

VILLAGE VOICES

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Editor, Jenna Utter, Village Clerk

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News from the Mayor's Office

How incredibly exciting to be anticipating the Cooperstown Winter Carnival next weekend!! After a several year hiatus, some of us feared that this tradition of more than a half century would cease. But a dedicated group of volunteers has secured sponsors and assembled a great line up of events! I hope you bundle up and enjoy seeing community members and partaking of the many activities planned.

This month I have given several "State of the Village" presentations. Although we are just over half way through our budget year, January is generally a time to reflect on the past calendar year and set goals for the upcoming year. The summer of 2022 was in many ways a return to normal. Our paid parking revenue grossed around \$400,000. While not back to pre-pandemic levels, it certainly was a great deal healthier than the prior two years. Contributing to the summer's success was a July Induction Weekend for the first time since 2019 with our Main Street merchants reporting excellent sales.

By law the Mayor is required to present by March 20th a Tentative Budget for the next fiscal year which begins June 1st. This process is a cooperative one, with Trustees and Department Heads working together to draft a budget which addresses the many personnel and infrastructure needs of our Village. We have scheduled four budget workshops over the next several weeks in order to put together a budget that reflects the needs of our community while also striving to not increase the tax levy which has remained at the same level for ten years.

All our Village meetings are public and also streamed to the Village's YouTube channel which can be easily found by clicking the "VOC Live" tab on our website www.cooperstownny.org.

Looking forward to a wonderful 2023!

-Ellen Tillapaugh, Mayor

Village Elections - 2023

Election Day for the village will be Tuesday, March 21, 2023. Voting will take place at the Cooperstown Fire Hall, 24 Chestnut Street, from noon until 9 p.m.

The following offices are up for re-election:

- Trustee (2) – Three-year term

Check the Village website for updates on the nominations for Trustees from the Democratic Caucus that was held on January 30th, 2023.

The deadline for the Village Clerk to receive Independent Nominating Petitions is February 14, 2023; therefore, additional candidates and/or parties may be added to the ballot at that time.

Absentee ballot applications are available at the Village Office during regular office hours, Monday-Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by calling 547-2411.



Grievance Night

The tentative assessment roll has been completed for 2023. Notices have been sent to the owners of properties that have changed values.

The Assessor, Al Keck, is available weekdays, 8 AM – 2 PM in his office at 22 Main Street. He will also hold special office hours for those unable to meet during regular office hours on Thursday, February 9, from 6 PM – 8 PM and Saturday, February 11, from 9 AM – 1 PM or by appointment by calling 607-547-6057.

The Board of Assessment Review will meet on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 in the Village Meeting Room, 22 Main Street, Cooperstown, NY between the hours of 4 PM and 8 PM, for the purpose of hearing and determining complaints in relation to assessments on the application of any person believing himself to be aggrieved.

Complaints with respect to assessments must be filed with the Village Clerk on or before the day of the meeting on a form prescribed by the State. These forms are available at the Village Office, 22 Main Street or by calling (607) 547-2411.

Snow Emergencies

A snow emergency, or other emergency, is declared by the Mayor or the DWP superintendent. An emergency will be announced via media outlets including TV, radio, and the Village website.

Parking is prohibited on all Village streets during a declared emergency. Cars that remain on the street during an emergency may be towed.

Parking is available in the Doubleday Field Parking Lot whenever an emergency prevents parking on the streets. Please continue to support local businesses during the winter, even if that requires a little extra walking.

Removing Snow and Ice from the Public Sidewalk

This winter season, please remember that according to local law:

- ◆ Owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from public sidewalks adjoining their properties within 24 hours after a snowfall.
- ◆ 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 and deiced 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.

If the public sidewalk adjacent to your property is not cleared, the Village will clear it and charge you a fee of \$100 per instance. You will be notified of the need to clear the sidewalk via a paper notice placed at your entrance door before the sidewalk is cleared by Village employees. The Village does not make phone calls or send emails to property owners who have neglected this duty.

We ask that you remain diligent in clearing snow and ice from the sidewalk and make alternative arrangements if you are out of town. We would prefer not to have to issue notices, shovel sidewalks, or fine property owners—we do this to promote pedestrian safety.

