

The Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees met in the Municipal Building, 14 Baker Street, Patchogue, New York on Monday, January 24, 2022 with public viewing through video streaming on YouTube and in person.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Pontieri with Deputy Mayor Krieger and Trustees Brinkman, Carillo, Ferb, Keyes, McHeffey, Village Attorney Egan, and Deputy Village Clerk Braile present. Village Treasurer Krawczyk and Village Clerk Devlin were absent.

The flag salute was made and the safety message was given.

Deputy Village Clerk Braile asked the Board to approve Board Meeting minutes from January 10, 2022.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee McHeffey, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Board meeting minutes from January 10, 2022.

Deputy Village Clerk Braile asked the Board to accept the 2021-2022 report of the Receiver of Taxes.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee McHeffey, and unanimously carried, the Board accepted the 2021-2022 report of the Receiver of Taxes as presented.

Deputy Village Clerk Braile stated the total bills for the period ending January 24, 2022 were \$781,029.03. The five largest bills were as follows: \$177,745.78 for NYS Employees Health Insurance; \$59,635.67 for Trius; \$55,996.00 for Kubota Membrane Corp; \$43,296.98 for Town of Brookhaven; and \$33,248.60 for Russel Reid.

General	\$ 530,846.26
Trust & Agency	\$ 17,687.11
Cap Projects	\$ 10,501.66
Sewer Fund	\$ 208,028.19
B.I.D. Fund	\$ 1,708.96
Housing Fund	\$ 0.00
CDA Fund	\$ 6,748.10
General Bills	\$ 5,508.75
Totals	\$ 781,029.03

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of the bills as presented.

Mayor Pontieri noted that the one expense for Trius was for a vehicle that had been obtained through a grant which was split between Patchogue and the Village of Bellport. Patchogue was picking up 75% of the cost and Bellport 25% of the cost. He indicated that the membrane expense was for the sewer treatment plant which came out of the sewer fund portion of the budget as well as the Russel Reid expense.

Mayor Pontieri invited Chris Reno from the Village's auditing firm, Cullen & Danowski, to step forward to review a presentation with the Board.

Mr. Reno indicated that his firm had reviewed the Village's financial statements to ensure that no material mistakes had been made. They had found no such mistakes. Internal controls had also been assessed, as well as compliance measures that had been taken. Any issues or material weaknesses would have been cited in their report. The Village had none of these as noted in the opinion that had been provided and would be followed up with a separate letter stating such findings. Mr. Reno continued by noting that a review had also been done based on comptroller requirements with a management letter issued if there had been any concerns noted. He stated that the Village was one of a few of their clients who had not received such a letter since no issues had been found. Any issues that had been found in the past had been quickly resolved. A report had also been issued on the Village's Justice Court which was also clean. Mr. Reno indicated that a letter of communication with the Board was included in the report which noted that minimal issues with the audit process had occurred. He stressed that the Village had a clean audit, was financially stable with a projected 30% reserve, and taxes were stable which was rare.

Mr. Reno then asked that the Board accept the report as presented.

Mayor Pontieri indicated that this annual report provided a good look at where the Village was financially. It was especially nice to note that the Village had 31% of its budget in reserve funds. This allowed the Village to be in the position to recover quickly from natural disasters such as Superstorm Sandy. Mr. Reno concurred that this eliminated the need to borrow funds in anticipation of being reimbursed. Mayor Pontieri indicated that the federal government reimbursed funds after local municipalities spent them to recover after incidents, so reserve funding prevented excessive interest payments on borrowed money. He also noted that the Village did not have to bond the purchase of smaller pieces of equipment such as pick-up trucks and other similar types of vehicles due to this reserve funding.

Mr. Reno indicated that he was always available throughout the year should the Board or Treasurer's Office have any questions. Mayor Pontieri observed that last year the Village had taken \$500,000 from the reserve funds to stabilize taxes. It was anticipated that a similar amount would be appropriated for this year's budget to keep taxes at a reasonable rate. He then thanked Mr. Reno for his work with the Village. Mr. Reno expressed his appreciation for the Mayor's remarks and noted that he had been working with the Village since 2005.

Mayor Pontieri asked if there were any questions from the Board or the public. There was no response.

Mayor Pontieri asked the Board to accept the 2021 fiscal year audit.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee Brinkman, and unanimously carried, the Board accepted the 2021 fiscal year audit as presented and prepared by Chris Reno from Cullen & Danowski.

