

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
February 14, 2018
7:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Mechanicville City Council was held at the Senior Center, North Main Street, Mechanicville, New York on Wednesday February 14, 2018.

Roll Call:	Mayor Baker	Present
	Commissioner Dunn	Present
	Commissioner Gilheany	Present
	Commissioner Gotti	Absent
	Commissioner McGuire	Present

Mayor Baker: Called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
David Hicks led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Motion to accept the January 10, 2018 Minutes:

Motion:	Commissioner Dunn	Seconded by:	Commissioner McGuire
Roll Call:	AYES: 3	NAYS:	0
	Abstain:	Commissioner Gilheany	

Commissioner Reports:

Mayor Baker stated the deal for the purchase of the DiSiena property on Round Lake Avenue is off the table and the IDA has been notified.

Commissioner Dunn had nothing to report.

Commissioner Gilheany had nothing to report.

Commissioner McGuire stated that her office has been inundated with paying outstanding bills from the previous years and they are trying to catch up. Commissioner McGuire stated some of the bills have been floating around since last April and July. Commissioner McGuire added they have amended the City bus schedule to coincide with the City Hall hours; it previously ran from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. now it will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and they are down a bus driver and will be advertising to hire another driver. Commissioner McGuire went on to say they are in the process of organizing an Easter egg hunt in the park the Saturday before Easter.

Mayor Baker added that our Building Inspector is going to be retiring in March and that he wants the Council to think about it but, he would like Mr. Holland to come back part-time and possibly have former Fire Chief Alonzo to work doing the Fire Safety part of the job. Mayor Baker stated he will discuss it again at the next meeting but wanted to make everyone aware of it. He

added that John has been a very good public servant and that several contractors have been in the Mayor's office to let him know that John's shoes will be hard to fill so he feels bringing him back part-time would be a good way to go.

City Attorney Val Serbalik stated Ordinance 2018-1 is seeking to change the zoning on South Street from residential to commercial and it was referred to the Saratoga County Planning Board in which they have thirty (30) days to act on and come to a recommendation. He went on to say that the City cannot act on it unless they receive the feedback from them and Attorney Val Serbalik stated he received an email earlier in the day from Mike Valentine that they had no objection to it and he would give the Council a copy of that therefore the Council would be able to vote on it. Attorney Val Serbalik explained that the maintenance agreement with the State of New York in resolution 13-18 involves a small parcel property on Central Avenue that is not in the part of the travel way and Stewart's has shown an interest in buying so they can complete their project. Attorney Serbalik added that if they did want to purchase the property it would have to be sent out for bid and Commissioner Dunn has estimates of value. He went on to say that in 1954 there was a DOT/City agreement that stated the State will maintain the parcel. Attorney Serbalik stated that in January the Council authorized the Mayor to ask DOT to release the maintenance agreement and Howard Silverstein stated they would need a resolution and according to him in order for them to release the maintenance agreement it would take a minimum of two (2) months of action by the State. He added this would mean the Stewart's project will be delayed. Attorney Serbalik explained that resolution 15-18 authorizing the City of Mechanicville to act as lead agency for North Central Streetscape Project completes the SEQRA process. He also stated by passing the resolution not only does the City become the lead agency you will also be making a declaration that there is no adverse environmental impact and that the City and B & L can move forward on the design phase.

Mayor Baker stated he spoke with Supervisor Richardson and he is going to talk to the people at DOT so we can get it moving along faster. Mayor Baker added Mr. Richardson is on the Capital District Planning Commission and they meet at DOT so he can easily speak to them.

Chief Waldron stated that during one of the cold spells in January a pipe burst in the Police Department and Commissioner Dunn notified the insurance company and the adjuster stated it is covered by the insurance. Chief Waldron stated they received \$8800 to replace the floor inside the dispatch room and he already had some money put away in his budget to upgrade the communication center so both will be done at the same time. Chief Waldron stated that Commissioner Gotti and his guys can do some of the work but he will have a contractor come in and do the work professionally including a new dispatch counter and putting the televisions so they are not in public view. Chief Waldron stated that the first snowstorm of 2018 cause forty-four (44) cars to be towed which is a quite significant amount. The Chief wants people to understand that parking on a City street is a luxury and if they don't have off street parking they must follow the rules. He went on to say they tell the people that come to the window that if they know there is going to be three (3) inches of snow or more automatically triggers a snow emergency. Chief Waldron stated that during the second snow storm there was confusion between the DPW and the Police Department. He went on to say a few people moved there car to the even side and once that side of the street was cleared they gave conflicting reports that DPW told them to move to the other side. Chief Waldron stated that he and Commissioner