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. A map with numbered hydrants is available on the Village website at <http://cooperstownny.org/volunteers/>.

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.

Boat Dock and Rack Rental 2023

We will begin to accept names for the boat dock & canoe/kayak rack waiting list on March 6th. To be put on the waiting list, you must come to the Village office on or after Monday, March 6th, during regular business hours which are 8:00 a.m. until 4 p.m. Spaces are assigned on a first come first assigned basis.

Last year's renters will automatically be assigned a slip/rack space and will have until March 31st to renew for the season. Slips that are not renewed will become available for those on the waiting list.

Because exterior slips (1-W dock) are best able to accommodate larger boats, and they tend to be the most desirable slips due to their accessibility, we have adjusted our slip fee schedule to reflect this. **Boats longer than 24' cannot be accommodated on Village docks.**

On 1-W with exterior slips, rates are \$800.00 for Cooperstown Village residents (**those who actually reside in the Village of Cooperstown as their primary, legal residence**) and \$1,750.00 for non-residents. For interior slips on 1-E, 2-E and 2-W rates remain at the prior rates of \$600 for Village residents and \$1350 for non-residents. If you are currently on 1-W, and do not wish to pay the increased rate and have a boat no longer than 20', you may request to move to an interior slip.

Boat Permits are valid from May 1st through November 1st.

Reminder: The slip applicant must be the registered boat owner and in order to receive in Village rates, your primary, legal residence must be located within the Village.

2023 Village Flag

My name is Oliver Wasson, a Senior at Cooperstown Central School. Since I was seven, I have been enthralled by flags, absorbed by their seemingly simple yet emotional symbols. The powerful art form expresses the identity and values within a group, bringing them closer together. Across the country, communities have been adopting flags that represent themselves, bringing

pride into locality. Despite growing up in “the Home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame”, I realized that our tight-knit hometown didn’t have a flag flying to its name. I took it upon myself this summer as a sort of personal project to design a flag that embodies our unwavering community. For weeks I contemplated on elements to include, weighing design options in my head. I gained inspiration by reflecting in various spots around the area, including Brookwood Point on the Lake. I then began to sketch out my ideas with colored pencils. The hardest part about design is translating your thoughts onto the page, sculpting your intangible ideas into definite shapes. After my vision was brought to fruition, I began to experiment in Adobe Illustrator. Through various versions, I balanced the flag mathematically to ensure its symmetry.

This flag is a stoic icon that can be embraced by both locals and tourists alike. The background of the flag can be seen in multiple different perspectives: the blue (representing our lake) and the green (representing our natural beauty) can be seen as a top-down view of Cooperstown. Otsego Lake stretches to the village, acting as a point of the start of the Susquehanna River. The subtle home plate design points to Cooperstown as the "home plate for baseball". The background can also be seen from the perspective of looking out at the horizon of the lake, with the green being the valleys encapsulating our village and lake. Of course, the home plate could be on a baseball field of green, the interpretation is based on what *you* see in it. The column gives the flag a very distinguished, scholarly look to represent Cooperstown as a village of museums and rich cultural history (the column is a very common architectural icon in our village). The column itself has three different regions, representing the Baseball Hall of Fame, the Fenimore Art Museum, and the Farmers' Museum. The column has been a significant symbol representing the arts, literature, and medicine that dates to the Greeks. The grey "keystone" shows how our community culture supports our village. It was also designed to represent Council Rock and James Fenimore Cooper's novels. It can be seen as a baseball diamond. The column has a wave-like trim that furthers the imagery of the glimmering lake. Lastly, I chose the column as a good symbol for the field of the flag as it represents our community and everyone's impact. I wanted to make a flag that, at heart, represents us locals, but also appeals to tourists, which I think is what Cooperstown is all about. – *Oliver Wasson*

The Village Board of Trustees approved Mr. Wasson's flag as the 2023 Village flag at their monthly meeting on Monday, January 23, 2023.



