

VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
November 1, 2022

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

Patty Blackwood, Clerk
Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer, Excused
Stacy Tanner, Deputy Treasurer, Absent
Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works
Paul Miller, Altamont Fire Chief
Jason Johnston, Altamont Police Chief
Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel

General Public: 11

7:00 p.m.

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

Paul Miller, Chief Altamont Fire Dept., submitted a Chief's report for October. Copy of report included with Official Minutes.

Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works: We're finishing up our hydrant flushing. Hopefully that will be done this week. The guys are out sucking leaves just about every day. I want to ask everybody to not put any sticks or stones in the leaf piles. It doesn't work too well with our machinery. Put them in a wind row instead of one big pile. A lot of places you have to put just one pile. But if you put it in a wind row, it's easy for the guys to pick up and try to keep it out of the ditches too, so that it doesn't plug up our drainage.

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Matulewicz to approve Amended Treasurer's Abstracts for Payment and Transfer of Funds for October 4th.

Roll Call: All in favor

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to approve Treasurer's Abstracts for Payment and Transfer of Funds from November 1st. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Public Comment:

Laura Shore, Altamont Community Tradition President: I'm here on behalf of ACT. I'm president and I just wanted to bring you up to date on what was happening with the winter event, which we're now calling WinterFest. The Fall festival was so incredibly popular and really well done that we thought it made sense to kind of extend that idea into WinterFest. There'll be some changes this year for those of you that have been around for a while. We will not be having the train. We haven't had it for a couple of years because of Covid and the crowding. We asked them if they could come this year during the day because we felt like it would be a way to avoid that bottleneck by the library. We're going to have Santa come to the park instead of being on the train. It will give the kids a chance during the day to run around and entertain themselves. It will create much more fun, festive spirit in Orsini Park. We'll be starting at noon. Santa Mike has agreed to come and lead the pet parade. The pet parade has gotten bigger and better every year and we'll promote it. John Scally has agreed to play the bagpipes again. There will be pet photos in Orsini Park. We will have the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and St. John's may have a bake sale table. Two regular food trucks, a taco truck and

Sustainable Eats from Vermont and the cookie truck, if the roads are clear, will also come. Jennifer, who owns the new diner, said she'll stay open throughout the day and do something special for the event. We will also have the Festival of Trees and the wreaths in Masonic. It will be a warmup station with cider and donuts. St. John's has agreed to do kids' activities. We're trying to spread the crowds out so that we don't have big clusters because we don't really know what Covid is going to be like in December. It's still got a lot of the festive feel that we've come to expect. It's looking really good. Kate Provencher will be talking with the Police Department to figure out a way to somehow manage the traffic in that little space around Orsini Park during the course of the event. It was terrible this summer during the Fall Festival and it's just something that we need to work on because there's a lot of kids running around and we just want to make sure that people are safe. The event ends in Orsini Park and the Masonic at 3:30 p.m. and people can then head over to the Living Nativity.

Deborah Katz, Heather Fox, & Lindsey Giagni, Residents: We wanted to come together as a small group and really express our concerns about the pedestrian crosswalk issue with kids going to school in the mornings. Heather had an incident recently where she was almost hit in the crosswalk. We had another experience with a resident in the crosswalk. We've started to talk together as a small concerned group. Started doing some research and sharing it with each other. It really speaks to a larger environmental issue. We wanted to bring up a few of those points tonight and see if there is a possibility that we could form a resident group to work with the Village, Police Chief, and Public Safety. As part of a larger issue, we will at some point have high speed trains coming through the Village. The face of Altamont is changing to some degree in our surrounding areas with development going in and that's inevitable. It raises some additional challenges in terms of pedestrian safety. Especially with the kids. The kids that live so close to the elementary school. Ms. Katz's husband has very fond memories of walking to the elementary school, all the kids with their dogs. The dogs would come back alone to pick up the kids at the end of the school day. When we listen to the young families that have come into the Village specifically for the reasons that we cherish our village and the walkability and the safety of kids being able to ride their bikes. We have a larger issue and I'm hoping that we can organize together and work collaboratively. There are a number of state and federal programs that help residents to take a look at some of the issues within communities and provide some really good guideposts for working with the community to educate and basically take a multi-prong approach. Our Village Police do a great job and it's evident that you guys have more visibility within the Village. We appreciate that and thank you. But you can't be in all places at once. It is a group effort to find out what is available to us. If we can work together to obtain some of these grants, find out what other communities are doing. You guys have started some things with NYS DOT but if the community can help and follow up on that as well, we can hit it at all angles. The goal is to make our community better and make it safer for everyone as well.

