

Minutes of the Special Joint Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Lake George, NY, and the Town Council, held on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Resort Conference Room located at 2223 Canada Street, George, NY.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert M. Blais, Mayor
John Earl, Deputy Mayor
Joseph Mastrodomenico, Trustee
Ray Perry, Trustee
John Root, Trustee

TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT: Dennis Dickinson, Supervisor
Marisa Muratori, Councilwoman
Nancy Stannard, Councilwoman
Vincent Crocitto, Councilman

Also Present: Clerk Julie K Allen, Superintendent Keith Lanfear, Director of Planning and Zoning Dan Barusch, Comptroller Jenn Farrell, Highway Superintendent Rob Lanfear, and Buildings and Grounds Jim Martino

Others in attendance as follows: Tony Hall, Thom Randall, Chris Hawley, Gina Mintzer, and Bob Flader Jr.

At 5:01 Mayor Blais welcomed everyone to the Shared Services Summit. Mayor Blais explained that the Town representatives were to his right and the Village representatives were to his left. Mayor Blais said the Town and Village have always had a great history of sharing services. Mayor Blais explained it all started with Supervisor Robert Flack, grew with Supervisor Tessier, and has been going steady since. Mayor Blais said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the shared services, see if any changes needed to be made to current contracts, or if we need to add or remove any. Mayor Blais explained that Dan Barusch would be acting as moderator and would be going through each service one by one.

Dan Barusch thanked everyone for coming. Dan Barusch said they would be going through each service quickly as to try to end the meeting by 7:00 p.m.

Dan Barusch presented the first item on the agenda, the Fire Protection District 1. Dan explained that the 2023 annual contract was already signed and in place, that any changes made would be for the 2024 Contract. Dan Barusch said one matter for discussing was the possibility of adding a cap for the Town portion of the contract to be set at 80%. Mayor Blais said that although there had not been a formal vote for the cap of 80% with the Village, he could not foresee it being an issue. Mayor Blais asked that they also include in the contract the share of 50/50 for the fire house cost. Supervisor Dickinson said he felt those were both fair suggestions. Councilwoman Marisa Muratori asked if the contract was in perpetuity, Mayor Blais explained that it was year to year. Mayor Blais continued to say that if the Town wanted to, they could make the contract term longer, up to four years. Trustee Perry agreed that he felt if they set the limits, the contract should be set for four years going forward, to save having to look at it every year. Mayor Blais presented that the LOSAP would be up for Village vote in this March election. In the Vote, the vote would be to accept or deny the increase of benefits from \$1K per eligible member to \$1.2K per eligible member. Dan Barusch presented the purchase of a new ladder ruck for the Fire Department as the next item on the agenda. Mayor Blais explained that a decision needed to be made on whether to purchase prior to February 28, 2023 or the cost will increase. Mayor Blais said there was currently \$477,799. In reserves for the purchase. Mayor Blais said if they use the reserve toward the purchase, it will leave a balance of roughly \$1.2M that they would need to finance. Mayor Blais presented the scenario of financing for 15 years at a 6% rate and suggested that the Village and Town split the cost 50/50.

Mayor Blais further explained that splitting the cost would save the Town over \$500K in payments. Nancy Stannard asked how old the current fire truck was, Trustee Perry responded that the truck was from 1995. Mayor Blais added that the current truck did not pass inspection and needed repair to get it to pass. Trustee Perry said he felt the interest rate would be lower. Dan Barusch said he would make sure it was put on the agenda for the Town Board meeting.

Dan Barusch next presented the Caldwell Sewer District and WWTP agreements. Dan said that there was a long-standing IMA in place for the WWTP so they did not need to go over that unless there was a suggestion to change. Dan Barusch said the Caldwell Sewer is a two-year agreement. Dan Barusch said that there had been a preliminary discussion and that the cost would most likely go from \$35.5K up to \$37.5K. Dan Barusch explained that Mayor Blais had presented a detailed expense report to show the costs that make up that charge and that the expenses are a little higher than the \$37.5K the Village is proposing to charge the Town. Dan Barusch said that the Towns only concern is that the current agreement includes cleaning of the wet wells and that they want the contract to continue including it. Mayor Blais responded yes it would. Dan Barusch said there was still time and that he would work on the agreement and getting maps together of the 5 areas that make up the 6400 linear feet.

