

# VILLAGE VOICES

Number 118

Editor, Teri Barown, Village Administrator

November 2020

## News from the Mayor's Office

2020 has certainly brought with it many challenges and changes!

The Village will experience another change at the end of October. Long time employee, Teri L. Barown will be retiring. Teri served as Village Clerk from 2005 to 2015 and as our very capable Village Administrator from 2015-2020. As you can imagine, she will be very missed by fellow employees, elected officials and all the residents she has so professionally and impartially served for the past fifteen years. The Village has planned a Community Reception, with masks and social distancing, on the front lawn of 22 Main on Sunday November 1, 2020 beginning at 1 pm, with remarks scheduled for 1:30 pm. We hope you will be able to stop by and express your appreciation to Teri as we wish her well in retirement!!

Since our last issue of Village Voices, the Village Board enacted a Mask Law on August 10<sup>th</sup> within our business district in response to the coronavirus pandemic. That law worked to ensure that our residents and visitors were safe during the tourism season. The County Health Department confirmed there were no documented cases attributed to our downtown businesses and visitors.

We did however, see almost a doubling of positive cases in the month of August, six additional Village residents tested positive. As confirmed by the Health Department, it was a result of several large gatherings – over 50 people – without any social distancing or masks. We are fortunate it was only six – the rapid spread at SUNY Oneonta illustrates how quickly a community can become infected.

We are all in this together and wearing a mask and social distancing are critical safety protocols, which evidence our care and respect for each other. Stay safe.

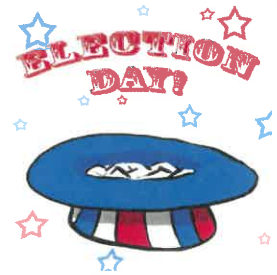
*Ellen Tillapaugh – Mayor*

## Village Elections - 2021

Election Day for the Village will be Tuesday, March 16, 2021. The following offices are up for re-election:

- ❖ Trustee (2 positions) – Three year term each

Absentee ballot applications are available at the Village Office during regular office hours, Monday-Friday between 8 AM and 4 PM. Applications may be returned on or after November 16, 2020.



## Be Water Smart and Dollar Wise

All residents and business owners served by the Village's water and sewer system are responsible for the safe and secure operation and maintenance of water and sewer lines and internal plumbing "downstream" of the Village's meter at each property.

In this fiscal year several owners had undetected leaks in the water supply lines on their property that resulted in water bills well in excess of a thousand dollars. Deteriorated toilet tank seals are a frequent source of leaks, though leaks may occur anywhere in the system. Please be vigilant in monitoring your water supply and waste lines, including faucets and toilets.

It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that plumbing is working as designed. What seems like a small leak can add up to a large cost very quickly. One local church received a bill for over \$6,000 due to a leaky toilet. Please check your plumbing regularly and if something seems wrong contact a professional.

Long-established Village policy provides that the property owner is fully responsible at the established water and sewer rates for: (1) all water that passes through the Village meter to the property; and (2) all water discharged into the Village sewer. So if a leak on the property discharges into the sewer, the full water and sewer rate applies for that volume. But if the leak does not discharge into the sewer system, the property owner may petition the Board of Trustees through the Water and Sewer Board for relief from the sewer charge associated with the volume of leaked water.

The Village's 2020-2021 Water and Sewer Budgets are \$949,936.00 and \$1,079,445.00, respectively. Fully paid water rates are essential for meeting those Village expenses.

### ***Paid Parking***

During the 2020 Paid Parking Season the Village of Cooperstown collected upwards of \$107,800 from transactions at its twenty parking kiosks. This is approximately 24 percent of the gross revenue in 2019 when tourism was at pre-pandemic levels. Paid parking allows the Village to maintain services and maintenance without an increase to the annual property tax levy, even during the pandemic.

### ***Brush and Leaf Pickup***

The Village continues to offer leaf pickup for residents and property owners this fall, beginning in mid-October. You can facilitate this process by following these guidelines:

- 1) Do not blow or rake leaves into the street.
- 2) Leaves should be placed loose between the curb and sidewalk away from trees, poles, and fire hydrants.
- 3) Do not use plastic or paper bags or hard containers as we will pick up leaves using the leaf vacuum.
- 4) Place brush in a separate pile between the curb and sidewalk. Do not put brush in containers. Root balls, stumps, and large tree limbs will not be picked up, as we can only take material that will go through our shredder.
- 5) Do not include non-compostable materials like plastic flower pots, construction debris, processed lumber, bricks, or stones with leaves or brush.
- 6) Residents may also bring green waste (leaves, brush, grass clippings) at any time to the Village Street Garage on Linden Avenue and deposit it themselves in the appropriate area. Commercial dumping is prohibited.