Gotti have been communicating and they would be working on something to guarantee that when the snow emergency is in affect the first 24 hours you stay on the even side no matter what. Chief Waldron stated the City Council has deemed it necessary to take the middle man out of the equation for the ability to communicate with the City residents so they have partnered with Civic Partners who will meet Desk Officer Cebula and Commissioner Dunn to go over their proposal. He went on to say that the City will have the ability to email, text, or call by phone. Chief Waldron added there could be multiple reasons for the need for communication it can be a water main break, Family Day is approaching, there is a city wide garage sale, etc. He went on to say that as long as it stays at a professional level, and that he is sure he will have good control of it, it should start sometime in March. The Chief stated that once Desk Officer Cebula and Commissioner Dunn are trained they will train other City employees who would need to have it.

Mayor Baker asked if there was a cost on it.

Chief Waldron stated it was roughly \$3000.

Mayor Baker asked if that was per year.

Chief Waldron stated it was \$3000 for the first year and \$2000 for the second year and so forth.

Mayor Baker added the County did put an emergency 911 out for the City during the last snowstorm and they are more than happy to do that if the City needs them but they only want it to be for emergency use and nothing else.

Deputy Chief Matt Dunn read his monthly report which is attached to the minutes.

Public Comment:

Emily Morelli from Girl Scout Troop 1114 asked if there were any updates on the Brownfield issue at the Dog Park.

Mayor Baker stated he hasn't received anything.

Commissioner Dunn stated that she hasn't received anything and Commissioner Gotti wasn't there to answer it.

Dave Hicks of 241 First Avenue stated that Pruyn Hill road is deteriorating and he asked if they will fall back on the contractor for that repair.

Mayor Baker stated he noticed that earlier in the day and he is not sure but he will have it looked into; he did say he recalled there was a one (1) year from date of completion guarantee on it. Mayor Baker stated he would talk with B & L about it.

Dave Hicks asked if anything has gone forward with the energy audit

Mayor Baker stated he hasn't heard anything on that.

Dave Hicks stated it has been over four (4) years he has been preaching about it.

Mayor Baker stated he would talk with Commissioner Gotti about it.

Dave Hicks has stated he has spoken with the Council about meter consolidation and nothing seems to be happening with it. Dave stated he informed Commissioner Dunn about a virus on the webpage. He asked if the purchase of the property on Round Lake Avenue is on hold.

Mayor Baker stated it was not on hold but that the project fell through.

Dave Hicks asked about the DPW property.

Mayor Baker stated the City sold that property and the new owner has an agreement with DEC to do work on it and if he doesn't do it there is a possibility the City could take it back, he added that with DEC involved it could take a while.

Dave Hicks asked if there was a quote as to how much the Building Inspector would get paid if he returned part-time.

Mayor Baker said they are working on that and at this time he just wanted people to know he is retiring and he would like to have two (2) part-time employees one would be a fire inspection and one will be a building inspector.

Dave Hicks asked if anything was happening with the Esplanade.

Mayor Baker stated he hasn't heard anything they have never come back to refile.

Tom Mahoney with The Express asked about the proposal to hire the attorney. He stated the PBA brought the charges up about work place intimidation, and he asked if the proper rule would be for the PBA to pursue the alleged grievances rather than the City Council since the City Council was not really named in anything. He stated he is wondering what the PBA is doing. He went on to say with the collective bargaining agreement there are certain procedures to follow.

Commissioner Gilheany asked if any of the officers in attendance of the meeting would like to answer the questions.

Mayor Baker stated that when Mr. Mahoney was done if anyone from the PBA wanted to respond they could.

Tom Mahoney asked if the position of the Secretary to Public Safety was a new position.

Commissioner McGuire responded it was for the Deputy.

Tom Mahoney stated he was wondering about the other resolution.

