

**Village of Buchanan  
Mayor & Board of Trustees  
Regular Meeting  
April 1, 2025**

**PRESENT: (This meeting was held live and via Zoom)**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker  
Trustees Awilda Baez, Anthony Capicotti, Daniel Stewart, Robert Wheeler  
Village Administrator Marcus Serrano  
Village Attorney Stephanie Porteus  
Village Engineer, George Pommer  
Deputy Clerk, Sharon Murphy  
Deputy Treasurer Dominic Evangelista

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:18 P.M. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and informed every one of the fire regulations.

**2. APPROVE MINUTES:**

February 4, 2025 Board Meeting  
February 20, 2025 Workshop Meeting

A motion to approve these minutes as presented was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

**3. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR (agenda items only):**

There were no comments.

**4. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Presentation by the Village's Auditors**

Village auditors O'Connor Davies presented by Melissa Szot on the financial results of fiscal year 2023-2024. Ms. Szot updated the Board on the 2024 audited financial statements. She spoke about management responsibility, the auditor's responsibility, major revenues, major expenditures, fund balances and debt service.

**b. Resolution Declaring the Village Board Lead Agency on Proposed Text Amendment.**

David Smith, Village Planner discussed a resolution declaring the Village Board lead agency and scheduling of a public hearing on May 6, 2025 to consider the proposed zoning text amendments modifying lot coverage requirements within the M-1 and M-2 districts. This issue arose from the Zoning Board of Appeals in review of various applications for lot coverage. The Zoning Board of Appeals would like both districts M-1 & M-2 to have a lot coverage of 75%. Mayor Knickerbocker told Mr. Smith that the Board is ready to move forward with the rezoning of the 250 acres from the Indian Point property at the next Village Workshop.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to declare the Village Board lead agency and scheduling a Public Hearing for May 6, 2025. Trustee Baez seconded with all in favor.

**c. Continuation of Public Hearing Regarding Parking Restrictions on Intersections.**

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to open the public hearing, seconded by Trustee Baez with all in favor.

The following two areas described below is what the Board is proposing:

*No Parking on the north side of Henry St. from Third street intersection 90 feet East on the north side of Henry St. (198 Henry St drive way to Third St intersection. is approx. 88 feet) that should give the sight distance needed to help make the turnout of Third street safer.*

*No parking on north side of Tate Avenue from Lake Drive 90 feet East on the north side of Tate Avenue. This should give the sight distance to make a turnout of Lake Street safer.*

The meeting was held over until the affected residents were notified by the Village.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to keep the Public Hearing open until May 6, 2025, seconded by Trustee Baez with all in favor.

**d. Consider a Motion to Open the Public Hearing Amending Chapter 53 Entitled Animals, §53-8.1 to the Code of the Village of Buchanan.**

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Trustee Baez.

Ms. Porteus stated that in this section of the Code the Village is only transferring licensing of dogs to the Town of Cortlandt. The Village is mimicking the Town of Cortlandt fees and Buchanan residents should go to the Town Clerk. By Amending our Code, the Town of Cortlandt has to take over our dog licensing. The Dog Control Officer is still being worked on.

Mayor Knickerbocker asked for any comments from the floor.

Lisa Mecora, 162 First Street, thinks it's really great that the Village is addressing animals as our Village grows. Town of Cortlandt has a great Dog Control Officer, Steve Hunt.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to close the Public Hearing with Trustee Stewart seconded with all in favor.

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution and made a motion to adopted Local Law #2 of 2025, seconded by Trustee Capicotti and all in favor.

- e. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to enter into an agreement with the MTA to allow for radio communications, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.
- f. **Consider a Bond Resolution related to the borrowing of up to \$1,420,111 related to the cost of the wastewater treatment plant upgrades.**

Mayor Knickerbocker stated that Village Board has to sign the Bond Resolution because the State wants to make sure that all the money is in place before going out to BID as spoken by Mr. Pommer at the last workshop. The Village has \$11 Million but needs to bond approximately another \$1.5 Million. Administrator Serrano stated that the entire process is on hold until this Resolution is adopted and to continue with the State to get the contract signed. Mayor Knickerbocker said the Village should be breaking ground this year.

This bond resolution is subject to a permissive referendum and will take effect upon its adoption by the Board of Trustees of the Village and the expiration of the period prescribed in the Village Law during which petitions for a permissive referendum may be submitted and filed with the Village Clerk.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Wheeler and all in favor.

- g. Consider a motion to call for a Public Hearing on May 6, 2025 regarding a renewal Franchise Agreement with Verizon, seconded by Trustee Baez and all in favor.
- h. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to call for a Public Hearing regarding the tentative 2025-2026 budget on April 9, 2025, seconded by Trustee Stewart and all in favor.
- i. Mayor Knickerbocker stated that a lot of Westchester Communities are banding together to fight the rate increase that Con Edison is asking for electric and gas distribution. The Village's share in retaining Joel R. Dichter would be about \$3,000.00. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion for a resolution authorizing the hiring of Joel R. Dichter of Dichter Law LLC as special counsel to represent participating Westchester municipalities in Con Edison's Electric and Gas Rate Case before the Public Service Commission, seconded by Trustee Stewart and all in favor.
- j. **Consider a motion authorizing the mayor to execute the Membership Agreement with the Education Services Commission of New Jersey Cooperative pricing system for the purchase of goods and services.** This would be an agreement so the Village could purchase the hook truck for the

Highway Department. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Capicotti and all in favor.

