

Zoom ID # 4118425407

VILLAGE OF CAYUGA HEIGHT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONTHLY MEETING

August 20th 2025
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton; Fire Superintendent Tamborelle, Police Chief Wright, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder; Village Attorney Shah; Village Clerk Walker.

Absent: Trustee Biloski, Superintendent of Public Works Cross; Treasurer Dolch

1. Call to Order: Mayor Woodard calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2a. Approval of the July 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes (Exhibit 2026-049)

Resolution: 9877

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees approves the July 16, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Conway

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, and Robinson

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

3. Report of Fire Superintendent Tamborelle: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2026-050)

- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that members of the department are returning for the fall semester.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that the bids for the Cayuga Heights Fire Department bunker kitchen renovations were received and opened yesterday. One bid was received on time and was from Streeter Associates, from Elmira. The bid amount was still over the budget of \$199,000.
- Mayor Woodard states that this is still \$20,000 over budget, but the Town of Ithaca will be covering 40% of the total expenses
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he could re-bid the project for the third time. We will have to make some adjustments to the bid to make it different from the first two to keep it fair.
- Trustee Robinson states that if we re-release the bids, the other two companies now know what Streeter Associates bid, and that gives them an advantage.
- Mayor Woodard states that she is trying to find a way that the Village can do some of this work to save money.

- Trustee Conway states that we budgeted \$162,000 for this project and to date have spent \$6,000 on appliances.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states he can change the scope of the project to include providing a dumpster for the demolition.
- Clerk Walker states that part of the project cost is the removal of the existing kitchen. Why can't our DPW staff provide that service?
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states the contractor may use some of the existing frameworks, and if we take them all out, then we could see an increase in costs.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states he will reach out to the contractors to let them know we will be re-releasing a new RFP with the Village supplying the dumpster and a request for two proposals, one with the contractor doing the demolition, and one with the Village doing the demolition.
- Mayor Woodard states that there was a TCCOG meeting earlier this month that discussed the possibility of Tompkins County supporting its own ambulance service and expanding the Rapid Medical Response EMS rescue.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that last year, Tompkins County received a grant that supports 3 EMS units, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., to cover parts of the county that are lacking emergency coverage. There is also talk about staffing two or three ambulance services.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that what they are proposing now is to budget for 24 hours Monday through Sunday, with an additional paramedic-level fly car.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that there is already a shortage of paramedics in the county, and the only place they could draw from would be Bangs.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that the Village would not benefit from this; other municipalities have appropriate coverage.
- Trustee Salton states that we and others pay no taxes for ambulance services that are available for county residents right now.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that Bangs does not serve the Village residents. He is sure that other municipalities most likely do have some type of ambulance tax on their Town and County bills.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that what is happening is that call volume has increased so much over the last several years. 911 calls for assistance are overwhelming the system. Most of these calls are non-emergency related.
- Mayor Woodard states that the county did finance a study specifically on this topic; however, the results are not available yet.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he had a Tompkins County Fire Chiefs' meeting in which the consulting group stated they expected to have some results by the middle of September. He suggested they should

take as much time as possible to thoroughly examine the entire situation.

- Trustee Salton inquires whether or not there is a shortage of ambulance services in the county.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he does not. There are four ambulance services in the county that cover 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Again, the issue is that people are using the 911 system as a primary care source, and we have to transport them to the hospital.
- Trustee Salton states that under what rule states you cannot triage a call.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that the guidelines we follow from the Central New York Regional EMS Council state that if you don't have a way to send an ambulance within five minutes of a call, then they will send the next service out.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that our county 911 dispatch is now asking some discretionary questions to determine the type of emergency.
- Trustee Salton states that we need to figure out how to write policy or implement some changes for central and upstate New York.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that this is exactly what the regional EMS Council is talking about right now.
- Trustee Robinson states that he would like to know what action the Board can take to assist.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he will be glad to get some information for the Village Public Safety Committee to discuss at next month's meeting.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that to summarize this discussion, there are many variables that come into play to staff another ambulance service that have not been thought through. Call volumes and costs alone are huge and will be a big burden on the taxpayers.

4. Privilege of the Floor: No members of the Public wish to speak.

5. Report of Treasurer Dolch: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2026-051)

- Treasurer Dolch was absent from tonight's meeting.

Approval of Abstract 3:

Resolution: 9878

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves Abstract # 3 for FYE 2026, consisting of TA vouchers 12-20 in the amount of \$58,647.59 and Consolidated Fund vouchers 114-197 in the amount of \$766,776.92, and the Treasurer is instructed to make payments thereon.

