

What's New in the Village of Fonda

Newsletter – Mayor's Report
March 2019

Mayor

William Peeler

Board of Trustees

Timothy Healey, Deputy Mayor

Lynn Dumar

Walter Boyd

Randy Wellman

Village Clerk & Treasurer

Christine Kearns

JoAnn Downing – Deputy

Street & Water Commissioner

Christopher Weaver

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Did you know?

The Board of Trustees meet at least once per month, and often multiple times within a month?

We meet on the Second Monday of each month at 6:30 PM.

Getting Started

I want to welcome you to the Village of Fonda's revised newsletter - the Mayor's Report, where we will periodically provide written updates as to what is happening within our community.

As we will be entering the 2019-2020 budget year, I wanted to provide our residents with an enlarged source of information. The reason behind this is simple, we have a lot going on, and we want to keep our residents and taxpayers abreast of what's coming next.

This newsletter will be available online, and through printed versions at local businesses as well as the Village Clerk's Office.

Get Involved

We invite our residents to attend our Board of Trustees meeting held each month. Knowing life gets in the way we have and will try different communication medians to keep you informed. It is essential for our residents to participate and get involved if we wish to make our community a better place.

Current Committee's & Board's Available for Membership

- Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Waterfront & Recreation Park Committee
- Fonda Fultonville Joint Wastewater Sewer Board
- Comprehensive Planning-Steering Committee
- Consolidated Board of Health
- Flood Damage Prevention Appeals Board
- Home & Community
- Personnel Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Streets Committee

Apply at the Village Clerk's Office by April 1, 2019

Knowing the Differences in Government

The Village of Fonda resides within the Town of Mohawk, that lies in Montgomery County, which of course resides within New York State. Each of these municipalities governs their corporate territories and are responsible for specific services within those territories or jurisdictions.

Also, each municipality has authority over the roadways and other public areas within their corporate boundaries. The exception to this is when the government, state or federal, exert influence over certain facilities (utilities), roadways, rights-of-way and the like.

So, in addition to the municipalities, we are required by law to obey authority given to other non-government entities, i.e., National Grid, numerous communication companies, railroad systems and government agencies such as the NYS Department of Transportation. A prime example of this is NYS Route 5 (Main Street), and the NYS DOT controls NYS Route 30A (Broadway). Where on any regular roadway or street within the Village these entities would have to seek permission from the Village to conduct work it is the opposite, we (the Village) have to ask permission from the body with the given authority.

Confusion often exists when individuals are living outside the Village Boundaries that have a Fonda mailing address.

We have some people that will state they are a resident of Fonda. Where you reside is important when it comes to dealing with official business.

If you have a question as to if you live in the Village of Fonda, contact the Village Clerk.



Bridging the Gap

Among the number of initiatives that we are undertaking as a Village, we look to partner with other organizations in bringing these visions to fruition.

One of the current initiatives is working to bridge the gap between our Senior Citizens and younger families living in our community and that will allow our younger community members the opportunity to spend time and learn from our older community members. To this end, Mayor Peeler is working with the AARP and Montgomery County who are applying for a grant on our behalf to fund some of our concepts.

We want everyone to enjoy the amenities we are bringing to our community free from physical obstacles and fulfilling their needs. Walkways, Recreational Activities, Water Fountains, Shaded Areas to enjoy the improved waterfront and park are just some of the considerations underway.

We will keep you posted on our progress with this important initiative.

History begins when you walk into the room... it is important to take the time to find out what happened before you arrived.



The Waterfront Revitalization Project

The Waterfront Revitalization Project began in 2013 with four participating municipalities and continues under the Village of Fonda with assistance from Montgomery County.

The project as a whole experienced a rocky start and is finally coming to fruition with the Mayor and the Board of Trustees continue the work needed to make this project a reality. As of today, approved plans, that received funding from the NYS Canal Corporation and the NYS Department of State are forming into actual construction plans that will be placed out for bid in 2019. Through public hearings planning approval was given for this project.

The Village will be constructing a boat launch, boat docks, boat parking, boat pump-out equipment, public bathrooms with facilities for boaters, a paved parking area for events, a stage with audio & video equipment for public affairs, a memorial, recreational fields, signage with event announcements, a pavilion, picnic areas, benches, bicycle racks and canoe rentals (Montgomery County initiative on our behalf).

Future Facilities

As we complete the significant portion of the construction, we are considering additional facilities and improvements. One of the long-desired improvements is to our playground. Other considerations include an ice-skating rink for winter activities, a privately donated dog park, and holiday tree, a splash park, connection of the county bicycle trails and other recreational facilities. The most significant consideration we are undertaking is the revitalization of the County Highway property once vacated. Considered “green space” under the flood requirements, we are completing studies to create a village campground. The campground will allow visitors, who would otherwise be transient, to spend time in the area and utilize local resources such as fishing and visit the many rural businesses within the region. Much further down the road, we will attempt to work with the county in revitalizing the old school when and if they vacate the property. Ideas for this include new living space for sale or rental through a developer.

