

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oxford was held on July 29, 2025 at the Village Hall - 20 LaFayette Park, Oxford, NY 13830. Audit Committee met at 7:00 P.M. and Regular Board meeting started at 7:30 P.M.

Present were: Mayor Terry Stark, Trustee Dale Leach, Trustee Dustin Hendricks, Trustee Richard Marks, Trustee Mary Branham, WWTP Operator Brenton Rideout, DPW Superintendent Bill Kelsey, Police Officer in Charge Adam Francis

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Shelly Marks, Fire Chief Ron Martin, EMS Captain Mark Forrest, Code/Zoning Officer Roger Barrows

Others Attending: Resident Mary Kirchenbacher. Planning Board members Nathaniel Emerson, Dan Matos, and Elizabeth Johnson, Resident Matt Begeal.

The Village Trustees (Audit Committee) reviewed all abstract invoices for June 2025.

Mayor Terry Stark called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was given.

PUBLIC CONCERNS: Mary Kruppenbacher indicated that she was a new resident in the Village and wanted to meet the Village Board. Planning Board Members Nathaniel Emerson, Dan Matos, and Elizabeth Johnson were present to address code enforcement issues. As code issues were on the regular agenda and would take more time than allocated for public concerns, Mayor Stark asked members to wait for the agenda item to discuss. Resident Matt Begeal indicated a concern about village code and police enforcement.

ABSTRACT:
Trustee Leach seconded by Trustee Branham made a motion to approve Abstract #002 as presented. All voted aye and motion was carried.

General Fund	\$35,145.53
Water Fund	\$ 5,398.90
Sewer Fund	\$ 8,975.92
Water improvement Project	\$ 2,142.00
V-Fire Capital Project	<u>\$ 4,973.00</u>
	\$56,635.35

Trustee Branham moved and Trustee Leach seconded a motion to approve the abstract as presented. All voted aye and motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Trustee Hendricks moved and Trustee Marks seconded a motion to approve the June 24, July 1st, and July 15th meeting minutes. All voted aye and motion was carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT:
May Treasurer’s Report is still under review pending close of FY 2025.

JUSTICE REPORT:
Trustee Marks moved and Trustee Hendricks seconded the motion to approve the June Justice Report from Judge Ross. All voted Aye and the motion was carried.

OFD REPORT:
Mayor indicated that he had completed the first of two reviews of the OFD and Board objective to determine the impact of the revised OFD capital improvement project. The first review indicates the local tax levy increase in the general fund would be in excess of 10% based upon the critical assumption listed below. The second review now under way is to determine what projects could be funded without increasing the local tax levy base beyond the NY State Tax Levy cap assumed to be no more than 2%. This cannot be completed without OFD input regarding the critical assumptions, priority of projects and where to adjust amounts in operating budgets, debt schedules, capital projects and reserve funds.

CURRENT CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1. The \$1,000,000 V-Fire Grant awarded to the Village in November of 2024 would be allocated to help reduce the cost of the original 2.8-million-dollar project approved by a voter referendum in September 2021.
2. Savings including a recognition of escalating costs for approved project scope would be about \$600,000 resulting in a revised capital project of 2.2 million dollars.

3. The \$600,000 would be reallocated to authorize and purchase a new 2025 pumper/tanker to replace an aging apparatus (#262). This would be a separate project and subject to permissive referendum and all bidding requirements. Purchase would be financed via a bond for the entire amount for a term of the useful life of the apparatus (20 years) at an anticipated borrowing rate of 3.5%.
4. A new ambulance is needed as the two current 20 plus year aging ambulances are well past their useful 10 year lives. Board has approved a bond resolution of \$235,000 for the purchase of a new 2025 or 2026 ambulance. Purchase would be financed via a bond for the entire amount for a term of the useful life of the apparatus (10 years) at an anticipated borrowing rate of 2.5% via NY State Fire Fighter Revolving Loan fund.
5. The current Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) of \$851,000 to finance the first phase of the capital project (roof \$162,000, generator \$74,000 and riverbank restoration \$615,000) would be renewed with NBT for one year. Current note expires on August 31, 2025, and new NBT rate is estimated at 3.90%.
6. Current quoted price of new pumper/tanker of about \$600,000 is good until about mid-September and the lead time for delivery is 15-18 months.
7. Results in the number of bid prices for the first phase of the V-Fire Grant projects will help determine future spending assumptions. The V-Fire Station Grant Renovations bid package has been publicized in Norwich and Binghamton papers as well on Village web site. A contractor solicitation list was developed and 15 contractors have been contacted to determine their interest. Mandatory walk-through scheduled for Tuesday August 4th to also determine level of interest in project. Formal BID submission deadline is August 19th. There was an omission of language regarding BID Bond Requirement in the first publication in paper. All contractors responding to the public notices or present at the walk-through will be informed of the BID bond requirement of 5% of total BID price submitted for each contract bid upon.

