

**Village of Buchanan
Mayor & Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
November 6, 2024**

PRESENT: (This meeting was held live and via Zoom)

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker
Trustees Awilda Baez, Anthony Capicotti, Daniel Stewart, Robert Wheeler (via zoom)
Village Administrator Marcus Serrano
Village Attorney Stephanie Porteus
Village Engineer, George Pommer (via zoom)
Village Clerk, Treasurer Cynthia Kempter
Deputy Village Clerk, Sharon Murphy

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. She led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

September 3, 2024 Board Meeting and September 24, 2024 Workshop Meeting

A motion to approve these minutes as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Wheeler with all in favor.

3. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR (agenda items only):

Steven Wan, 5 Donahue Court thanked the Board for promoting pickleball.
Patrick Quirke, 2 Woods Court thanked the Board for supporting pickleball.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Knickerbocker asked Village Engineer Pommer for updates on projects.

Village Engineer Pommer stated that we are coming to the end of the 2024 Roadway Improvement Project. We need to do line striping. Westchester Avenue needs the white lines, yellow lines, pavement crossings and the stop bars. The contractor will use the prices he has in his bid.

Village Engineer Pommer stated that the sewer lining is complete. We reduced the

infiltration by 15,000 gallons per day. The purchase order for the 4th street pump station fence has been submitted and should be completed by the end of the year.

a. Update Regarding Pickleball.

Trustee Baez stated that the last session of the clinic is complete. The group is still interested in playing and learning their skills, so the group will be paying for their own lessons. They thanked the Board for leaving the pavilion open so they can continue to play and for the opportunity to have this time to socialize, make new friends and learn a sport.

b. Update on Recreation Survey.

Mayor Knickerbocker stated the names of the people on the recreation committee: John Palmietto, Megan Starsja, Karen and Rick Boyle and Colleen Lonergan. The formation of the recreation committee was to see what the needs and the interest were in the Village. Trustee Baez stated that the individuals on the committee worked together to see what the residents were interested in doing. Megan Starsja prepared a power point presentation. Megan thanked the Board for the opportunity to look at recreation. Over the last several months, they looked at the facilities and infrastructure. They met with Village Administrator Serrano and Recreation Supervisor Pasquale. They had 67 people respond to the survey. They went through the responses to the survey. They would like to build upon special events. There are areas of opportunity that could be explored to increase recreation.

c. Discussion with Pool Consultant.

John Petroccione stated his background in working on pools and what he is currently working on. He looked at the Village pool and asked the Board what their objective is regarding the pool. Trustee Capicotti replied that we need direction and a design showing what the options are. There was further discussion and Mr. Petroccione will come back with more information.

d. Consider a Motion to Open the Public Hearing Regarding the Altice Franchise Agreement.

A motion to open up the public hearing was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

Frank Alleva, senior director of government affairs for Optimum, explained that the new agreement is based largely off of the existing agreement that was entered

into January 1, 2009. It was for a term of 15 years. The agreement grants Cablevision of Wappingers Falls which is doing business as Altice USA, the authority to operate throughout the entire Village. The Village receives a franchise fee of 2% of their gross cable revenue which is based on the cable services provided to the Village residents. Free basic cable services are offered to Village Hall, the Highway Department and the Fire Department. The agreement provides for a \$5,000.00 grant in support of the Villages public education access capital needs. The new agreement is for 15 years.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

- e. Consider a Motion Authorizing the Mayor to Sign the Altice Franchise Agreement for a Term of 15 Years, a Franchise Fee of 2% and a Peg Grant of \$5,000.00.

A Motion to approve this as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart, with all in favor.

- f. Consider a Motion to Approve Change Order #5 in the amount of \$15,848.00 in Reference to the 2024 Road Improvement Project as Recommended by the Village Engineer.

A Motion to approve this as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Baez, with all in favor.

- g. Consider a Motion Authorizing the Mayor to Sign the Teamster Stipulation of Agreement Regarding a Grievance and the Labor/Automotive Mechanic Position.

A Motion to approve this as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Capicotti, with all in favor.

- h. Consider a Motion to Approve the Request from Trinity Solar for a Solicitation Permit between the hours of 12:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M., Monday – Saturday, but not more than two times a week.

A Motion to approve this as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Baez, with all in favor.

- i. 2024-16 Resolution in Support of Continued and Increased State Aid for Local Governments

A Motion to approve this as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart, with all in favor.

