

# VILLAGE VOICES

Number 130

Editor, Jenna Utter, Village Clerk

November 2023

## News from the Mayor's Office

How wonderful it was to finally, after a 4-year hiatus, be able to gather on our Main Street for the Community Dinner on October 1<sup>st</sup>! We are so appreciative of all the Volunteers with Growing Community who helped coordinate this event. After a busy summer season, the dinner gave us all a chance to reconnect with friends and neighbors.

Volunteers are an integral part of our Village. At the most recent Village Board meeting, we approved applications for several events coordinated by the Cooperstown Community Christmas Committee – the 4 C's. Mark your calendars for decorating day on November 19<sup>th</sup> when families and friends decorate Main Street lampposts and Santa's Cottage in Pioneer Park. The 4 C's also coordinates all the visits to the Cottage by Santa and Mrs. Claus. These holiday events are true memory making occasions.

And not to look too far ahead, the Trustees also approved a permit request for fireworks at Fairy Spring Park to launch Winter Carnival Weekend on Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. Last year marked the return of a Carnival Weekend that began in our Village in the 1960's. If you participated last year, you know how successful the weekend was and how very hard the Carnival Committee worked.

The Village itself has numerous volunteers on our Committees and Boards including Community & Environment, Parks, Water & Sewer, Doubleday Field and Tree Committee. We particularly want to acknowledge the hard-working individuals on our very important Zoning Boards - the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board and Historic Preservation and Architectural Review Board. Their expertise ensures that our Village remains the beautiful community which is enjoyed by so many.

And I would be remiss not to mention the Village Board, who are unpaid elected officials doing our best to serve our community. Our reward is seeing all the incredible improvements we have successfully implemented. We thank you for your support.

*-Ellen Tillapaugh – Mayor*

## Welcome Home Cooperstown!

*Welcome Home Cooperstown*, our series of monthly Meet & Greets launched in May, has been a wonderful success! The gatherings are held at Village Hall and are designed to welcome newcomers to our Village and assist them in building connections to established residents and institutions. We hope they will choose to make our community their permanent home. Everyone is welcome, including longtime residents who would like to meet and welcome others.

The gatherings take place on the first Tuesday of each month with the next one on **Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7** at Village Hall. Diwali (Indian New Year) occurs a few days after the 7<sup>th</sup>, and event organizer Anush Patel along with others, will wear traditional Indian attire and provide information about Diwali along with some Indian snacks. The Village Library, in coordination with the event, will be featuring a Diwali craft project for children.

For **Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**, organizers are planning a **Meet & Greet & Stroll the Street!** We will welcome people to Village Hall (complete with a Library event for young children!) and then encourage attendees to stroll down our beautifully decorated Main Street to visit local businesses which will be staying open until 8 p.m. that evening. We have heard that even Santa and Mrs. Claus might make an appearance!



## Cooperstown Free WIFI

Have you tried it?! Cooperstown Free WIFI is at long last in place on our Village's Main Street, from Fair to Chestnut streets.

After years of delays while agreements and grant funding requirements were met, not to mention pandemic associated delays with equipment orders, Cooperstown Free WIFI became operational a few days before Induction Weekend. Although the signage announcing the WIFI network had not yet

arrived, many visitors found and used the free network over the weekend.

For this \$310,000 grant funded, broadband project the Village worked with the Otsego County IDA and Middleburg telephone – Mid-Tel.

Work over the past few years included pulling fiber cables through existing conduits under Main Street and installing small (4" x 7") wifi units unobtrusively on our lampposts. In addition to the downtown WIFI hotspots, an app to enhance visitor experience and provide event and retail awareness will complete the project.

### ***New York Forward***

The \$4.5 million New York Forward Award (NYF) is an exciting opportunity for the Village to undertake significant transformative projects in our downtown area. We are so fortunate that the Village's application over a year ago to the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to receive an award from New York State Governor Kathy Hochul was successful.

By the time you read this, the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Local Planning Committee (LPC) on October 25<sup>th</sup> will have already occurred. The meetings held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at Village Hall, are advertised in local papers, posted on the Village website, as well as live streamed and recorded on the Village's YouTube channel. There is always time at meetings set aside for public comment.

The Local Planning Committee (LPC) is co-chaired by Mayor Ellen Tillapaugh and REDC Member Ken Meifert and consists of eleven other members representing a diverse cross section of the Cooperstown community.

The total funding request submitted via the Open Call for projects was over \$12.8 million with a total project cost of \$24.6 million.

The agenda for LPC #5 included a continued review of projects for inclusion in the Strategic Investment Plan as either a 'priority' or 'pipeline' project. All the projects which were considered are located within the NY Forward boundary, can break ground within two years of receiving funding, have financing largely in place, and are sponsored by a public, non-profit, or private entity with legal authority to undertake the project.

Throughout this process, the Village is very appreciative of the incredible support provided by the NYS Department of State and the state funded consultants, Laberge Group. The final Strategic Investment Plan which will include well in excess of

our allotted \$4.5 award and will be submitted to New York State, which will make the final selection of projects to be funded.

### ***Village Elections – 2024***

Election Day for the Village will be Tuesday, March 19, 2024. The following offices are up for re-election:

- ❖ Mayor- two-year term
- ❖ 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 19, 2023.



### ***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 the past, several owners have 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.

### ***Paid Parking***

During the 2023 Paid Parking Season the Village of Cooperstown collected upwards of \$450,000 from transactions at its twenty parking kiosks and on its new mobile app. Paid parking has allowed the Village to maintain services and maintenance without an increase to the annual property tax levy.

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

The Village continues to offer leaf pickup for residents and property owners this fall, beginning in mid-October and continuing until the snow starts. 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.

