

## **Village of Aurora Board of Trustees March 4, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was held at 5:30 p.m. in the Aurora Firehouse meeting room.

**Present:** Mayor Jim Orman, Trustees JD Balloni, John Miller, and Janet Murphy

**Absent:** Matt Bianconi

**Others:** Clerk Ann Balloni, Barton & Loguidice Engineer Chris Lawton, Account Clerk Christine Tanner, Village Engineer Ken Teter, Sewer Plant Operator Mike White, and Water Plant Operators Dave Wenzel and Bob Yager

**Call to Order:** Mayor Orman called the special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **Village Water System**

Chris Lawton and Ken Teter discussed preliminary ideas from the forthcoming update to their Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), submitted in 2018, and prompted by Wells College informing the Village Board of Trustees in 2016 that they no longer wanted to be the water supplier for the Village. Mr. Teter explained that the PER was required to apply for Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) Funding from New York State. The Village was awarded \$3 million from WIIA funding in 2021.

The initial plan for the WIIA grant to build a new water plant at Long Point State Park, with the potential for expansion to include additional users and as a redundant system for Cayuga County, was subverted when Wells College changed their mind about “getting out of the water business” and instead applied for their own grants to upgrade their water system.

Further complications for the Village arose following Wells College closing announcement on April 29, 2024. The Village became responsible for the Wells Water Plant, including completing the applications and documentation of the two grants that Wells was awarded for the upgrades. As the WIIA funding now requires a complete revision of the application, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has advised relinquishing the \$3 million grant and re-applying for a \$5 million grant.

Referencing ongoing conversations with NYSDOH, Mayor Orman and Mr. Teter noted that there are no guarantees, but they emphasized the strong recommendation from NYSDOH to re-apply. Mr. Lawton added that he was involved with a municipality who was given the same advice and they were awarded the \$5 million.

Trustee Miller discussed the two potential options for the Village, operating the Wells water plant or purchasing Owasco Lake water from the Town of Springport. Both options are roughly the same cost, \$10-\$11 million. Trustee Miller inquired about piping water from the wells in Poplar Ridge as a potential third option. Mr. Teter noted that he contacted the head of Buildings and Grounds at Southern Cayuga Central School as part of his research for the 2018 PER, but never received a reply. Mr. Teter offered to reach out to him again, as well as the developer who recently purchased the Emily Howland Elementary School building in Sherwood.

Mr. Teter and Mr. Lawton then led the Board through key issues and considerations that play a role in the Village Board making a final decision..... i.e., cost, control, funding, the future, etc. It included the next critical steps upcoming and the need to pursue key political leaders to get them acquainted with

the project in anticipation of having our project on their lists for upcoming Congressional Directed Spending appropriations.

Mr. Lawton and Mr. Teter stressed the urgency of completing the updated PER and deciding on a plan for the water system. Ideally, there could be a plan by the March 19 regular Board of Trustees meeting, but no later than the end of the month.

**Adjournment:** On motion by Trustee Miller, second by Trustee Murphy, the Village Board voted to adjourn the special meeting at 7:00 p.m.

AYES: Balloni, Miller, Murphy, and Orman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Bianconi

Motion carried.