Whereas, until 2024, cities, villages and towns had not received an increase in unrestricted state aid (AIM funding) in 15 years, significantly impacting their ability to provide essential services to their residents; and

Whereas, after a prolonged period without financial support, local governments finally received an increase of \$50 million in unrestricted state aid; and

Whereas, local officials express their gratitude for the \$50 million increase in unrestricted state aid, recognizing it as a positive step towards addressing long-standing funding challenges; and

Whereas, the State has referred to this new aid as Temporary Municipal Assistance, suggesting that such increase may not continue, jeopardizing the sustainability of crucial municipal programs and services; and

Whereas, the property tax cap further limits the ability of local governments to properly fund the programs and services their residents need; and

Whereas, increased and ongoing state aid for local governments is vital for maintaining infrastructure, public safety, housing and other municipal services; and

Whereas, the challenges of inflation, the increasing costs of labor and supplies, and the end of extraordinary federal aid only accentuate the need for consistent and predictable funding to effectively plan for the future and meet the growing needs of their residents;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Village of Buchanan calls upon the Governor and the State Legislature to commit to continuing the additional \$50 million in unrestricted state aid in the 2025-26 State Budget and beyond, and

Be it further resolved, that the Village of Buchanan urges state officials to recognize the need for a long-term plan that ensures consistent and predictable increases in financial support for local governments that keep pace with inflation.

Carried by the Following Votes:

AYES: Mayor Knickerbocker, Trustee Baez, Trustee Capicotti, Trustee Stewart,
Trustee Wheeler

NAYS: None

5. INFORMATION FROM OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS:

a. Justice Reports – September 2024

Received and filed.

b. Police Report – September 2024

Received and filed.

- c. Highway Report – September 2024

Received and filed.

- d. Wastewater Treatment Plant – September 2024

Received and filed.

- e. Building Department – September 2024.

Received and filed.

- f. Buchanan Engine Company – September 2024

Received and filed.

- g. Planning Board – August 22, 2024 and September 26, 2024

Received and filed.

- h. Zoning Board – September 18, 2024 minutes

Received and filed.

- i. Prosecutor's Report – None

- j. Attorney's Report

Village Attorney Porteus gave an update on the negotiations with Homeland Tower. She has spoken with Mr. Comi and they are busy negotiating. The agreement as proposed was lower than they offer to most communities, so they are negotiating that now. Village Attorney Porteus will be writing the Board a memo regarding paper streets to try and take care of some of the open issues. She recommends a change to the Village Code in regard to easements.

Administrator's Report

Village Administrator Serrano stated that at the next Planning Board meeting there will be a public hearing on 300 White Street.

- l. Mayor's Report

Mayor Knickerbocker stated that 13 flags will be put up for Veterans Day. The Town of Cortlandt will hold a Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11 at 11:00 a.m. at Muriel Morabito Center. For elected officials and first responders, the County is holding an informational update at County Center regarding battery storage facilities on November 22.

m. Trustee's Report

Trustee Capicotti congratulated all the politicians who achieved victory on Election Day. He thanked the Recreation Committee for what they did. It's good for the community to come together.

Trustee Wheeler wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Trustee Baez said that she already shared the information on pickleball and the Recreation Committee's presentation.

Trustee Stewart asked about the status of the WQIP grant. Village Administrator Serrano replied it won't be until January or February. Trustee Stewart asked what the status of the Entergy money is. Mayor Knickerbocker stated that after we see where we end up with the grant money, we can contact the state about the Entergy money. Trustee Stewart asked about the status of 3176 Albany Post Road. Village Administrator Serrano replied that they will be applying for a demolition permit. Trustee Stewart asked about the breakdown on the AMS fees. Village Administrator Serrano replied that the estimated fee the Village will net out for AMS is \$430,000.00 and for Village Square we will net out \$23,000.00. The estimated taxes for both properties using the current year tax rate will be \$447,000.00. The recreation fee for both properties will be \$232,500. Trustee Stewart said there is a St. Patrick's Day committee meeting on November 11 at 7:00 P.M. at the fire house.

6. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:

Steve Laker, 181 Cortlandt Street, made thanked the Recreation Committee and invited them and all the public to the St. Patrick's Day committee meeting. They need volunteers.

John Bell, 208 First Street, spoke on behalf of the Buchanan Running Club and thanked everyone for the support they had.

Gregory Lebowitz, 235 Westchester Avenue made public comment about having a street light put on the pole across from his house.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 9:16 P.M. a Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

8. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:06 P.M. a Motion to exit executive session was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

At 10:06 P.M. a Motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor. No monies were expended.