Mayor Blais said the largest surprise associated with the cost of the sewer plant was the cost of electricity. Mayor Blais presented that the old cost was around \$3.3K/month and the new cost was averaging around \$16K. Mayor Blais said that the Village is in discussion with NIMO to see how we can cut costs. Mayor Blais shared that the following week the Village had a representative from NYS Rural Water coming free of charge to give suggestions on saving on energy costs. Mayor Blais said the Village is also currently in contact with some solar companies to see about developing a solar array on Village land to help offset the costs. Mayor Blais said he would inform the Town of the results. Councilwoman Marisa Muratori asked if the Village was planning on separating the sewer tax from the general tax. Mayor Blais responded the Village is attempting to set up a sewer tax rate by June 1, 2023 but there are a lot of legal issues to set it in place. Marisa Muratori asked how much the Village ended up getting in grants and Mayor Blais responded \$17.4M. Dan Barusch said the Town was sending out a letter regarding the increase to all residents.

Dan Barusch said there currently is no written IMA for the Village Public Works & Town Highway Department. Keith Lanfear said the original contract for the roll off dumpsters was for about 26 trips per year, but we are now up to around 28-30 per year. Keith Lanfear said this means the cost has gone up about \$4k- \$5k. Rob Lanfear replied that he believes the cost increase to be more in line of \$9k. Dan Barusch suggested the two of them get together and write down everything they trade off and see if there is anything else we can share or if the Village would need to pay the Town the difference. Mayor Blais also suggested they get together and get it all in writing especially for insurance purposes and to also include a brine Co-Op. Both Keith Lanfear and Rob Lanfear agreed they would meet and figure it out. Dan Barusch said there currently is no written IMA for the fuel depot and that he would work on getting it in writing.

Dan Barusch brought up the Rec Center and said there is no written IMA. Gina Mintzer questioned who they were supposed to contact on the weekends when there is an issue with the bathrooms at the Visitor Center and Mayor Blais responded they should contact the Village for any issues. Dan Barusch wants to spell out in an IMA exactly who does what. Councilwoman Marisa Muratori stated that the Town pays \$14.5K and that the people in the Town don't always have access to the field. Mayor Blais responded that the agreement was originally for \$25K but the County came in and gave \$25K so the Village reduced the Towns cost to the \$14.5K. Mayor Blais further explained that the field is used by the Youth Commission which are children of the Town. There was concern over overlap between the Youth Commission and Titans Fast Pitch. The Mayor said the Titans do not start using the field

until the Youth Commission season is done. Dan Barusch asked to identify who and when the field will be used. Mayor Blais said he will have a meeting with the Titans to re-affirm their usage dates and all will be invited. Dan Barusch said there is a lease agreement for the Transfer Station, where the Town pays the taxes. Dan Barusch questioned whether we should consider a split of the property. Trustee Perry brought up that most of the money the Town pays for the field is used for upkeep of the property including mowing, and materials used. Councilwoman Marisa Muratori said the Town had never received a copy of the budget for the field. Mayor Blais said the Village can get her one.

Dan Barusch brought up the next item on the agenda, the planning and zoning director which is his position and said there is an IMA in place that is up for renewal. Dan Barusch said one thing he is looking at adding to his renewal is the MS4 annual program. Dan Barusch said that both the Town and Village both have to do this report annually and he believes that we can join forces on some of the items and do some the report together. Dan Barusch further explained that the permit is changing, and the paperwork could increase by as much as 50%. Dan Barusch brought up that both the Village and the Town would be working on their comprehensive plan and that he believed we could also consolidate some work on that. Dan Barusch asked if both the Town and Village are happy with the services that he provides and the Mayor responded that the Village has included his services in this coming years budget and that the Village is happy.

Dan Barusch started on the next item on the agenda, the sharing of general planning studies. Dan voiced that we had completed the LGEP (Highway/DPW), CREG (Dissolution Study), DEC CSC (Climate Action Plan), ABPP (Fort George and Environs Study), Economic Dev. Plan (APA) Dan said the following are the new studies/projects: Workforce Housing Market Study and Project, Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), potential Consolidation Study (CREG) Dan Barusch said we currently have the following committees: Go Green, Courtland Street, Workforce Housing, DRI, Joint Occ Tax, Historic Preservation Board (future).