Waterfront and Recreational Uses

Uses for the Waterfront and Recreational Park are plentiful. We are looking for a committee that will lead these ideas for events such as movie night, musical entertainment, bass fishing tournaments, events such as the After the Fourth Celebration, car shows, weekly farmer markets and facility rentals for private function uses.

Financial Sustainability

Maintenance of the park such as lawn mowing, weed trimming, and repairs, has always been paid for through the village tax base. Since 2015 the village has created a line item and account for revenues received from various sources such as the parking lot proceeds. Initially, funds will be used in the needed matching of funds received from our grantors. In the future, the revenues created will be utilized for the maintenance and upkeep of the park facilities. Allowing the cost burden to be allocated away from the tax revenue of the village. With the addition of campground rentals, facility rentals and the like, it is possible that we will not only maintain the facilities but grow the facilities and the community events held within the park.

Understanding Choices Made for Our Facilities

When we approach conceptual plans for the Waterfront and Recreational Park we consider - utilization, construction cost, residual cost & sustainability related to maintenance and regulation requirements. The Village also consults with loss prevention experts from our insurance company and legal counsel as to any liability exposures encountered. Once a concept appears to be viable, we consider final input from our taxpayers and residents.



Understanding the Grant Process

All too often we hear people begrudge communities applying for grants to improve, replace or add new facilities. Often cited is the statement, “it is a waste of taxpayer money.”

The opinion that the pursuit of grant funding is a waste of taxpayer money would be correct if we did not pursue these dollars made available. Applying for grant funding is how we as municipalities return tax dollars paid by our constituents. We are capable of completing major

Water & Sanitary Improvements

The total cost of these two critical projects is \$4,700,000. These projects required the Village to seek bonds in the amount of \$2,265,000 to cover the difference. The work on these improvements began in the spring of 2018. The Village continues to explore other streams of funding that would allow continued development of services.

Projects: Water Storage and Distribution System Improvements \$3,600,000:

Water Construction:

- A. Source: At Briggs Run Reservoir
 - Intake and aeration improvements
 - Correct filtration plant deficiencies
 - Replace existing units with stainless steel
 - Turbidity and chart recorder replacement
 - Replace various leaking pipes/valves
 - Install iron and magnesium filters
- B. Transmission/Distribution
 - Replace Pressure Reducing Valve at Little Reservoir
- C. 500,000g Water Tank Improvements:
 - Install new mixing system inside tank
 - Install telemetry to monitor water levels
- D. Distribution Improvements
 - Replace mains at various streets (along with hydrants, gate valves, curb stops, curb stops and road reconstruction.

projects in your community because of this funding.

Grant funding begins in the Federal, State, and County budget process. Each entity earmarks revenue received for particular funding needs, i.e., infrastructure, such as water & sanitary systems, roadways, energy conservation, and the like. As the receiving party or the grantee, we can choose from the earmarked funding made available through the necessary application process. Funding is not guaranteed. Since 2012 we are at about 65% approval rating.

Budget vs. Grant Funding

The total budget for the Village is \$1,517,785.00 for the current fiscal year. This past fiscal year we received a total of \$2,961,750.00 – this is \$2,435,000 for water and sanitary improvements, and \$526,750 for waterfront improvements.

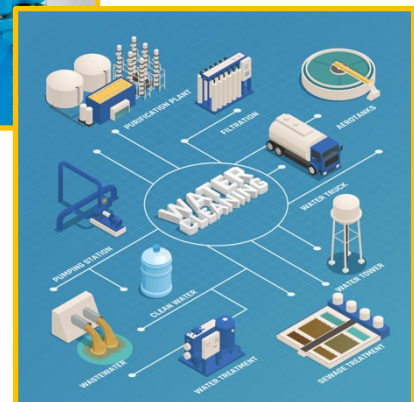
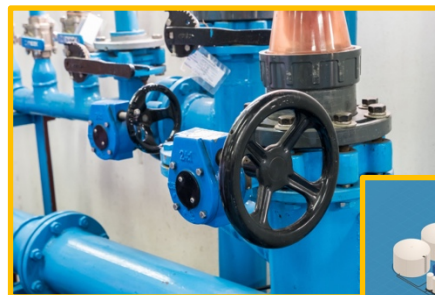
Grants Received in 1 Year is Nearly 2 Times Our Annual Budget

Water & Sanitary Improvements cont....

Projects: Sanitary Sewer System Improvements \$1,100,000

Sanitary Construction:

- A. General Requirements: mobilization, insurance, televise, dye tests
- B. Sanitary Sewer Open Cut Replacement approx. 2,100 feet
- C. Trenchless Sanitary Sewer Lining, approx. 1,400 feet



We continue to work with Fultonville for the North Center Street Water, Sanitary, Storm water, and surface improvements. We hope to see this in construction by the end of 2019. Funded by CDBG Grant

As a small and rural community, we have to budget and strategize for not only today but tomorrow as well.

