

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Village of Haverstraw Board of Trustees on Monday, April 4th, 2011, beginning at 8:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL	Trustee Batista	- Present
	Trustee Bueno	- Present
	Trustee Watson	- Present
	Trustee Dominguez	- Present
	Mayor Kohut	- Present

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor opened the meeting by introducing Judge Henry Gruffi, who recently retired as Acting Justice for the Village of Haverstraw Justice Court. The Mayor spoke highly about Judge Gruffi and his 17 years of dedicated service and commitment to our village, starting in 1994 with his appointment as Acting Justice to his retirement this year. The Mayor acknowledged his accomplishments throughout his years sitting on the bench of the Village Justice Court, where his work ethics, compassion and sense of value made him a person deserving of everyone's respect, but also through his sense of fairness and caring gave his respect and consideration to everyone. He also mentioned the ladies of the Village Hall who will miss his smile and greetings whenever he sat on the bench. The Mayor then read a plaque, which he presented to Judge Gruffi on behalf of the Village Board.

The Mayor invited Judge Ronald DeCaprio to speak who reiterated the Mayor's statements. He also mentioned what a pleasure it was to work with the Judge for the past 4 years and that he has a huge amount of respect for Judge Gruffi who is a sound lawyer, a sound justice and with all his experience, a great man to turn to for some sound advice. He also acknowledged what a great mentor Judge Gruffi was, as well as being a good friend and a tremendous asset to the Village of Haverstraw. He will be truly missed.

Judge Henry Gruffi: Judge Gruffi graciously thanked everyone and mentioned he would be available to serve at any time, except when he is headed for Atlantic City.

Judge Thomas Walsh: Judge Walsh had the pleasure of working with Judge Gruffi from the time of his appointment in 1997. He spoke of Judge Gruffi as always being a fair man and judge who gained the respect of the community, the Village Board, his fellow judges and all those who appeared before him.

The Mayor then continued the meeting with the first Public Participation inviting the public to ask questions or make comments.

Noel Rappaport, 31 New Main Street: Mr. Rappaport spoke to the Board about some complaints he has heard, one of which is inadequate lighting on several of the side streets, in particular Division Street. The other item involved moving criminals from holding cells in other municipalities to and from the Village.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that prisoners have to be transported from place to place because they must be tried in the municipality where the

criminal action took place. He explained further that when an arrest is made in the Village, that person is brought to the Town Police Station until the Village can contact a judge to reside at the arraignment here in the Village.

Noel Rappaport: Mr. Rappaport then inquired how much money would be lost if there were no court in the Village and who would receive the money from the meters and ticket violations.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that the Village does not make money from the court stating there is more expense than profit. With regard to ticket violations, funds for parking tickets would remain in the Village, with or without a court. He was not sure if other fines and penalties would remain with the Village or go to the Town, stating however, that the courts were not designed to make money but to dispense justice.

With no further public participation, the Mayor opened the Public Hearing on the Proposed Mayor's Village Budget. He mentioned that the Trustees still have to review the budget for approval by April 30th. He stated that the total spending from his proposed budget for the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year would amount to \$8,237,483.00. He explained that the increase of approximately \$142,000.00 from the previous year was due mostly to increases in legal fees and judgments/claims for lawsuits still pending in the amount of \$110,000.00, an increase in the NYS Retirement Account to which the Village contributes amounting to \$137,000.00, an increase in Workers Compensation Funds of \$36,000.00 and an increase in Hospital/Medical Benefits of \$44,000.00. The Village has had to offset this increase by making reductions elsewhere. As proposed, this budget shows an increase of 2.018%; with no proposed increase to unionized employees and a 3% increase to the non-unionized employees who have gone without a raise for two years.

Judge Ronald DeCaprio: Judge DeCaprio inquired how the \$9,700.00 for the two Village Justices was broken down.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that \$4,000.00 would go to the new Acting Village Justice bringing his salary to \$14,000.00 with the remainder to increase Judge DeCaprio's salary up to \$40,000.00.

