



**Vol. 1, Issue 1**

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## **Village Launches Monthly Newsletter**

An essential element in the effectiveness of the democratic process is communication between government and the governed. In an effort to help facilitate that connection within the Village of Dansville, this electronic newsletter is being launched, with the aim of publishing it in the first week of each month.

The content will come from a variety of sources: Board meetings, department heads, elected officials and outside sources (town, county, state and federal,

### **Notice to Property/Business Owners**

While it doesn't feel like it, the winter season is drawing down (spring starts March 20). Nevertheless, that doesn't mean there won't be more cold and snow, even after the start of the new season. With that in mind, central business district business district owners are asked to keep their sidewalks cleared of snow. The Village street crew will do its best to remove snow off Main Street. What would you think of a business that showed little interest in the convenience and safety of the general public?

### **Attention: Board's New Meeting Schedule**

The Board of Trustees has changed its meeting schedule commencing with the March Committee Meeting. The reason is to provide adequate time for the Clerk-Treasurer's Office to receive the monthly bank statements and accurately produce the necessary financial statements for the Board to make informed decisions. Until now, this has been a haphazard process that has been burdensome for the administrative staff.

Previously, the Board met for its Committee Meeting on the first Wednesday of each month and its Regular Meeting on the second Tuesday. Those meetings now will be the second Wednesday and third Tuesday, respectively.

as well as firms and organizations serving the public). The mayor will function as the editor. There are other sources of information about what the Village is doing or involved in, such as meeting minutes and recordings (available elsewhere on this website), and while this newsletter will speak about some of the issues out of those sources, it is not the intent here to simply repeat that information but to elaborate on it.

This document is meant to assist you in understanding what is happening in this village in your name, so it is important that you provide feedback. Let your government know if the

## **Ambulance Attaboys**

Congratulations are in order for Dansville Ambulance Co. At the annual dinner Feb. 22, members of the unit celebrated 46 years of service to the community by honoring their own who distinguished themselves by reaching many different plateaus this past year. There is not enough room to honor every award recipient, but three members deserve singling out: Chris Hedges, Member of the Year; Fred Flint, 51 years of EMS service; and David Leven, first recipient of the President's Award. Well done!

information is helpful and ask questions about areas that have been overlooked. If there are topics you would like to have explained or clarified, please contact Mayor Vogt at 335-5330.

## **Wissick Named to Deputy Clerk Position**

**W**e would like to welcome Jessica Wissick to the position of part-time deputy clerk. She assumed her duties on Feb. 3, 2014.

Ms. Wissick is a 1999 graduate of Dansville High School and came to the Village by way of the local banking community. She resides in Dansville.

The deputy clerk is a part-time (24 hours per week) position, with Jessica working Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. She is busy learning her duties and helping the village clerk, Megan Aldrich, catch up on a backlog of work; however, please stop in to welcome her to our family.

## **New Full-time Employees**

**B**esides the hiring of a part-time deputy clerk, the Village has also hired several full-time employees, one within the Dansville Police Department and four in the public works department.

## **Dansville Officer Makes Arrest**

We applaud Dansville Police Officer Brian Chapman for arresting a Hemlock man, Gary Flemke, who was initially charged with tampering with evidence but has since been accused of murdering his wife. The incident and arrest took place over the first weekend of March.

Officer Brian Chapman, a Dansville High School graduate, was hired from part-time to full-time in the Police Department. His previous law enforcement employment was part-time with the Town of Nunda Police Department.

In the Department of Public Works, four part-time employees were hired full-time to replace departing/retiring workers. They are Dave Avery, Nick Kostarellis, Milan Kysor and Don Stuart. All four work on the street crew.

Of the four employees departing the Village's workforce, two retired after many years of faithful service to the community. Frank Robson, street foreman, closed out his career Oct. 28, 2013, after 28 years. Ron Didas, who headed up the distribution and collection section, retired Aug. 23, 2013, also after 28 years on the job. Best wishes to both men.

It should be explained that Ron's section has been incorporated into the water and sewer sections. It is likely one of the street workers will be moved to sewer to bolster that operation. Matt Williams, who assisted Ron, has already moved to water. This realignment will give the two plant operators oversight over their entire systems.

Best wishes are also extended to Kevin Sick, who returned to the private sector in July after working in the street section for about 2½ years.

## **Independent Audits**

**L**ate last year and into this year, the Village's accounting firm, Bonadio Group of Victor, conducted independent audits of the Village and Village Court. At the Board's February meeting, the

final report for the Court was accepted and approved. However, the final report for the Village is still pending a review of the MedEx account, the account which holds the funds received as a result of ambulance billing.

