



# The Village Report

Volume 21 Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2021

## Contact Information

[www.villageofvoorheesville.com](http://www.villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Village Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Notary Services available

**Phone:** (518) 765-2692

**Fax:** (518) 765-2967

**Mailing address:** 29 Voorheesville Ave.

### Mayor

Bob Conway 765-0036  
[mayor@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:mayor@villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Deputy Mayor

Dick Berger 765-2674

### Trustees

Jack Stevens 765-4350  
Rich Straut 765-2068  
Sarita Winchell 765-2133

### Village Clerk/Treasurer

Linda Pasquali  
[clerk@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:clerk@villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Deputy Clerk/Treasurers

Karen Finnessey  
[deputyclerk@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:deputyclerk@villageofvoorheesville.com)  
Suzanne Hartmann  
[deputy@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:deputy@villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Building Inspector

Steve Mason 765-2698  
[building@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:building@villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Superintendent, Public Works

Brett Hotaling 765-4512  
[DPW@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:DPW@villageofvoorheesville.com)

### Stormwater Officer

Frank Fazio 765-2692 ext 14  
[stormwater@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:stormwater@villageofvoorheesville.com)

## Board Meetings

### Village Board:

4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM  
at Village Hall

### Zoning Board of Appeals:

1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at  
Village Hall

### Planning Commission:

2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at  
Village Hall

ZBA and Planning meet only when  
applications have been submitted. Call the  
Village Office or check the Public Notices and  
the website calendar to confirm meetings.

Public Notices for the Village of Voorheesville  
can be found in The Enterprise's advertisement  
section.

## From the Village Board

While it has been more than a year that the Global pandemic has significantly impacted our every-day lives, the signs of hope for a return to some sense of normalcy continue to grow. Unfortunately, we are not out of the woods yet regarding the pandemic and as some of our friends, neighbors and family members continue to struggle with the illness. While we see a light at the end of the tunnel, we encourage everyone to remain vigilant with mask wearing and social distancing protocols until the pandemic subsides. There is an abundance of vaccination sites in the area so please contact Village Hall should you need assistance finding one. Unfortunately, the difficult decisions have been made to again forgo the Memorial Day festivities that are a hallmark of Voorheesville's traditions and to cancel our 2021 summer recreation program. The Village Board is hopeful that we can resume these traditions in 2022.

In spite of the pandemic, Village Officials and Village staff have continued to progress important work on behalf of our residents. You will learn about some of those initiatives here and if you have further questions, please call the Village Office and we will be happy to assist. Here are a few highlights:

- The Village did some belt tightening over the past year in anticipation of increased costs and reduced revenues resulting from the pandemic. Fortunately, this effort has "paid off" and our finances remain strong.

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## Community Choice Aggregation Program Update

*By Trustee Richard Straut*

The Village began exploring Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) bulk energy purchasing in 2019 with Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA) as the program administrator. Since initiating the project, the Village held several public information sessions and passed a local law enabling Voorheesville to pursue CCA on behalf of our residents. Participating in the CCA, the Village of Voorheesville is part of a 12-municipality group in the Capital Region that together would leverage our collective buying power to secure a fixed competitive price for renewable electricity. Central to our decision to move forward with the CCA is our ability to access 100% renewable energy at a price competitive in the overall electricity market. A disruption in the market for Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) last summer led MEGA to put bidding for the CCA on hold because it was clear that the disruption would not result in competitive pricing of the renewable energy at this time. MEGA is currently working with the NYS Department of Public Service, NYS Public Service Commission, and New York State Energy Research Authority (NYSERDA) to develop a solution to the REC market disruption that will bring costs down to a competitive rate again. We're hopeful that progress toward offering energy through CCA will advance in 2021, but the pricing issues must be resolved first.

MEGA is also exploring another option for an opt-out Community Distributed Generation (CDG) renewable energy offering.

