

**SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD MEETING**  
**APRIL 26, 2016**

The Village of Gowanda Board of Trustees special meeting was called to order by Mayor Heather McKeever at 6:00 p.m. at the Municipal Hall. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Mayor Heather McKeever  
Trustee Carol Sheibley  
Trustee Aaron Markham  
Trustee Wanda Koch  
Trustee Paul Zimmermann

Village Employees: Village Clerk Kathy Mohawk, Public Works Superintendent Jason Opferbeck, Treasurer Mark Adamchick, Account Clerk Typist Kathleen Ellis, Village Attorney Deb Chadsey, Village Engineer Burr

Public Present: Jack Broyles, Dorothy Selan, John Walgus, Rob Gaylord, Erich Weyand, Mike Hutchinson,

Media Present: Max Borsuk, Gowanda News  
Phil Palen, Cable Channel 23  
Rebecca Cuthbert, Observer

Mayor McKeever advised that the purpose of the special meeting was to adopt the 2016/2017 Village budget. Trustee Markham indicated he had some questions about the final version. He asked why line A9740.7 Debt Service increased so much. Treasurer Adamchick indicated this number include the RAN which was included last year. Trustee Markham asked about F2144 water charged which doubled. Treasurer Adamchick stated this was a case of re-labeling charges that were placed in other line items. Trustee Sheibley asked if there is a reason the BAN interest is in this budget. Trustee Markham asked about the street maintenance – personal service line is much higher. He questioned whether the Village would be deleting the mechanic position. Trustee Markham also questioned the F8320 line for water supply. Treasurer Adamchick again stated that these charges are because of relabeling items and moving them into different lines. Trustee Sheibley asked why the water and sewer health insurance amounts went up. Treasurer Adamchick indicated that part of the cost is retirement which the Village continues to pay. All three departments have increased as have the deductibles. Trustee Markham asked about the police equipment line which shows that nothing was spent last year. Treasurer Adamchick simplified the budget into line totals and reclassified the amounts. All the personal services are now under street maintenance, not broken down into snow removal, street cleaning, etc.

Trustee Sheibley indicated she feels that removing \$75,000 of garage service should have brought about a bigger tax decrease.

Public Works Superintendent Opferbeck advised he has had 4 or 5 haulers contact him wanting to solicit business. Trustee Sheibley stated there is a solid waste and recycling section in the Village code book. She advised that she spoke with Linda McAndrew from Cattaraugus County to see if the County code superceded the Village code. Ms. McAndrew indicated she did not know.

Mayor McKeever read her budget message:

“Today I present a budget in which the Village of Gowanda continues to develop a sustainable and long term financial plan. This budget reflects changes where we have made cuts in an effort which allows us to be fiscally responsible while demonstrating our priorities. In our budget we have found ways to save on utilities and insurance carriers among other lines and our departments including Fire, Recreation, Public Works and Police continue to help us in our efforts to keep cost low while providing services that help build a higher quality of life for our residents.

Over the past year we have explored different options in how to approach curb side garbage service. Since January 2015 the Village has held several open meetings as we have well thought-out the input from the public, which included a public hearing with a special presentation by DEC and Cattaraugus County. After taking into consideration the public’s feedback and assessing all available options, by passing this budget, curb side garbage pickup will no longer be a service available in the Village of Gowanda. The reason we have been forced to make this hard pressed decision came down to cost. Even after raising the garbage tag revenue last year from \$2 to \$3 it was not enough to cover the cost of our garbage contract. With added requirements to include curb side recycling the Village was projected to have to pay approximately \$75,000 from the general fund if we continued to offer curb side service which would have resulted in an increase of 5% to the tax levy and a projected 1.5% - 3% annually increase. It is also notable that if the Village kept garbage service, residents would not have been able to choose their own hauler, they would have to participate with whatever service the Village offered. As we move forward without garbage service the Village continues to work closely with Cattaraugus County in an effort to offer affordable options to our residents. We will have an initial list of haulers available at the village hall as early as next week.

As we are moving forward we realize that code enforcement and public safety continues to be concerns for our Village residents. This budget includes funding for a new team approach as we tackle our code enforcement challenges. We have appointed two police officers as our new code enforcers. Our current building inspector will be on call to assist with projects and train our new code enforcement staff. This approach will allow for better enforcement and I am confident that by taking a community policing approach we will find success in the program. This team will also be charged with reviewing and updating our current code. We will also continue to strengthen our police force by maintaining the task force position and adding another full time police officer to our staff, as we have made cuts in other areas of the department it will allow us to hire another full time police officer with keeping the same budget as our last fiscal year. I am proud of the efforts our police force has made in tackling the current drug epidemic and the Village board stands behind their efforts in supporting them by giving them the tools needed to keep our community safe and healthy.

