

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Rouses Point, New York held on Tuesday, July 18, 2022, at Halstead Hall, Civic Center, 39 Lake Street scheduled to commence at 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: John J. LaBonte, Mayor
Benjamin J. Arno, Trustee
Brian S. Pelkey, Trustee
Dale M. Menard, Trustee
Joseph E. Rodriguez, Trustee
Rebecca Pelkey, Deputy Village Treasurer

ABSENT: Arsene F. Letourneau, Village Treasurer

OTHERS PRESENT: John Cooper, Code Enforcement Officer

RECORDING SECRETARY: Christopher W. Latremore, Village Clerk/Administrator

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Mayor John LaBonte called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

REGULAR SESSION:

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments from the public.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Trustee Arno made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 5, 2022, meeting, Seconded by Trustee Rodriguez. **ALL VOTED AYE**

BILLS: \$424,722.47 **CHECK #** 28738 - 28796

Deputy Treasurer Pelkey reported that we had two additions and one deletion. A bill for business cards in the amount of \$55.00, New York Power Authority 26, 607.01 and a deletion to High Line Utility in the amount of \$80.55.

Trustee Rodriguez made a motion to pay the bills as amended. Seconded by Trustee Arno. **ALL VOTED AYE**

CORRESPONDENCE:

Administrator/Clerk Latremore read a request from Anne Paulson, the village librarian, advising the board that the friends of Rouses Point Dodge Memorial Library would like to install a Little Free Library, which was purchased from generous donations from the American Legion and the Rouses Point Historical Society. They would like to install the Little Free Library in Ross Park and possibly in two additional locations within the village.

Trustee Menard made a motion to install the Little Free Library. Seconded by Trustee Pelkey.

ALL VOTED AYE

Administrator/Clerk Latremore advised the board that the village received the contract from New York State on the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan grant. This has been in the works since December 2021. Since there are various steps, they offered to facilitate a contract pre-submission meeting, which has been scheduled for August 4, 2022, at 1:00 P.M.

REPORTS OF THE MAYOR AND TRUSTEES:

MAYOR JOHN J. LABONTE:

- 1) Mayor LaBonte asked the board to authorize Treasure Arsene Letourneau and the Administrator/Clerk Chris Latremore to attend NYS Conference of Mayors from September 12-16, 2022.

Trustee Rodriguez made a motion to allow travel. Seconded by Trustee Arno. **ALL VOTED AYE**

TRUSTEE BENJAMIN J. ARNO:

- 1) Trustee Arno wanted an update on the job postings. Administrator/Clerk Latremore advised that the jobs have been posted internally as well as in the Press Republican. Today have only received one application for the MEO II position and one for the Electric Line Helper, which did not qualify, with no other applications for the other positions.
- 2) Trustee Arno advised the board that the electric department was working at the sewer plant and cutting trees behind the fire station.

TRUSTEE DALE M. MENARD:

- 1) Trustee Menard thanked the Civic Center Crew for doing an excellent job and the village looks good. They are doing a fantastic job mowing the lawns and trimming.

TRUSTEE BRIAN S. PELKEY:

- 1) Trustee Pelkey asked the board to accept the bid from Parker Chevrolet on a 2023 Chevrolet 2500HD 4WD Regular Cab for the supervisor of Public Works in the amount of \$44,330.01. Trustee Pelkey made the motion to accept the bid in the amount of \$44,330.01. Seconded by trustee Arno. **All Voted Aye**

- 2) Trustee Pelkey spoke with Dan Guay, the supervisor at the wastewater plant, and he received quotes for a new pump for the new pumping station. The cost for the pump would be \$5,860.40. Trustee Pelkey indicated that this did not need board approval for it was a budgeted item and the cost was within the specs of the budget.