Commissioner McGuire stated that was for the Senior Center and Public Safety oversees that and an employee left and they are just replacing that person.

Mayor Baker asked if any member of the PBA would like to respond.

None of the Officers responded.

Nick Rinaldi of 113 Viall Avenue asked if the resolution to hire an outside attorney wasn't already voted on last meeting and approved.

Commissioner Gilheany stated it was not approved.

Nick Rinaldi stated that at the last meeting it was stated it was approved and what the Council doesn't realize is they represent the residents and that it seems that they are not aware of the parliamentary procedure and they are the ones that control the City's government.

Commissioner Gilheany stated she knew it wasn't approved because there were only two (2) yes votes.

Nick Rinaldi asked why that wasn't stated; he added that it was actually stated that it was approved at the last meeting.

Commissioner Dunn stated no one said it was approved.

Mayor Baker stated he believes he said it was passed.

Commissioner Dunn stated that Mayor Baker did say it and Commissioner McGuire agreed with Commissioner Dunn.

Nick Rinaldi told Chief Waldron he has nothing but respect for the Police Department and he has always had respect for them. He went on to say he is seeing too many people coming to Mechanicville and going to the academy and then they disappear and he asked if we are a stepping stone paying for people to attend the academy and then then go to another place to work. Nick asked if the City could possibly pass a resolution that set requirements for Officers that transfer and possibly they could pay the City back for the academy.

Chief Waldron stated there are some rules that do apply and some are related to what it cost to train them and the City is aware and it is in the contract sitting in the collective bargaining agreement. Chief Waldron stated he has addressed this issue and everyone is concerned about it.

Nick Rinaldi stated you can't fault them for wanting to get a better paying job but he can't justify why he has to pay for that.

Chief Waldron stated he was totally right and he has spoken with the Commissioner and he went on to say that if he can hire an Officer that starts at \$38,000 and the next year goes up to \$42,000 the Sheriff comes in and says he can start them at \$50,000 and that is what happens.

Nick Rinaldi compared it to Governor Cuomo offering the Excelsior College Scholarships but to receive that you need to remain in New York State and work for five (5) years after graduation. He added right now we are losing businesses which means we are losing money and we are continually putting more money. Nick said it is an elderly community and the City cannot afford it.

Commissioner Gilheany stated there is a three (3) year commitment and if they leave before the three (3) years we are able to go back for a portion of the cost.

Chief Waldron stated we did receive \$10,000 from Watervliet when one of our Officers transferred there.

Nick Rinaldi stated an Officer recently went to the Sheriff's department and he wanted to know if money was reimbursed for him.

Chief Waldron stated the issue with that is that Officer is remaining with us part-time.

Nick Rinaldi there is loop hole with part-time. He asked if there was a requirement of how many hours he had to work to not have to be reimbursed.

Chief Waldron stated it is a tricky situation that he would be speaking to the Council about.

Commissioner McGuire stated she wanted to make a comment to Nick. She went on to say when they were at a previous meeting there was a big concern as to how much it was going to cost the City for the investigator and he asked why isn't the investigator here so they could ask him questions. Commissioner McGuire stated Mayor Baker had someone here in support of Mayor Baker and not one person asked this attorney what his cost was going to be and not one person asked him any questions. She went on to say there was no concern what so ever as to what that cost was going to be because Mayor Baker said the City is paying for my attorney too.

Nick Rinaldi stated it is like we are playing a poker game and we are playing against our own money.

Commissioner McGuire stated she wanted to make the point that no one was concerned with his Attorney and the cost.

Nick Rinaldi stated he doesn't want to pay for Mayor Baker's Attorney and he doesn't want to pay for City's Attorney.

Commissioner McGuire reiterated she just wanted to point that out.

Gina Kenyon added at the last meeting it was stated that the City was not paying for Mayor Baker's lawyer.

Commissioner McGuire stated that Mayor Baker stated the City was.

Gina Kenyon stated that Commissioner Gilheany stated she did not think we were paying for it.

Nick Rinaldi stated that no one is going to win here but the taxpayers will be the losers.

Commissioner McGuire stated that unfortunately they have to do this.

Nick Rinaldi stated he can't figure out why they have to do this over a complaint we are spending a lot of money for a complaint.