Over the past year we have moved forward with long term borrowing, the board is committed to following through with the needed capital improvements projects. This budget does include a reasonable and slight increase to the current sewer rates, this increase in rates will allow us to update and maintain working order in our sewer plant. It is also notable that the board followed through with their government efficiency plan by working with the Town of Collins as we now oversee their water department. We hope to carry on in this effort to continue working toward shared services with NYS and other municipalities. We are also working towards reorganizing our Department of Public Works, through this effort we will continue to cut costs. By appointing a Department of Public Works Superintendent we will now have the ability to work as one department and eliminate the need for duplicated equipment and costs associated with having three separate departments. Our priority will be to continue to train our current Public Works employees to become both dual certified with water and sewer licenses. I am proud of the dedication our employees have to help continue to solve problems that have been overlooked for too long. I foresee many opportunities this reorganization will produce. I'm excited for the future of our Public Works Department as we reorganize and develop a long term debt free sustainable plan.

With that said, we will not be overriding the tax cap this year our budget being presented for 2016/17 is a -2.5% decrease to the tax levy. It is important to point out that for both Erie and Cattaraugus Counties the tax assessed values have gone down, this means depending on what county you live in, your taxes will remain the same or have a very slight increase. Our budget reflects we are maintaining priorities such as public safety by strengthen our Police Department and developing a sustainable and cost effective Department of Public Works. It is unfortunate that the tax assessments in both counties have gone down, but I am very hopeful that with new developments on South Water Street, projects such as the construction phase of the Safe Routes to School Grant and the results our Brown Fields Opportunity Go-wanda grant initiative we will continue to strengthen and grow our community.”

Motion 37-16. Motion by Trustee Zimmermann, seconded by Trustee Markham to adopt the 2016-2017 Village budget as presented. Motion carried 4-1. Trustee Sheibley opposed.

Motion 38-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Koch to appoint Zachary Fisher as a part-time summer employee, effective immediately. Motion carried 5-0.

Phil Palen reported that 13 trees were purchased from nurseries for spring planting. He advised that 2 oak trees were grown by his father and they were planted on upper Buffalo Street.

Mayor McKeever read the Arbor Day Proclamation:

“WHEREAS, in 1872 Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and  
WHEREAS, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and  
WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, and  
WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and  
WHEREAS, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community and  
WHEREAS, trees, wherever they are planted are a source of joy and spiritual renewal,  
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Heather McKeever, Mayor of the Village of Gowanda, do hereby proclaim April 26, 2016 as Arbor Day in the Village of Gowanda and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and  
FURTHER, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.”

Motion 39-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Koch to adopt the foregoing Arbor Day Resolution. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Works Superintendent Opferbeck presented a proposal from Hunt Engineers for the meter replacement project. He indicated that the cost of \$4600 would be split with the Town of Collins. This proposal would start the process of preparing a bid package for the water meter replacement project. If this could be approved now, the cost would be split with Collins. Otherwise, the Village would have to pay the entire amount for Hunt Engineers to prepare the RFP. Village Engineer Burr advised it would cost him more to do the RFP. Public Works Superintendent Opferbeck indicated that a lot of his current budget numbers were based on getting these new meters. This current proposal indicates the Village would not exceed \$2300 for these engineering services.

Motion 40-16. Motion by Trustee Koch, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to approve the meter replacement proposal for engineering services prepared by Hunt Engineers as presented. Motion carried 4-1. Trustee Sheibley abstained until she had further time to review the proposal.

Motion 41-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to adjourn the special Village Board meeting at 7:05 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 42-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to recall the special meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 43-16. Motion by Trustee Zimmermann, seconded by Trustee Sheibley to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the GARC Board members, Village Attorney Chadsey and other personnel matters. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 44-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to come out of Executive Session. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 45-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Koch to authorize Village Attorney Chadsey to prepare and submit a proposal to the Potentially Responsible Parties for the Peter Cooper Superfund Site. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 46-16. Motion by Trustee Markham, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to adjourn the special Village Board meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen V. Mohawk/Kathleen M. Ellis  
Village Clerk/Deputy Clerk