Judge Ronald DeCaprio: Judge DeCaprio has reviewed the budget and does not feel it is fitting to increase the salary for the Acting Village Justice position since there would be no change in responsibility whatsoever and the person being appointed has no experience in that position. He then suggested that instead of such a huge increase in his own salary, he would rather his two clerks receive more money. He stated that the clerks work on a daily basis handling all the affairs of the court, whereas both he and the Acting Judge have other jobs and incomes from other resources and the clerks have not had a raise in years. He would prefer the money be given to the clerks before giving a 40% increase to someone who has not had any experience in a Judge's position.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor then mentioned that also included in the proposed budget is a proposal to reduce the Mayor's salary from its existing level to \$35,000.00 per year as a part-time position.

Noel Rappaport: Mr. Rappaport: Mr. Rappaport inquired what the increase would be if the budget passed as currently written. He also questioned whether or not commercial properties would be taxed at the same rate as residential properties.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that the average residential property tax bill is somewhere between \$2,000.00 and \$2,500.00, which would put the increase at approximately \$40.00 to 50.00 for the year, adding that in the Village of Haverstraw, commercial properties are taxed at the same tax rate as residential properties. He then mentioned that the trustees, along with the Treasurer and accountant, still have to review the budget, therefore, there may be revisions, however the budget must be passed by April 30th to be submitted to the State on time.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to close the Public Hearing on the proposed budget.

RESOLUTION #81-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Francisco Batista

Motion carries: All

Joanna Garcia, 25 Clinton Street: Ms. Garcia only spoke Spanish, which was interpreted by Trustee Francisco Batista. She was speaking about the huge amount of cats wandering around the village. Her son is allergic to cats so this is a risk to his health. She does not have any cats, but there are always pregnant cats in her yard and she cannot believe the village would allow all these animals to roam free throughout the village.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor inquired if there was someone in the neighborhood feeding the cats.

Joanna Garcia: Ms. Garcia responded "NO". She has spoken to Animal Control who has taken 6 cats away so far.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor stated that the board would see if there was anything that could be done to resolve the cat issue.

Mayor Kohut:

REPORTS OF VILLAGE OFFICIALS

VILLAGE ATTORNEY, Jay Hood, Jr.: Counselor Hood had nothing to report.

VILLAGE TREASURER, Judith Curcio: Ms. Curcio gave the following report for December, January and February, the 3rd quarter of the fiscal year:

Total Disbursements	\$2,227,325
Revenue	\$ 515,196

Ms. Curcio had nothing further to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT, Mayor Kohut: The Mayor stated that the village will be continuing programs with the Rockland County Youth Bureau, acquiring summer help for the village in various departments. Rockland County pays half the hourly wage with the Village paying the other half. Additionally, AMERICORP students will be working with the Department of Public Works for the summer. Also, the Academy of Finance, a high school program for students majoring in business, the Village will be taking two high school students to work part time in the Treasurer's Office for the summer.

The Village is preparing to start permitting WEB payments through its WEB site for various fees that the Village collects; taxes, permit fees, etc. There will be no cost to the Village and WEB payments will ease the burden of getting to the Village Hall to pay fees on time.

The Mayor received a request from St. Peter's Church to hold their annual Good Friday procession on Friday, April 22nd. The march will start at St. Peter's School, take its usual route through the Village and then back to the school.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to grant permission for their annual Good Friday procession.

RESOLUTION #82-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Terrence Watson

Motion Carries: All

The Mayor received a letter from Brooker Engineering stating that the Annual Storm Water Compliance Report for 2011 is due. Brooker has been preparing this report for the past several years and will once again be filing the MS 4 and MCQ annual reports for 2011 at a fee of \$950.00.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to authorize Brooker Engineering to prepare the 2011 Annual Storm Water Compliance Reports for 2011.

RESOLUTION #83-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Terrence Watson

Motion Carries: All

The Mayor mentioned that a large amount of the funding for the Streetscape Project has rematerialized for 2011 in the amount of \$2.5 million. The board has met with the landscape architects who are approximately 60% to 90% done with all the drawings. They will now continue to move forward with the plans. The Mayor did mention, however, that it will probably be spring of 2012 before construction begins. The board anticipates having a contract by late summer or early fall with groundbreaking at that time. The project is now back on track.

The Mayor then mentioned that Senator Carlucci is sponsoring an Easter Egg Roll and Family Health Fair at Peck's Pond, Sunday, April 10th at 2:00 to 4:00 PM for anyone wishing to attend.

