

**VILLAGE OF CAYUGA HEIGHTS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING**

**September 29th 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Conway (via Zoom), Hubbell, and Robinson; Fire Superintendent Tamborelle; Village Clerk Walker.

1. Call to Order: Mayor Woodard calls the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Privilege of the Floor: No member of the Public wish to speak.

3. Fire Superintendent Position:

- Mayor Woodard states that she has dreaded this day for a long time. She felt that at some point in time Fire Superintendent Tamborelle would tell her he was going to retire, or state that he was a professional and he should be paid accordingly.
- Mayor Woodard states that every year during the budget season, she is embarrassed and ashamed at how little we pay Fire Superintendent Tabmorelle.
- Mayor Woodard states that we have got away with this because of his full-time job and flexibility. It is time to pay a professional what they are worth.
- Mayor Woodard states that we are the envy of all departments.
- Mayor Woodard states the Human Resources Chair Biloski, has sent out a lot of information today. Treasurer Dolch has spent most of the day putting numbers together to show the Board what impact moving Fire Superintendent Tamborelle from a part-time (20) hours a week to (30) hours a week with benefits for filling the vacant Village Fire Inspectors position.
- Mayor Woodard asks the Board if there are any questions for Fire Superintendent Tamborelle.
- Trustee Hubbell states that he supports the move as long as we can afford it and Fire Superintendent Tamborelle can fulfill the role.
- Trustee Robinson states that the first thing we are looking at is a mid-year budget adjustment, adding health insurance and adjusting compensation that is competitive with the surrounding area.
- Trustee Robinson states that, as chair of the Village Public Works Committee, we would be filling a gap since the Village has not had a fire inspector since Chris Hamilton left.
- Trustee Robinson states that this comes at an inopportune time but fills a need. This was rushed because of the training program starting in November and Fire Superintendent Tamborelle needing to take time off to attend.
- Trustee Biloski states that she knows Fire Superintendent Tamborelle has expressed that this expansion of hours would give him more opportunities to work on projects with the department.

- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that getting this done now would allow me to complete my code training by January 1, 2026. The other aspect was giving the Bangs family a courtesy that, after twenty-nine years, he would be retiring.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he spoke to every level of officers at the Cayuga Heights Fire Council, and they all were supportive of the fact that the fire chief would be an employee of the Village.
- Trustee Conway states that this kind of makes sense but this seems rushed. We have not had time to look at the budget figures, the Mayor has been gone, and other Board members could not attend. It just seems hasty to make a hiring/ firing employment decision without long-term numbers on this type of decision.
- Trustee Conway states that this is a great opportunity to start the conversation. He would like to encourage the Board not to vote on anything tonight, since it does not feel like a responsible thing to do from the Villages' standpoint, even though it might be the right thing to do in the long run.
- Trustee Conway states that he would like to see the responsibilities spelled out as a reason for more hours. We all have lots of thoughts on this, and it's critical to know all these things.
- Trustee Hubbell states that he understands Trustee Conway's concerns, but we have a long history of this position and knowledge leading up to tonight, and it is reasonable to act now.
- Trustee Conway states that this may be the case with the Village Public Works Committee, but this is the first time he has heard of this, and nothing was ever brought up in the Public Safety Committee.
- Trustee Conway states that this has nothing to do with Fire Superintendent Tamborelle, no disrespect, but this feels like we are being rushed when there is no emergency. He is just coming from the side that we need to make a responsible decision.
- Trustee Conway states that he also wanted to point out that our employee job description does not allow for employee health care unless the employee works thirty-five to forty hours. This is just a small example of why we should not rush this through without doing our due diligence.
- Mayor Woodard states we can make these changes by Board Resolution.
- Trustee Conway states that he has to push back on this; this is a rushed transaction when it really is an important decision for the Village to make.
- Mayor Woodard states that the only sense of urgency here is the training. The next training opportunity is the middle of March 2026.
- Mayor Woodard states that Superintendent of Public Works B. Cross will be retiring at the end of the year, so he will not be available to help. Assistant Superintendent of Public Works A. Cowder will be taking over the code enforcement side, and we are in a bind.
- Mayor Woodard states that the one thing you are overlooking is that we are two years behind with our Village fire inspections.

- Mayor Woodard states that it is rushed, yes, but the Village Human Resources Committee has been discussing this for the last month or so.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that it has been a light topic of conversation for the last couple of years. He does not disagree that this is moving very fast, but he would have never brought this up in a Public Safety Committee Meeting.
- Trustee Conway states that this move makes total sense; we just need time to review before making a decision.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that he doesn't want to come into this position losing income. He absolutely wants to do this, but cannot afford to lose money.
- Mayor Woodard states that with the increased hours, what else will you be working on?
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that plans to work on filing, take over the rescue director responsibilities, ordering, and training files. Things are getting missed. There is enough work for 30-40 hours a week.
- Fire Superintendent Tamborelle states that grant writing is a great idea. The training that he did not have time to do, he now would be able to get done.
- Trustee Robinson states that the information sent out in the spreadsheet was hard to understand.
- Mayor Woodard states that the key information from a budgetary standpoint is the health insurance. The Village spends around thirty thousand dollars per employee for a family plan.
- Trustee Robinson inquires to how much was budgeted for the fire inspector position this fiscal year.
- Mayor Woodard states that nothing was budgeted. We were told that either Brent or Aaron would be able to get them done and we would not need to budget. We should have budgeted seventeen thousand for that position.
- Mayor Woodard states that, ironically, the only thing not covered by the Town of Ithaca fire coverage reimbursements is the fire inspection costs.
- Trustee Conway states that he has to leave the meeting for another appointment and would urge the Board not to make any decision tonight. He would have to vote no at this point, just because there need to be more information for the long term and we don't have that.
- Mayor Woodard and Trustee Biloski, Hubbell and Robinson respect Trustee Conway's decision.
- Trustee Biloski states that there has never been an issue with submitting for reimbursements from the Town of Ithaca for fire expenses.
- Mayor Woodard states that, no there has not.
- Trustee Hubbell states that, respecting Trustee Conway and Rennekamps' thoughts on this, we should move forward tonight.
- Trustee Biloski states that we would have to do something at some point for this position.

Resolution: 9898

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Village of Cayuga Heights Board of Trustees authorizes and approves increasing Fire Superintendent G. Tamborelle's hours to thirty (30) starting on January 1, 2026, to allow for the added responsibilities of Village Fire Inspector with an hourly rate of \$22.67, and provide him with the Village non-bargaining unit Health Insurance Gold Plan with an HRA Account.

Motion: Trustee Biloski

Second: Trustee Hubbell

Ayes: Mayor Woodard; Trustees: Biloski, Hubbell, and Robinson

Nays: none

Abstentions:

Conway

Motion Carried

4. Adjournment: Mayor Woodard adjourns the meeting at 8:05p.m.