

Village of Lansing

MINUTES of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on Monday, October 2, 2023, in person at 2405 N. Triphammer Rd. and via Zoom Videoconferencing/Teleconferencing.

PRESENT: Mayor Ronny Hardaway; Trustees, Susan Ainslie, Wolfgang Bullmer, Carolyn Greenwald, Drew Riedl; Attorney Natalie French.

Zoom: Mike Baker, Planning Board Chair; Jerry Sheng, Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Hardaway called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Roll Call: Susan Ainslie, Wolfgang Bullmer, Carolyn Greenwald, Drew Riedl, Ronny Hardaway.

Hardaway opened the public comment period. Mike Baker was the Planning Board representative.

Motion - To Close the Public Comment Period

Hardaway made a motion to close the public comment period. Bullmer seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Ronny Hardaway-Aye  
Trustee Drew Riedl-Aye  
Trustee Wolfgang Bullmer-Aye

Trustee Susan Ainslie-Aye  
Trustee Carolyn Greenwald-Aye

Hardaway entertained a motion to approve the minutes from September 14, 2023. Riedl had minor changes which he sent to Jodi, so they postponed the approval to the next meeting.

**NYCOM Conference Reports**

Drew Riedl & Susan Ainslie attended the NYCOM Fall Training School 9/18-22/2023. The following are the Highlights/Takeaways/Notes.

*Susan Ainslie:*

*The NYCOM in Saratoga Springs in 2022 was my first conference. It felt like other professional conferences that I have attended. Lake Placid this year was relaxed. Perhaps it was that there were a large number of first-time attendees.*

*I chose the sessions that I did not attend in 2022 and added one from a vendor.*

- 1. Albany Legislative Updates*
- 2. Understanding public water and sewer systems: two sessions: (Lead and Copper Rule)*
- 3. Local government primer for cities and villages*
- 4. Ask the Auditors*
- 5. Pro Housing Communities: Removing Obstacles*

6. *Clean Energy Pathways, Solutions and Products*
7. *Municipal Finance Fundamentals*
8. *Establishing and Accounting for Reserves*

*Barbara Van Epps, Wade Beltramo, and Rebecca Rustico were, as always, entertaining and informative!*

*Absent this year were handouts for all sessions. CLE and CPE were the only sessions without handouts.*

*I left with the sense that again our village is currently strong and healthy due to our dedicated staff, and our past and present board members. Now to keep it that way!*

*Drew Riedl:*

1. *During Civil Service session, connected with Ruby Pullian, Commissioner of Human Resources for Tompkins County. This department essentially serves as HR for the Village of Lansing.*
2. *Casey Mastro, who works for NYPA and is Ithaca-based, presented at a Clean Energy Pathways session. He works on advising municipalities on moving toward clean energy in a resource efficient manner. He is willing to attend the Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss possible uses for our NYSERDA grant. (Slides have been distributed.)*
3. *Kate Van Tressel, Director of Special Projects at NY Dept. of Homes and Community Renewal, led a Pro-Housing Communities session. (Slides have been distributed.) NY state (like much of the USA) has a housing deficiency. The lack of adequate housing impedes economic growth as employers have increased difficulty bringing employees into the area.*

*The State Government has switched from a “sticks” approach (unpopular mandate approach) to a “carrot” approach (financial incentives to reward communities for increasing housing.) Among the key aspects is for communities to apply for Pro-Housing certification. This status is modeled after the CSC certification process and provides preference in obtaining state grants. There is strong chance the Village may qualify based on the efforts we have already undertaken in increasing housing. Among initial steps the Village would need a LOI and to assign an applicant coordinator.*

4. *Community Choice Aggregation does not structurally alter a Utility Gross Receipts Tax as the new ESCO serving residents would pay. Village should monitor to ensure ESCO paying correctly.*
5. *Fund Balance Policy came up often. How big it should be? How and when to spend it? (Often 3 months of expenditures is a rule of thumb for Unassigned Fund Balance size cap.)*
6. *Villages can contract with County Sheriff for heightened policing in certain areas (for an add'l cost).*
7. *Can utilize OSC websites (tools and resources) to perform own fiscal stress tests / scenarios / benchmarks when budgeting.*
8. *Economic Trends indicate that Local Sales Tax revenues have stabilized.*
9. *Important to ensure the Towns prepare two budgets and two tax rates when they contain villages.*

*10. Important for Village to consider organizational resiliency plan. What happens if unexpected turnover at a key area? What are plans for near-term succession? Should certain duties be split for better oversight?*

Ainslie reported that overall, it was a great conference. It seemed that everyone was very tired. She feels the best session was on water/sewer. Asked the Auditors was also another good session. Attended that session she realized what good shape our village is in. There are New York State mandates that affect us. Ainslie had a list of these mandates to share.

Riedl thought it was nice to network with everyone. He thinks the Board needs to discuss Fund Balance and how we deal with unexpected turnover. Hardaway agreed that these issues should be discussed in the future.

Ainslie and Riedl thanked the village for sending them. It was very informative. Hardaway asked them to pass along any updates they may get from NYCOM.

