

Village of Aurora Board of Trustees June 18, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Present: Mayor James Orman, Trustees JD Balloni (6:05), Matt Bianconi, John Miller, and Janet Murphy

Others Present

Village Officials: Clerk Ann Balloni, ZBA members Alexis Boyce & Laura Holland, Treasurer Christine Tanner, and Engineer Ken Teter

Inns of Aurora: Corey Guerrette

Members of the Public: Jacci & Virgil Farlow, Lydie Haenlin, and Ed Rossmann

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

Changes to the Agenda: No changes

Approval of Minutes

May 15, 2025, Special Meeting: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the May 15, 2025 special meeting minutes

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, and Orman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Balloni

Motion carried unanimously.

May 21, 2025, Regular Meeting: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the May 21, 2025 regular meeting minutes

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, and Orman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Balloni

Motion carried unanimously.

June 10, 2025, Special Meeting: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to approve the June 10, 2025 special meeting minutes

AYES: Bianconi, Miller, Murphy, and Orman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Balloni

Motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor:

- A letter of support from the Village was sent on behalf of the Cayuga County Water & Sewer Authority for their Honoco Road sewer project
- Tee-Ann Hunter has offered to helm the tree project with the funding from the Climate Smart grant
- NYSDOT approved the Right-of-Way for the Patrick Tavern porch project

- The Town of Scipio sent a letter of concern about the NY State RAPID Act which diminishes Home Rule regarding renewable energy projects.

Village Engineer: Mr. Teter reported on the installation of the new filters at the water plant and noted that they are “a crucial component” of the upgrades needed and funded through State grants.

Visitor Welcome

Alexis Boyce: Ms. Boyce commented on the negotiations for the Village to purchase the Wells Water Plant. Ms. Boyce noted that there is an end date of October 1 for the Village to close on the plant and is hopeful that the Village will follow through with the purchase.

Ed Rossmann: Mr. Rossmann questioned the upcoming increase in water rates and suggested pumping less water to keep the costs down.

Treasurer’s Report

On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Orman, the Village Board voted to accept the May Treasurer’s Report.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Tanner noted that there will be an upcoming temporary transfer of funds from General to Water. Ms. Tanner added that there are multiple abstracts this month for General, Water, and Sewer because some bills were paid out of the 2024/2025 budgets, and some were paid from the 2025/2026 budgets.

Bills

General: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the General Fund Abstract #13 for payment.

Voucher #475-479

Total: \$1,389.34

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Water: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the Water Fund Abstract #13 for payment.

Voucher #402 & 403

Total: \$271.75

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer: No Abstract 13 for the Sewer Fund

General: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the General Fund Abstract #14 for payment.

Voucher #479-502

Total: \$19,134.55

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Water: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the Water Fund Abstract #14 for payment.

Voucher #404-410

Total: \$8,715.11

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Mayor Orman, the Village Board voted to approve the Sewer Fund Abstract #14 for payment.

Voucher #371-377

Total: \$2,211.75

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

General: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the General Fund Abstract #1 for payment.

Voucher #1-12

Total: \$17,140.28

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Water: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Trustee Balloni, the Village Board voted to approve the Water Fund Abstract #1 for payment.

Voucher #1-5

Total: \$4,214.16

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer: On motion by Trustee Murphy, seconded by Mayor Orman, the Village Board voted to approve the Sewer Fund Abstract #1 for payment.

Voucher #1-3

Total: \$6,921.18

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Code Officer: Officer Rhea reported on permit applications received this year and a resident who continues to violate the Village Zoning Law by keeping shipping containers on his property. A court date is pending.

Additionally, Officer Rhea noted an error he made in issuing a permit for fireworks for a wedding at the Aurora Inn. The application did not adhere to the regulations in the Village Zoning Law and there were several complaints from residents. Officer Rhea assured the Trustees that it will not happen again.

Historian (see attached): Dr. Schwab discussed the legacy agreement that Wells College now has with Hobart-William Smith College in Geneva. Dr. Schwab stressed the importance of the Village staying informed on the distribution of Wells materials, particularly those pertaining to the Village history. Mayor Orman will discuss the Village's role in the process with the village attorney and follow up with the trustees and Dr. Schwab.

Old Business – No Old Business was discussed

New Business

Village Water/Sewer Rates: Mr. Teter explained the new rate system instituting a flat fee for users based on Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs). A single-family home = 1 EDU, but a commercial establishment may have several and the fee is charged for each EDU.

Trustee Miller supports a flat fee approach but strongly disagrees with the EDU structure, believing that it puts an undue burden on the local businesses. As the owner of almost all the commercial properties in the village, the Inns of Aurora will pay a significantly higher amount for water & sewer. Trustee Miller suggested dividing up the cost based on usage which would lower the cost for commercial but raise the cost to village residents to \$630/quarter (using the EDUs formula, the cost to village residents would be (\$372.75/quarter). Trustee Miller added that most municipalities give businesses a break on water/sewer fees and questioned why the village attorney advised that the Village not charge short-term rental owners a commercial rate.

Mayor Orman noted that the increase in fees is substantial for everyone, and the Village does not have the population to absorb the commercial costs like other municipalities. The few residents outside the village who have municipal water/sewer, along with the water haulers, will also bear the burden because there are so few residents. Mayor Orman further noted that the rate for commercial properties is lower than residential, but still results in higher costs due to usage. Mayor Orman added that this is a 6-month trial period to determine how the plan works through 2 billing cycles, beginning with the July billing.