Leaf pick up will continue until the snow starts. If you have any questions please call Mitch Hotaling, DPW Superintendent, at 607-547-2411.

### ***Removing Snow and Ice from the Public Sidewalk***

As we prepare for the winter season, please remember:

- Owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from public sidewalks adjoining their properties. If this duty is neglected, the Village will remove ice and snow and the owner will be charged a fee of \$100 per occurrence.
- The use of sodium chloride (rock salt) is not permitted on public sidewalks. Look for deicers labeled as safe for concrete.

- In the business district it is not necessary to remove snow and ice from the pavers, but the pavers can be carefully cleared if desired.
- Snow or ice you clear must not be deposited on streets or sidewalks.
- Snow or ice must not be deposited on someone else's property without express permission.

### ***Holiday Shopping***

Small Business Saturday is November 28, but you shouldn't limit your local shopping to just one day this holiday season. Before you buy gifts on-line or drive to Utica or Albany, consider buying gifts right here in Cooperstown. Shopping in Cooperstown supports local business owners and keeps local money in our local community, something desperately needed this year. While the discount prices at big box stores may be appealing, after factoring in time and gas, good deals are not always so good. Paying sales tax in Cooperstown—rather than somewhere else—also helps keep property taxes in check since a portion of local sales tax is returned to the Village. If you think that all Cooperstown has to offer is baseball, explore further this holiday season. Remember that the 2-hour limit for parking is suspended on Main Street between Pine Boulevard and Fair Street from Thanksgiving through Martin Luther King Day (third Monday in January).

### ***Support our Firefighters: Clear a Hydrant***

The Village of Cooperstown offers an opportunity for its residents, businesses, organizations, and others to get involved in helping to keep the Village safer. There are 127 fire hydrants in and around the Village—the majority were repainted by our local scouts this year, and for that we are very grateful!

Clearing a hydrant means shoveling the snow 3 feet around the hydrant on all sides. This will ensure that in the event of a fire, firefighters can quickly access water to extinguish it. For the safety of drivers and pedestrians, snow should be piled on the tree lawn and not deposited in the street or on the sidewalk. More serious hydrant issues should be reported to the Village at 547-2411.

If everyone pitches in, we can ensure that access to fire hydrants is more continuous, especially following a large snow storm. The ultimate goal is to help ensure a safer Village for all who live, work, and visit here. Would you like to join the team? Contact Rich McCaffery at [ctownadoptahydrantdrain@gmail.com](mailto:ctownadoptahydrantdrain@gmail.com) or call 547-5256. A map with numbered hydrants is available on the Village website at <http://cooperstownny.org/volunteers/>.

### **Rain Garden Volunteers**

The Village is grateful for the committed crew of volunteers, led by Rich McCaffery, who have regularly cleaned the rain gardens on Main Street. Rainwater and snowmelt can carry sediment and pollutants from Village streets and sidewalks into Otsego Lake, the Susquehanna River, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. To curb this process, the rain gardens on Main Street capture rainwater, allowing it to slowly soak into the ground. The soil naturally filters the water, ridding it of contaminants before it reaches the water table. As a result of their function and their convenient location, the rain gardens also collect trash and falling leaves. A big thank you is due to the volunteers who have helped keep them clean, especially this year.

### **Reminders from the Water Department**

- Meters will be read again in January.
- Remember to leave an opening for operators to access the water touch pad at your residence or business. For instance, if you have fencing around your shrubs, please leave an opening for them to access the touch pad.
- Even slight drafts during winter may cause your water meter to freeze and break. To avoid the expense and inconvenience, please ensure that your water meter is draft free.
- Leaving for the winter? Don't forget to drain your household water pipes and water meter to prevent the pipes from freezing while you're away.
- If you have any questions, please call the Water Department at 547-5591.

### **Overnight Parking**

A reminder that overnight parking is prohibited on Village streets from November 1 to April 1. Overnight parking is available in designated spaces in the Doubleday Field parking lot and the Fowler Way parking lot.

### **Tax Credits**

Did you know that you might qualify for a state income tax credit for work you do on your historic house or business property? New York State offers tax credits for homeowners in qualifying census tracts (of which ours is one) who do more than \$5,000 of approved work on their historic house. The house must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or as contributing in a National Register historic district. Fortunately, most homes built before 1949 in the Village of Cooperstown are contributing in the Glimmerglass Historic District. At

least 5% must be spent on the exterior of the home, and all work must be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office before it begins. The credit is equal to 20% of approved qualifying expenses up to \$50,000.