EMS REPORT:

Mayor indicated permissive referendum period to require a public vote for the purchase of a \$235,000 ambulance has expired and notice of estoppel has been legally published. The next step is to secure funding stream (NYS revolving fund or NBT bank loan) for a ten (10) year term at a 2.5% - 3.5% interest rate. EMS needs to obtain a purchase order for a specific ambulance for the Board to authorize Mayor Stark to place an order.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Officer Francis addressed the Board. Key recent issues were related to responding to an increasing number of requests for assistance from other police agencies (County/State) that require the OPD to travel outside of the Village. The number of incidents requiring police response is increasing across the entire region and is being attributed to this summer's continuing heat wave events and drugs, include resisting arrest, failure to comply and deviant behavior in public places.

Mayor inquired if current TRAC system or new e-citation equipment and software could improve accuracy and efficiency in writing and administering citations/tickets for vehicle and traffic violations as well as code violations. Officer responded that current system would not be able to accommodate the necessary programs to implement. Local violations do not lend themselves to being applied to the systems used statewide or nationally.

WASTE WATER PLANT:

WWTP Operator Rideout addressed the board. Key points in his report include:

1. Continuing to haul sludge to the landfill.
2. Obtained quote for secondary sludge pump for \$10,500 which is well above expected repair or replacement. Will look at other options.
3. Last pump station to be complete at middle school after summer program is completed and prior to start of school in September.
4. Pump cleaning due to accumulated rags continues to be an issue.
5. Maintenance/Service schedules have been implemented to ensure equipment life can be extended.
6. Operator continues to assist DPW with leak detection/repairs and street cleaning.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:

DPW Superintendent Kelsey addressed the board. Key points in his report include:

1. Completed repairs to four catch basins.

2. Street Cleaning.
3. Water leak repair on Ross Street.
4. Street patching.
5. Routine maintenance/service at fountain, entry sign light, downtown vegetation, Clark's Creek, street grading.
6. Catch basin (70+) cleaning scheduled for early fall.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Roger Barrows was not present. The mayor opened the floor for discussion with all those present. Nathaniel Emerson speaking for the group summed up their concerns as expressed at the meeting or as described in previous meetings and/or correspondence as follows:

1. There are many properties that meet or exceed "minimum" standards. However, these property owners have been neglected and victimized by lack of attention to code enforcement for the few others that neglect maintaining standards.
2. Several properties require code enforcement as the Village is not enforcing minimum standards and/or safeguards. Neglecting such standards leads to the spread of blight and eventually, the need to expend large amounts of public funds to mitigate the problem.
3. Neglect is diminishing a sense of security and pride in our community. The Village is not preserving property values and community standards.
4. Specific examples include the following:
 - i. **23 Main Street** - The property is always unsightly, cluttered with garbage; broken gutters, broken lamp post, broken fence, sidewalks never shoveled, lawn rarely mowed. These conditions have been blatantly evident and worsening for several years.
 - ii. **Dollar General** – Parking lot damaged to the point of being unsafe. Building is unsightly and does not meet minimum standards outlined under our property maintenance codes. Boxes, containers, recyclable materials are still stored in plain view, unenclosed, exposed, and unsightly.
 - iii. **Greene and Merchant Street Properties** continue to store garbage receptacles on the side or front of the property.
 - iv. **At least two (2) properties have or had chickens for over a year.**
 - v. Several streetlamps are unlit and have been out for about a year. NYSEG response has been inadequate. NYSEG should be forced to reimburse. It is also difficult to believe that this issue cannot be resolved in a timely manner. DPW should change the bulbs or village should be more assertive with NYSEG.

