

PRESENT Mayor Welch, Deputy Mayor Eydt, Trustee Conde, Trustee Coppins, Trustee Gibson, Law Counsel Leone, Superintendent Wills, Engineer Marino, Police Captain Salada, Clerk Fundis, Treasurer Longwell, Deputy Clerk Cassick, Recreation Director McDermott, Historian Piper

EXCUSED Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Candella

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Welch called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:00pm

RESIDENTS Lewiston Landing Spruce Tree

Resident Trixi Goods spoke in favor of keeping a spruce tree at Lewiston Landing that was voted on to be removed at a meeting on November 20, 2023. Goods said it is a healthy, beautiful tree that has sentimental value. It was planted as a memorial for Ted Beeton. I urge the board to reconsider and to make a compromise. Goods provided images to the Board of Trustees showing ideas on how to trim the tree.

Resident Susan Bray spoke in favor of keeping the spruce tree; I have asked the businesses surrounding this area and they have no trouble with it being there.

Jocelyn Pinson spoke on behalf of her grandfather, John Ritter. In favor of keeping the tree, Pinson said he (Ritter) was the harbor master at Lewiston Landing for many years. I think that if we take care of it and it looks great, then we should keep it. I rode my bike down there for many years when he worked, and I always looked at that beautiful tree. Resident Nancy Ritter said that the DPW and Larry Wills are in favor of keeping the tree, and I know they would be glad to trim it. John (Ritter) used to trim this tree; this tree hasn't been trimmed in seven years.

Mayor Welch explained that beautification asked for the removal of the tree because they want to redo the park and this tree takes up a large portion of it. Rob Nichols of the Lions Club said they are planting 11 new trees throughout the village, and they want to plant two at Lewiston Landing. Once these trees get big enough, they are hard to maintain, we thought to take this one down before it got too large. We appreciate beautification and try to help them every step of the way. I think it is a good idea to compromise, to keep the tree and maintain it.

Trustee Gibson said I would like to apologize to the taxpayers for not doing my due diligence. I didn't realize it was a healthy tree, and I did not realize that it was a memorial to somebody in the village.

A motion was made by Trustee Gibson seconded by Deputy Mayor Eydt and passed unanimously to save the spruce tree at Lewiston Landing. Trustee Coppins added, for the tree to be trimmed and maintained.

MINUTES A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded by Trustee Conde and passed unanimously to approve the January 16, 2024 and February 5, 2024 minutes.

BILLS A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to approve the February 2024 bills presented by Treasurer Longwell in the following amounts:
General Fund: \$663,092.20
Capital Fund: \$67,134.08
Trust & Agency: \$4,963.40
Total: \$735,189.68

REPORTS **Police Captain Salada** said they have two new part time employees and will bring them in to meet everyone soon. A discussion ensued on the upcoming eclipse on April 8, 2024. Salada said all officers are on duty that day, and we will be spread out through all parks.

Recreation Director McDermott said the Annual Spring Fling will be held on Sunday, May 12, 2024 from 11am-2pm. Paul Beatty will be taking care of the race management for the event.

Doreen Albee of the Planning Commission said they gave approval for the Academy Park pavilion, with a surveyor determining the exact location. We also approved the development plans for 780 Center Street; this is a wonderful development and we are glad to see the incorporating of the landscaping and sidewalks in the approved plans.

Historian Piper said he has acquired new pieces, and mentioned the continuous work he is doing at Oakwood. Piper said Rob Nichols of the Lions Club is going to give him two decorative trees for the cemetery.

**NEW
BUSINESS**

Mighty Fitz 5K

A motion was made by Trustee Gibson seconded by Trustee Conde and passed unanimously to approve the request made by iRun WNY Inc. to host the 2024 Annual Mighty Fitz 5K on Saturday November 9, 2024.

Academy Park Pavilion

Architect Jim Fittante presented proposed plans for a pavilion at Academy Park. Trustee Conde addressed concerns on the design, height and size of the design. Conde suggested to shrink the size of the pavilion down, to save money and to improve the quality of the pavilion. Conde suggested to raise the sides to 10 feet, and to reduce the size to 80' x 40'. Engineer Marino said he would work with Fittante on the design for the plans to go out to bid for the project.

A motion was made by Trustee Conde seconded by Deputy Mayor Eydt and passed unanimously to approve the proposed pavilion at Academy Park, contingent upon the revisions discussed at this meeting, and for the changes to be reviewed at the Village Board of Trustees meeting on March 4, 2024.

Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1 Resignations

A motion was made by Trustee Gibson seconded by Deputy Mayor Eydt and passed unanimously to remove Spencer Rhyans from our roster and to accept the resignation of the following Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1 members:

Michael Richards
Tyler Walker
Colby Chretien

Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1 Conditional Membership

A motion was made Trustee Gibson seconded by Trustee Conde and passed unanimously to approve the Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1 Conditional Membership for Maureen Penzotti.

