

VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

December 7, 2021

Mayor Kerry Dineen
Trustee Nicholas Fahrenkopf
Trustee Michelle Ganance
Trustee Tresa Matulewicz, Absent
Trustee John Scally

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

General Public: 3

7:02 p.m.

Mayor Dineen called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kyle Haines, Chief Altamont Fire Dept., submitted a Chief's report for December. Copy of report included with Official Minutes.

Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works, submitted a Public Works report for December. Copy of report included with Official Minutes.

Keith C. Lee, Co-Chairman of the Parks Committee, submitted Parks report. Copy of report included with Official Minutes.

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve the Treasurer's report; Abstract #12 and #13 and transfer of funds as submitted. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Public Comment:

No comments from the public.

Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel, opened the public hearing with reading of the Legal Notice to consider proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2021 Amending Chapter 300 of the Code of the Village of Altamont and Adopting an increase in the Sewer Service Charge.

Mayor Dineen stated the Board discussed this a little bit at the last meeting but had a longer conversation during the budget workshops back in February and March. Treasurer, Catherine Hasbrouck, has been keeping an eye on the Village's Sewer Fund and the expenses are greater than the revenues that are coming in. There are various reasons for that. Water usage is down. That's one of the big reasons for lower revenue. The expenses on the plant have also increased over the last so many years including the electricity is higher than expected. The Village has been taking from the General Fund to cover any shortages but it's getting to the point where we are then hurting one fund by trying to balance this out. The Comptroller's office is saying that the revenues should be supporting the expenses. There will be a shortage of approximately \$96,000 by the end of this year after all the revenues come in. The increase to the \$100 capital charge was increased to cover the shortage. That's what the hearing is about tonight. Mayor Dineen stated she has looked at many different ways of trying to do this and also reached out to Trustee Fahrenkopf because he's really good with data. It's tough though. It can't be

pulled from somewhere else because those funds are already needed where they are. Mayor Dineen stated she did many calculations herself with \$60, \$70, & \$85 seeing if that would get the Village towards the needed goal. Those figures don't hit what is needed. This is what we are going to talk about this evening. Mayor Dineen stated no comments have come in from the public by email and one anonymous call came into the clerk with questions about the public hearing. Mayor Dineen asked if there were any comments from the Board or the public.

Kate Provencher, Thatcher Drive, questioned if this is the charge to pay down the debt for improvements because there is also a fee rate based on usage that's supposed to support ongoing expenses.

Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer, responded but it was inaudible.

Kate Provencher, Thatcher drive, stated this is the fixed charge that is being raised. Ms. Provencher asked at what point the fixed charge goes away.

Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer, stated 23 years.

Mayor Dineen stated there was a discussion about raising rates versus raising the capital charge, but the difference is with raising the rates, the Village can't budget on what they're going to be getting in because it all depends on the usage. You can't say we're going to have this concrete amount and then maybe the Village be short again. This is an investment to be spread out evenly to everyone that's why the Village is proposing the raising of the capital charge.

Kate Provencher, Thatcher Drive, stated that all makes sense to her and she has been following this conversation over a period of time while the Board has been wrestling with this. She appreciates the Board looking into this. The increase doesn't seem like a lot for those that are continuing to work, but for others, it is. She doesn't see how else the Board was going to be able to take care of this. She's aware of other concerns the Village has with the infrastructure and the need to support that.

Mayor Dineen stated when she worked the numbers it worked out to be about \$9.29 extra a month and \$2 something a week. Not that it makes it better, but if we're breaking it down it does help.

Trustee Fahrenkopf stated when he was looking at the data he was trying to figure out, is this a base problem that should be spread across to all users or is it a result of the operations. If the cost of hauling away the sludge is what doubled or tripled, then it would make sense to charge it as a usage. But this is just keeping the plant running, which no matter how much you use, you need the plant to run.

Mayor Dineen stated they weren't happy about it either.

Trustee Fahrenkopf stated that's why it took so long. The Board has been talking about this for almost a year.

Mayor Dineen stated Catherine asked them to consider this for the Spring for the first part of the year, but they really wanted to look at it from as many different ways as they could to just see if there was something else they could do. The impact is large.

Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer, stated the Board is probably going to have to do another transfer to cover the October billing that this increase won't cover.

Kate Provencher, Thatcher Drive, stated this isn't the only infrastructure issue that the Village is going to have to look at. She thinks that the Board as a whole, not just this Board, but other Boards over the years, have tried to keep tax rates down. Not increase taxes, which is great, but perhaps has not helped the Village to keep up with cost.

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve closing the public hearing at 7:13 p.m. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Village Board and Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel, reviewed SEQRA on proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2021 entitled "A Local Law Amending Chapter 300 of the Code of the Village of Altamont and Adopting an increase in the Sewer Service Charge".

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to approve Resolution Issuing a Negative Declaration under SEQRA and Adopting Local Law No. 3 of 2021 entitled "A Local Law Amending Chapter 300 of the Code of the Village of Altamont and Adopting an increase in the Sewer Service Charge". **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve of Library Lights Gazebo Lighting Ceremony fundraiser to support Altamont Free Library to be held on Friday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the gazebo in Orsini Park, per request of Joseph Burke, Director. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve renewal of Enhanced Plan with NYS Volunteer Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program for Altamont Fire Department's Eligible Volunteer Firefighter members. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve authorizing Mayor Dineen to sign supplemental agreement, not to exceed \$2,000, with Barton and Loguidice, for processing reimbursement paperwork with DASNY for Sam Grant #24544 regarding Lark Street and Fairview Avenue Sidewalk Replacement project.
Roll Call: All in favor

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve authorizing Mayor Dineen to expend up to \$37,000 from unallocated reserve for purchase of streetlights from National Grid. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to approve of Board Minutes for November 3, 2021. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Mayor Dineen encouraged the public to attend the ACT Festival of Lights this weekend.

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.
All in favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Blackwood
Clerk