Motion: Trustee Rennekamp

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

6. Report of Mayor Woodard:

a. Property Maintenance Enforcement Update:

- Mayor Woodard states that we have issued thirteen notices of violation this week.
- Mayor Woodard states that we are realizing that we need to update this law, mainly surrounding lawn maintenance.
- Mayor Woodard states that she has scheduled a Property Maintenance Taskforce for August 25, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.
- Mayor Woodard states that the largest number of violations this year was for grass height. Other fines were issued for a wood pile, furniture, construction materials, and a boat in the front yard.
- Mayor Woodard states that a new area that we will be discussing is the “wild” growth in or around a property.
- Trustee Robinson states that the area on the Village Right of Way is the biggest area residents are forgetting.
- Mayor Woodard states that B. Cross has spent a huge amount of time enforcing this law, and we have been lucky that our summer interns have been doing most of the inspection work over the last few years. Moving forward, hopefully, we will streamline this process.

b. Upland Heights Update:

- Mayor Woodard states that the architects for this project requested a meeting to present a new version of the project.
- Mayor Woodard states that, as a result of NYSDEC reclassifying wetland setback boundaries from 25 to 100 feet, most of this property cannot be developed.
- Mayor Woodard states that the developer is now presenting a scaled-down version of the plan that consists of ten dwelling units.
- Trustee Robinson states that with this change, does this trigger a rezoning of the property?
- Mayor Woodard states that it is a great question. Before this meeting, this property was being allowed to combine the two parcels so he could qualify for the Planned Development Zone (PDZ). At this point, we are not sure if the new version of this project needs to be rezoned.
- Trustee Salton states that we do not have a formal application for a PDZ for this property, and there has been no

Board approval as an approved PDZ.

- Trustee Salton states that the next step would be for the Village Zoning Officer to determine how this project could move forward.

- Trustee Salton states that we need some legal advice to move forward.

- Trustee Robinson states that it seems that the newest version of this project might fall under current zoning and not need a variance to develop this property.

- Trustee Conway states that some of the original density concerns, like traffic, are now gone with this new proposal.

- Mayor Woodard states that we will hear more about this at the September Board Meeting.

c. Gand of Six Update & NYSDEC Letter with Resolution:

- Mayor Woodard states that the main discussion was the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Facility (IAWWTF) and the plant's potential violations with NYSDEC.

- Mayor Woodard states that the IAWWTF is working on convincing NYSDEC that their requirements are not realistic and are baseless without research.

- Mayor Woodard states that our plant is configured completely differently. The IAWWTF is looking at two hundred million dollars in renovations and upgrades.

- Mayor Woodard states that the Town of Ithaca, Rich DePaolo has drafted the letter in Exhibit 2026-052 for the Village to sign in support of their request for clearer regulation.

- Mayor Woodard states that one of the things that NYSDEC is not considering is the amount of agricultural runoff into our lake.

- Mayor Woodard states that to summarize, if NYSDEC can prove that there is an issue with ammonia, then show us the proof.

- Trustee Conway states that this letter is worded in a more hostile way than it needs to be.

- Trustee Salton states that he would like the drafter of this letter to be present before the Village Board and explain where all this information came from. This letter needs to be tabled until we have more information.

- Trustee Hubbell agreed.

- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works A. Cowder states that the Village is also in a review process with NYSDEC for its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit (SPDES).

- Mayor Woodard states that another NYSDEC issue related to Cayuga Lake is that NYSDEC has just announced the Cargill Salt Mine received a fifteen-year mining permit to continue removing salt from under Cayuga Lake.
<https://tompkinsweekly.com/articles/cargill-salt-mine-wins-dec-approval-environmentalists-push-back/>

- Mayor Woodard states that she would like to circulate this letter for feedback on any changes.
- Trustee Salton states that he suggests the author present to our Board. We should not be the ones who need to rewrite this.
- Mayor Woodard states that she will write back requesting revisions.

d. FYE 2024-25 Budget Numbers:

- Mayor Woodard states that the Village Finance Committee met and discussed the final figures from last fiscal year.
- Mayor Woodard states that she could see the Board having a budget workshop for the General Fund and then a workshop for the Water and Sewer Fund.
- Trustee Rennekamp states that the Village Finance Committee is looking for more information from departments on budget items that get split across funds.
- Trustee Salton is concerned that having separate budgets at different times might not follow the Village law.
- Mayor Woodard states that we can discuss our proposed budgets anytime, but we will have to file the adopted budget in April after the public hearing.
- Trustee Rennekamp states that they need to be close together because budgets cross all three funds.
- Mayor Woodard states that across all budget lines, we were very close.
- Trustee Conway states the Sewer Fund had the biggest gap (\$150,000) due to less income received from the other municipalities that use our plant.
- Trustee Salton asks if the money spent on the WWTP upgrades is reflected in these figures.
- Trustee Conway states yes, and the biggest difference was that some budgeted funds did not get expensed in the same fiscal year.
- Mayor Woodard states that we will work on projections moving forward once we have true numbers from four years ago.
- Trustee Rennekamp states that, where we are also looking at items in the budget that were over or under by a certain amount, the department heads could share with us why, so we can get a better understanding moving forward.
- Trustee Robinson states that he just wants to make sure the numbers are accurate.

e. Superintendent of Public Works:

- Mayor Woodard announces that B. Cross has announced that he will be retiring from the Village at the end of this

year. We will be talking about this more over the next few months.

