

**VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
September 17, 2013

Mayor James M. Gaughan  
Trustee William F. Aylward  
Trustee Kerry Dineen  
Trustee Christine Marshall  
Trustee Dean Whalen

Patty Blackwood, Clerk  
Catherine Hasbrouck, Treasurer  
Jeff Moller, Supt. of Public Works  
Robert White, Altamont Fire Chief  
Todd Pucci, Altamont Police Chief  
Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel

General Public: 2

7:00 p.m.

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

**Public Comment:**

No comments from the public.

**Public hearing at 7:00 p.m.**

Allyson Phillips, Legal Counsel, opened public hearing at 7:00 p.m. with reading of the Legal Notice to consider proposed Local Law No. 1 of 2013. A Local Law amending Chapter 300 and Chapter A405 of the Code of the Village of Altamont and adopting a new sewer service charge.

Mayor Gaughan read letter Village office received from Matt Flaherty, Village resident. Copy of letter included with Official Minutes.

No comments from the public.

Mayor Gaughan reported what is being proposed in law is a \$45 semi-annual charge for a total of \$90 a year fee to be used towards \$3.5 million debt for the sewer plant project that is now near completion that was ordered to be built by NYS DEC.

Trustee Marshall stated one reason the committee settled on a flat fee was committee believed that every user of the system will benefit from the improvements made to the waste water treatment plant. There probably is no one way, of collecting the money to repay the debt, that will make everyone happy but doing it by usage could be viewed as regressive because people with large families who happen to use more water pay the same amount as those with smaller households who would use less water. Everyone is benefiting from the improvements to the plant and just like what was done with the well improvement project there was a flat fee set to repay for well debt. Committee thought this was the best thing to do and it ensures that Village will be able to calculate exactly the amount Village needs and time needed to repay the debt.

Trustee Aylward stated Village was placed in a position where they really didn't have an option. The project was necessitated by NYS DEC by an order on consent. The alternative was to be fined by NYS DEC which was not acceptable. Village has acted on the order on consent and has produced the project. This is an environmental issue. The problem Village had at the sewer plant was the high water mark when Village got high water at the sewer plant. It was putting polluted water into the creek which goes to the

Watervliet Reservoir. Village had serious neighborly issue. Village did the right thing to try to contain the situation by improving the sewer plant. Committee has searched for a way to make this project as equitable as possible and with the current proposal Village will be able to help pay for sewer debt.

Trustee Dineen stated she agrees with Trustee Marshall regarding the benefit of the sewer project. The project, as described by Trustee Aylward, was anything but simplistic. This has been discussed and worked on for the last two and a half years. The project itself is a benefit to all and the fairest way to take care of the financing is to do it equally. It's not like the water, water is sold as a product, water and sewer rates are based on usage which is done fairly. When you're dealing with something such as a \$3.5 million loan you need something that is a constant to pay back loan. If the Village based repayment of loan on usage and a current home that has four to five family members at present and later sells to a family of one to two users, the Village will lose a lot of gains in making money to repay loan. Village would then have to make up the lost income in the future in other areas. The formula for the payment of the loan was thought about long and hard and was discussed with the public, discussed at Board meetings, been in various newsletters and been in the newspaper. The flat fee is the strongest and most fair way to go to pay back the loan.

Trustee Whalen stated this plan has been looked at and reviewed for quite some time and the message has been out there that this was always going to be some sort of fixed fee. Board has come close to what was estimated as a fee almost a year ago. Trustee Whalen stated conceptually he doesn't have a problem with the thought of trying to do it as a basis of usage, it does seem more equitable way to do it, but when you think about it he wasn't sure how equitable it would actually be. It's very hard to calculate and one of the concerns is the Village really wouldn't know until the end of a cycle if they were making enough income to cover that particular cycle's debt load on the bond. At that point, the Village would have to look at reserves. If the mixture of households changed over a particular year, Village would be struggling and have to take monies from someplace else which the Board doesn't want to have to do. The improvements are going to be shared by everyone. In the end, this is a fairly equitable and fairly typical way this is handled by other municipalities.

Mayor Gaughan reported two and a half years ago Village had the first discussion on the technique of collecting for the sewer debt loan. Village had infamous Table B which Board used to look at rate scenarios by what they thought the projected interest rate would be. All of that technique was based on the same underline philosophy that was used for the payment of the well water loan. Board made every attempt to let people know what Village was doing. Articles were placed in the newspaper and Village newsletter that was mailed to everyone in the system. Final amount of \$45 was determined when Board received the finalized 2.07 interest rate from NYS EFC. Board has talked long about this and belief is the waste water project is a benefit to be shared equally by all. Other municipalities charge a flat rate for sewer. The new \$3.5 million loan for the Hamlet of Berne will be charging \$630 per user with a \$7 increase every year until the 30 year loan is paid. Village of Voorheesville has flat rate of \$560 for sewer and everyone is charged including the new senior housing that was built in the center of the Village. Mayor Gaughan stated he doesn't feel isolated in the choice the Village has made. The committee has thought long and carefully. Mayor Gaughan stated he is confident with this solid predictable amount of money. Each budget year Village Board goes through process to figure out where Village is getting money from. Mayor stated he would be fearful that there would be a transmigration of people coming in and out of

Village or people using less water than they did the year before and Village wouldn't be able to depend upon the same amount because it could always be changing. This is a sound fiscal approach and it's based on good philosophy and it's benchmarked against other municipalities who do the same. Mayor Gaughan stated he would strongly support Board moving forward on the flat sewer debt fee.

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Dineen to close public hearing at 7:17 p.m. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Marshall to approve adoption of Negative Declaration under SEQRA. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Dineen to approve resolution authorizing Mayor Gaughan to adopt and publish Negative Declaration.

**Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Marshall to approve adoption of Local Law No. 1 of 2013, A Local Law Amending Chapter 300 and Chapter A405 of the Code of the Village of Altamont and Adopting a New Sewer Service Charge.

**Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Dineen made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve authorizing Jeffrey Moller, Supt. of Public Works, to solicit bids for roof repair at Village Hall, 115 Main Street, Altamont. Bids will be opened by Village Clerk on September 26<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve resolution to set public hearing for October 1, 2013 at 7:15 p.m., subject to permissive referendum, to consider authorization to expend up to \$45,000 from Repair Reserve Fund for roof repair at 115 Main Street, Altamont. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Whalen to approve authorizing Mayor Gaughan to sign Inter-Municipal Agreement, commencing on September 1, 2013, with Town of Guilderland Fire Districts for purpose of repair and maintenance of the Fire Training Center Tower for annual fee of \$2,000. **Roll Call: All in favor**

Trustee Aylward made a motion seconded by Trustee Dineen to adjourn at 7:34 p.m.  
**All in favor**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Blackwood  
Clerk