

**Regular Board Meeting of the Village of Solvay Board of Trustees**  
**Tuesday, September 26, 2023**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK**  
**HARRY DECARLO**

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Today, Tuesday, September 26, 2023 the **REGULAR BOARD MEETING of the SOLVAY VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES** was called to order by Mayor Derek Baichi at the Town of Geddes Court Room, 1000 Woods Rd, Solvay, NY 13209 at 6:00 pm.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

<b>ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL:</b>	<b>Trustees</b>	<b>Deborah DeGilio</b>	<b>Present</b>
		<b>Salvatore Sciuga Jr</b>	<b>Present</b>
		<b>William McVicker</b>	<b>Present</b>
		<b>Brian Worrall</b>	<b>Present</b>
		<b>James Cometti</b>	<b>Present</b>
	<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	<b>John Fall Sr</b>	<b>Present</b>
	<b>Mayor</b>	<b>Derek Baichi</b>	<b>Present</b>

**MAYOR’S COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Special Presentation to Deputy Mayor John Fall Sr for 25 years of service from (NYCOM) New York Conference of Mayors.
- Milton Ave Corner Project Public Information provided by Bonnie Palmer and Jim Monahan of Monahan Development Corp. The details included the plans for apartments and retail space. A restoration of the Pozzi Hotel. A grant through New York Forward is being submitted and a vision statement from community members is being requested.
- Matt Gomm Retirement, DRI Committee Idea, Solvay-Geddes Lighting Agreement, Quality of Life Idea and Fall Fest.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- Local Law No. 3 of 2023 amending the Village Code by adding thereto a new Chapter 127a entitled “Short Term Rentals”

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: McVicker**  
**SECOND: Fall**  
**7-0 Vote, Motion Carried**

The discussion was led by Attorney Herkala. The local law would prohibit the operation of short-term rentals in the Village of Solvay including “Airbnb’s.” This will affect a rental less than 29 days. Mayor Baichi suggesting the law be tailored where owners of the property live on site and have a high consumer rating to operate as an Airbnb. Joanne Kerr, village resident questioned if a sex offender registry will be verified. Other comments from the board members and audience were made.

**ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING: Fall**  
**SECOND: Worrall**  
**7-0 Vote, Motion Carried**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Derek Baichi, Mayor</b> – Planning for administrative meeting in October.
<b>Legal</b>	<b>David Herkala, Village Attorney</b> – No Report
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Peggy Rowe, CPA</b> – Provided details from the Electric/Finance meeting that took place on September 21 <sup>st</sup> . 2022 PSC is ready to submit and 2023 report is next. The 2022 audit is currently being done. The plan for fiscal 2024 was briefly discussed.

<b>Police</b>	<b>Derek Osbeck, Chief</b> – 928 calls in August which included: 30 follow ups, 4 felonies, 30 misdemeanors and 163 parking tickets. Two recruits are currently enrolled in the academy. Extension of “no shave November” was discussed and the success of over \$7000 in donations made by the police department.
<b>Electric</b>	<b>Pete Reap, Electric Superintendent</b> – Work being completed in Lakeland regarding transformer. Ongoing tree trimming is being done around power lines.
<b>DPW/Highway</b>	<b>Andrew Burke, DPW Superintendent</b> – Continuous work on catch basins and brush pick up. The parking on Worth Avenue was brought up.
<b>Library</b>	<b>Brian Rowlands</b> – Best of luck with Matt Gomm retiring as Library Director. The building improvements included the HVAC work that needs to be completed. Over 134 participants in the summer reading program this year. The Magnarelli grant for 2024 was briefly discussed. The all schools are project and Book sale was discussed as well.
<b>Codes</b>	No Report
<b>Stormwater</b>	<b>Mark Malley, Village Engineer</b> – No Report
<b>Parks</b>	<b>Brian Worrall, Trustee</b> – A tentative plan for Charles Ave Park was discussed. Additional funding sources are being looked at.

**Additional Resolutions from the Village Board: None**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- **Tony Modafferri**, village resident questioned resolution no. 11 and is hoping the village is doing their due diligence before the contract is signed.
- **Carol Ball**, village resident discussed Charles Ave Park, Boyd Ave Park and other areas being revitalized. Reminded everyone that she asked about the matter of the dirt pile next to the DPW in June and still nothing has been done.
- **Bridgette Vargas**, village resident stated how she has been in the village of six years and is noticing change. Continued spending on legal bills and overtime.
- **Ron Reudink**, village resident questioned resolution no. 8, street lighting agreement. Considers this a great idea and hopes it does not overwhelm the electric department.
- **Joanne Kerr**, village resident asked if a permit is required for a pool? Yes.
- **Sal Sciuga**, village trustee: *It was about five years ago that I realized I wanted to know more about the village of Solvay Board. Having grown up and spent most of my adult life here, I felt it was my duty to better understand the inner workings of this great village. Much to my dismay, what I found was a group of elected officials who seemed to feel that we should be stuck in the past instead of progressing to new and better ideals and processes. Shortly after the next election, it seemed to get even worse. Votes seemed to be out of spite, instead of what was in the best interest of the village residents, barbs tossed across party lines, it just seemed like Junior High all over again. This is what convinced me that I had to run, and I had two main reasons driving me to that conclusion, first, to try to work on building a more cohesive board that was working for the benefit of the residents they represent; and second, to address the ever-increasing taxes that affect many of our residents. I feel this board has evolved since those days and we are generally moving forward, mostly together, and in most cases, more smoothly than before. We are beginning to address a lot of the issues that have needed addressing since Allied Chemical left the village that grew up around them. Having a diverse board, both politically and otherwise, has allowed it to become more transparent in its actions to this village that we were elected to represent, as we more accurately reflect our constituents now. My 21 months on this board have been educational and very illuminating. I have begun to understand the amount of time and effort that the board members put into the running of this village, and attending to the concerns of those we represent. We don't just show up for meetings, many of the board members are working on village concerns during the day and on weekends as well. There are countless hours put in by every single board member to make this village run as smoothly as possible and make it the best it can be for our residents. Beyond that, I see how much time John Fall and Jim Cometti put in and wonder how anyone could hope to match that while holding a full-time job. However, I have digressed, and*