During the discussion, the mayor noted the following:

1. There are over 615 properties in the Village and 600 (98%) of those properties are code compliant. The remaining fifteen or so properties have issues and the village has taken steps to remediate the concerns. Suggestions that there is a village wide neglect of the health, safety and welfare of its residents due to the issues of those properties and, as a consequence, those properties represent a village wide decline in security, pride in our community, decreasing property values and erosion of community standards does not seem reasonable.

To address the concerns and recommendations raised by the group and to help alleviate the property maintenance issues in a timely manner, the following steps will be taken:

- a. Code Officer will be directed to issue citations following one verbal warning to repeat offenders.
- b. Additional citations will be issued subsequent to the first citation as law allows. Mayor seeking guidance from village attorney and/or New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM).
- c. Village will review current fine levels established at other communities and raise fines consistent with local communities and compliant with any state laws. Code must be changed via local law and will take about 90 days.
- d. Village will renew efforts to identify and hire a second authorized Code Officer position to concentrate on problem properties that

require significant time, effort, and costs. Absentee owners represent 80-90% of the problem properties and require more than 10 hours of time to contact and provide legal service of notice. Additional legal process and guidance varies depending upon the nature of the violation. A new budget recommendation will be forthcoming for Board review and is anticipated to require a budget modification of about \$5,000.

- e Citation for Dollar General will be issued via certified mail and citation for 23 Main will be issued to owner of 23 Main Street for any current code documented violations. Current issues reported and for lawn maintenance and refuse/garbage.
- f. Violation letters will be sent to Greene Street & Water Street properties regarding proper storage of receptacles.

OLD BUSINESS:

MOU'S SOIL & WATER INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT TIMBER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Will Kelsey, District Technician from Chenango County Soil & Water District conducted a Timber Inventory assessment in June encompassing the east side of Boname Park. He presented the report at the June board meeting. Following his presentation, the Board agreed with his findings, conclusions, and indicated actions as follows:

1. The timber should be thinned out in the near future.
2. Based upon current market, the Village could receive between \$75,000 - \$100,000 minimum for the timber harvesting.
3. Harvesting should occur between November and March to avoid the wet season.
4. Timber management plan should be developed, approved, and implemented prior to any capital projects improvement to Boname Park.
5. Proceeds from harvesting should be put in a Boname Park Improvement Reserve.
6. Chenango Soil & Water can help develop management plan contingent upon a Memo of Understanding (MOU) being signed by the Village and the County.

Board asked Mr. Kelsey (upon approval of Soil & Water Management) to develop and provide to the Village MOU for review and approval. The Village received an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) from the District on July 22nd and it was forwarded to Trustees for review. The critical components of the IMA are as follows:

Scope of Services: The Parties agree to collaborate on the following services:

- Forest inventory and health assessments
- Invasive species management recommendations
- Timber harvest planning and execution
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Walking trail planning and development
- Public education and outreach

Conditions of Services: Parties agree to the following:

Services will be provided by the district at no cost to the Municipality. The Municipality shall grant the district access to the area for the purposes outlined in the scope of services for the length of this agreement. This agreement may be modified, amended, or extended upon the mutual written agreement of both parties. Parties may jointly apply for state and federal grants to implement the recommendations within the plan. This agreement may be terminated at any time during the term by either party upon seven (7) days written notice to the other party. That each party complies with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations applicable to the activities proposed under this agreement. That each party shall maintain adequate insurance to include but not be limited to workers compensation.

Following discussion, Trustee Hendricks, seconded by Trustee Branham made a motion to direct Mayor Stark to sign IMA. All voted in favor, carried.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Terry Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry M. Stark/Mary Branham
Recorders of Minutes