to that? I don't see anybody's hands. Catherine, is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer, stated no, you covered it very well.

Mayor Dineen asked if there are any questions from the public. If you're on camera I'll have you either wave at me first and then if I don't see anybody there, I'll ask phones if they have anything to say. I think I un-muted everybody. If there's anybody that has a question that wants to ask.

No comments from the public.

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to close the public hearing at 7:34 p.m. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Whalen made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve 2020-2021 Village Budget. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve of Standard Work Day Resolution of 6 hours per day for Village Clerk, Court Clerk, Administrative Assistant, Parks Department, Historian, and Office Cleaner for NYS Retirement System for reporting purposes. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve of Standard Work Day Resolution of 6 hours per day for Mayor, Trustees and Justices for NYS Retirement System for reporting purposes. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Whalen made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve of Standard Work Day Resolution of 8 hours per day for Department of Public Works and Police Department for NYS Retirement for reporting purposes. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve addendum to escrow agreement with Stewarts Corporation for the Stewarts' project application to include technical services in addition to legal services. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve authorizing Mayor Dineen to sign agreement with Village of Voorheesville for 1996 Packer Truck and Shared Services at an approximate value of \$1,800 per recommendation of Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve Board Minutes for February 26th, March 3rd, and March 11, 2020. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to adjourn at 7:42 p.m.
Roll Call: All in favor

Respectfully Submitted,



Patty Blackwood
Clerk

VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT

2020-21 HOLIDAYS

Schedule A

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2020	MEMORIAL DAY
FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2020	INDEPENDENCE DAY
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2020	LABOR DAY
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020	COLUMBUS DAY
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2020	ELECTION DAY (SKELETON CREW)
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020	VETERAN'S DAY
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2020	THANKSGIVING DAY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2020	DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2020	CHRISTMAS EVE (1/2 DAY)
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2020	CHRISTMAS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2020	NEW YEAR'S EVE (1/2 DAY)
FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2021	NEW YEAR'S DAY
MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2021	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2021	PRESIDENT'S DAY
FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021	GOOD FRIDAY (1/2 DAY)