Overnight Parking

Between November 1 and April 1 overnight parking is prohibited on all Village streets to ensure snow and ice can be promptly removed. Free overnight parking is available in the Fowler Way Parking Lot and the Doubleday Field Parking Lot in designated areas. Look for signs indicating where overnight parking is allowed in these lots and don't make snow removal harder for our road crew by parking overnight on the street.

Spring Clean-Up

To facilitate spring clean-up, the Village of Cooperstown will be picking up green yard waste Monday – Friday beginning at 7 a.m. during the month of April, weather permitting. After April, pickup will be the last Thursday of each month.

Compostable Waste and Brush Curbside Pickup Procedures:

- 1) The Village will pick up compostable yard waste and brush separately. There will be two pickups per street, one for soft green waste and a second for brush. These may occur over a period of several days depending on demand.
- 2) Place any soft green waste such as grass clippings, leaves, and other soft garden waste in compostable bags or in reusable hard plastic containers.

Place containers between the sidewalk and the curb.

- Do not use plastic bags.
- Do not include non-compostable materials like plastic flower pots.
- Do not assume that we can lift containers that you cannot lift. Containers that are too heavy will be left at the curb.

- 3) Place brush in a pile between the curb and sidewalk.

- Do not put brush in containers.
 - Keep brush separated from green waste.
 - Root balls, stumps, and large tree limbs will not be picked up. We can only take material that will go through our shredder.
- 4) We do not pick up any kind of construction debris or processed lumber.
 - 5) For the initial clean up in the spring and the final clean up in the fall, leaves and green waste do not have to be bagged. Leave them in a pile between the curb and sidewalk. We will pick them up with our leaf vacuum.
 - Make sure there are no stones or bricks in the leaf pile.
 - Keep brush in its own pile that will be picked up separately.
 - Check the Village web site for fall and spring cleanup dates.
 - These pickups will continue over several days until all eligible items have been picked up.
 - 6) Residents may also bring green waste at any time to the Village Street Garage on Linden Avenue and deposit it themselves in the appropriate area. Commercial dumping is prohibited.

If you have any questions please call Mitch Hotaling, DPW Superintendent, 547-2411.

Badger Park Ice Skating Rink

As locals know, sunny warm days spell doom for the ice rink in Badger Park. Even a day or two of freezing temperatures are not enough to allow the ice to harden. It is frustrating for both Village staff and for the many people who are eager to skate. Fortunately, cold weather is in the forecast and everyone is working to have the rink in great shape for Winter Carnival Weekend.

In support of this community rink, used by Village residents and non-residents alike, the Village has a new Parks Superintendent Jake Diedrick and has funded a seasonal winter employee, who is tasked with working on the rink when weather conditions allow.

We appreciate all the assistance received from the Friends of the Parks for the Village's six parks, but particularly appreciate their support in the winter

months at the rink. Check out their Facebook page *Cooperstown Friends of the Parks* for updates on when the rink is open and activities that are planned.

When skating is available, the rink is often divided so that half is set up for hockey and half for open skating. The hours are as follows, weather permitting:

M/W/F 3pm-7pm mixed-use; T/Th 3pm-6pm mixed use, 6:30pm-9pm Hockey; Weekends and Holidays 10am-12noon Family skate; 12:30pm-6:30pm mixed use.

The warming hut will be open to allow skaters to borrow skates for daily use this season. Please be sure to remind your kids to put their skates back neatly. Skates should not leave the park for any reason.

Repairing Your Historic Home

If you live in the Village of Cooperstown and your house was built before 1949, you might qualify for a state income tax credit for work on your home. New York State offers income 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. 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 tax credit is equal to 20% of approved qualifying expenses up to \$50,000. For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643 or Otsego 2000 at 607-547-8881.

Paid Parking

The 2023 Paid Parking season will run from the Saturday before Memorial Day through Columbus Day. The paid parking area includes portions of Main, Chestnut, Pioneer, and Fair Streets. The rate remains \$2.50 per hour, payable in 30-minute increments, with a \$15 all-day option at the Doubleday Field parking lot. On the streets, parking will continue to be limited to a 2-hour purchase, with the ability to buy additional time by re-upping at a Pay and Display Machine. Doubleday Field provides an all-day option.

