

Village of Aurora Board of Trustees Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Aurora Firehouse Meeting Room at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor James Orman, Trustees Matt Bianconi, L. John Miller, Janet Murphy, and Frank Zimdahl

Others Present: Clerk Ann Balloni

Members of the Public: See attached list

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Orman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and all rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was had for Kevin Van Orman, lifetime resident of the village, who passed away on December 6.

Public Hearing for Local Law #5 of 2023: To Regulate Short-Term Rentals

Mayor Orman explained the procedure for the public hearing:

- sign-in on the comment sheet if you would like to speak
- state your name and address
- limit of 2-3 minutes for each speaker
- only comments regarding Local Law #5 will be received

On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Zimdahl, the Village Board voted to open the public hearing for Local Law #5 of 2023 at 6:06 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Robert Jetty: Mr. Jetty questioned “what problem are you trying to solve with the law?”

Kay Burkett: see attached comments

Kathy Britt-Almeer: Ms. Almeer noted that renting out their property short-term has allowed them to keep the house in their family.

Burch Craig: see attached comments

Bill Clark: Mr. Clark agrees with safety considerations but feels the law is too restrictive especially regarding the lottery.

Robin Driskel: Ms. Driskel commented that the law is trying to regulate for a village that no longer exists and is now dependent on tourism. Short-term renters are preferable to long term renters and the state of the village is due to the Inns of Aurora.

John Haggerty: see attached comments

Chris MacCormick: see attached comments

Steve McGuire: Mr. McGuire explained that renting his property short-term helps defray costs which allows them to keep the home in the family. Mr. McGuire also advocated for the other short-term rental properties in the village which his family frequent on occasion. Mr. McGuire believes that the law is too burdensome for a village and better suited for a city, noting that the short-term rental owners were not consulted on the law.

Bonnie Bennett: see attached comments

John Place: Mr. Place questioned the process.

JD Balloni: Mr. Balloni introduced himself as the fire chief for the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department from 2018-2023. Mr. Balloni commended the committee and the village board for addressing the short-term rental issue and appreciates the comments received for and against the law. Mr. Balloni noted that when he joined the fire department in 2009 there were 20 interior firefighters; today there are 5. Mr. Balloni believes that an increasing number of short-term rentals in the village does cause a recruitment problem and, just as he chose to stay and live here, is hopeful that the law will make more homes available for others who want to live here full-time.

John Dentes: see attached comments

Marie Dentes: see attached comments

Virgil Farlow: Mr. Farlow noted that before he purchased 432 Main Street, it was used as an apartment house for college students. Multiple calls were made to the sheriff and fire department during that time and the building was trashed. Mr. Farlow added that he has significantly improved the building and should be praised for the renovation. Mr. Farlow expressed concern about the code enforcement officer's authority to revoke a short-term rental permit and questioned the legality. Mr. Farlow further remarked that the Village should be supportive of community investment.

Lindsay Bolton: Ms. Bolton is a realtor for Finger Lakes Properties and has attended several municipal meetings regarding short-term rental laws. Ms. Bolton noted that the trend to buy up houses in the Finger Lakes for short-term rentals is decreasing. Ms. Bolton added that placing limits on the number of short-term rentals is problematic and views responsible renting as possible in the village.

Brody Smith: Mr. Smith introduced himself as an attorney from Bond, Schoeneck, and King representing the short-term rental owners. Mr. Smith noted that he has represented towns adopting short-term rental laws and some were adopted, and some were not. Mr. Smith sees room for "reasonable compromise" but sees the lottery as a mistake. Mr. Smith believes that the trustees should address non-conforming uses as better protection for the village.

Mary Webber: Ms. Webber noted that she was the youngest person in the room, and ten-year resident of the village, who recently lost her apartment due to the sale of the building and has no other option for housing in the village. Ms. Webber noted that "young people" were responsible for AuroraFest and short-term rentals limit opportunities for young people to live here. Ms. Weber added that Wells graduates and Inns of Aurora employees are without any affordable place to live in the village.

Jacci Farlow: Ms. Farlow thanked everyone for attending. Ms. Farlow referred to herself as the "Ambassador for Aurora" and noted that she did not set out to manage short-term rentals, but short-term rental owners came to her. Ms. Farlow appreciates the overflow business from the Inns of Aurora and offers welcoming accommodations to customers who support local businesses. Ms. Farlow added that they are not making any money and that all profits from the rentals go back into the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings.

Public Hearing Adjournment: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Zimdahl, the village board voted to close the public hearing for Local Law #5 of 2023 at 7:05 and defer discussion and decision to a later date.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayot Orman called the regular meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda: Hiring a part-time seasonable helper for the Village DPW is added under New Business.

Approval of Minutes: On motion by Trustee Zimdahl, seconded by Trustee Murphy, the Village Board voted to approve the November 15, 2023 regular meeting minutes and the December 9, 2023 special meeting minutes.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor: Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority received ARPA funds from the Cayuga County legislature to hire MRB Group to do a feasibility study for a water plant at Long Point State Park.

Clerk: Pat Bianconi has agreed to continue to represent the village at Cayuga County Planning Board meetings.

Visitor Welcome: No comments.

Treasurer's Report: On motion by Trustee Zimdahl, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to accept the October Treasurer's Report.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Bills

General: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the General Fund Abstract #7 for payment.

Voucher #200-205, 209-219, 221, 223, 225-233, 235, 236, 238, 239, 242, 243, and 245-247

Total: \$21,730.69

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Water: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the Water Fund Abstract #7 for payment.

Voucher #201, 207, 208, 219, 230, 236, 237, and 240

Total: \$6,725.48

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the Sewer Fund Abstract #7 for payment.

Voucher #201, 206, 208-210, 215, 219-222, 224, 227, 234, 236, 240, 241, and 244

Total: \$16,422.92

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Code Officer (see attached): Officer Rhea submitted his year-end review.

Historian (see attached): Dr. Schwab reported on community events, recent queries, and upcoming presentations.

Old Business: No Old Business was discussed.

New Business

Hiring part-time, seasonal DPW help: On motion by Trustee Zimdahl, seconded by Trustee Murphy, the Village Board voted to hire Louis Hasenjager to assist the DPW, mid-December through mid-January, at \$17/hour.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Appoint Registrar: On motion by Trustee Bianconi, seconded by Trustee Murphy, the Village Board voted to appoint Ann Balloni as the village registrar and Deborah Brooks as deputy village registrar.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Firehouse Heating System: The mayor and trustees discussed submitted proposals and considered applying for a SAM grant to replace the boiler. The Board further discussed insulating the truck bay. On motion by Trustee Bianconi, seconded by Trustee Zimdahl, the Village Board voted to approve the E&V Energy Oil Boiler Annual Service Plan proposal for \$359.88.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, Orman, and Zimdahl

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.