The draft of the Village's audit was less than stellar, but not unexpected. The turnover in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office and the lack of a deputy, not to mention the tremendous workload of catching up and conducting day-to-day operations, created way too much chaos. The stabilization of that office with the hiring of Ms. Wissick is already showing benefits. We have an ambitious plan to right the problems (or get the corrections underway) by the time the new fiscal year starts in June.

Both final reports will be posted on the Village's website.

## Budget Process Begins

The 2014-15 budget process is underway. Most of the department heads have submitted their numbers to Mayor Vogt. At the time of this writing, the Clerk was typing the data into the accounting-budget program. Once that is completed, the Board will receive a copy which it will go over line by line.

It is the Board's intent to keep the budget under the 2 percent tax cap. That cap, in fact, actually applies to the levy, not the budget itself. There is a formula that is used, thus the figure could appear to be higher. People should also understand that the tax levy and the tax rate are two separate numbers. The levy is what is needed to meet the needs of the budget after all revenue sources besides taxes have been determined. The rate is the amount of money per \$1,000 of assessed value it takes to achieve the levy. It is possible the tax rate won't increase, or could even go down, yet your taxes could increase because the assessed value of your property has gone up. Just be aware of that.

The Board will receive the preliminary budget not later than March 31, at which time that body will review it and make any adjustments. A public hearing must be held not later than April 15 before the Board can give its final approval to the budget document, said adoption being required not later than May 1.

## Consolidation Committee

Details have yet to be presented to the full Board, but for the moment suffice it to say that the Board has informally established a committee to review the consolidation study published in 2010 for the possibility of putting some form of consolidation to voters.

As of this newsletter, the committee is composed of two Board members (Trustees Kreiley and Griffith), two village resident representatives (Brenda Hoag and Paul Hoffman), two Town councilmen (Greg Horr and David Leven) and one town representative (William Bacon).

## Summer Recreation RFP

The Village has put out a request for proposals (RFP) to two organizations and the public at large seeking organizations or individuals to run the 2014 Summer Recreation Program. The proposals were due to the Village by March 3. They will be reviewed by the Board, with the selection made during the March or April Regular Meeting.

## Police Department Assessment Study

After reviewing several bid proposals from the private sector to conduct an assessment of the the Dansville Police Department, your Board of Trustees made a decision to have the State Division of Criminal Justice conduct the study for free.

Listed by cost (highest to lowest), the following companies submitted proposals to the Village:

- Center for Government Research, Rochester, N.Y., \$42,000
- Clark Patterson Lee, Rochester, N.Y., \$34,769
- The Novak Consulting Group, Cincinnati, Ohio, \$29,750
- The Empire Group, Boynton Beach, Fla., \$10,465

## Grants

This past year the Village applied for grants to rebuild Knox-Adams-Quay streets and to help shore up banks along Bradner Creek where that stream runs through the village, especially between Clinton and Clay streets from Seward to Perine. Unfortunately, both grant applications were denied. The first grant would have helped in not just resurfacing the streets, but in completely rebuilding them to include repairing the water and sewer lines, sidewalks, and storm sewers. It would have greatly benefitted the surrounding neighborhoods and the hospital. The second grant would have helped address bank erosion and flooding. We will reapply this year.

While we had hoped to apply for a records management grant this year, there was just too much going on for us to get the information together in time. However, that is a priority for next year. Mayor Vogt has been speaking to potential vendors and our grant-writer, Thoma Associates, about this. The objective is to put our records in digital format on the Village's website for access by our employees and, as appropriate, the public.

The Village has applied for a housing rehabilitation grant, the same as last year. We will keep the public informed about where it stands as we learn more.

The Livingston County Sign & Facade Program application process is now underway. The deadline for submission is March 25. Central business district properties and businesses are eligible through the Downtown Partnership of Livingston County Development. Building or business owners may apply for up to \$5,000 in matching funds for sign and/or facade improvements. All projects must comply with local design guidelines. Last year local applicants were awarded approximately \$14,000 in grant money. That, in turn, generated well over \$40,000 in private investment. Well done!

As previously announced, the Village received a \$2 million hardship grant for the Waste Water Treatment Plant project. That amount has been taken off the cost of the plant. We're also on the list for a 50 percent grant for the composting facility, but that will be paid three to five years after the work has been completed.