Downtown parking permits provide an alternative to using Pay and Display machines for parking in the paid parking area. Anyone—local or tourist—can buy a permit. Permit holders can park for up to 2 hours daily in 2-hour areas without purchasing a ticket from a Pay and Display machine. The same permit can be used to park in the Doubleday Field Lot after 4 pm and all day in the permit-only Fowler Way Parking Lot (located behind the Chamber of Commerce) if an all-day option is needed. Please

remember that the purchase and display of a parking permit does not guarantee a parking space.

Parking permits can be purchased in person from the Village Clerk's office at 22 Main Street or by mail or email. Applications can be accessed on the village website www.cooperstownny.org (under permits) or at the Clerk's office. A completed application must be accompanied by the appropriate fee, payable by cash or check. Credit cards can be accepted at the Village office. Permits remain a great deal at a cost of \$25 for the first permit, and \$15 for additional permits at the same address.

Water and Sewer Rates will increase in May

Do you know how many gallons, on average, of Village water you use in a year? Or the cost per gallon of that water? Most do not know the answers to those questions.

Village Voices is always mailed along with your water/sewer bill. It might be helpful to look at your bill as an illustration. In addition, the following information will prove useful in calculating gallons used and for understanding why the Village Board of Trustees at the January 23rd meeting, approved a 11.92% increase in water and sewer rates beginning with the May 2023 billing. The last time there was an increase in these rates was in 2007, nearly sixteen years ago.

The Village water meter on your water line measures water usage in cubic feet. Why does it measure in cubic feet instead of gallons? No one knows. One cubic foot of water equals 7.48 gallons. The cost of one cubic foot of water is .056800. So, the cost for one gallon of water is \$.00759. In other words, less than one cent for one gallon of Village metered water.

In looking at your bill, you will note there is a minimum usage charge of 500 cubic feet, at a flat fee of \$28.40 [500 cubic feet x .056800 = \$28.40]. Anything over the 500 cubic feet minimum is billed at \$5.68 per 100 cubic feet; the same rate, but billed at a 100-cu. ft. minimum.

As an example, on a bill indicating 800 under the word USAGE, the property used 800 cubic feet of water (5,984.42 gallons), at a cost of \$45.44. The sewer usage is based on a property's water usage; however, the sewer rate is slightly higher, .061100 per cubic foot. Therefore for 800 cubic feet, the sewer cost would be \$48.88.

For any properties lying outside the Village, which receive water and sewer services, the billing rates for both water and sewer are doubled. A property

outside the Village would pay .113600 for one cubic foot of water and .122200 per cubic foot for sewer. The enclosed bill represents our current rate. Your quarterly bill which you will receive in May 2023, will reflect the increased rate of .0668 for water and .0711 for sewer. Even with this 11.92% rate increase, Village water rates are still the lowest of surrounding Villages.

At the new rates, 800 cubic feet of water or 5,984.42 gallons will cost \$50.74 in Cooperstown. That same quantity of water would cost \$169.35 in the Village of Hartwick, \$84.00 in the Village of Cherry Valley and \$140.00 in the Village of Milford.

Blocked Sewer Line? Avoid unnecessary costs, call the Village First!

Property owners are responsible for maintaining waste lines to their junctions with the Village's sewer mains. The Village is responsible for operation and maintenance of the sewer mains. In the event a blockage occurs and an owner is uncertain about the location of the blockage, please notify the Village at 607-547-2411 for both daytime and after-hours emergencies. Village staff will investigate promptly. If the blockage is in the main, the Village will bear the cost of clearing it. If the blockage is in the owner's sewer lateral leading to the village main, the owner will be responsible for the cost. We bring this to your attention because recently a resident experienced a blockage, hired a plumber, and discovered that the blockage was in the Village main, not the owner's waste line. The Village cleared the line at no cost to the property owner, but was not authorized to reimburse the property owner for the cost of the plumber's services.

Trees

The Village of Cooperstown values the positive benefits of trees on air quality, water quality, energy bills, and aesthetics. The Village has been named a Tree City by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

In an effort to maintain the mature tree canopy in the Village, on any property not more than 30% of trees with a trunk diameter of six inches or more may be cut or drastically altered within a ten-year period. This applies to all property owners. There are exceptions for pruning or cutting of trees that are diseased or unsafe.