Michelle Duell of 18 Grove Street asked if this Attorney is replacing the Honeywell Law Firm that is retained by the City of Mechanicville to handle human resource issues.

Mayor Baker stated he is not replacing Honeywell Law Firm.

Michelle Duell asked if we have insurance that will pick up a majority of the cost and we pay the deductible.

Mayor Baker stated he thought he heard someone say that at the last meeting.

Commissioner Gilheany asked Commissioner Dunn if she talked to the insurance company.

Commissioner Dunn stated they are waiting to clarify and that she would not be answering any of these questions. She went on to say that if they want to make a comment they could make a comment but that she would not be answering any questions.

Michelle Duell stated they were just questions she had and she knows usually there is a policy and she knows they do at the library in case they are sued and she was just wondering because that could alleviate the cost.

Marylou Cebula of 28 Lee Street read a statement but declined to provide it. She started off by saying she was hoping there were more ears hearing what she had to say and it was unfortunate there wasn't. Marylou went on to say that she was not speaking for the Mechanicville PBA but, as a taxpayer and she was there to point out a few important issues in regards to the complaint at hand. She stated by referring to the timing of regard to the complaint; she stated the PBA was criticized for not filing the complaint prior to the election and a lot of the incidences occurred prior to the election and that there was one egregious incident that happened after the election.

Mayor Baker asked if she was speaking for the PBA.

Marylou Cebula said that she already stated she was not speaking for the PBA.

Mayor Baker stated he heard what she said but she seems to know their business versus what the City would know.

Marylou Cebula stated if you read the complaint you could tell this.

Mayor Baker stated he read the complaint.

Marylou Cebula continued that if you followed the timeline of the complaint you could see what happened prior to the election and what happened afterward. Marylou went on to say that if the complaint was filed prior to the election she felt that there would be an equal amount of criticism as well as some accusations stating they were trying to alter the election. She stated it was in her opinion that there was no politics impacting the timing of the complaint. She went on to say that there is also the concern brought up at the special meeting of nepotism with Mrs. Dunn because her sons work at the Police Department and she has a friend there which everyone is well aware was her. Marylou added that Mrs. Dunn is the Commissioner of Accounts which also makes her the human resource officer which is the office to which the PBA is required to submit their complaint. Marylou stated she feels it is perfectly clear listening to everybody and reading the actual complaint that there is only one person who is the reason behind this issue and he is the subject of the complaint. She went on to say that the Council was attempting to hire an independent investigator to look into this matter and get an unbiased opinion. Marylou went on to say that the allegations weren't about isolated incidents they were about consistent repeated course of conduct. She added she thought it was meant to demean the supervision within the department and I think it worked. Marylou stated that since the complaint has been filed there has been a lack of action, criticism, and having the issue to not turn into what the truth is but more of a like political maneuvering. She said it was said at the last meeting that the City looked ridiculous because this complaint was made public; she added that the situation is ridiculous and it is sad. She went on to say it is frustrating people are perpetuating incorrect information, and that the complaint was filed a month prior and nothing has been done. Marylou stated that it is simple logic that there should be someone independent of anyone connected in any manner to take a look at it and apparently there was a max cost to help facilitate this so it seems like it was the most fiscally responsible way to go about it. Marylou added that she has worked with some of the officers for over a decade and that they are not crybabies, they are not weak, nor should they be expected to suck it up. She stated they have been spit on, they have been punched, kicked, they have been almost run over, and that they have been called almost every name in the book and it is unfortunate but that is part of their job, she added they should not have to face this type of behavior from a supervisor and that it was not fair to have a black cloud over them about losing their jobs in addition to that. She added that with everything going on they still go to work every day and do their jobs.

Gina Kenyon read a statement and it is attached to the minutes.

Dave Hicks 241 First Avenue asked if the O'Reilly Auto Parts that purchased DiSiena Furniture is in forward progress.

Mayor Baker informed him that it was still in process.

Dave Hicks stated he missed something at the last meeting about Mayor Baker's representation and he wanted if the attorney being hired is representing the Mayor or the Council.

Mayor Baker stated that James Walsh is the attorney he is hiring for these charges.

Dave Hicks asked the Mayor if he would be footing the bill.