Not unlike many of us raised within Upstate New York as a municipality we at times have to do without so we can save for the future.

As an example of this, we reduced lighting in 2013, so we could ultimately improve the overall lighting program within our Village.

New LED Conversion Lighting Program

The LED Conversion Program is an opportunity for which we have waited.

When the Village looked at the cost of street lighting, we identified one area that we could cost transition cost of mid-way street lighting to other areas of the village that needed attention without an exponential increase to our taxes. In addition to this, we had a choice, to pay the exorbitant cost of removing the unlit (red capped) cobra lights or allow the fixtures to remain at a lower annual fee.

In our study of this, we found it was written in New York law that municipalities were responsible for paying the power company to remove their equipment - this would have cost an estimated \$25,000. Now with this new program, the power company will remove any fixtures needed at no cost. Additionally, Mayor Peeler is working with State Legislators to rescind this law for future needs statewide.

In the program we have established, we will be reducing the number of decorative lights in the Main Street area for redistribution to other streets. During our water and sanitary construction on the streets, determined by our engineers, and decorative lighting placed in these locations. The result of reactivation of cobra and placement of decorative lighting will restore our full lighting program with annual cost savings.

We are anticipating completion of Phase I in 2019 and Phase II, and the completion of the decorative LED conversion in 2020.

We were at the forefront of these cost-saving measures, and now we find that many communities across the state have followed suit with their cost reduction measures.

In 2019 we are pleased to say; the right opportunity has arrived where we can return lighting to all of our streets at a significantly reduced cost.

Phase I - Cobra Lighting Conversion to LED

Phase II - Decorative Lighting Conversion to LED



Program LED Conversion Cost & Savings

2012 full year 157 cobra lights: \$24,000 at 107500 KWH

Current Year 50 Cobras: \$13,063.08 at 35000 KWH

Dollar Amount Saved since reduction of lights; Savings
\$11,000 per year X 6 years = \$66,000

Estimate of new amount for 100% Cobra Replacement & Reactivation Program
(per quoted 123 cobras proposal)

New Proposed Cost \$16,800.00 - 2012 Rate of \$24,000 = \$7,200 Savings Per Year

As we continue forward with future planning in the Village, we will continue to look at energy cost savings. We are currently looking at potential wind and solar options to reduce our overall electric cost.

As the Mayor and many of our Trustees are lifelong residents, we join our residents in their concern regarding the appearance of the Village as a whole.

We often hear people broadly generalize statements, such as “the village looks bad” or “the village is going downhill.” When you speak to individuals, you can narrow these concerns down to the blight and maintenance of individual properties throughout the village.

As a village, we have created local laws that allow us to deal directly with condemning unsafe buildings. We

Property Maintenance

In 2012 the Village of Fonda suffered the tremendous loss of our Village Code Enforcement Officer, Ronald Hinkle.

As we move forward and continue the initiatives started by the Village mentioned we are or have:

- Established a Comprehensive Committee and Plan
- Hired a new code enforcement officer
- Work to Improve Structural & Aesthetic Qualities of Our Homes
- Work to Develop & Renovate Existing Homes
- Promoted the reestablishment of the County Demolition Team
 - Removal of 30 W. Main Street & Others
- Received Funding from the Landbank and County
 - Remove and Rebuild Lower Prospect Structure
 - Renovate North Center Street Property

Both of these properties will be placed on the market & sold once work is completed.

It is not our intention to create more government and regulations but to enhance our enforcement of existing laws and assist property owners in improving and compliance of their properties.

To realize the compliance needed, we ask that our residents become familiar with the code and maintenance laws.

We are currently studying available funding sources for property owners to improve their homes.

Visit Our Website for Local Laws at:
www.villageoffonda.ny.gov

have improved our street cleaning efforts through the purchase of a vacuum truck, trash can placement on our streets and we have increased the annual residential clean-up, having it two times per year.

The Mayor’s also continues work with the Mohawk Valley Land Bank and Montgomery County Representatives in making abandoned properties viable again.

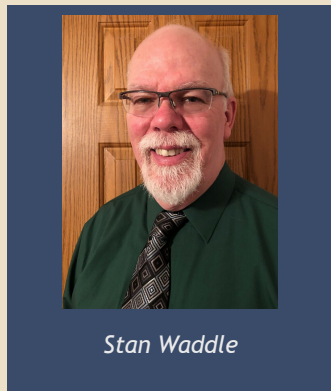
We, as your elected officials, will continue to work toward the goal of creating a place we can all be proud of. We ask that you join us in this endeavor and thank you for your efforts.

Landbank Project: N. Center & Lower Prospect Streets



Our newly appointed NYS Building & Code Enforcement Officer, Stanley Waddle, will begin employment on April 15, 2019.

Stanley has 50 years of experience in facility management and holds an Associate Degree in Electronics and is a Certified Code Enforcement Official.



Stan Waddle

NYS Building and Code Enforcement