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: Since I've taken over as Chief, we have spearheaded things with NYS DOT and State. I touched base with them again about what's currently being done. They increased the signage at the crosswalks that are closest to the schools. I know that they plan on putting amber lights in there. It's more of a technical issue at this point. They're trying to figure out how to best power those. I do track the community page, so I try to keep ahead of what people are complaining about when it comes to traffic control. That really does help us out. You guys see things. People see a police car and they're going to avoid it. The more intelligence we can gather, the better we can put our resources out there and try to combat it. Our ticket production has increased more than two thirds over this last year alone compared to what it was the two

years before. The crosswalk charge, that's a detail I put out periodically because it is kind of like catching smoke. There are not always people you can sit there and stare at a crosswalk for six hours because like that scenario from earlier, that just doesn't unfold all the time. We really do try to get out there. We've written probably a half dozen tickets just in the last couple months of that specific charge. The community can see and hear things that we don't necessarily always get to see and hear. We're always open to any kind of help we can get. I'm trying to better our technology. I've applied for a couple of grants also for plate readers for people coming in and out of town.

Mayor Dineen: We we're waiting to hear on a grant, that Trustee Fahrenkopf had worked on for quite some time, that a big piece of that was pedestrian and traffic safety. We don't know where we're going to land in that grant. We hope to know in a month or so. Trustee Ganance is going to talk about this later tonight, but we're starting to reorganize a comprehensive plan review committee. They could reach out to you at that time to look at what's there now and looking at what updates you might want to see, that might be a good way to incorporate the community input in that area.

Deborah Katz, Heather Fox, & Lindsey Giagni, Residents: We really don't see it as a deficiency in any one group or police department. It was so interesting to read about some of these programs and the fact that it's really about education. It's public service announcements and it's really getting that message out consistently in front of people. That's a collaborative effort. That can't just fall upon one organization.

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: We've had articles about safety in the local paper and also our newsletter. We are trying to keep the education up.

Heather Fox, Resident: Couple weeks ago, the kids and I were a step away from almost being done in that crosswalk. This is why we all came together. There is a very short window of a bunch of kids who walk to school every day and come home. I know there's a much larger issue on the pedestrian safety, but we need to do something for the school. We are a walking village and we have so many more kids that could be walking to school. My kids are old enough to walk to school on their own and there's no way in heck that I could ever let them being that I was crossing with them and this car was so far away. We practice safety every single day because we walk to school every day. They know what to do. That car must have been driving 50 miles per hour down Main Street to even get to the crosswalk at Sand Street where we were. It was extremely scary and I don't ever want to encounter that again. Hopefully we can fix and work on this before that happens again. That was the second time that week. Someone actually got hit earlier in the week. They did come and sit out on Euclid that day in an unmarked car. As much as I appreciate that, I still think we need to do more. People still don't even see the cop car because it's not marked as a cop car. Two guys went flying right through while the cop was there and while we were standing at the street. We need a body out there at the crosswalk even for the 20 minutes that the kids come and go from school.

Mayor Dineen: I would make a suggestion that you might want to approach the school district because legislature changed where the school district can pay for a crossing guard. Years ago, they could not financially support that. They're doing budgeting right now. They're in stage one/two budgeting at this moment. Make a request to talk to their officer, Officer Ralston is their SRO and a former Altamont Police Officer. He would actually be familiar. Reach out to the district office and possibly Officer Ralston as well and see if that is something they would fund for this school. I'm sure Mr. Brabant would

be supportive of that as well. We're not staffed for it unfortunately. We have one person on and if there's an emergency, they'd have to leave.

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: Once you establish a crossing guard, if they ever have to leave or call in sick or anything else like that, it becomes a litigative nightmare.