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## Taxes and User Fee Information

By Trustee Sarita Winchell

### Property Tax Rates

The Village of Voorheesville's General Fund supports the following Village services for residents: streetlights; Village parks; sidewalks; pickup of garbage, brush and leaves; snow removal and paving of Village streets; the Voorheesville Fire Department; ambulance services; code enforcement; compliance with environmental regulations; and the administrative costs associated with these services. The Village receives significant revenue from County sales tax, taxes on franchises, State revenue sharing, and State highway funds that go towards supporting these services. But, approximately 19.6% of total revenue comes from local property taxes assessed on property within the Village. From 2014-15 through 2020-2021 the tax rate increased \$0.0314 (from \$1.2552 to \$1.2866) for each \$1,000 of assessment. In formulating the 2021-22 budget the tax rate will increase a modest \$0.005, or half a penny, for each \$1,000 of assessment.

### Water Fees

The fees that are charged for water usage support the costs of operating the entire Village water system. The water supply system is carefully monitored by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Albany County Health Department, and is tested daily for purity. Much of the piping system is very old, with some of the mains close to 100 years old.

In fiscal 2014-15 the minimum water usage charge was \$150 with additional charges for usage above 25,000 gallons per year. Due to concerns on the part of DPW over the number of failures in the pipe system, and a lack of adequate repair reserves, the minimum rate was increased in 2017-18 to \$200 with additional overage charges starting above 20,000 gallons per year. The rate remained the same until fiscal 2020-21 when the rate was increase to \$210 minimum with no changes to additional overage charges above 20,000 gallons. The usage rate is not changing in 2021-22. The Village DPW has been able to complete most repairs themselves, but the Village is actively planning for future repair and replacement needs given the overall age of the system.

### Sewer Fees

Only those residents who are in a sewer district pay sewer fees. These fees support the operation of the sewer plant, repairs, DEC mandated upgrades to the sewer plant, and any needed pipe replacement to the sewer pipe system. Much of the sewer pipe system is over fifty years old. The ability to address problems with such an old system needs to be part of smart, forward looking, and financial planning.

The Village will address the I&I issue (see related article) with the use of money in the sewer repair reserve. The Village must plan for the replenishing of those funds, and, at the same time, ensure there is adequate funding for normal operations, and systematic pipe replacement where needed. The last time the sewer rate was changed was in the 2014-15 fiscal year when it went from \$540 to \$560 per user. To address the concerns for the future, there is a proposal to increase the sewer rate in fiscal 2021-22 to \$600, an increase of \$10 per quarter. There will be a public hearing on this proposal at 6 P.M., May 13, 2021 at Village Hall.

## Village Communication

Your office staff continues to collect phone numbers and email so we can easily contact you if an issue arises with a bill or payment, or to inform you about road, water or sewer issues. Please call or email us with any contact information you are comfortable sharing. Thank you for helping us to serve you more efficiently.

Just a reminder: the **NOTIFY ME** service is available for Village residents who want to be informed about Village issues. Opting-in for **NOTIFY ME** enables you to receive text and/or email notifications on bill due date reminders, Village news, and emergencies, such as water main breaks. To participate, log on to the Village website, [www.villageofvoorheesville.com](http://www.villageofvoorheesville.com) click on the **NOTIFY ME** tab, and follow the instructions.

The Village website can also be utilized to pay your Village Tax, Water, and/or Sewer bills. Use the link **PAY TAX /WATER/SEWER** located in the center of the homepage. A third-party charge is added for use of this service: \$1.95 for an ACH/e-check or 2.95% of payment amount for debit or credit cards. This service also gives residents access to current balances as well as amounts previously paid should you need that information for your records.

The Village uses Facebook (homepage **The Village of Voorheesville**) to post information of interest to our residents. Please note that this Facebook page is for Village or general community information only. For those not connected to the internet, an old-fashioned phone call to Village Hall will help you get the information



## Annual Property Clean-Up Reminders

Spring is a busy time for your Village DPW. As they work to get the Village in shape after winter wear and tear your help with the following items is appreciated.

- Loose debris must be in brown biodegradable bags and placed at the curb for pick-up. We require bagging at this time of year because of an increase in stones and rock and larger debris that can damage our chipper.
- Brush and limbs should be placed in piles at the curb - **do not block sidewalks or place on roadway** - with the cut side facing the street; limbs can be up to 10" in diameter. REMINDER: If you hire a contractor to trim your limbs or cut a tree, the contractor is responsible for hauling away the debris.
- Moveable basketball hoops are an obstacle if placed in, or along the side of, any street or cul de sac. Please keep these Bball hoops off/out of these areas as they make it difficult to maneuver DPW equipment, emergency vehicles, and the garbage/recycling trucks.
- Be advised that DPW is aware that snow removal has caused damage to some lawns. Repair of these areas are on the schedule for the crew and will be taken care of as time allows.