Mayor Kohut:

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FIRE & ORDINANCES – **Trustee Rafael Bueno:** Trustee Bueno mentioned that the fire department held its Chief’s Convention on April 7th with the following chiefs being elected:

CHIEF	Patrick J. McNamee
1 st Assistant	Albert Lynch
2 nd Assistant	Robert Drexler
3 rd Assistant	Thomas Price
4 th Assistant	John “Bart” Gordon

Trustee Bueno had nothing further to report.

PUBLIC WORKS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – **Trustee Terence Watson:**

Trustee Watson read the following report dated April 4th, submitted by George White, Superintendent DPW:

- 1) Worked on Riverside Avenue blacktopping.
- 2) Worked on the oil-water separator at the DPW garage.
- 3) Patched potholes throughout the village.
- 4) Worked on catch basin on Gurnee Avenue
- 5) Continue to clean-up the DPW garage.
- 6) Picked up yard waste, construction debris and white goods.
- 7) The DPW took delivery of a new truck; a 2011 International 7500 SFA 4X4.

Trustee Watson had nothing further to report.

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES - **Trustee Emily Dominguez:** Trustee Dominguez had nothing to report.

BUILDINGS & CODE ENFORCEMENT - **Trustee Francisco Batista:**

Trustee Batista read the following report submitted by Building Inspector, Ruben Berrios for the period of Mar 21st through :

Rental property inspections	-	26
Municipal searches	-	6
Miscellaneous inspections	-	93
Construction inspections	-	53
Complaints	-	6
Violations & tickets	-	18
Permits & C.O.’s	-	2

Trustee Batista had nothing further to report.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor mentioned that GDC held a ceremony on April 2nd for the conclusion of the work on the new building. They expect occupancy

by June and, according to Martin Ginsburg, they have approximately 25% of the units already rented.

The Mayor, on behalf of the board, expressed their thanks and gratitude to Fire Chief Pete Rugg for his ten years of dedicated service to the Village of Haverstraw Fire Department.

Mayor Kohut:

OLD BUSINESS

None.

Mayor Kohut:

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor presented the minutes of the January 18th, February 7th and February 15th for approval by the board.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to that effect.

RESOLUTION #84-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez (approved with minor changes to the February 15th minutes.)

Seconded by: Francisco Batista

Motion Carries: All

Mayor Kohut:

2nd PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Noel Rappaport: Mr. Rappaport was appreciative of the great job the DPW did with snow plowing and snow removal throughout this harsh winter season. He inquired if the DPW utilized their entire budget.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded surprisingly not, explaining that the DPW had a large stock pile of salt from the previous year, which helped immensely, adding that the overtime was within the realm of what was expected for the season.

The Mayor then read proposed adjustments to the budget as follows:

<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
A.1420.0400	Law Contractual	\$90,000
A.1620.0422	Build/Repair DPW	10,000
A.1620.0450	Build Water	7,000
A.1920.0400	Muni Dues	200
A.1950.0400	Sewer Tax	1,900
A.5110.0410	DPW Clothing	3,900
A.7310.0410	Summer Camp Cont	4,000
A.9040.0800	Workers Comp	46,100
A.9950.0910	Transfer to Community Development	10,000
A.1990.0400	Contingent Acct	(114,650)

REVENUES

A.599 Appropriate Fund Bal 58,450

APPROPRIATIONS

A.9789.0610 Principle Retirement (2,055)
A.9789.0710 Interest Retirement 2,055

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to accept the adjustments to the 2011-2012 Budget.

RESOLUTION #85-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Terrence Watson
Motion Carries: All

Pete Rugg, Hudson Avenue: Mr. Rugg referred to the discussion about group homes at the previous board meeting. He wanted the board to know that there are some people who are placed in these homes that could be potentially dangerous to residents of our community. He mentioned an incident with his wife and a resident of the group home next to his house. He believes that this is still a serious problem for our community and the board has a big responsibility to the community when approving a group home. He did state that most of the group homes are fine and good for the people they serve, however, some of them may present a risk to the community and he wanted the board to be aware of that.

Mayor Kohut: With no further business to be conducted by the Board, the Mayor entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to that effect.

RESOLUTION #86-2011

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Rafael Bueno
Motion Carries: All

Respectfully submitted by,

Beverly A. Swift
Senior Steno Clerk
April 25th, 2011