Mayor Baker stated he will if he has to but he is told by other lawyers that it is in the law that it will be paid for.

Dave Hicks asked if the Council needs to approve the lawyer he appoints.

Mayor Baker stated they do not need to approve the lawyer he appoints because he is defending himself.

Amy Pickett responded to Commissioner McGuire's comment about questioning why no one was concerned about Mayor Baker's attorney by saying if the PBA handled it in house Mayor Baker would not have to hire an attorney. She went on to say she would do the same thing if she were him and if we are paying for one attorney for ridiculous reasons we should have to pay for his.

Commissioner McGuire stated the complaint was made.

Amy Pickett stated it is just a complaint and there is no need for lawyers.

Commissioner McGuire stated there are some serious allegations that need to be looked into and they cannot just let them go they need to have a disinterested third party look at this objectively because none of them can.

Ordinance 2018-1 changing

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION 09-18: Water Meter Software

Moved by: Mayor Baker

Seconded by: Commissioner McGuire

AYES: 3 NAYS: 0

Abstain: 1 Commissioner Gilheany

RESOLUTION 10-18: Hiring Animal Control Officer Patrick Bruno

Moved by: Commissioner McGuire

Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 11-18: Hiring Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety Alyssa Santagato

Moved by: Commissioner McGuire
Seconded by: Commissioner Dunn
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 12-18: Hiring Office Clerk Department of Public Safety Patricia Brown

Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 13-18: Maintenance Agreement with State of New York (Central Avenue)

Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 14-18: Authorize Commissioner of Finance to issue checks from load proceeds for the Home Grant

Moved by: Mayor Baker
Seconded by: Commissioner Gilheany
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 15-18: City of Mechanicville to act as lead agency for North Central Streetscape Project

Moved by: Mayor Baker
Seconded by: Commissioner Gilheany
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 16-18: 2nd Annual Sasha's Run

Moved by: Mayor Baker
Seconded by: Commissioner Gilheany
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 17-18: Payroll and Vouchers

Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 18-18: Budget Transfer

Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 19-18: Budget Amendment

Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Mayor Baker
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 20-18: Hiring of Robert Hite as an independent legal counsel
to the City Council

Moved by: Commissioner McGuire
Seconded by: Commissioner Gilheany
AYES: 2 NAYS: 0
Abstain: 2 Mayor Baker and Commissioner Dunn

NEW BUSINESS: Mayor Baker stated that Paul Loatman the City Historian has given his
yearly report which will be attached to the meeting minutes.

OLD BUSINESS: None

Adjournment: 7:54
Moved by: Commissioner Gilheany
Seconded by: Commissioner Dunn
AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITY HISTORIAN FOR 2017

Submitted by Paul Loatman, Jr.

Mechanicville City Historian-January 15, 2018

A “Registered Public Historian” who serves on the Advisory Council for the Center for Applied Historical Research (CAHR) at The University at Albany and its Public Historians Education Committee, I am a Member of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), the Organization of American Historians and the National Council for History Education. CAHR acts as a clearing-house for municipal historians; organizes training seminars and workshops on behalf of APHNYS; maintains a website for local historians; and promotes the professional development of those seeking to become APHNYS “Registered Historians.” The group also acts as an editorial board for the State University of New York Press, proposing series for publication in areas of expertise of Board Members. CAHR’s website maintains a link to the Mechanicville History page.

This report reviews the roles of the municipal historian as defined by APHNYS: research and writing, teaching and public presentations, historic preservation, and organization and advocacy. A copy will be filed with the Saratoga County Historian, while a shorter version of the report has been submitted to the State Historian, Devin Lander.

Like my colleagues, I receive genealogical inquiries on a regular basis which are technically beyond the purview of local historians, per APHNYS guidelines. Federal census data, 1790- 1940, and local municipal Directories are available to the general public at “Heritage Quest” on-line for a fee. Since I maintain an alphabetized hard-copy database of Mechanicville federal and state census returns, 1865-1925, arranged chronologically, I provide information not always accessible to genealogists and historians. I am also fortunate that the local Catholic parish readily responds to questions I relay from those searching for ancestors who may be listed in parish marriage, death, and baptismal records. Heritage Hunters of Saratoga County has also published on-line data for Hudson View Cemetery and is a resource I use regularly. Given our community’s immigrant history, I receive a large number of inquiries which can be complicated by the fact that many people with “Mechanicville” mailing addresses lived in municipal jurisdictions outside of our community and they do not show up in our records.