As always, if you need to contact the Public Works Department, we can be reached at 518-765-4512 Monday - Friday from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM or by email at [DPW@villageofvoorheeville.com](mailto:DPW@villageofvoorheeville.com)

## Sewage Treatment Plant Work Required

By Trustee Richard Straut, Brett Hotaling and Karen Finnessey

The Village has been experiencing increasing difficulty in operation of the wastewater treatment plant on Severson Hill Road (Sewer District #1) over the past several years, primarily due to excessive stormwater that leaks and is discharged into the sanitary sewer system. The treatment plant becomes overloaded during rainstorms and periods of snow melt. Stormwater that finds its way into the sewer system is known as inflow and infiltration, or I & I. A significant source of Inflow is water added to the system from neighborhood sump pumps, roof drains and foundation drains that are connected to the sanitary sewer system rather than the storm drains. Infiltration is the addition of water to the system from ground water, faulty or worn-out pipes, and/or seepage from cracked or broken manhole covers. It is critical that we significantly reduce I & I to ease the load on the system and remain in compliance with the NYSDEC permit and avoid fines.

The treatment plant and sewer system were constructed with the Salem Hills development. and purchased by the Village in 1984 to salvage a deteriorating facility. The plant was last upgraded in 2004, but the sewer system is mostly original and is showing deterioration. Getting the I & I in check will help lower the cost of operations (less water = less processing) and will increase opportunities for outside financial resources to complete NYSDEC required upgrades to the plant.

The Village action plan for lessening the amount of I & I will require sump pumps to be disconnected from the sanitary sewer system. Our Sewer System Regulations prohibit the sump pump connections to the system. Compliance with the prohibition of sump pump connections has been difficult for some residents because there isn't a nearby storm sewer to connect to. The Village plans to extend storm drainage piping up the cul de sacs where necessary to provide a viable connection point for homeowners. In the near future homeowners will be required to remove sump pumps from the system and will also be responsible for connecting to a storm drain. More information will be provided to homeowners as plans progress.

To address infiltration issues the Village will be working with an engineering firm to locate damaged pipes and manhole covers. To do this they will be using CCTV technology to inspect the infrastructure – which is original to the development and sewer system. They will also be pumping an odorless, non-toxic smoke into the pipes to help locate issues with manhole covers and connections to the system. Again, once more information is available residents will be notified.

Addressing and ultimately reducing the inflow and infiltration issues for Salem Hills is imperative to moving forward with required updates to the sewer plant. The Village is currently working with NYSDEC to phase in a new ultraviolet light disinfection system. This system will be required within the next few years to maintain our permits with the State. In addition, we are working on rebuilding the water filters at the plant.

Lastly, we once again ask that all households connected to any of the Village's sewer systems, please refrain from flushing any type of personal care or household wipes, feminine products, or paper towels, facial tissue, cleaning rags or plastic packaging. Yes – these types of debris are cleared from the system several times each day. Grease is also an issue of concern. These items are causing significant damage at the treatment plant requiring the recent replacement of the Muffin Monster – the apparatus that screens the sewage as it comes into the plant. Septic system owners take note – these items are destructive to your systems as well.

## Building Department Information

By: Steve Mason

### Why Get a Building Permit?

There are many reasons why a property owner should get a building permit, but first and foremost is that by New York State law the local municipality must provide the means to enforce the NYS Uniform Code and the NYS Energy Code. In the village that is me. My job is to also have property owners follow the local zoning laws.

By applying for a permit, you will find out if a permit is necessary and if so, how to get your project completed safely and properly. It also makes for good neighbors by not infringing on their rights as a property owner. The process will assure:

- That you or your contractor is meeting the minimum code standards.
- That your contractor has all the insurance coverages that will protect you.
- That in the future your insurance company will cover any damage to the work done.
- That if you sell the property, it will not be held up by having an unpermitted modification.

