

# MINUTES – Alfred Village Board of Trustees Public Hearing

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April 28, 2020

## **DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THIS PUBLIC HEARING WAS HELD ONLINE**

**Present:** Mayor Prophet, Deputy Mayor McClain, Trustees Gill, Brown and Ninos; Clerk Hasper; Police Chief Griffith; and approximately 5 members of the public

1. **Hearing Opening** – Mayor Prophet opened the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.
2. **2020-21 Tentative Budget** - Deputy Mayor McClain acknowledged the challenges the Village has been experiencing with declining revenue. He noted the tax increase of 1.73% was just below the 1.78% tax cap. Some of the concerns he noted were the declining water usage, the possibility of students not returning in the fall, sewer cost concerns and the current quarter water billing is lower due to covid-19. The board has listened to the public's concerns and in the current budget proposal the sewer rate increase will be a 24% increase instead of the 37% rate increase (a decrease of one third). The lower revenue will be offset by using \$40,000 from reserves (in addition to the \$40,000 that was already planned to be used from reserves).
3. **Public comments** received and discussed:
  - Discussion on the likely difficulties we will face this next year due to covid-19, lack of students in town, possible financial devastation for the Village, business owners and landlords, and some talk of dissolution of Village (which is not a pretty picture for residents).
  - Concern over lowering our reserve account by so much with the uncertain future
  - Current quarterly water billing is \$40,000 less than last year (less consumption and covid-19) and \$60,000 less than 2 years ago (less consumption)
  - Concern over lack of understanding on how much it costs to run the wastewater treatment plant and the shop
  - Cutting expenses was suggested with the board noting this has already been done in numerous ways.
  - Idea of business owners and landlords holding a meeting
  - Dissatisfaction that small business owners not receiving any of the first round of stimulus money. It was felt that they will be part of the next round.
  - Comment on delaying passing the budget again but it was felt the impact would be too damaging.
  - Suggestion of instituting a commercial sewer rate. The board would need to seek legal counsel on it.
  - Suggestion of eliminating water meters and everybody pays the same amount. Village would then know what the revenue would be and these times of lower usage would not have such a damaging effect. The idea is a lot to look into.
4. **Adjournment** – With no further comments, a motion to adjourn the public hearing was made by Trustees Brown/Ninos. Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Hasper, Clerk

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