Other types of questions regarding local history most often come from people accessing the City’s History page website which includes over fifty articles I have published on local history as well as my e-mail address. The nature of these inquiries can be inferred by describing some of my responses to their questions in the past year:

1. I provided the Reunion Committee of the MHS Class of 1967 copies of my photographic history of the community to be distributed to those requesting copies during its 50th Reunion and dated the opening of the new High School to 1966. The building’s cornerstone lists “1965,” but a labor strike delayed the opening of the school for students until the following February. Each year, MHS Reunion groups contact me looking for photos and information related to their graduation class.

2. I provided the Luther-Richardson family with crime-scene photos taken in 1976, three articles published by the *New York Times* on October 31 and November 1,

1976 that included interviews with police officials who had participated in the shooting incident that led to the death of Paul Luther and another local resident, as well as the wounding of a fellow-officer, and three detailed maps of the City streets that helped to establish the close proximity of the shooter to his victims. The Luther-Richardson family had requested documentation from me to counter the claims of the shooter that he had been firing randomly from afar without intent to harm anyone. The material that I provided was presented by the family to the Parole Board at the prisoner's hearing held in June. In New York State, a person must be granted a parole hearing every two years after having served 25 years in prison. Persons affected by the prisoner's actions also have a right to appear before the Parole Board to present their point of view as well. The prisoner's request for parole was subsequently denied.

3. I conducted a lengthy correspondence between March and September with Robert Cary of California who was seeking information on his ancestors who were involved with the local brick industry in the early 20th century as owners of the Cary and New England Brick companies. In addition to providing him with an article I published on local brick-making history, and his family's role in it, I met with him in September when he visited here, helping to locate family gravesites in Hudson View Cemetery. I later accompanied him on a tour of Mechanicville while reviewing examples of our late 19th and early 20th century architecture, concluding with a quick tour of old brickyards in our area. He plans on returning to our area this summer.

4. As in years past, new Mechanicville property owners contact me seeking information about the history of their recently-purchased homes. I suggest that they begin by examining copies of their deeds and to check with the City Commissioner of Accounts for tax records. When possible, City Directories cross-referenced with census data permit me to trace previous ownership back into the early 20th century. Numerical City Directories are especially helpful in this regard, but few of them date prior to the 1950s.

5. A number of people have asked me about confusion regarding the names of some Mechanicville streets, in particular, Grand St. Without going into all the details, an examination of Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1891-1927, reveals that this short six block-long-street has been listed at different times, in whole or in part, as: Grand St.; Coit St.; Court St.; West Court St.; Smith St.; and West Smith St.; all within the course of forty years. The confusion arose as recently as this month when a local visitor was instructed by her car's GPS system when leaving 414 Grand St. to "proceed east on Court St."

6. In researching the history of the structure occupied by Baker Electric Co. at 83 South Central Avenue that was torn down recently to make way for the new Cumberland Farms Station, I discovered that prior to its use as a business structure, it had housed both the Gospel Hall and the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army has not operated in Mechanicville since the 1960s and it is believed that Gospel Hall was the predecessor of the Assembly of God Highway Tabernacle now located in Stillwater.

7. I provided Fr. Pat Rice, the new of Pastor of All Saints on The Hudson Catholic Parish, two articles explaining the origins of the celebration of the August 15th Feast of The Assumption that the local Italian community has been observing since 1903. I met with Fr. Rice and briefed him the history of the Catholic community in Mechanicville whose history goes back to the first half of the 19th century. I also was asked by the Chamber of Commerce to accompany him to the Annual Economic Summit to introduce him to local business and political leaders.

8. Paul Vermilyea of Mechanicville contacted me in May after discovering submerged wooden beams while kayaking in the Hudson River in Stillwater and asked if they might be of some historical significance. While discussing various possibilities with him, I passed on this information to John Bonafides, Director of Technical Preservation Services at the Peebles Island Office of Historic Preservation and Amy Bracewell, Park Ranger at Saratoga National Battlefield Park who indicated that they would investigate the matter further.