The permit fees in the village are minimal and are an economical way to get the resources and information to comply with the codes and have oversight of contractors.



### NYS Outdoor Burn Ban: March 16 - May 14

NYS has put an outdoor burn ban in place from March 16 through May 14. The State's regulation on open burning, enacted in 2009, is meant to help prevent wildfires and reduce air pollution. Open burning of debris is the largest single cause of spring wildfires in New York State; Forest Rangers put out 192 of this type of fires last year.

The open burning regulation does not restrict small fires of charcoal or untreated wood. We usually get complaints about this during this time of year; so, they are allowed, however, these recreational fires (campfires) should never be left unattended.

The Fire Code defines a recreational fire as: "An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth, or similar purposes."

Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions that could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

Open burning, bonfires, recreational fires and use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. Not fewer than one portable fire extinguisher complying with Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose for immediate utilization.

Just a reminder – burning garbage or leaves is prohibited year-round.

## Stormwater Corner

By Frank Fazio

### Stormwater website:

The website for Stormwater Management is currently being revised and updated. The new website will contain more information about stormwater management requirements, educational materials including green infrastructure practices and a link to the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County which has vast resources of information. It will be a work in progress so check in from time to time for updates.

### Stormwater Outfalls:

So where does all the rainfall go? The Village has 26 outfalls from the stormwater collection system that discharges rainfall runoff to the Black Creek or Vly Creek. This past year they were all inspected for evidence of pollution or erosion, and we are proud to report that all outfalls passed. So, continue to be aware that only stormwater runoff is allowed in the system and pollutants such as chemicals, oil, any other material is not to be put into the catch basins. The village storm sewers discharge directly to the creeks and our goal and requirement is to keep them clean. Thank you for all your help in the past.

### MS4 Annual Report:

The Draft Joint Annual Report (AR2021) for stormwater management of the Village will be posted on the Stormwater Coalition and the Village stormwater website on April 16, 2021. The Annual Report is prepared to record how the goals were met for stormwater management in order to be in compliance with the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit. If you have any comments or concerns, you can access a comment response form in the Coalition stormwater website at <https://stormwateralbanycounty.org/>

## Kudos to the Garden Club!!

The Village would like to extend a BIG “thank you” to the dedicated group of volunteers from the Helderview Garden Club for their continued efforts to beautify the Village throughout the year.

For years they have built and maintained the gardens at Hotaling Park making it a wonderful gathering spot. With some help from our DPW, the members see to it that the park sparkles each Holiday Season and they make all the arrangements for the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Take a minute to check out their other loving handiwork as you drive into the Village; they are responsible for the planting and care of all the flower boxes connected to the Village of Voorheesville signs you see at each entrance into the Village. We appreciate the time and effort of each member.

### Please note:

The Helderview Garden Club, while currently not meeting formally due to Covid advisories, always has room for new members! For more information contact Paula Handen, President at 518-765-3236.



## Recycling Reminder

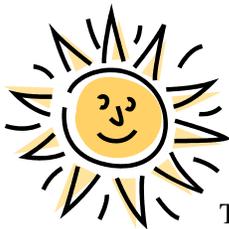
Just a gentle reminder that our green-topped recycling bins are for plastics (numbers 1,2 & 3), paper (no tissue, paper towels, or foil-type wrapping papers), cardboard (no dirty pizza boxes), clean glass (no decorative glass, Pyrex, or dinnerware), and metal (no pots and pans). Recycle bins should be placed at the curb, away from your garbage can, when they are FULL. It saves the hauler time and fuel by not having to stop for barely full bins; and this helps keep our contract costs lower.

## Annual Parade Canceled for 2021

The American Legion has decided to once again cancel this year’s Memorial Day Parade due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Associated Village activities have been canceled as well.



## Summer Park Program a No-Go Again this Year



Our Village Summer Park Program has been canceled for the 2021 season due to the Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines still in place. The Village does not have the facilities to stay in compliance so The Village Board of Trustees has made the difficult decision – for safety’s sake - to forego the program once again this year.



## Annual Household Hazardous Waste Day

The annual Household Hazardous Waste collection event is scheduled for  
**Saturday, July 17, 2021**  
**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Town of New Scotland Highway Garage**  
**New Scotland Road**

This program is for Town of New Scotland and Village of Voorheesville residents only.