In addition, recognizing the importance of vegetation to prevent erosion and promote water quality, within 20 feet of the shoreline of the lake or the river, not more than 30% of the small trees or bushes may be cut or drastically altered in configuration over a ten-year period.

If you have questions about landscaping projects that involve the removal or trimming of trees on your property, contact Zoning Enforcement Officer Jackson DuBois before work begins at zoning@cooperstownny.org.

Rain Gardens Caretakers

The rain garden stewardship program is a volunteer program coordinated by the Village of Cooperstown. This year, we look forward to working with the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) to expand volunteer opportunities to keep our rain gardens looking great. Individuals, organizations, and businesses are encouraged to adopt one or more rain gardens or tree boxes for the summer. For years, dedicated volunteers, until recently led by Rich McCaffery, have maintained the rain gardens throughout the summer season.

There are 37 rain gardens on Main Street between Chestnut Street and Fair Street and five additional tree boxes on upper Main Street east of Chestnut Street. The rain gardens, along with permeable pavers and asphalt, capture rainwater from the sidewalks and streets so it can slowly soak into the ground. The soil naturally filters the water, ridding it of contaminants before it reaches the water table or Otsego Lake—a great service to everyone in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Those willing to make this commitment would be responsible for adding plantings—annuals or perennials—in the spring if desired, weeding throughout the summer, watering if necessary, picking up trash as needed, and cleaning up by removing annuals and trimming back other plants after the growing season. OCCA will provide optional training to those interested in learning more about planting and caring for these small, specialized gardens.

If you are interested in signing up or want more information, contact Shelby MacLeish at OCCA at education@occainfo.org or 607-601-8259. We will try to honor requests for specific locations as space allows, giving first preference to businesses and residences adjacent to each garden.

Tax Credits for Carriage House Repairs

Owners of barns, including carriage houses, may qualify for the New York State Historic Barn Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which is a state income tax credit equal to 25% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The building must have been constructed prior to 1946, and it must have been used at one time for a purpose related to agriculture, such as housing horses and hay. Your qualified rehabilitation, which cannot change the historic appearance of the building, must have cost \$5,000 or more. The credit may be applied to certain work that has already been completed. So if you need a new roof or recently put one on,

Painted, made foundations repairs, or completed other projects on your carriage house or other agricultural building, you can benefit from this program. Please contact Otsego 2000 at 607-547-8881 or director@otsego2000.org or the NYS Division for Historic Preservation staff at 518-237-8643 with questions. Note that the building cannot have been used as a residence within one year prior to applying for the credit or converted into a residence as a result of the work.

Village Street Lights

Other than the decorative looking lampposts on Main and two blocks of Pioneer streets which are Village owned, our street lights belong to NYSEG. When we request additional lights be installed on the NYSEG owned poles, we do not pay for the lights, but we are reliant on their scheduling to install the additional fixtures. The only cost for the Village is the electricity usage for which we currently budget \$35,000 annually.

There have been lighting complaints over the past few months as we approached the winter solstice December 21, 2022. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, it is known as the shortest day of the year, with the least amount of total sunlight. With sunsets occurring around 4:30 p.m., the reduced light levels when walking or driving are particularly pronounced.

The Village has requested that NYSEG install 10 additional lights on a number of streets where we have received complaints and know this is an issue for both pedestrians and vehicles. We also have become quite knowledgeable about the lumen levels of the installed lights. Within the Village lumen levels range from 3,000 lumens to 15,000 lumens. Increased light levels in existing light fixtures, particularly at intersections have also been requested.

We know this is a balancing act for our residents as we also receive complaints about light levels which are too high for residential areas and do not comply with dark sky-friendly light levels. We recognize these concerns, but also feel that pedestrian and vehicle safety concerns take priority. Street light levels are always a concern in the winter months, and are less of an issue as we move toward June with sunsets at 9:16 p.m.

Village Holiday Schedule

The Village Offices will be closed:

- ❖ February 20 (in observance of President's Day)