would like to return to my point. Prior to my running and being elected to this seat on this board, the previous board decided to have an audit done on the Electric Department, specifically targeting the times when our current mayor was in office. As we have all seen from the audit results released by the state, that was not the case. The mayor, no matter who holds that office, cannot spend money without the authorization of the board. It really is that simple. All the financial transactions, including the budget modifications we talk about each month, must be voted on and have a majority vote to happen. Unfortunately, in the past, the setting of an annual budget for the Electric Department was dropped and never picked up. It became business as usual over the decades leading up to our current situation. Is there a financial concern with the Electric Department? Yes, there is, and no one has or will deny that. However, this entire board has been working to resolve these issues since before the State Comptroller even released the audit results. We have been working proactively to maintain the Electric Department and its amazing people. Unfortunately, as it is once again time for the election cycle to roll, we have seen a plethora of misinformation, some bordering on outright lies about your representatives. In order to be transparent with our residents, we asked our accountant to explain the results of the audit in the most basic terms possible as many of us are not financial wizards. Once she did, a picture was painted from that truth that was quite different from what certain people in this village would like you to believe. If you've read a post on Facebook and have questions, we are always willing to share the actual information with you and have it explained so we can all understand it. We are happy to be transparent in the workings of this village. Now I would like to pose a question. As one of the primary pot stirrers is a former board member, why didn't you take care of setting the Electric Commission and Electric Department on the right path when you had a blatant majority? Instead of criticizing those who are working to better this village, why not look back at what you did not do when you had the obvious power to do so? We fully accept the results of the audit and are working hard to correct the issues we have inherited. Our biggest question though, is why did you only feel the need to audit such a short time period, when a longer one would have given a much clearer picture of the actual problems that have come to light? What were you afraid of finding out? That your target had no malfeasance? Unlike some out there, we have chosen to move forward and address these results in a way to constructively move onward and maintain this village that we know and love, while ensuring it will progress into the next 100 years. If you want to run for this board to be a part of that, please do so. However, do not try to play dirty politics, run on a platform of who you are and what you want to improve. That is what this village needs now more than anything. Thank you, and good evening.

- **Deb DeGilio**, village trustee stated that audit was requested because of overdrawn check.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Authorization from the Board of Trustees to pay C&S Engineers \$9560.00 for services rendered from 8/1/23 to 8/31/23. (Total Cost to the Village is: \$8160.00)

Below are the specific projects that will be reimbursed through Grant or the County:

- Invoice No. 01114834 – Project No. 114.240.001 – Milton Avenue Pavement Project – Reimbursable Grant
- Invoice No. 01114836 – Project No. 114.242.001 – Erie Canal Trail Tree Planting II - Reimbursable

**MOTION: McVicker**

## SECOND: Cometti

**AYES: 7**

**NAYES: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

2. Authorization from the Board of Trustees to pay the Cerio Law Offices \$8999.25 for services rendered for the month of August 2023. A detailed list of charges has been provided to the Board of Trustees.

**MOTION: Fall**

**SECOND: McVicker**

**AYES: 7**

**NAYES: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

3. Authorization from the Board of Trustees to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2023 Regular Village Board Meeting and the Reading of the Minutes be herewith dispensed.

**MOTION: Cometti**

**SECOND: Sciuga**

**AYES: 7**

**NAYES: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**





Derek Baichi	Mayor	Voted	Yes Motion Carried
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Resolved that this Board of Trustees move into Executive Session to discuss a contract and personnel matter at 8:00 p.m.

MOTION: Cometti		
SECOND: Sciuga		
AYES: 7	NAYES: 0	MOTION CARRIED

Resolved that the Executive Session be closed and that this Board return to the regular meeting at 8:29 p.m.

MOTION: Cometti		
SECOND: Fall		
AYES: 7	NAYES: 7	MOTION CARRIED

No action was taken at the Executive session meeting

NEW BUSINESS:

Authorization from the Board of Trustees to approve the standard work day of 6 hours for Part Time Codes Enforcement Officer, Casey Palmer.

MOTION: Sciuga		
SECOND: Cometti		
AYES: 7	NAYES: 0	MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT:

The regular meeting of the Solvay Board of Trustees be adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

MOTION: Fall		
SECOND: McVicker		
AYES: 7	NAYES: 0	MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Harry DeCarlo, Village Clerk