The last brush pick up of the year will be the Tuesday and Wednesday of Thanksgiving week, November 21 and 22.

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 25, 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 April 1.



### ***Become a First Responder***

Not all first responders rush into burning buildings. Whether you're fighting a fire, responding to the scene of an accident, providing emergency medical care, or helping your community through a state of emergency, you can make a difference. When you

join the volunteer fire service or emergency squad you save lives, help others, learn new skills, and become a leader in our community.

Volunteer firefighters are the primary emergency responders in Cooperstown. Volunteers respond to fire alarms as well as car accidents, flooded basements, and carbon monoxide alarms. Our department also needs volunteers for emergency medical calls, fire police duties, on-scene support, and equipment operation. Volunteer firefighters additionally host community events and teach their neighbors about fire safety and how to be prepared during an emergency. Interested? Email Glenn Falk at [glenn.falk@cooperstownfd.org](mailto:glenn.falk@cooperstownfd.org) for more information about joining the fire department. Emergency squad inquiries can be directed to Mike Simons at [michael.simons@cooperstownfd.org](mailto:michael.simons@cooperstownfd.org).

### ***The Fire Whistle***

It may seem that in an age of pagers and cell phones, having a fire whistle is outdated. However, an audible alarm still alerts both emergency responders and the community at large that something critical is happening. The whistle – actually two whistles, one at the fire station and one at Beaver Street – does not go off for every emergency. If you hear it, there is a fire, accident, or other emergency situation that requires our volunteers to mobilize quickly. Many times, first responders are alerted via an automated system as well. However, when technology fails – and that does happen – the whistle becomes the primary signal. The fire whistle is also important for firefighters whose jobs or other activities prevent them from carrying a pager or phone. Plus, if you have ever slept through a text, you know why we still have the whistle that goes off at night. If you are not currently in the fire service and you hear the whistle, be prepared for responders to be arriving at and emergency vehicles to be exiting from the fire station and be thankful that we continue to be able to rely on volunteers to meet local emergency needs.

### ***Children's Holiday Party***

The Cooperstown Fire Department is pleased to continue the tradition of welcoming area children to a holiday celebration on Sunday, December 10 from 2-4pm. The party will take place outdoors in Pioneer Park at the corner of Main and Pioneer Streets and will include games, crafts, refreshments, and visits



with  
Santa  
Claus.  
There is

no cost to participate in this festive celebration.

### ***Library News***

The Village Library is continuing with their very successful, plastic bag recycling program. The recycling boxes for collecting the plastic are in place at the circulation desk and in the upstairs hallway outside the Library doors. Accepted plastic is shown on the recycling bins, and all plastic bags must be clean.

The program is part of the Trex Recycling Film challenge. For every 500 pounds of plastic collected the Library will receive a Trex bench. Well over 1000 lbs has been collected! The Library has already received one bench and another is on its way. A third bench will be attained soon. The Library Board, in conjunction with the Village, will decide on the ideal location for the benches. Be sure to thank Library staff and volunteers for this important initiative!

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

The Village of Cooperstown encourages 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 that need to be kept clear of snow.

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 607-547-2411.

If everyone pitches in, we can ensure that access to fire hydrants is continuous, especially following a large snowstorm. The ultimate goal is to help ensure a safer Village for all who live, work, and visit here.

### ***Rain Garden Volunteers***

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.



The Village is grateful for the committed crew of volunteers who have cared for the rain gardens on Main Street this summer and for the Otsego County Conservation Organization, which helped coordinate volunteers. If you maintained a rain garden this summer and have any personal plants or ornaments that you want to remove, please do so by November 12.

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

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. Meters will be read again in January.

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.

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.

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.

#### ***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.

#### ***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.

#### ***Winter Carnival***

Stay tuned for more information about Winter Carnival, which will take place from February 1-4 this year. The Village of Cooperstown is happy to make our public parks available for this mid-winter event.



### ***Smoking Prohibited***

Smoking is prohibited on sidewalks and adjacent public property on Main Street from Fair Street to Pine Boulevard, as well as in Village parks and at Doubleday Field and 22 Main Street. This prohibition applies to the smoking of tobacco and the smoking of cannabis.

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

The Village has made a significant investment in the upgrade of our Waste Water Treatment Plant. We can be proud that we have a Plant which meets the needs of our community for decades to come and also ensures environmental safeguards for the Susquehanna River, the headwaters of the Chesapeake Basin.

All Village residents can help ensure that our WWTP continues to function at its best by not flushing disinfecting wipes, baby wipes and other sanitary wipes 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 at our WWTP



### ***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.

### ***Breakfast with the Board***

Come and have Breakfast with the Board!

Designed as a casual opportunity for hearing about projects in the Village and items on the agenda for that evening's Trustee Meeting, Breakfast with the Board will continue on Mondays from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. on these days: **November 27, December 18, and January 22**. We look forward to seeing you there!

### ***Village Telephone Numbers***

<b>Main Office</b>	<b>547-2411</b>
Village Clerk- Jenna Utter	ext. 102
Deputy Village Clerk- Marcia Nye	ext. 101
Zoning Officer- Chris de Ville	ext. 112
Public Works Sup. – Mitch Hotaling	ext. 104
Assessor/Watershed Inspector- Al Keck	ext. 107
<b>Treasurer's Office</b>	<b>547-8558</b>
Treasurer – Debra Guerin	ext. 108
Deputy Treasurer–Kathy Caffery	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 10**  
(in observance of Veteran's Day)
- ❖ **November 23 & 24**  
(in observance of Thanksgiving)
- ❖ **December 22 & 25**  
(in observance of Christmas)
- ❖ **December 29 & January 1**  
(in observance of New Year's)