Acceptable wastes include pesticides, paints, wood preservatives and stains, thinners, solvents, drain cleaners, swimming pool chemicals, automotive fluids, batteries, cleaning products, gasoline, kerosene, acids and bases, hobby chemicals, asbestos (wet and double bagged), mercury thermometers, CFL and fluorescent light bulbs.

Our Household Hazardous Waste program is partially financed with a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

**Pre-registration coupon is required and can easily be emailed to you.**  
**Please contact Village Hall at 765-2692 for information**



## V F B D Something To Look Forward To

Mark your calendars!! The Voorheesville Family Bicycling Day (VFBD) is scheduled for Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a Rain Date of Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. As the COVID-19 directive for this date is unknown at this time, this date is subject to change or cancellation. Look for updates on the VFBD Facebook page.

# Street Lighting Project

By Trustee Richard Straut

For the past couple of years, the Village has been working on a project to purchase the streetlights in the Village from National Grid and convert them to LED fixtures in order to save money. Currently we pay National Grid a fee for the streetlights as well as for the electricity to operate them. Once the project is complete, we expect to save about \$70,000 per year in electricity and maintenance costs associated with street lighting and the project will pay for itself in 5 - 6 years' time. After a lot of back and forth with National Grid, we have finally been able to execute an agreement to purchase the lights and expect to close on the purchase late summer or early fall. Soon after that you should begin to see workers replacing the fixtures. We are excited that the project will come to fruition in 2021-22 resulting in improved lighting at a lower cost to the Village.



*Continued from front page Board message...*

- A significant grant has been secured to help extend municipal sewers to our business district along Main Street, and design of the project is underway with construction expected in 2022. This project will strengthen our business district.
- Grants were secured for implementation of a Railroad Quiet Zone with the assistance of Assemblyperson Fahy and former Senator Amedore, and with assistance from Albany County and the Town of New Scotland. While this project has been years in the making, we continue to progress toward implementation of the Quiet Zone, which would allow Railroad Engineers not to blow their horns if they believe it safe when passing through the Village. Design of improvements that would facilitate the Quiet Zone are underway.
- The Voorheesville Community and School Foundation agreed to assist the Village with a grant for a small outdoor amphitheater and additional public parking at Tork's Hill. While the pandemic slowed our progress and we need to figure out the remaining funding, design is underway and we're excited to move the project forward.
- Voorheesville became a Clean Energy Community through New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and received an \$80,000 grant to help with our street lighting project. We are pursuing the next phase of CEC funding for additional energy saving projects.
- Completion of two major sidewalk projects last year couldn't have come at a better time, as many people have been able to get outside and walk the Village this past year in greater safety. We plan to continue seeking funds to build additional sidewalks, as this was a priority identified by residents during our Comprehensive Planning process.
- Our Voorheesville Volunteer Fire Department continues to provide exceptional emergency service to all Village residents, and we continue to invest in the equipment and infrastructure that our volunteers need to keep us safe. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer member, please call the Village Office. We thank our volunteer firefighters for their service!

We look forward to a safe spring and summer and hope we can all gather together again and resume our great Voorheesville traditions soon. Please look for outdoor activities to enjoy such as music in Hotaling Park, some library family events, family bicycle day, the Farmer's Market and a parade to honor our high school seniors to mention a few.

Stay Well!

## Community Minded? Board Members Welcomed

Do you have an interest in helping to make a difference in your community and the continued enhancement of the Village?

Please consider submitting your name for current or future openings on one of our boards – Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, or our Conservation Advisory Committee. Every member helps in making decisions for changes that affect our community and neighborhoods.

A small stipend is offered for the ZBA and Planning Commission. If you would like more information call Village Hall or send an email to [clerk@villageofvoorheesville.com](mailto:clerk@villageofvoorheesville.com)



*Continued from front page CCA...*

The design and process are similar to CCA, but rather than a fixed-rate supply this would be savings in the form of a bill credit for all eligible residents. MEGA is working toward this offering at the same time the PSC is deciding how best to regulate and structure opt-out CDG programs statewide. We will continue to update you as progress is made toward potentially offering this program to Voorheesville residents.