Dan Barusch asked Mayor Blais to present the Joint Occupancy Tax. Mayor Blais asked that next year both the Town and the Village give \$30K each because there are so many requests that they have to turn down. Mayor Blais said he does not see a need for an IMA for the Events. Trustee Root stated that he is not a fan of the Joint Occupancy Tax committee as there is no oversight. Trustee Root explained said there are no minutes taken, and therefore there is no transparency. Dan Barusch said that comptroller Jenn Farrell is oversight. Dan Barusch said she takes notes and records the meetings. Mayor Blais said that the awards are a very important way for new accounts to get their foot in the door. Mayor Blais said when the people of the Town and Village vote the members into office, they are putting their faith in the people making the decisions. Trustee Root disagreed. Trustee Root was concerned with a past recipient that had his event cancelled due to covid that did not get his money back. Dan Barusch explained that the money is reimbursable so long as the recipient provide receipts and that in this instance, he does not believe the person provided any receipts. Trustee Root asked if all Board members were able to attend and Dan Barusch responded yes. If there would be a quorum and official minutes would need to be taken, then a clerk would need to be present to take them.

Mayor Blais presented his proposal to the County, the Town, and the Village, to offer his services to stay on as a director of special events. Mayor Blais said he sees a need for someone to help the new incoming Mayor to learn and eventually take over the events. Mayor Blais said last year there were over 82 events and that it takes a great deal of time. Mayor Blais said he is thinking it would be about a two year term and by then the new Mayor would be able to take over. Mayor Blais is asking that the County for \$15K, the Village, \$15K, and the

Town, \$5K. Mayor Blais asked that both the Village and the Town please put the position on the agenda for their next board meetings. Supervisor Dickinson said he thinks it's a great idea.

Dan Barusch presented the Gateway Beautification & Shepard's Park Lifeguards services. Dan Barusch said Judy Gearwar handles the Gateway project, and Jim Martino handles the Lifeguards. Dan Barusch said there were questions in the past as to what the costs were associated with the gateway project and the lifeguards. Keith Lanfear and Judy Gearwar provided a breakdown for the gateway and Jenn Farell had done costs for the lifeguards. Dan Barusch suggested there be a separate meeting soon between the two groups to go over each part of the agreement and get an updated IMA in place that spells it all out. Mayor Blais agreed that another meeting needs to happen.

Dan Barusch went over the last item on the agenda, the balance of the shared services. Dan Barusch said there is the Parking Enforcement for Westbrook Road that has a two-year IMA that is up for renewal. Dan Barusch said there is a new Teen Center and Student Connection IMA that was just signed. Dan Barusch said the Village and Town share the Assessor, Courts, Dog Warden, Historian (2024), and Youth Commission. Dan Barusch read that the last item on the agenda was the special district EMS that is paid for by both the Village and the Town taxpayers.

Supervisor Dickinson said that the relationship is one of cooperation and that we both take advantage of the relationship.

Councilwoman Marisa Muratori asked Dan Barusch if there was a timeframe that we are looking at to get all the IMA's in place. Dan Barusch went over each IMA individually giving the timeframe as follows:

Fire Protection District 1 (LGVFD) – 2024 update/changes- DONE.
Caldwell Sewer District O&M – 2024 update/cost change- DONE.
Caldwell Sewer District WWTP – agreement – DONE.
Village Public Works & Town Highway – New IMA 2023- As we identify- JUNE.
Fuel Depot – IMA renewal 2023- just needs to be signed.
Recreation Center, Transfer Station & Landfill – New IMA 2023- JUNE.
Planning and Zoning Department – IMA renewal 2023- drafted and ready to be signed.
Joint Occupancy Tax – New IMA 2023- JUNE.
Fireworks, Concerts and Events – New IMA 2023- not required.
Gateway Beautification & Shepard's Lifeguards – Revise/Cancel- JUNE.
Westbrook Road Parking Enforcement – IMA renewal 2023- Just needs to be renewed.
Teen Center – IMA renewal 2023- DONE.
Student Connection- IMA renewal 2023- JUNE.

Councilman Vincent Crocitto thanked Mayor Blais for his many years of service and his great leadership.

Supervisor Dickinson thanked everyone for coming, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie K Allen
Village Clerk