## WWTP & Composting Facility

The Village of Dansville's Waste Water Treatment Plant project continues to move forward. The harsh winter weather has slowed work down some, but it should be completed by this fall as planned. The new facilities (intake building, sequence batch reactor tank, and process building) should be on line sometime this spring so that we can switch the system over from the worn out structures and begin their demolition. To date, the project remains under budget.

Planning continues for the composting facility, the construction of which is expected to commence this summer. It will stand between the control building and the processing tanks. The process will involve taking the sludge "cake" and turning it into material for use on lawns and flower gardens.

Currently, we ship our sludge (which contains about 80 percent water) to another facility. Hauling is expensive (more than \$160,000 in 2012-13) and becoming more expensive and restrictive. The composting material from the new facility will be used by the Village and be available to rate payers, most likely free on a first-come, first-served basis. Village officials have visited other communities who have said they cannot process the sludge fast enough for their citizens.

## Summer DPW Projects

This summer the DPW will again be stretched to the limits as a number of projects are scheduled.

Last year the reservoir dam received a lot of attention, with Superintendent Tracy's crew using spoil from the Waste Water Treatment Plant project and a farmer's field to reduce the slope of the structure so that it can be maintained more easily. About two-thirds to three-quarters of the dam's face was resurfaced with a gentler slope and seeded. It is hoped the project can be completed this year.

It is expected that at the Board's March meeting the dedication of Seward Street Extension will be approved so that the street can be widened to an average of 16 feet and surfaced. It had been thought the street was a totally private track, but research

this past year revealed that the Village has a right-of-way along it, though it varies and is generally narrow. The widening and surfacing will bring the street into compliance and afford the residents along it the kind of roadway for which they have been paying taxes.

Needless to say, a major undertaking will be the patching of our streets due to this winter's extreme weather. How we will go about it has not been worked out in detail, but this will be more than just filling in potholes. Significant patchwork will have to be undertaken.

Also on tap will be the placement of the new monument in Pioneer Park, along with the rebuilding of the sidewalks and the placement of lighting. This will complete the project. The important thing to remember is that this park was the site of the Village's first cemetery, and when it was closed not all remains were removed to other locations. A ground penetrating radar project located likely sites in the park of some of those remains. In effect, while the site is no longer an official cemetery, it remains a burial site, and those still interred there should be honored.

## CVS Demolition Work

As is obvious to anyone who has driven through the central business district in the last few weeks, demolition work is proceeding at the site of the new CVS store. The former VanHynning service station has been leveled and the former shoe factory is all but down as well. One Milton Street, a facility rented by Finger Lakes DDSO (a state agency) remains occupied for now, but should be emptied not later than April and then demolished soon thereafter.

The design plan for the new CVS store itself had to go back before the Planning Board in February due to changes in design and size. A public hearing was held, with a sizeable turnout asking for the structure to better comply with the adjacent historic district. Some modifications are expected. The new store design has a smaller footprint, down from 13,000 sq.ft. To 9,000 sq.ft.

The Planning Board will discuss and possibly decide on the new plan at its next meeting, the third Tuesday of the month.

## Flood Insurance Increases Raise Alarm

There has been much talk of late, both nationally and locally, about the dramatic rise in flood insurance. Actually, "dramatic" does not even begin to describe the impact.

Flood insurance is a federal program that is required by mortgage companies if a person wants to borrow money for a home in a designated flood plain. Whether or not a property is in a flood plain is determined from maps produced by the federal government. Contrary to the opinion of some, local government has no say in the production of maps or who must have flood insurance. That is a shame, because the recent rate increases (Biggert-Waters Act of 2012) could have a devastating impact on communities such as Dansville.

Dansville has three areas of concern: Mill Creek, Bradner Creek and Brewery (Mud) Creek. Mill Creek generally has little impact, despite its relatively large size, because few houses are built directly along it. However, Bradner and Brewery creeks flow directly through residential neighborhoods, and relatively shallow banks and have periodically flooded, though the damage, for the most part, has been limited to basements and is not covered by flood insurance. Still, homes in these areas require flood insurance if purchased on a commercial loan. In some cases the insurance payment can exceed the mortgage payment, and in most all cases the amount is prohibitive.

"So what?" you say. You own your home outright. The very likely impact is to cause real estate sales in the flood zones to become depressed because if people won't buy, owners won't be able to sell. At some point most people sell, or leave the home for the family to sell. At any rate, even if you don't care now, a depressed neighborhood loses value not just on how its homes sell, but also on its assessments. That results in higher taxes on everyone or the loss of services. The downward spiral is obvious.

The Village is looking at the problem now in an effort to mitigate it. More on this topic will be forthcoming as the Village talks with its engineers and congressional representatives.