780 Center Street – Development Plans

Tom Fox of Ellicott Development presented the plans for the proposed conversion from commercial to residential space at 780 Center Street. Fox explained they have been unable to lease the commercial ground space, but the residential market is very strong. This will be a mixed-use building, changed primarily to residential with approximately 3,000 SF of commercial space. This project was approved by the Planning & HPC Commissions, and the necessary variances were granted by the ZBA. An entrance on the southwest corner has been added to the front of the building near the lobby and elevators, as well as additional windows to the first floor, and the commercial access will be removed. Additional sidewalks and landscaping have been added throughout; embellishing landscaping islands, removing five parking spots to create more green space, as well as a gazebo.

Trustee Conde asked if greenery could be added to the 8th Street side of the building. Conde also asked about the possibility of a sidewalk being added there. Superintendent Wills said National Fuel will not allow sidewalks over their high-pressure lines, which run down that street.

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Eydt seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to approve the proposed development plans for 780 Center Street, with additional bushes to be placed on the east side of the building and updated sewer calculations reflecting the change of use to be completed.

Lewiston Harvest & Hops Festival

A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to approve the Upward Niagara Chamber of Commerce request to host the Lewiston Harvest & Hops Festival on September 28-29, 2024; this request includes Village facilities use of the International Peace Garden, Hennepin Park, closing of Center Street from 4th to 8th Street, as well as waiving the Open Container Bottle Law for the two days of the festival.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Trustee Conde seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to enter into executive session immediately following the close of this meeting to discuss litigation and personnel.

Increase in AIM Funding

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Eydt and seconded by Trustee Gibson to approve the following resolution:

Resolution Calling for an Increase in AIM Funding

Whereas, the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program plays a critical role in funding essential municipal services for cities and villages across New York State; and

Whereas, city and village officials share the same priorities as our state leaders which is to make New York safer and more affordable; and

Whereas, New York's local governments, who are on the frontlines of controlling property tax affordability and ensuring public safety, are integral to achieving those goals; and

Whereas, the State has not increased AIM funding in 15 years and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation has increased by nearly 45% during that same period; and

Whereas, this neglect from the State has led to rising municipal tax burdens and harmful disinvestment in essential municipal services and staff; and

Whereas, the property tax cap further limits the ability of local governments to properly fund the services their residents need; and

Whereas, the challenges of rising inflation, the increasing costs of labor and supplies, and the end of extraordinary federal aid, only accentuate the need for an increase in AIM funding; and

Whereas, the Governor's 2024-25 Executive Budget proposes to keep AIM funding flat; and

Whereas, an increase in AIM funding would reduce the local tax burden and help revitalize communities across New York;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Village of Lewiston urges Governor Hochul to work with the leaders of the Senate and Assembly and increase AIM funding in the 2024-25 adopted State Budget.

Clerk Fundis polled the board and the resolution passed with the following results:

Gibson – Yes Coppins – Yes Conde – Yes Eydt – Yes Welch - Yes

DISCUSSION**Lew-Port Youth Football – Used Athletic Equipment Collection Drive**

A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded by Deputy Mayor Eydt and passed unanimously to approve the request made by Lew-Port Youth Football and Cheer to place a bin at the Red Brick Municipal Building for collection of used athletic equipment under the stairs near the Onondaga entrance, through the program Leveling the Playing Field.

REPORTS **Superintendent Wills** said he has been working with Engineer Marino on the fish cleaning station, stating there are serious problems with it. Mayor Welch asked Engineer to order the necessary parts to repair the equipment.

BOARD **Trustee Conde** mentioned that while in the Red Brick building on Saturday, the new boiler had gone out again. Conde said the boiler needs combustion air with a louver, and said we need to look at funds for this.

REPORTS **Deputy Mayor Eydt** said he went to a meeting with Niagara County Emergency Management on the upcoming eclipse on April 8, 2024. The county has made us very aware that this whole area will be extremely crowded. Already the Niagara Falls Airport is packed solid, and they don't even have enough space to park the planes that have requested to be here. We will see an influx of people throughout Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday leading up to the eclipse, but right afterwards, expect to see huge traffic jams, as everyone will be trying to leave all at once. Mayor Welch said we are looking into getting porta potties for all of our parks for this event.

Mayor Welch thanked everyone for their input and revisions on the Academy Park pavilion; I am hoping to have this built by summer.

ADJOURN A motion was made by Trustee Conde seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:53pm.

Shannon Fundis, Clerk

EXECUTIVE SESSION

PRESENT Mayor Welch, Deputy Mayor Eydt, Trustee Conde, Trustee Coppins, Trustee Gibson, Law Counsel Leone, Clerk Fundis, Treasurer Longwell

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Welch called the Executive Session to order at 7:03pm.

BUSINESS A discussion ensued on litigation and personnel. No action was taken.

ADJOURN A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded Trustee Gibson by and passed unanimously to adjourn the executive session at 7:53pm.

Shannon Fundis, Clerk