### **Natural Resource Inventory Document**

Hardaway stated that Jerry Sheng was on zoom. Sheng is our Cooperative Extension staff person who has been helping us with the Natural Resource Inventory document. He is the Climate Smart Communities Coordinator for Tompkins and Tioga Counties. Hardaway emailed the document to the Trustees on Friday. The task force just finalized it on Thursday evening. Hardaway stated that we do not have to vote on it tonight. We are a member of Climate Smart Communities, but this document will get us points to get to the next level which is bronze. There is also a silver and gold level. This document tells us what our current natural resources are now. This will help the village make changes to our Comprehensive Plan relating to protecting our natural resources in the future. It has boiler plate information from the Tompkins County perspective, and we improved it to focus on the Village's resources. It discusses climate change.

Bullmer asked what the impact of going to bronze, silver or gold levels would be. Hardaway stated that it can make us more competitive for grants down the road. It shows that we are interested in protecting our village assets. We usually don't use a lot of grants but if we ever need one, it would be nice to have this. At the Village level a lot of the steps do not apply to us. The Task Force went through the action items and determined what we would try for. Hardaway stated that it's about doing the right things the right way. Having an inventory lets us know where we are so we can then decide where we want to be.

Greenwald had questions about what we are actually seeing in the village in terms of the number of gallons of water runoff and historically what the temperature is. Greenwald did not understand the "average minimum temperature dipping to 15" as stated on page 4. Hardaway thinks we can get that information but from a higher level.

Sheng stated that they also had a question about the average minimum temperature. Sheng's predecessor added up all the days in the season and averaged out to a minimum temperature. He is unsure if this is relevant. Bullmer asked how many years the temperatures were averaged over.

Bullmer disagreed with this method. Sheng will look at the data again. Riedl feels the bigger thing was the average over longer period of time.

Greenwald wanted to go ahead and pass it for the purposes of the Climate Smart and then add more data as we continue the process.

Bullmer pointed out that if you look at climate you should look at long term plans. Obviously, the weather depends on some other things. If we are throwing average numbers around, we need to know what the base for the average is.

Hardaway thinks they are trying to show the amount of changes. We should add more long-term information to the document. Sheng will do that and make a recommendation as to where to put the information and how to use it in the future. Riedl thinks the large amounts of rain and run off is more of a concern for the village and it would be helpful to see those trends.

Hardaway would like to get the new information before approving the document. This document has been evolving over the last two years. This is our first version, and we can always come back and update the document. Greenwald and Riedl wanted to move forward with the document.

**Resolution #6998** - To Accept the Village of Lansing Natural Resources Inventory for 2023

Hardaway moved this resolution. Bullmer seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Ronny Hardaway-Aye  
Trustee Drew Riedl-Aye  
Trustee Wolfgang Bullmer-Aye

Trustee Susan Ainslie-Aye  
Trustee Carolyn Greenwald-Aye

Riedl clarified that if we get additional information we can go back and add it to this document. Hardaway stated that we can make changes any time we want.

### **Volunteer Recognition**

The Board decided to have the recognition on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12pm-2pm. This will recognize all the volunteers that have helped with greenway, parks, plantings, and village staff will be invited. We hope to have this as an annual event to help recruit more volunteers. Greenwald asked if we were inviting people from the Community Observer Program. Hardaway thinks we should. Hardaway will contact Bieri to have him send names to Dake. Greenwald asked if we are invited families. Hardaway thought we should.

### **Mayor's Comments**

Hardaway stated that he and his wife met with the Menlo Micro people. They are not quite ready yet to give tours. It will be a staged opening. They will probably start out with 40 people and then down the road have 100-120 people. They will be holding a public event in the future. Hardaway stated that Menlo will not be using any more water than Kionix did. They intend to start production next year. Currently they are producing overseas, and they plan to move all of that here.

### **General Comments**

Bullmer is now receiving information on the youth meetings. Bullmer asked if we know what is going on with Transact and Borg Warner. Hardaway had no idea what they were doing. This could be a big impact to the Village.

Ainslie had nothing to report.

Riedl gave a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) update. The City of Ithaca approved their CCA on Sept 6, 2023. Both the City and Town of Ithaca have passed their plans. They still need to approve a CCA Administrator. Riedl gave an update on the Planning Board meeting. Interesting issues with the Transact development that were brought up were the availability of sewer units and having a traffic study.

Greenwald reported that the Recreation Partnership is having issues with its budget. Tompkins County is the biggest funding contributor. The Partnership is asking for a 9% increase, but the County Administrator is suggesting a 2% increase for all organizations which would leave a shortage of \$7,000. This would impact us if we decided to give more money for this program.

### **Adjournment**

Motion- To Adjourn

Ainslie motioned to adjourn. Greenwald seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Ronny Hardaway-Aye  
Trustee Drew Riedl-Aye  
Trustee Wolfgang Bullmer-Aye

Trustee Susan Ainslie-Aye  
Trustee Carolyn Greenwald-Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Jodi Dake, Clerk/Treasurer