Mayor Pontieri asked the Board to grant approval for an out of district sewer connection for 160 South Ocean LLC and Mulford Bay LLC. Village Attorney Egan indicated that this was for the Labor Department building at 160 South Ocean Avenue and the vacant lot which was behind it near the railroad tracks.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee McHeffey, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval for an out of district sewer connection for 160 South Ocean LLC and Mulford Bay LLC.

Deputy Mayor Krieger noted that the Theatre was open and staging shows, so he encouraged everyone to check out the Theatre's web site for information on them. There was plenty of room to social distance. He also noted that masks were required inside the Theatre.

Deputy Mayor Krieger asked the Board to approve hiring a Chief Election Inspector for the March 15, 2022 Village Election.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire Lorraine Crowley as Chief Election Inspector for the March 15, 2022 Village Election at a payment of \$400 for the day.

Deputy Mayor Krieger asked the Board to approve hiring Chairperson of the Election Inspectors for the March 15, 2022 Village Election.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire Camille Brideson, Donna Cochrane, and Jessica Boehm as Chairperson of the Election Inspectors for the March 15, 2022 Village Election at payment of \$210 for the day.

Deputy Mayor Krieger asked the Board to approve hiring Election Inspectors for the March 15, 2022 Village Election.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Carillo, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire the following Election Inspectors for the March 15, 2022 Village Election: Gervaise Baker, Mary Ellen Bodkin, Kelly Berwick, Judy Sullivan, Aida

Chimelis, Paul Paquette, Alice Painteer, Pat Condos, Paulette Green, Pamela Gregory, Aida Rodriguez, Duane Spak, John Terlecki, Patrick Molluso, and Grace Molluso.

Deputy Mayor Krieger asked the Board to approve awarding the bid for the removal, transportation, and disposal of liquid sludge from the sewage treatment facility.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to award the bid for the removal, transportation, and disposal of liquid sludge from the sewage treatment facility to Clear River.

Deputy Mayor Krieger asked the Board for approval to hire a part-time Public Safety Officer.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Krieger, seconded by Trustee Keyes, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire Lee Depolan as a part-time Public Safety Officer at \$17.60 per hour starting Wednesday, January 26th.

Deputy Mayor Krieger then noted for his neighbors near Central Avenue and St. Joseph's College that he hoped the sewage extension work being done in this area to connect St. Joseph's Student Center to the sewer system would be completed shortly. A great job was being done on this project, and he assured everyone that the road would be brought back to a nice flat surface.

Trustee Keyes noted that he had some good news on a personal front. Years ago, his son had performed in the South Ocean Middle School production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, and he had just learned that his granddaughter had been chose for the lead in the production of *Annie* in her school musical. He was a very proud of her accomplishments.

Trustee Keyes indicated that he had received a report on the bike share/pedal share program from Bethpage Credit Union. He noted that Patchogue had come in third in terms of usage behind the Town of Riverhead and the Village of Babylon. Mascot Dock was the most heavily used location in the Village for picking up and dropping off equipment. Trustee Keyes stated that he was looking forward to the return of this program in the spring and continuing its success in Patchogue.

Trustee Keyes noted that he had mentioned at the previous meeting that he had been concerned about the low number of registrations for the basketball program. He was happy to report that registrations had increased, and there had been great turnouts for the last two Fridays of the program. Trustee Keyes indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department prioritized providing recreational opportunities over obtaining revenue, but it was nice to see that the basketball program would provide a net gain to the department.

Trustee Keyes also noted that Mr. Smith had commented at the last meeting that the living shoreline project at Shorefront Park was in jeopardy due to funding issues. Since then, some discussions had taken place with regard to a few changes to be made to the plan, and a contract proposal had been received from an engineer which was being reviewed by Village Attorney Egan. The proposal contained some exciting suggestions, and he hoped that it could be moved forward shortly.

Trustee Keyes then indicated that the pickleball courts would be rehabbed shortly. Mayor Pontieri inquired as to the tennis courts. Trustee Keyes stated that those would be revamped as well. He noted that the Village had a great partnership with the school district too since South Ocean Middle School used the tennis courts. The Recreation Department also used River Elementary's gym for basketball. This would help keep this partnership strong. Trustee Keyes indicated that this project would involve a complete removal of what was there down to the base followed by reconstruction. He noted that some revenue was obtained from the use of the pickleball courts from non-residents who used them. The pickleball courts would be turned from east to west to face north and south due to issues with the sun throughout the day.