9. I provided Paul Schneider of the Waterford Historical Museum with information dating to the 18th century regarding the history of “the flats” and the area of the Leland Farm south of Mechanicville that is marked by a historic marker noting an attack there by “North Indians” in the 1740s. Paul was preparing a presentation on the property’s history in the first half of the 19th century based upon the “Diaries of John Strachan” in the Rensselaer County Historical Museum. Paul later sent me a 700 page transcription of the Diaries, 1821-1847, an invaluable source that provides insight into everyday life in our area during that time period prior to its purchase by the Leland family.

10. Linda Mackey, Historic Preservation Specialist at NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, has been doing research on buildings located on Saratoga Avenue and looking for a historic photo collection of the area. I referred her to my book on Mechanicville and told her that I have a number of other photos not included there in my collection that may be of use to her.

11. Karen Crandall of Rochester is completing a book on cobblestone houses in New York State and is trying to document four of them located in Saratoga County. Of particular interest to her is the history of the Cuerdon/ Fort “cobblestone house” originally located at the bottom of Hill St. and North Main dating to the late 18th century that was razed by Urban Renewal in 1966. I sent her digitized photos of the structure prior to its destruction, including one of the building’s interior fireplaces. I also forwarded a copy of a 1969 article in *The New York Times* that took exception to the building’s destruction. An 1892 Sanborn Map of the area suggests that there may have been another cobblestone house in that area, but there is no photographic evidence to confirm that.

12. David Hubbard, Site Manager of the Grant Cottage at Mount McGregor is preparing a program on Bishop John C. Newman, known as “Grant’s Pastor,” who often spent time with the Grant family when it lived at Grant Cottage. Hubbard was seeking documentation on Newman, a Methodist Bishop who married a Mechanicville woman and whose burial site is marked by a large monument in Hudson View Cemetery. I loaned Hubbard my Newman files for Xeroxing, which include 42 articles that retrieved from *The Historical New York Times* that were published between 1880 and 1899 when Newman died. I also copied an article I have written about Newman, as well as some relevant census records about him. Newman was Chaplain of the United States Senate in the 1870s, and while serving at the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., President Ulysses S. Grant anonymously routed donations for the poor through Bishop Newman, a fact noted by Ron Chernow in his recent biography, *Grant*.

13. Aida Manso Brewer, in preparing a Junior Dante Christmas Party quiz “How Well Do You Know Mechanicville History,” asked me to verify a number of answers to such questions as the dates of the 1960s Fantauzzi Restaurant and Army & Navy Store

fires; the history of the building of the Mechanicville High School , and the dates of some of the pictures in my photographic history of Mechanicville. I also provided Aida with the *New York Times*'s obituary of Aida Alvarez, born and raised in Mechanicville, who died in 1996. Upon completing her education, she visited northern Spain, the area from which the Alvarez and Manso and other local Hispanic families emigrated, she specialized in teaching Spanish dance in New York City. In 1947, she was the lead dancer in the New York City Ballet's production of "Carmen." This year marks the centennial of her birth and I will be writing an article for *The Express* reprising her career.

14. Lise McDonald of Old Greenwich CT, the great-great-grand daughter of C. M. Fort of Mechanicville who founded a store here in 1869 in the "cobblestone house" on Hill St. requested copies of photos that were provided captions but were never uploaded by the City's previous webmaster onto the City History website page as part of "The Fort Collection." I forwarded here digitized copies of five of the photos that she requested.

16. Joan Aldous, Town of Queensbury Historian, and I exchanged copies of biographical information about Albert Barnes, a prominent Mechanicville businessman. His brother John, a noted physician, operated a hospital in Glens Falls in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I provided Joan with a copy of a biographical profile that Albert had written about his brother that he scripted on the Glens Falls hospital's letterhead, something she had not seen before. The Barnes material is contained in 100+ page transcription of memoirs that Dick Hoover of Washington State provided me two years ago. Dick, his brother and their wives, visited me this summer and spent an afternoon discussing the Barnes' material and my on-going efforts to establish the provenance of the 1859 Ellsworth Bible that Dick donated to me.