Heather Fox, Resident: This is all really great information. I feel like if we consider having a task force put together, we can all rely on each other with our resources. How do we tie into Guilderland and does Guilderland have any resource to help us out here in regard to the speed signs?

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: If we request those, they'll put them up periodically, but they move them all the time. They're a big town. Ideally that's another thing I've been trying to get a grant for is to get a couple of those. All those things are great but they're also very expensive.

Trustee Matulewicz: Can crossing guards be volunteers?

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: There's insurance issues. They're supposed to be paid for and trained by the police department. You're basically deputizing them for that traffic control for that little bit of time. That's why it's such a cost overall.

Deborah Katz, Resident: I feel like that particular crosswalk at Lark Street is one that could be targeted for some immediate actions. I watched what people are doing and there's that little bump out in the road after they come through the Village and people have been pretty good about stopping in crosswalks in the middle of the Village, but I notice as soon as they pick up speed and come around that curve, which is a little bit of a lack of visibility there with that bump out, the crosswalks right there. I'm just wondering if that may be part of the problem. If there's a cruiser sitting there with lights flashing for 20 minutes in the morning, that would create a mind map for these folks.

Mayor Dineen: In the meantime, I think on our end, Trustee Ganance and Trustee Scally could reach out to you folks after the new year because that's when they're going to get started with the comprehensive review committee. At the same time, Jason, you are working with New York State, you've already contacted with them about where are the lights that they had talked to us about.

Trustee Matulewicz: Is there anything in these grants for cameras?

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: Yes, and I've also applied for those too. The application process is open right now because they released a lot of money for Safe Streets initiatives and things like that. I did put in a litany of things. I think they're trying to expedite it and if everything goes well, I should know something one way or another by December, I'm hoping.

Mayor Dineen: I think they're putting out this money because we're not the only community having these same problems.

Jason Johnston, Chief Altamont Police Dept.: We're competing with other jurisdictions. That's why you never know what you're going to get. We do have great stats here as far as high traffic control and low crime. It's great as a community but unfortunately that can

hurt us as far as a grant application. There's enough money out there that I'm hoping to get some stuff.

Andrea Parker, Resident: I also just quickly came to voice my concerns about the speeding on Main Street. I listened to everything you guys said and I was curious about if the grant might include a speeding sign that's lit by solar. Would the Village be open to lowering the speed limit to 25 miles per hour?

Mayor Dineen: It's something we can think about as we go forward with the review of the comprehensive plan. It only became recently possible. This is not a village street, so we'd have to figure out that process.

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve authorizing Mayor Dineen to sign renewal contract with CDPHP for health insurance for retired employees. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve of Library Lights fundraiser to support the Altamont Free Library, to be held on December 9th at 6:00 p.m. at the gazebo in Orsini Park, per request of Joseph Burke, Director.

Roll Call: All in favor

Trustee Matulewicz made a motion seconded by Trustee Ganance to approve authorizing Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works, to solicit bids for installation of approximately 761 L.F. of concrete sidewalk and related work along Fairview Avenue in the Village of Altamont. Bids will be opened on November 30th at 2:00 p.m. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Fahrenkopf made a motion seconded by Trustee Scally to approve request of Phil Carducci, 35 Whipple Way, to hold Altamont 5K Run/Walk along the streets of Altamont on November 26th. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Matulewicz to approve holding a Public Hearing on December 6, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. on proposed Local Law No. 2 of 2022 to Adopt the NYS Minimum Requirements for Enforcement of the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the State Energy Conservation Construction Code.

Roll Call: All in favor

Trustee Scally made a motion seconded by Trustee Matulewicz to approve of Board Minutes for October 4, 2022. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Ganance: We're going to be starting to organize a comprehensive plan review committee to start up in the new year. John and I will be working together to organize and start the committee and work out the details. You'll be hearing more about that as time goes on. We're in the beginning phases of all of that.

Mayor Dineen: It's on our website. If you've never familiarized yourself with the comprehensive plan, you can just search it on the website and it pops right up so you can see what we're talking about.

Trustee Ganance made a motion seconded by Trustee Fahrenkopf to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.

All in favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Blackwood

Clerk