Trustee Keyes indicated that he had met with representatives from Circuit which was a company similar to Quik Ride which would provide transportation by electric vehicles. There were a couple of actions which could be taken with their proposal. One was to obtain the National Grid parking lot for employee parking and install some electric charging stations there. The Circuit shuttle could then bring the employees from the parking lot to their places of business. It could

also help with shuttling individuals who might need to park on the outskirts of the Village to Main Street businesses on the weekends. In addition, from Monday to Friday, this service could be used to help individuals who did not have vehicles travel to and from their jobs more safely than by walking by arranging for pick up and drop off spots throughout the community. Trustee Keyes noted that he felt many of these actions could be taken while keeping costs associated with the program low. He would keep the Board updated on any additional information he obtained.

Trustee Keyes indicated that he had also discussed at the last meeting that the DEC had requested to trap and tag mallard ducks, but the Village had been waiting on a Certificate of Insurance. That insurance certificate had been received. Deputy Mayor Krieger inquired as to why this action was being taken. Trustee Keyes stated that the DEC wanted to document female mallard's breeding habits and locations.

Trustee Keyes asked the Board to grant approval for the Elly Cares Project, Inc. and Elite Feats to hold the "Stomp the Stigma 5K" at Shorefront Park. The race was named in honor of a young high school student who had struggled with some mental issues and tragically lost her life at an early age.

Upon a motion by Trustee Keyes, seconded by Trustee Brinkman, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval for the Elly Cares Project, Inc. and Elite Feats to hold the "Stomp the Stigma 5K" on May 28th at Shorefront Park with a 7:00 a.m. set up and 9:00 a.m. race start.

Mayor Pontieri asked for confirmation that approximately eight 5K runs were generally held over the course of the year. Trustee Keyes stated that this was correct but noted that decisions had not yet been made on whether a few of them would be held. Since this was for such an important cause, a decision had been made to move forward with it.

Trustee Keyes asked the Board to grant approval to hire a Youth Winter Basketball Assistant Director.

Upon a motion by Trustee Keyes, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire Joe Abate as a Youth Winter Basketball Assistant Director at \$18 per hour.

Trustee Keyes asked the Board to grant approval to hire a Youth Winter Basketball Assistant Director.

Upon a motion by Trustee Keyes, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to hire Thomas Norman as a Youth Winter Basketball Assistant Director at \$17 per hour.

Trustee Brinkman noted that a Planning Board meeting was scheduled for the following night, and a Zoning Board meeting scheduled for February 1st.

Trustee Brinkman expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Building Department employees for utilizing the new Village's web site to a greater potential to share information more readily with residents. All of the applications, documents, and minutes for 2021 Planning and Zoning meetings had been posted online, as well as media links to YouTube videos of the meetings. This made it much easier for residents interested in these meetings to find the information they were seeking.

Trustee Ferb asked the Board to grant approval for the Patchogue Lioness Club to hold their 18th Annual Puppy Walk. He noted that this event raised funds to sponsor a guide dog and indicated that it cost \$6,000 to sponsor one. However, it cost \$50,000 each and three years to train these dogs.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee Brinkmann, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval for the Patchogue Lioness Club to hold their 18th Annual Puppy Walk on Sunday, May 22nd from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Trustee Ferb asked the Board to grant approval for South Ocean Middle School to tie purple

ribbons around Village poles the week of February 7th.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee Carillo, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval for South Ocean Middle School to tie purple ribbons around Village Poles the week of February 7th in recognition of PS I Love You Day and help raise mental health and suicide prevention awareness.

Trustee McHeffey indicated that the Building and Housing Department was taking advantage of the slower time of year in order to concentrate on such items as graffiti removal. He noted that some bulkheading work would be done by Lombardi's shortly which would result in sidewalk closure on that side of the street.

Trustee McHeffey indicated that the CDA would be holding a public hearing at their February 3rd meeting to discuss its five year plan and its public authority budget. The CDA would be soliciting community feedback on where grant funds should be spent in the coming years, so he invited anyone interested to attend this meeting.

Trustee Carillo indicated that the Village was working with individuals and organizations in the community to get COVID tests for Village residents.

Trustee Carillo also noted that the Patchogue-Medford Library had created marketing images to promote pedestrian safety as well as the use of the available safety vests. She reminded everyone that safety vests could be obtained from Village Hall, the library, and community organizations. Additional donations of vests had been obtained, and she thanked everyone who had contributed to this program.