Businesses can take advantage of both state and federal income tax credits. Owners of income producing real properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including those contributing in the Glimmerglass Historic District, may be eligible for a 20% federal income tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties. The work performed (both interior and exterior) must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the National Park Service. Owners who qualify for the federal credit can also take advantage of a 20% state income tax credit.

For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643.

### **Costly News from the Water Department**

- 1) Each residence has a black touch pad which is approximately 2" X 3" in size. This pad allows the Village to read the meter without gaining access to your home. Recently, we have encountered more and more residents removing this pad from the exterior of their home. These pads cost approximately \$50 each. Effective immediately, replacement touch pads will be charged to the home owner. If you are planning to do work to the exterior of the home please contact the Water Department prior to removal so that appropriate arrangements can be made and you are not accessed the \$50 charge.
- 2) All Water and Sewer Consumers are reminded that there is a monthly 2.00% Penalty for all amounts unpaid for any billing period. Your new bill should make the penalties easier to recognize. Also please note that the penalties reflected for late payment are only accurate for one month, new penalties are added each month.
- 3) The fee for final reads and reactivations for water and sewer accounts will be \$50.00.

If you have any questions regarding your touch pad please contact the Water Department at 607-547-5591. Questions regarding billing and fees should be directed to the Village Treasurer, Deb Guerin, at 607-547-8558 extension, 108.

### **Snow & NYS Vehicle & Traffic Laws**

The Cooperstown Police are reminding drivers to clear all snow and ice from their vehicles before

driving. Not only does this practice provide better visibility for the driver, it prevents snow or ice from flying off the vehicle onto other moving vehicles.

The New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law requires drivers to have an unobstructed view from the front, rear and sides of a vehicle. This law also prohibits depositing snow on the roadway by any means, whether from shoveling, plowing or driving a snow-covered car out of your driveway to let the wind clean it off. Questions on snow removal in the Village can be directed to the Police at 547-2500.

**Bicycle Etiquette!!**

With our lovely fall, many bicycle riders were out enjoying our Village. The majority know the rules of the Village and are respectful. However, we have received several complaints of bicycles displacing pedestrians from sidewalks and park pathways.

Just a reminder that Village law prohibits the use of a bicycle on Main Street sidewalks between River Street and Chestnut Street, except for handicapped persons who are unable to walk. Elsewhere in the Village no bicyclist over the age of 12 years is allowed on a sidewalk or pathway set aside for pedestrians.

In all cases when a bike rider is on a sidewalk, they need to move aside for the safety of pedestrians. Be respectful !

**No Wipes in Pipes!  
Flushable Wipes Aren't Flushable!**

The Village is making a significant investment in its Waste Water Treatment Plant. Last September we began a \$9.1 million upgrade. We are fortunate that grant funding and a zero interest, thirty year loan will allow us to undertake the project without burdening our taxpayers.

But in the current COVID-19 health crisis, there has been an increased use of disinfecting wipes, baby wipes and other paper goods being flushed down toilets. These materials - despite packaging which says they are "flushable" - should be placed in the trash not in the toilet.

While toilet paper is designed to break down quickly, so called flushable wipes do not break down. They clog and damage equipment. *Consumer Reports* tested several varieties of wipes and reported they do not fragment even after testers processed them for ten minutes in a bladed mixer. Save yourself expensive household plumbing problems by not flushing this material into the sewer system and your actions will also benefit the new and expensive equipment being installed at our WWTP.

**Sidewalk Use**

Residents and property owners are reminded that motor vehicles should not use the sidewalks other than to enter or exit driveways. This is particularly important for the sidewalks with pavers on Main Street, as the pavers are rated for foot traffic only. In the future watering plants in baskets hanging from lampposts will be accomplished from the street side and snow removal will be accomplished using lighter equipment. Please help us to promote pedestrian safety and maintain our infrastructure for years to come by keeping vehicles off sidewalks

**Village Telephone Numbers**

<b>Main Office</b>	<b>547-2411</b>
Village Clerk Jenna Utter	ext. 102
Zoning Officer- Jane Gentile	ext. 112
Public Works Sup. – Mitch Hotaling	ext. 104
<b>Treasurer's Office</b>	<b>547-8558</b>
Treasurer – Debra Guerin	ext. 108
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer	ext. 109
Village Police	547-2500
Village Library	547-8344
Village Street Dept.	547-5521
Village Water Dept.	547-5591
Village Sewer Dept.	547-8501
Doubleday Field	547-2270

**Village Holiday Schedule**

- The Village Offices will be closed:
- ❖ November 11  
(in observance of Veteran's Day)
  - ❖ November 26 & 27  
(in observance of Thanksgiving)
  - ❖ December 24 & 25  
(in observance of Christmas)
  - ❖ December 31 & January 1  
(in observance of New Year's)