RESOLUTION #25-27: TO RAISE WATER AND SEWER RATES IN THE VILLAGE OF AURORA

Moved: Trustee Balloni

Second: Trustee Murphy

Date: June 18, 2025

WHEREAS: the Village of Aurora was forced to operate and maintain the Wells water plant beginning October 1, 2024, due to the sudden closure of Wells College, announced April 29, 2024; and

WHEREAS: the annual cost of operating and maintaining the water plant and overall water system has been determined to be \$327,600.00, an increase of \$209,500 from the previous year's water budget of \$118,100.00; and

WHEREAS: revenue to operate the water plant and system must be received through water fees from all the users of the water; and

WHEREAS: the Village of Aurora also lost significant revenue in the sewer budget due to the closure of Wells College; and

WHEREAS: the annual cost of operating and maintaining the sewer treatment plant and system has been determined to be \$234,200, and increase of \$11,590 from the previous year's budget of \$222,610; and

WHEREAS: revenue to operate the wastewater treatment plant and system must be received through sewer fees from all users of the sewer system; and

WHEREAS: the Village Board desires that a new overall rate structure be developed which is simpler and is focused on a flat fee approach for each category of user and they also desire that the new system allocates the fees in an equitable manner reflecting the actual volume of use by each category of user; and

WHEREAS: the Village Board recognizes that this represents a significant impact on all residents and businesses who use these services and therefore will revisit these new rates following the next two quarterly billing cycles to assess the accuracy and performance of these new rates;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Village of Aurora will adopt a new rate structure for both water and sewer use as is described and noted on the attached "Rate Schedule". The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, the upon roll call, the vote was as follows

Trustee Balloni: AYE

Trustee Bianconi: AYE

Trustee Miller: NAY

Trustee Murphy: AYE

Mayor Orman: AYE

Vote: 4-1

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

WIIA Grant: Mr. Teter explained the consultations with the NY State Department of Health (NYSDOH) regarding the funding from the Water Infrastructure & Improvement Act. The Village was initially awarded \$3 million for the construction of a new water plant at Long Point State Park. Wells College informed the Village at a regular meeting on December 16, 2016 "we want out of the water business", which prompted the Village to apply for the funding.

When the grant was awarded, Wells changed their mind and requested support from the Village for their own grant funding to continue to operate their plant. The Village continued to work with NYSDOH on how to now utilize the \$3 million.

When Wells announced their closure on April 29, 2024, and the Village was tasked with operating Wells water plant, NYSDOH was again consulted on the next steps for the Village regarding the grant. After much discussion, and reviewing the new WIIA grant funding rules, NYSDOH advised the Village to rescind the \$3 million grant and re-apply for a \$5 million grant. Initially, there was concern that it was a risky move but, given the situation with Wells, they strongly recommended starting over with a new grant application.

As the grant application requires a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR), the Village Board voted to act as Lead Agency for the review.

Proposed Action: Village of Aurora Water System Improvement Project

**RESOLUTION # 25-28 DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE VILLAGE OF AURORA VILLAGE BOARD
TO ACT AS LEAD AGENCY**

Moved: Trustee Miller

Second: Trustee Balloni

DATE: June 18, 2025

WHEREAS, the Village of Aurora (Village) is proposing the Village of Aurora Water System Improvement Project (Project), located in the Village of Aurora, Cayuga County, New York; and

WHEREAS, the Project has been classified as a “Type I Action” as defined by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) in 6 NYCRR Part 617.4; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Village of Aurora Village Board to assume the role of “Lead Agency” for purposes of conducting a SEQRA/SERP assessment of the Project; and

WHEREAS, Part I of a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) has been completed, reviewed by the Village of Aurora Village Board, and will be circulated to all Interested and Involved Agencies for purposes of establishing the Village of Aurora Village Board as “Lead Agency” in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND DETERMINED, that the Mayor of the Village of Aurora hereby is authorized to sign Part I of the FEAF (page 13); and it is further

RESOLVED AND DETERMINED, that the Village of Aurora will send said Part I of the FEAF and associated site figure to the attached list of “Interested and Involved Agencies” under cover of a “Notice of Intent to Establish Lead Agency” letter for purposes of establishing Lead Agency status under the SEQRA/SERP; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor of the Village of Aurora and the Village Board, together with the Village of Aurora Attorney and B&L, are hereby authorized to take all actions, serve all notices, and complete all documents required to give full force and effect to this determination.

The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

JD Balloni, Trustee AYE
Matt Bianconi, Trustee AYE
John Miller, Trustee AYE
Janet Murphy, Trustee AYE
Jim Orman, Mayor AYE
Vote: 5-0

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

Williamson Law Book Contracts: On motion by Trustee Murphy, second by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to renew the annual Williamson Law Book software program contracts for Accounting Support (\$1,405.00), Payroll (\$1,104.00), Tax Collection (\$602.00), and Water & Sewer (\$1,405.00), reflected on the General Fund Abstract #12.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

ZBA Appointment: On motion by Trustee Balloni, second by Trustee Miller, the Village Board voted to appoint Michael Groth as Alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: On motion by Trustee Balloni, seconded by Trustee Bianconi, the Village Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Balloni
Village Clerk