Deputy Mayor Krieger noted that a meeting had recently been held to discuss the courthouse parking lot improvements and indicated that work should begin on this project within the next three months. Mayor Pontieri stated that there had been much discussion about tiered parking in the past which would have resulted in a net gain of approximately 220 spaces. Taking this property that was currently available and redeveloping it would result in approximately 199 spaces. The County would be providing approximately \$1 million towards the project, and the Village would need to provide approximately \$1 million towards it as well. Expenses on the Village side would be covered through metered parking revenue and not impact taxpayers. This cost would still be a great savings over the projected cost of over \$7 million for the tiered parking previously considered.

Trustee Ferb noted that, in reviewing the audit report, he had noticed that the Village's budget expenses from 2017 to 2021 had remained consistent at approximately \$13 million in spite of the huge increases in expenses beyond the Village's control such as retirement system and health insurance costs. The fact that expenses could be kept level over that many years given these factors was pretty remarkable. Mayor Pontieri expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Village Treasurer's office staff, since this could not be done without their assistance. Trustee Ferb agreed and thanked them as well. Mayor Pontieri noted that the staff did an excellent job in monitoring the various department expenses and keeping them under control.

Mayor Pontieri if anyone from the public wished to be heard.

Giovanni Fernandez, 109 Jennings Avenue, stepped forward. Mr. Fernandez spoke in Spanish which was translated by Trustee Carillo. He noted that he came to Patchogue in 1990 and had resided in the community for 31 years. When he first had come here, there was a small number of Ecuadorians, but the Ecuadorian community had grown a lot since that time. He inquired if the Village would be able to provide a safe location where members of this community could do sports safely, such as soccer, since they had been here so long and numbered so many. Mr. Fernandez noted that they had seen many changes and growth in Patchogue over the years, and as parents, they would be happy to have somewhere where their children could safely play sports. He then thanked the Board for their attention. Trustee Keyes inquired if Mr. Fernandez was requesting a structured soccer league or something similar. Mr. Fernandez stated that he was not asking for a league but rather soccer fields where the families could go and play on weekends. Trustee Keyes indicated that in the past, there had been a lot of activity behind 380 Bay Avenue, but that had not been seen the past couple of years, possibly because of the pandemic. Even though these were not official fields, such activity had occurred there in the

past. Trustee Carillo indicated that she had heard from the community that there was not proper lighting in that area, and there was no proper soccer field area just grass. She believed that they were requesting soccer fields be put in place near the baseball fields. Village Attorney Egan inquired as to the policy for the Village to use school district grounds after hours. Mayor Pontieri stated that he was not sure but could make some inquiries. Village Attorney Egan suggested that this might be able to be addressed by arranging for use of school fields after school hours or weekends since the schools had professional, good fields. Mayor Pontieri noted that the school district used the Village's tennis courts, so this might be a possibility. He inquired if Mr. Fernandez would be willing to work with the Village to open discussions with the school district. Mr. Fernandez stated that he would be happy to do so. Mayor Pontieri asked Mr. Fernandez to provide his contact information to Trustee Keyes. Trustee Carillo noted that Mr. Fernandez spoke English but felt he would be nervous in front of the Board which was why he had chosen to speak in Spanish.