7. Report of the Trustees:

a. Village Public Works Committee:

- Trustee Robinson states that the Cayuga Heights Road Sidewalk Project preliminary design has been submitted to NYSDOT.
- Trustee Robinson states that T.G. Miller has been working on the easement maps for this project. They seem to be behind, which is putting us behind on getting signatures for those easements. We are still working on distinguishing temporary versus permanent easements for this project.
- Trustee Robinson states that there is a possibility we will need an extension of time to complete this project.
- Trustee Robinson states that we are waiting for T.G. Miller to provide the water infrastructure priorities list. The original expense for this exceeded five million dollars.
- Trustee Robinson states that the Renwick Brook Culvert Pipe project is still in flux. We are now looking at lining the culvert, but that is still undetermined.
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that the main concern is washout under Remington Rd.
- Trustee Robinson states that we now have a crosswalk at Texas and Spruce Lane. The crosswalk lights have been ordered and should be in this Friday.
- Trustee Robinson states that there was a new request from a Village resident to dim the streetlights even more to allow views of the sky.
- Trustee Salton states that there must be a way to make it less bright.
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that we have programmed the brightness based on the time of year. It might look the same to the naked eye, but there is a difference.
- Trustee Salton states that this is still one of the best projects we have ever done.
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that we will also be installing meters on the North Triphammer lights, which should save the Village some money.
- Trustee Robinson states that as NYSEG replaces natural gas lines in the Village, we are evaluating any lead pipe replacements.
- Trustee Salton states that he would like to know why NYSEG is not replacing the sidewalks that they have torn up with ADA-compliant sidewalks. When his sidewalk in front of his house was replaced by Verizon, they put five-foot-wide sidewalks in. Why isn't NYSEG?
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that NYSEG is replacing what they took out. This is

considered a restoration project, not a new project. NYSEG plans on completing the sidewalk replacements where they have torn them up by the end of September. The overall project is slated through 2030.

- Mayor Woodard states that she thinks it is reasonable to reach out to NYSEG and ask them to at least replace the sidewalks that children use to walk to school this fall.
- Trustee Robinson states that the paving at the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant is finally completed.
- Trustee Robinson states that the North Sunset Rd. Culvert repair is done, and the guardrail will be installed next week.

b. Village Wastewater Committee:

- Trustee Robinson states that the Village is still waiting for feedback on our SPDES Permit renewal.
- Trustee Robinson states that the newly installed solar panels are still waiting for NYSEG to connect them to the grid.
- Trustee Robinson states that the rail system should be completed by the end of September or October.
- Trustee Robinson states that YAWS management is looking to replace the control panel for the pumps.
- Trustee Conway asks why it is taking so long to connect the solar panels. He is anxious to see how well this will reduce energy costs at the plant.
- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that vendors are causing the delay.
- Clerk Walker states that he spoke to our NYSERDA representative about upgrading the charging station outside of Marcham Hall, and he informed him that we will be storing electricity "credit" when we give back energy and then draw on that later in the year.

c. Village IT Committee:

- Trustee Robinson states that the committee met briefly to go over Windows 11 updates and the transition to the .gov.
- Trustee Conway states that he is on the committee and was not aware of the committee meeting.
- Clerk Walker and Trustee Robinson apologized for missing that he was appointed at the Village Organizational Meeting this spring.
- Trustee Robinson states that we will have to upgrade the three patrol vehicle computers.
- Police Chief Wright states that he has contracted Parol PC, and we can upgrade and move to a tablet type for a lot less cost.

d. Village Human Resources Committee:

- Trustee Robinson states that they have completed the Village job descriptions for most of the non-bargaining employees and the Village Handbook.
- Trustee Robinson states that the concern in the past was that if we made a change to a job description, it would trigger the county to require a possible exam. Internally, we had this concern when A. Cowder applied to the Assistant Superintendent of Public Works.
- Trustee Robinson states that one of the key changes was the definition of part-time and full-time in each position and in the Village Handbook.
- Trustee Conway wonders why it matters since we offer benefits to part-time employees (30 hours), and why then define full-time and part-time.
- Trustee Conway states that the way this is written is confusing. We should really only care about the fact that at 30 hours, you qualify for benefits.
- Trustee Robinson states that he agrees, but we are trying to be clearer for future needs.
- Trustee Robinson states that we can table this until Trustee Biloski returns and can add to the conversation.
- Trustee Conway states that the section of a job description that describes the qualifications is always confusing. Are we saying this is a general statement of subjectivity to qualify for the particular job, or is there something more specific related to the Civil Service part?
- Trustee Robinson states that this comes from the County, and as he reads it, an applicant's experience can take over for the educational, or degree, or time as required as a minimum.

e. TeraWulf:

- Trustee Hubbell states that he has learned that a company called TeraWulf has signed a five-year lease at the old Millikan Station site. They are a digital asset technology company specializing in digital infrastructure.
- Mayor Woodard questions whether or not the Town of Lansing has provided permits already.

f. Village Public Safety Committee:

- Trustee Conway states that the committee met and discussed the county ambulance topic, as Fire Superintendent Tamboelle spoke earlier.
- Trustee Conway states that the police department recruitment is a priority right now, with one full-time and several part-time officer vacancies.
- Trustee Conway states that the commercial vehicle traffic assignment continues to be productive.

g. Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium Update:

- Trustee Salton states that it looks like we will be seeing an eighteen percent premium increase in 2026. We are in a situation where we have used up all our reserves. He has suggested using a larger increase now to put into savings, so down the road, we are not looking at the same results.
- Trustee Salton states that there was no way to predict future costs, a health pandemic, and Big Pharma with so many new, expensive drugs.
- Clerk Walker states that the GTCMHIC Design Committee was faced with some tough decisions. We decided not to cut benefits but increase the single and family deductibles to fall within the Affordable Care Act requirements.
- Trustee Salton states that another interesting point is if a larger municipality were to do what we did and move to a high-deductible plan, this would lower the premium revenues and adversely affect the bottom line of the consortium.
- Trustee Salton states that it only takes a couple of high claims to deplete the fund balance and use up the stop loss coverage.

8. Report of Superintendent of Public Works Cross:

- B. Cross was absent from tonight's meeting.

9. Report of Police Chief Wright: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2026-054)

- Chief Wright states that his profession has the same issues as Fire Superintendent Tamborelle has with Bangs and EMS services. Calls for service are up, and the type of calls seems less critical for police involvement.
- Chief Wright states that the factor is just finding people who are interested in this type of career.
- Chief Wright states that the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department recently asked if we would be willing to have a couple of their deputies on commercial motor vehicle traffic violations and procedures.
- Trustee Salton states that the department has also assisted the Village Court when it comes to explaining commercial motor vehicle rules and potential violations.
- Chief Wright states that the former chief's vehicle auction is ongoing now. He hopes it will sell for \$15,000 or more.

10. Report of Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder: Submitted Report (Exhibit 2026-055)

- Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Cowder states that the only action items he has for tonight are to declare surplus two leaf vacuums, a leaf box, and a tire mounting machine.

Resolution: 9879

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves declaring surplus a 2002 and 2003 Leaf vacuums, a one-ton leaf box, and a tire mounting machine to be sold at auction.

Motion: Trustee Salton

Second: Trustee Robinson

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

11. Report of Clerk Walker:

- Clerk Walker states that to date, we have collected over \$3,627,880.52 with around \$59,105.96 outstanding.
- Clerk Walker states that the design committee met for the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium last week. The committee agreed to pass on to the Board of Directors a deductible increase versus decreasing benefits.
- Clerk Walker states that the Village Healthcare premium will likely be a double-digit increase in January 2026. Key factors are the large claims over one million dollars. There are 8300 covered lives, and one percent of those claims account for thirty percent of the total budget.
- Trustee Conway inquires about how the change in deductible will affect the Village and or staff with this increase.
- Clerk Walker states that the Village absorbs the increase in deductibles since it is funding them. Staff will see an increase in their costs from the overall premium increase.

12. Report of Attorney O. Shah: No report at this time.

13. Executive Session:

Resolution: 9880

WHEREAS: The NYS Open Meeting Law §105 prescribes matters for which a public body may conduct an executive session; and,

WHEREAS: Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting under a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered; and,

WHEREAS: The conduct of an executive session for these enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public money:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT An Executive Session of the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees is conducted for subsection (F) the medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation.

Motion: Trustee Robinson

Second: Trustee Rennekamp

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Conway, Hubbell, Rennekamp, Robinson, and Salton

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Motion Carried

14. Adjournment: Mayor Woodard adjourns the meeting at 10:32 p.m.