- 3) Trustee Pelkey stated that he reviewed that auditors report for the electric department. Trustee Pelkey said he met with the auditor, and for a couple of years in a row, the auditors biggest concern has been with the village electrical department. Trustee Pelkey said that the village needs to do one of two things. Raise rates to make more money, or the village needs to sell more power to keep the electric rates where they are. It will take a while to adjust the village rates for the village will have to petition PSC. Trustee Pelkey would like the board to start thinking about how we can sell more power. This can be achieved by rider A. Trustee Pelkey said we will need to get our legal counsel involved and start implementing right away. With rider A this would secure more of the hydro power for the village residents and small businesses. Any large industrial users that fall under rider A will have to pay full supplemental power cost. By adopting rider A, the power cost does not affect the village residents and the village will make more money. Trustee Pelkey would like to have this conversation with the board and start moving forward. Trustee Rodriguez stated that he brought this up months ago and the issue with the board was that the law needed to be changed first. Trustee Pelkey said that was correct. Right now, the local law needs to be changed. Currently the way the law is written, it does not allow high density load users within the village. Trustee Pelkey said that is why it is going to take a while. He continued to state that the village can place a moratorium and have public hearings. Therefore, we need to start now. Mayor LaBonte explained that this was probably not the news that everybody wants to hear, but the electric rates have not been raised since 1982, 40 years ago. Mayor LaBonte said that the village has been taking money from the savings account, and putting it in the checking account, to pay the electric bill. The mayor said the savings is dwindling down, and soon the village is not going to have enough money to pay the electric bill, and it is for that reason the village needs to increase its revenue within the electric department by selling more power or increasing the electric rates slightly. Mayor LaBonte said this should have been done years ago. Mayor LaBonte is not criticizing prior boards but feels that it should have been done gradually over the past for decades. Mayor LaBonte said that this is going to be a discussion the board needs to have. Trustee Pelkey said part of the reason is the operating cost have increased. Mayor LaBonte said he also spoke with the auditor, and they said that this action should have been done 20 years ago. Trustee Rodriguez said that when this was brought up a couple of months ago, the board should have started the process, and the board could be halfway done. Mayor LaBonte said that it would not have been possible for the village did not know what was in the building, and there is a difference with a server farm and bitcoin operation. With 2CRSI repairing and testing and what we had with RPNY was a bitcoin operation, we cannot allow this type of operation. The village needs to come up with a permit cost of \$50,000 or \$100,000 renewed every 6 months, once a year or every 2 years, whatever the board agrees upon. Also, the village needs to collect a security deposit, so if they leave, the village is not stuck with a huge electric bill.

4) TRUSEE JOSEPH E. RODRIGUEZ:

- 1) Trustee Rodriguez was happy that the board could finally sit down and talk about rider A and get something going.

OTHER REPORTS:

CODES ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

- 1) John Cooper stated that permits are picking up and the village is looking rather good. Trustee Arno advised Code Officer Cooper that someone was burning garbage on Pineview at night. Code Officer Cooper said he was going to investigate.

CLERK/ADMINISTRATOR:

Administrator/Clerk Latremore advised the board that John Bernard was working on installation of the brine pumps at the Civic Center. John could smell an odor of ammonia. We reached out to J Hogan Refrigeration, and they indicated that the chiller needs to be replaced. The cost is going to be a considerable amount of money. These units are custom built. Hogans are providing a cost to replace, and John is looking into rebuilding the chiller. No matter what direction the board wishes to go, the cost is going to be considerable. Action needs to happen quickly for the chiller is needed to make the ice. We will have estimates by the next meeting and the board will need to decide for time is of the essence.

OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Patrick Canning wanted to know what factor was going to be used to determine rider A, and what load density was going to be factored. Mr. Canning was told that it will be based upon usage of prior tenants. Trustee Pelkey said that currently the village has residential, commercial, and industrial customers. The rider A would fall mainly on industrial users.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Arno to adjourn at 7:31pm. Seconded by Trustee Menard.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully Submitted,



Christopher W. Latremore
Village Clerk/Administrator