Jaquelyn Hollands indicated that she and her husband, Craig, owned the property located at 100 West Main Street. The current store there was Energy Bar. Ms. Hollands stated that she was here to discuss the ongoing problem with parking occurring in the right of way behind their building. The problem was so large that sometimes their tenant could not even access the building due to being blocked by parked cars that should not be parked there. Deputy Mayor Krieger asked for confirmation that the property in question was on Railroad Avenue. Ms. Hollands stated that this was correct. There were four stores on the west side of Railroad Avenue. There were two parking spaces behind Village owned property, then there was their property and two more stores. Deputy Mayor Krieger inquired if their property had private parking. Ms. Hollands stated that this was correct. Other than the two spaces on the Village owned property, the remainder of the parking was theirs. The other businesses in this area had chosen to use their space for purposes other than parking. Ms. Hollands reiterated that the issue was that the right of way was being used on a daily basis for parking. In November, she had met with Michael Reccio and reviewed surveys of the property with him to determine that there was an actual right of way. Ms. Hollands stressed that her tenant had been upset for well over a year due to this ongoing problem. People continued to park there even though they had installed "Private Property" signage and fencing. Ms. Hollands noted that she had visited the property on different days and times, and there was always someone parked there. Deputy Mayor Krieger inquired if it was the same car or person doing this. Ms. Hollands stated that it was often the same cars, but sometimes people pulled there to pick up something quickly from a nearby restaurant. She was especially concerned about the problem with emergency vehicles being able to access the property if needed. When she met with Mr. Reccio in November, he had suggested that the Board consider making this a fire zone. Ms. Hollands indicated that this was a serious and ongoing problem, and Village Code Enforcement could not help since the right of way was considered private property. She would like to take whatever action was necessary to alleviate this issue. Village Attorney Egan inquired if she knew of a Planning Board application with regard to the Tap Room property. Ms. Hollands stated that she did not know anything about that. Village Attorney Egan indicated that there was quite a bit involved with these properties including a dumpster location issue. He noted that the Board was approached once in awhile with regard to problems with parking on private property. Unfortunately, Village code officers could not enforce private property parking issues. This was a police department, trespassing problem. Since private property signage was in place, cars illegally parked there could be towed. However, this could be cumbersome to do. The other option was to designate this as a fire lane which would be enforceable by the fire marshal. However, this would only encompass the right of way, not the parking spots. Ms. Hollands stated that she understood this. Village Attorney Egan indicated that the Village Board could schedule a public hearing to designate this area as a fire zone but suggested that she also get consent from the other adjoining property owners as well. Ms. Hollands stated that she did not think the Tap Room property owners would agree to this since they were using this area for parking, and she was not sure about the other business owner. Village Attorney Egan indicated that he would speak with Fire Marshal Reccio and get a report from him with regard to establishment of a fire lane. He also suggested that Ms. Hollands speak with the owner of the accounting business to determine if they had any objections to this action. Village Attorney Egan indicated that it would be possible to place the resolution on the next Board meeting's agenda if the Fire Marshal provided his report within the week. Deputy Mayor Krieger inquired if cars were rotating out of there on a regular basis. Ms. Hollands stated that she was not sure, but it was usually the same vehicles unless someone was running in quickly to a nearby store. Village Attorney Egan asked for confirmation that she would not object to the Village going 20 ft. from the rear of her building to the property line to designate as

a fire zone. Ms. Hollands stated that she was fine with this. Village Attorney Egan stated that since was being done with her consent there should be no problem; however, including the additional properties would most likely involve further study. Ms. Hollands asked for confirmation that this area would no longer be designated as a right of way. Village Attorney Egan concurred and noted that right of ways should not be utilized for parking, only for ingress or egress.

David Patelco, 23 West 3rd St., stated that he had been a Village resident for over seventeen years. He expressed concern that he had seen an article on the Patch last week that stated that the Village required proof of COVID vaccination for residents to be able to attend meetings. Mr. Patelco indicated that he had immediately contacted Village Clerk Devlin who had told him that this was a misunderstanding. He felt that this was untrue since the information had been posted on the Village's web site, and Village Clerk Devlin had been quoted in the article. Mayor Pontieri stated that the Village had to follow New York State requirements. He also noted that Mr. Patelco did not have a mask on which was also required, and he requested that he not return to Village Hall in the future without one. Mr. Patelco indicated that there were medical exemptions allowed, and he did not believe he had to disclose his private medical information in order to attend a public meeting. Mayor Pontieri stated that Mr. Patelco had not been stopped from attending the meeting. Village Attorney Egan asked Mr. Patelco to state his opinion and move on. Mr. Patelco indicated that Title 10-2.60 for private businesses allowed a COVID vaccination policy or a mask policy. It did not permit segregation of groups of people based on their vaccination status. He reiterated his concern that the article on the Patch and the Village's web site, which had since been updated, had indicated that proof of vaccination status was required to attend a public meeting. Mayor Pontieri stated that people could choose to wear a mask instead. Mr. Patelco indicated that this was not what the article or web site had stated. He felt that the Village had tried to take action which was illegal and would have done so if he had not expressed his objections to the Village Clerk. Deputy Mayor Krieger expressed concern that Mr. Patelco was not wearing a mask and could spread COVID as a result. Mr. Patelco reiterated his concern that the article and Village web site had stated that COVID vaccination proof was required to attend public meetings which was not true. Mayor Pontieri stressed that Mr. Patelco should be wearing a mask. Mr. Patelco inquired as to who had implemented the policy with regard to vaccination mandate requirements. Mayor Pontieri stated that he was following New York State requirements. Village Attorney Egan thanked him for expressing his opinion.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee Brinkman, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Signed _____
Valerie L. Braile, Deputy Village Clerk

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