

## Village of Aurora Board of Trustees June 28, 2019 Work Session Minutes

The meeting was held at the Firehouse meeting room at 9:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor Bonnie Bennett; Trustees Grace Bates, Matt Bianconi and Janet Murphy

**Absent:** Kit Van Orman

**Others Present:** Clerk Ann Balloni, Treasurer Deborah Brooks, ZBA member Laura Holland and Wells College Director of Sustainability Marian Brown

**Call to Order:** Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**LED Lighting for the Firehouse:** A proposal was submitted from NYSEG for \$21,000.00, including a \$6,000.00 rebate, for a total cost of \$15,000.00. Per Ms. Brooks, money is available in the Capital Improvement Fund and the Aurora-Ledyard Fire District Commissioners Chairperson offered a 75%/25% Village/District split of the cost, but he would like to present the proposal to his Board.

Trustee Bianconi suggested soliciting alternate quotes from private electric companies. Mayor Bennett noted that there is a deadline of July 11, 2019 for the NYSEG proposal and additional quotes would have to be submitted ASAP. Trustee Bianconi and Ms. Brooks recommended having Jim Weber, a Fire District Commissioner with electrical expertise, meet with Pleasant Valley Electric and Saxton Electric and discuss all the proposals with the membership at the next Fire Department meeting (along with Alan Ominsky who instigated the LED project while a Village Trustee). The Village Board agreed to move forward with the project.

**Solar Discussion:** Ms. Brown presented a revised configuration for the Wells College Poplar Ridge Road solar array option with a longer, narrower setting. Per Ms. Brown, the plan requires less clearcutting and should not impact lake views. The configuration could also allow for a future, small housing development.

Trustee Bianconi questioned if an array smaller than 20 acres would suffice and Ms. Brown replied that 20 acres is the minimum needed to meet the energy demands of Wells College.

Mayor Bennett questioned if locating it in the Town of Ledyard was an option and Ms. Brown replied that residents on Fry Road voiced concerns as did the Town of Ledyard Planning Board.

Mayor Bennett asked the Trustees to consider the positive and negatives aspects of large solar arrays in the Village, especially given the National Historic District designation. Mayor Bennett noted that Aurora is thriving in part due to the Historic District attraction to tourists and businesses, such as the Inns of Aurora. Mayor Bennett also referenced the City of Auburn which is consciously working toward regulating solar away from residents and tourist areas, preferring to site solar arrays in a former landfill.

Trustee Bates encouraged allowing solar in the Village to blend the past with the future and help employers be sustainable.

Mayor Bennett remarked that the Village does allow for roof mounted and small ground mounted solar arrays in the residential district but questioned the appropriateness of allowing large solar arrays in a tiny village.

Trustee Bianconi suggested a public meeting to hear residents' opinions. Mayor Bennett agreed, noting that a Public Hearing is mandated, but questioned the validity of public opinion. Mayor Bennett added that a proposal was received from Barton & Loguidice for a professional consultant to come to the Village and make a recommendation on allowing large solar arrays. Trustee Murphy agreed with hiring an unbiased professional who is educated in the specifics of locating solar arrays. Trustee Bianconi remarked that both public and professional opinions are warranted in moving forward with adopting a solar law.

On motion by Mayor Bennett, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to hire a consultant from Barton & Loguidice at a cost of \$2,800.00 for guidance in regulating solar arrays in the Village.

AYES: Bennett, Bates, Bianconi and Murphy

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment:** On motion by Trustee Bates, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to adjourn the work session at 10:30 a.m.

AYES: Bennett, Bates, Bianconi and Murphy

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Balloni  
Village Clerk