

MINUTES – Alfred Village Board of Trustees Meeting

December 19, 2011

Present: Mayor Clark, Trustees Bowden, Rasmussen, Prophet; Clerk-Treasurer Koegel, Town Supervisor Mansfield, Town Councilmember Stearns, and County Election Commissioners Herdman and Lorow

1. Meeting Opening – Mayor Clark opened the meeting at 12:30 p.m. and explained the purpose of the meeting: The Village received the Election Commissioners’ letter about election district consolidation. The Village still wants to have different polling districts if possible and wishes to learn what the objections are to doing so.
2. The Case for Separate Districts – Trustee Rasmussen added that the village is not just concerned about having to make a change, but about how to design a political system inviting for engagement. They don’t want to disenfranchise students and have the change create a negative impact on voting habits. Trustee Prophet stated the colleges want to connect the students to the community, and said a change from a 5-minute walk on a lunch hour to a bus system will eliminate the practice of voting for many of them.
3. Commissioner Response – Commissioner Herdman stated the Town polling place (Town truck bay) meets and exceeds expectations due to great measures taken by the Town, and the Village polling place (A.E. Crandall Fire Dept.) falls short of expectations due to issues with heat and accessibility. She also explained how election expenses (i.e. printing, inspectors) have increased due to the new election requirements. She continued by saying that with the new 2% property tax cap, neither the County nor the Town has the resources or the desire to keep these districts separate, and doing so would be unfair to the rest of the County residents. Commissioner Lorow stated the only costs charged to the Town are the cost of inspectors and setup of the machines. Commissioner Herdman said they are in the process of learning what other charges can be charged back to the towns.
4. Village Board Response – Trustee Rasmussen pointed out many of the issues with the November 2011 election were associated with communications and responsibilities of jurisdictions other than the Village. She also stated that it does sometimes cost more to honor the rights of everyone. Mayor Clark reminded the Commissioners that Alfred Village residents are Town and County residents too. She and Mayor Clark expressed the board’s willingness to improve the polling site with the minor changes needed to bring about the necessary improvements to access and heat. They also said we have enough residents willing to become election inspectors, but in 2011 they weren’t permitted to get through the County training process.
5. Action – Mayor Clark and Trustee Rasmussen stated the Village has requested before, and needs to receive, hard facts about the cost to the Town of maintaining two separate polling places. Mayor Clark requested the Commissioners to provide the Village with a written list of the election costs currently charged to the Town, so rational discussion between the Village Board, Town Council and Election Commissioners could follow.
6. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.