

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oxford was held on May 13, 2025, at the Village Hall - 20 LaFayette Park, Oxford, NY 13830 at 7:00 P.M.

Present were: Mayor Terry Stark, Trustee Dale Leach, Trustee Dustin Hendricks, Trustee Richard Marks, Trustee Mary Branham, Zoning Officer Roger Barrows, Clerk-Treasurer Shelly Marks.

Also present were members of the Planning Board: Nathaniel Emerson, Beth Johnson, and Dan Matos. Ann Marie Paster attended as a concerned citizen.

Mayor Stark called the Special Regular meeting to order at 6:57 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was given.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Nathaniel Emerson, planning board member, talked to the board. In 2021-2022 they began having planning meetings about property maintenance, snow removal, etc. Pamphlets went out to the community. There are still several areas around the village that have issues and he has had many complaints. There are 4-5 properties that have chronic issues with them. Several more are questionable but are not constant. Six of these are snow related. Beth Johnson said that our zoning officer does not have the proper tools to take care of the issues and he does not make the salary he should be making. Nat read from Chapter 212 in our code book as he feels this relates to what we are trying to accomplish. He does not feel that the issues are addressed when they are small and then they get out of hand and they escalate. If we can catch the problems when they start, we could stop this before it gets out of hand.

Behe's Funeral Home is next door to a house that is constantly an issue (dogs barking, garbage all over, etc. There are many issues at that property).

Chipped paint, gutters detached, painted homes, fences maintained with safe homes. If we do not necessitate things, the cost will increase to take care of the problem. Code says verbal warning, written warning and then a citation and/or fines. Fines then would double, then triple, etc. until this is resolved.

Beth also said not all homeowners have the money to paint their house if it needs painting nor would they be able to address it in years' time. The goal is to see what structures and processes we can put in place to have these issues addressed in the future.

Legal definition of blight in the village. Mayor Stark saw about 20-25 properties that are not mowed, not plowed, properties need to be maintained. We need a better way to manage code enforcement issues.

Our Code Enforcement Officer needs to be trained and must have the materials to make the issues more easily taken care of. If a person does not paint their house, they do not have the money to fix it up so why issue a ticket because they obviously do not have the money and it is not going to resolve the issue.

Code Enforcement Officer Roger Barrows gives out tickets at his discretion when it applies to the situation.

The Planning Board does not feel the job description is aligned with what we need to do in the village. Zoning Officer also must do building permits and code enforcement and this takes up quite a bit of his time.

Take care of the action in 24 hours, address the issue within 48 hours. They would like a more formal tracking structure for taking care of the problem. They feel the village should provide the code enforcement officer with a phone number, email address and work (cell) phone and tablet (for data tracking).

The resident at the Funeral Home has had many complaints about the neighbor and the upkeep of the house. People attending funerals, calling hours, etc., see the mess at the house next door to the funeral home. They also have concerns for the children that live in the house with the odor, garbage, etc. even inside the house.

Code enforcement summary monthly to address the board. People getting numerous verbal's is not working. We need to be more aggressive going forward.

If a resident has a violation, Zoning Officer Barrows can write a ticket at his discretion. The fines need to be looked at – the judge sets the fines when people are in court for a citation that is issued from maintenance issues of the zoning officer. Mayor Stark is going to suggest that we issue tickets then the court handles the issue for us. It is not as much of a problem if the house has no one living in it. It is not safe for a contractor to mow a lawn when the house is occupied. The Planning Board suggests that Roger Barrows keep track of his time however he does it. Take five properties that have an issue and continue to keep track of these properties. The house next to the funeral home is the biggest concern currently.

Barking dogs and a leash law are all that the village has listed. The town has other issues as they are responsible for the other issues. The key issues that came out of the meeting are as follows:

- Roger to keep track of his hours/calls
- Mayor Stark to call our attorney James Gregory to see what we can do legally
- Contact the Village Justice about people ignoring tickets
- Can we mail a ticket to people for violations?
- Village only has the court to resolve a problem

Set a time for follow up of these issues to see what is going on.
Second week in June to get together again to see what has been happening.

NEW BUSINESS:

Various departments – The police need a new vehicle ARPA annual report from 3-4 years ago. The backhoe was \$76,000 in 2022; \$120,000 for DPW vehicles (on debt schedule for 10 years), a sweeper is also needed. This year's budget, \$110,000, we will use CHIP money for our main road from the post office to Park Street. We can use CHIP money, with prior approval, to purchase a vehicle. Patrol vehicle has \$26,000 in reserve from 2-3 years ago. Balance sheet on investment sheets. Dedicated reserve must be used for that purpose.

\$55,000-\$60,000 on police vehicles due to things we need to add to it. We can borrow the money as they are under budget by \$45,000 due to less overtime and not having a part-time office person. \$40,000 out of police department into the reserve and fund the car through the reserve.

\$235,000 for the ambulance – cannot be funded for more than 10 years.
2.8 million for the fire department plus we received the \$1,000,000 grant for the OFD.
We are under the debt limit now. Need to understand that the million dollars is it. No more money for them.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Trustee Leach likes the checklist idea for Code Enforcement Officer to keep track of letters, citations, etc.

Trustee Branham's thoughts are that the Code Enforcement Officer does not report to the Board on what is going on.

Trustee Hendricks said that confronting people is not easy either.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly W. Marks
Clerk-Treasurer