

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Rouses Point, New York held on September 18, 2023, at Halstead Hall, Civic Center, 39 Lake Street scheduled to commence at 7:00PM.

PRESENT: John J. LaBonte, Mayor
Dale Menard, Trustee
Nicholas C. Southwick, Trustee
Brian S. Pelkey, Trustee
Benjamin J. Arno, Trustee

OTHERS PRESENT: Arsene F. Letourneau, Treasurer
John Cooper, Code Enforcement Officer
Thomas Murnane, Village Attorney

RECORDING SECRETARY: Christopher Latremore, Clerk/Administrator

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Mayor LaBonte called the meeting to order at 7:03PM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Nobody addressed the board.

REGULAR SESSION:

II. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Trustee Arno made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 5, 2023, seconded by Trustee Pelkey. **ALL VOTED AYE.**

III. BILLS: \$304,065.72 CHECK # 29880-29921

Treasurer Arsene F. Letourneau indicated that there were four additions Business Card \$285.51 travel expense to get paver, Excellus Health Plan-Group \$47,924.88 October monthly bill, Simply Prescription \$6,301.12 October monthly bill, NY Power Authority \$29,025.54 and two deletions to the bills Northern Insuring \$309.00 and Nolette's Metal Roofing Supply \$56,000. Trustee Menard made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Trustee Pelkey. **ALL VOTED AYE.**

IV. CORRESPONDENCE:

Administrator Latremore advised the board that he received an email from Brittney Turner stating that she has been anxiously awaiting the next step regarding the petition she submitted in

February 2023, in favor of allowing residents of Rouses Point to be allowed a raise of a few backyard hens for a clean and sustainable food source. For months, she has been told by several members the next step would be a public hearing. Imagine to her surprise when last Tuesday, September 5th, she was approached and informed by a board member, at her place of employment, that the petition had been vetoed due to the cost of changing the law! She watched the entire village meeting and there was no mention of this during the public airing. Ms. Turner asked if this decision was made in an executive session that the residents are not privy to. Ms. Turner asked when was the board planning to inform the residents? Ms. Turner indicated that she saw that village was having a public hearing regarding changes in dog licensing laws, as well as flood zoning insurance. Ms. Turner asked, "Why are these issues more important and subject to public approval than mine? How substantial is the cost to change the law? I cannot imagine that it is more sustainable than changing the other laws going to public hearing. I am sure the almost 300 residents that signed my petition would help raise the funds to cover this cost. I am also sure these residents, who pay a great deal of money in taxes to this village, would be very disappointed to know that their voice is not being represented. It seems as if the voice of only a select few in this village ever gets heard. Have you considered lifting the band for a one-year trial period? This seems like the logical first step. There have been no problems since Plattsburgh changed their laws allowing hens and I see this going the same way in Rouses Point. Another inquiry, what is the actual fine/disciplinary action should one actually start raising hens on their own private property? With the state of the world, I do not see this as unreasonably happening. If the village cannot afford to hire our lawyer to change a simple law, it seems to be that there is not enough funds available to take action against someone not abiding. Even the simplest of codes/laws seem to go unnoticed and unenforced in this village. How would this be any different?"

Mayor LaBonte indicated that he agrees with Ms. Turner, and that the board needs to decide on whether or not to move forward amending the local law.

Mayor LaBonte asked if the board wishes to move forward changing the code allowing chicken in the Village of Rouses Point.

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Benjamin J. Arno-Voting- NO
Trustee Nicholas C. Southwick-Voting- NO
Trustee Dale M. Menard-Voting-NO
Trustee Brian S. Pelkey-Voting-NO
Mayor John J. LaBonte-Voting-NO

Mayor LaBonte stated that the village will not move forward amending the village code. Mayor LaBonte also indicated that the board is trying to do what is best for the residence.

V. REPORTS OF THE MAYOR AND TRUSTEES:

A. MAYOR JOHN J. LABONTE

1. Mayor LaBonte advised the board that the Champlain EMS contract for 2024 increased \$25,000 from last year's contract for a total cost of \$210,000. Mayor LaBonte indicated that he has explored other options and the cost with Champlain EMS was still less than the other options available. Mayor LaBonte asked for a roll call vote to accept the Champlain EMS contract.

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Benjamin J. Arno-Voting- AYE
Trustee Nicholas C. Southwick-Voting- AYE
Trustee Dale M. Menard-Voting-AYE
Trustee Brian S. Pelkey-Voting-ABSTAIN
Mayor John J. LaBonte-Voting-AYE

2. Mayor LaBonte read Resolution with proxy 2023-19 that the NYMPA Board of Directors be and is hereby designated as the accredited delegate of the Village of Rouses Point at its annual meeting on October 12, 2023, in Clayton, NY.

Trustee Menard made a motion to adopt the resolution seconded by Trustee Pelkey.
ALL VOTED, AYE.

B. TRUSTEE DALE MENARD:

Currently I have nothing to report.

C. TRUSTEE BENJAMIN J. ARNO

1. Trustee Arno made a motion to hold an executive session regarding personnel issues, seconded by Trustee Menard.
ALL VOTED, AYE.

D. TRUSTEE BRIAN S. PELKEY:

Currently I have nothing to report.

E. TRUSTEE NICHOLAS C. SOUTHWICK:

1. Trustee Southwick advised the board that residents have reached out to him concerning the intersection of Lake Street and Montgomery Street. Trustee Southwick indicated that the intersection is on a state road. The issue will need to be addressed with the New York State Department of Transportation and they will need to do all engineer studies to address the problem.

VI. OTHER REPORTS:

Mr. Cooper Code Enforcement Officer stated that the property owner on Pine Street has started to clean up the property and is almost completed. Mayor LaBonte asked Mr. Cooper about the debris put in the swimming pool. Mr. Cooper explained that the property owner put in two tandem loads of dirt, and they only needed one more load to finish filling in the pool.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Nobody addressed the board.

VIII. RECESS:

Mayor LaBonte made a motion to enter recess at 7:18PM, seconded by Trustee Menard. **ALL VOTED, AYE.**

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Pelkey made a motion to enter executive session at 7:20PM, seconded by Trustee Arno. **ALL VOTED, AYE.**

Trustee Menard made a motion to exit the executive session at 8:35PM, seconded by Trustee Pelkey. **ALL VOTED, AYE.**

X. REGULAR SESSION

No action taken in executive session.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor LaBonte made a motion to adjourn at 8:35PM, seconded by Trustee Menard. **ALL VOTED, AYE.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Christopher W Latremore
Village Clerk/Administrator