- k. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion declaring the 2011 Ford Expedition as surplus as well as to sell it to Brookfield as scrapped, seconded by Trustee Stewart and all in favor
- l. Administrator Serrano stated that this involves possibly terminating an officer for an injury on the job/off the job and requiring that officer to report back to work in a certain timeframe agreed upon in this collective bargaining agreement. This is different than worker's compensation.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion that the Board of Trustees hereby ratifies and approves a memorandum of agreement with the Buchanan Police Association setting the terms of a Civil Service Law Section 71/73 procedure to be incorporated into the 2021-2025 Village/PBA collective bargaining agreement, second by Trustee Baez and all in favor.

- m. Mayor made a Motion to Approve the Volunteer Firefighters that have met the Required 50 Points for the Service Award Program as Provided by the Village of Buchanan Fire Department, seconded by Trustee Capicotti.

Mayor Knickerbocker: Aye

Trustee Baez: Aye

Trustee Capicotti: Aye

Trustee Stewart: Aye

Trustee Wheeler: Recused (member of this Service Award Program).

- n. **Determination of Request from Buchanan Engine Co. #1 Regarding Letter of Authority**

The Board is not ready to move forward with this Determination.

- o. **2025-05 Resolution Authorizing Appointment of Special Counsel**

**for the Village of Buchanan for the Year 2025.**

The Village Board stated the it is important to hire a special counsel to prosecute violations not prosecuted by the Village of Buchanan Prosecutor. Special Counsel would be Anthony Piscionere, Esq. and Michael Konicoff, Esq. of the Law Firm of Piscionere & Nemarow, P.C. at the rate of \$375.00/hour as contractors not employees.

Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Wheeler and all in favor.

WHEREAS, the Village Board is desirous of hiring Special Counsel to prosecute violations not prosecuted by the Village of Buchanan Prosecutor, and

WHEREAS, the Village Board has conducted an interview with a recommended candidate, and

WHEREAS, the Village Board believes it is in the best interest of the Village to begin prosecuting matters requiring immediate attention and resolution as determined by the Village Board;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED subject **to the signing of a Professional Service Agreement**, the Board of Trustees of the Village of Buchanan does hereby appoint the Law Firm Piscionere and Nemarow, P.C. ( Anthony Piscionere Esq. and his associate Michael Konicoff, Esq,) as Village Special Prosecutors at the rate of \$375.00 per hour (as contractors, not employees) for a term to expire in April 2026 unless extended by Board resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all requests for reimbursement pursuant to this appointment shall be set forth in a signed and itemized voucher and audited and approved by the Village of Buchanan Board of Trustees, as required by law.

Carried by the Following Votes:

AYES: Mayor Knickerbocker, Trustee Baez, Trustee Capicotti, Trustee Stewart,  
Trustee Wheeler

NAYS: None

p) **2025-2026 Tentative Budget presentation by the Village Administrator**

The presentation is on the Village website. 4.11% will be the increase in taxes. The lowest tax increase in seven years. The Budget Hearing will by April 9, 2025.

**5. INFORMATION FROM OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS:**

- a. Justice Reports – February 2025  
Received and filed.

- b. Police Report – February 2025  
Received and filed.
- c. Highway Report – February 2025  
Received and filed.
- d. Wastewater Treatment Plant – February 2025  
Received and filed.
- e. Building Department – February 20245  
Received and filed.
- f. Buchanan Engine Company – February 2025  
Received and filed.
- g. Prosecutor's Report – None
- h. Attorney's Report - None

i. **Administrator's Report**

Village Administrator Serrano stated that Fred Cook will be doing street sweeping in the Village the week of May 12<sup>th</sup>. Lower Village will be done on May 12 & 13, 2025 and Upper Village will be done on May 14 & 15, 2025. Please keep your cars off the road.

The old gas station at Route 9A and White Street was demolished over the weekend. Mr. Raulindo is not ready to move forward as of now.

Verizon double poles on Catherine and 9A should be removed within the next few weeks.

j. **Mayor's Report**

Public Service Commission could not confirm the timing with the poles but did investigate the cracked pole and found it sound. Mayor Knickerbocker announced it was Trustee Wheeler's last meeting. Trustee Wheeler was an asset to the Board.

Mayor Knickerbocker was invited by County Executive Jenkins to the Weekly Conference call and it was her pleasure to update the County on our beautiful Village.

May is "go purple" month. Foster Care Awareness month. At the May 6, 2025

around 12:30, the seniors and employees would go on the front lawn and take a group picture. Also asked the Highway Foreman to change the circle lights to purple.

Met with Superintendent of Schools to discuss an emergency preparedness/ planning for the Village and incorporate the school.

k. **Trustee's Report**

Trustee Baez – She met with the Superintendent of Schools also. Trustee Baez would like to thank Trustee Wheeler for his time on the Board.

Trustee Wheeler – Trustee Wheeler would like to congratulate Trustee Capicotti and Steve Laker on winning the election. Trustee Wheeler would like to thank everyone for his time on the Board.

Trustee Capicotti – Trustee Capicotti said it was an honor to work with Trustee Wheeler. He had a wealth of knowledge. Trustee Capicotti congratulated Administrator Serrano on his numbers for the budget. Also inquired about Church Street roadwork (two-way, sidewalk on one side). Update on Bleakley Avenue Project.

Trustee Stewart – Trustee Stewart would like to thank Trustee Wheeler for his service to the community. Trustee Wheeler brought a lot of insight to the Board. Thanks Administrator Serrano & staff for putting together the budget. Trustee Stewart would like to thank again everyone who contributed to the St. Patrick's Day parade.

6. **COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:** None

7. **ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 8:53 P.M. Mayor Knickerbocker made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss negotiations, seconded by Trustee Stewart and all in favor.

No monies were expended.