

**SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2014**

The Village of Gowanda Board of Trustees special meeting was called to order by Mayor Heather McKeever at 5:00 p.m. at the Municipal Hall. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Mayor Heather McKeever
Trustee Carol Sheibley
Trustee Pete Sisti
Trustee Barb Nephew
Trustee Paul Zimmermann

Village Employees: Treasurer Cindy Schilling, Village Clerk Kathy Mohawk

Media Present: Samantha McDonnell, Observer

Public Present: Ryan Frykholm and Ron Simmons from Simmons Recovery Consulting, Disaster Coordinator Nick Crassi, John Walgus, Joelle Woodward and James Kubek, Gowanda Central School

Mayor McKeever opened the discussion with Simmons Recovery Consulting by stating that the Village never took on a consulting firm after the 2009 flood and the Village has again sustained damaged from the latest flooding in May.

Mr. Frykholm spoke about the services that Simmons Recovery Consulting would offer. A portion of their fees are reimbursable back to the Village. He advised they have just contracted with the Towns of New Albion, Otto and Randolph to assist them with FEMA recovery. The service represents the Village interests to the State. They coordinate records, document the claims process, review project worksheets and monitor that what was promised to the community is what they get. They do FEMA grant management.

When asked by the Village Board about payment, Mr. Simmons suggested the Village take out a RAN for 1/3 of what they anticipate getting back. Nick Crassi asked Mr. Simmons about the success rate for getting reimbursement. Mr. Simmons indicated they only failed with 1 client in 7 years.

Simmons Recovery would monitor the timeframe for denials. When FEMA challenges a Village claim, it can be modified rather than entirely rewritten. Simmons Recovery bills an hourly rate. FEMA reimburses for direct costs which are anything attributable to a specific grant. 85% of their costs are in this category. The other 15% is indirect costs which are anything that covers all grants, i.e., disaster updates.

The Village cost-share is typically 12 ½ %.

Treasurer Schilling asked Mr. Simmons if they had references.

The Village Board asked about timelines. Mr. Simmons advised that the State has 30 days after an emergency declaration to put on an applicants' briefing. Applicants then have 30 days to submit a request for assistance. This application is then reviewed by the State to determine eligibility. FEMA has 30 days to hold the kick-off meeting with each applicant. Applicants then have 60 days to give FEMA the final list of damages. All projects are reviewed and then an exit meeting is held. Any time extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis.

Simmons Recovery Consulting proposes to meet with the Villages prior to the kick-off meetings. They will do a risk assessment report which includes what wasn't done but should have been and what type of mitigation efforts can be done. They will then submit the report to the Village Board outlining what steps should be taken to help appease FEMA.

Mr. Simmons advised that \$120,000 is now the threshold for small projects. Nick Crassi feels the estimated damages are \$850,000, mostly for the reservoir.

Mr. Frykholm indicated that the services they provide would include directing the FEMA walkthrough. He indicated it is important to track the donated services as well, including volunteer hours and any equipment that was provided. Simmons would be retained by the Village and they would meet with the Village to prepare a strategy before FEMA has ideas.

Disaster Coordinator Crassi advised that the applicant briefing was held two weeks ago in Little Valley.

Mayor McKeever asked Mr. Simmons if they could help with past appeals. He indicated that once a second appeal has been filed, there is nothing that can be done.

Discussion followed about the cost of contracting with Simmons Recovery. Mr. Simmons indicated that the sooner they can do the risk assessment, the better they can protect the Village. They typically work 40 hours per week. The cost could be close to \$100,000. The Board further discussed asking for references, an outline of the process, the deliverables, a scope of work and a timeline.

Mr. Simmons indicated he could give the Village Board a lump sum amount and then provide a plan. When asked about the cost and terms, Mr. Frykholm indicated the contract spells this all out. He sent the contract to Mayor McKeever but no one else had it. Mr. Frykholm advised he would e-mail the contract to Village Clerk Mohawk to make available to the rest of the Board members.

Another meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 12th, at 5:00 p.m. for further discussion of Simmons Recovery Consulting services.

Discussion then turned to road repairs. Trustee Sisti reported on the information presented by Highway Superintendent Denea. He advised that Erie Avenue and the end of Johnson Street from the bridge to West Main Street could be done with CHIPS money. This would leave some money in the CHIPS account. Doing Beech Street and Erie Avenue would use up too much of the money. Trustee Sisti asked if CHIPS money can be used for patching. Treasurer Schilling indicated she would find out.

Motion 114-14. Motion by Trustee Sisti, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to approve redoing Erie Avenue for \$74,112.85 with the use of CHIPS money, and if the funds cannot be used for patching, then approve the repair of Johnson Street from the bridge to West Main Street for \$12,844.30. Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor McKeever asked for approval to appoint Steve Raiport from interim to permanent Officer-in-Charge. She presented a draft job description with a list of duties. There was much discussion about the appointment pertaining to the duties and not enough time to review them. Trustee Sisti indicated he didn't see the urgency of this appointment and thought it could wait until the next meeting. Trustee Sheibley felt the job description should be put in place first.

Motion 115-14. Motion by Trustee Nephew, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to appoint Steve Raiport as Officer-in-Charge from interim appointment. A poll of the Board resulted:

Trustee Nephew – yes

Trustee Zimmermann – yes

Trustee Sisti – yes, but with the comment that he didn't understand the urgency of the appointment

Trustee Sheibley – abstained, indicating that the job description should be put in place first

Mayor McKeever – yes

Motion carried 4 yes, 1 abstention.

Motion 116-14. Motion by Trustee Zimmermann, seconded by Trustee Sheibley to accept the resignation, with regret, of Steve Coudrey as crossing guard. Motion carried 5-0.

John Walgus reported that Davey Tree started tree removal and grubbing at Gateway Park. He asked that the paper report that the Hazmat suits being worn are because of poison ivy, poison oak and various other poisonous vegetation on the site, not because of hazardous waste materials. He indicated that on August 13th the County bulldozers will be spreading some of the dirt and on August 18th, the shared services with the surrounding towns will do final grading of the topsoil.

Motion 117-14. Motion by Trustee Sisti, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to adjourn the special Village Board meeting at 7:05 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Village of Gowanda special Village board meeting is August 12, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen V. Mohawk
Village Clerk