17. I provided Rose Marie Getty of Green Island background on the work that now-deceased Catholic Bishop John Nolan of Mechanicville performed on behalf of Palestinian refugees in the 1960s and 1970s as head of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association that is headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon. Getty's nephew, Brad Parker, is a human rights lawyer for Defense for Children International-Palestine and she was interested in learning more about Nolan's work. He visited Mechanicville often during his tenure with CNEWA, raised funds while here to support his mission, and was a sought-after commentator on national news broadcasts regarding his views on Arab-Israeli relations and as an advocate for the rights of Palestinian Christians whenever he returned home.

18. I corresponded with Geena Coreno, a former Mechanicville resident and conducted a lengthy phone interview with her in December regarding aspects of local history. A Graduate Teaching Assistant at The Tisch School of Performing Arts at N.Y.U., she is writing a drama about growing up in Mechanicville. She posed questions regarding the imposition of a youth curfew by the City in 1915; the custom of employing horn and siren signals to alert citizens about fires; the history of the local Rescue Squad; and the practice of private citizens' using police scanners. She discovered that many people in New York City find all of these behaviors as somewhat unusual. Having previously lived in New York City myself, I addressed her questions, providing her with some historical background that might help explain small town life to big city residents.

19. I am happy to report that following efforts by the Mechanicville City Council, the Malta Town Board, and the New York State Military History Museum, Col. Elmer E.

Ellsworth finally has gained some recognition in the City of Alexandria, Virginia where he was killed in 1861. Local residents who have visited that area often expressed amazement that while Ellsworth's killer was immortalized with a plaque, Ellsworth's death went unmentioned. Recently, however, the new owners of the site removed the Jackson's plaque and the City of Alexandria erected a mini-kiosk near the site of the 1861 incident that includes photos of the Jackson House hotel [no longer standing] as well as of Col. Ellsworth in uniform, the "kepi" Zouave hat he wore the day he was killed, and a piece of the flag whose removal led to the incident.

The bulk of my research in the past year focused on World War I and its impact on the local community and the role played by its citizens in that conflict. My goal has been fit the story of Mechanicville within the context of our larger society. In May, I attended Region 5 APHNYS meeting in Clifton Park where presentations were made by State Historian Devin Lander and Jennifer Lemak, Chief Curator of History at the New York State Museum on New York history in the era of "the Great War." The following month, CAHR members previewed the New York State Museum's current display on World War I, whetting my appetite for the subject. Along these lines, I re-read historical monographs written by academic historians dealing with the war; reviewed the JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY's "Historian's Roundtable" discussion of the conflict; downloaded numerous articles from the files of *The Historical New York Times* written during the war period; utilized a cache of letters written to and by my grandmother who served as a 2nd Lt. in the Army & Naval Nursing corps in France between 1916 and 1919; and closely examined the *Mechanicville Saturday Mercury* whose weekly columns of "Local War News" included publication of letters written by local men serving on the front-lines in France in 1917 and 1918. A major resource that I constantly referred to was THE HONOR DAY PROGRAM, SEPTEMBER 1, 1919 published by a local committee listing all local soldiers who served in the military at that time. Fortuitously, the booklet contained the names of over 450 men, and two women, who served in the war, including their ranks, local home addresses, and where they served, while also noting if they were wounded, gassed, or died while in the service. I used the list to track many of those who served in subsequent census records and City Directories.

I also shared my notes and findings with Marie Boucher and Tom Farnan, publishing parts of letters written by their relatives from the battle field in 1918. Marie's father-in law and his brother, and Tom's father served in the 105th Infantry in France in 1918. As we approach the 100th Anniversary of the first unofficial Armistice Day, I will publish additional articles on the subject. Part of the motivation for doing so relates to the fact many historians fear that World War I, a conflict whose consequences have shaped the modern world, has become a "forgotten war." It would also be disgraceful to relegate the sacrifices made by local citizens to some "forgotten past."

Prior beginning the series on World War I, I published "The Apples of Their Irish Eyes" in *The Express*, an eye-witness account of the stripping of a local apple orchard in the early 1850s. Starving Irish immigrants debarked from a south-bound canal packet in the early 1850s and picked the trees clean while their owner looked on helplessly. This scene was described by a young English immigrant whose father had escaped debtor's prison and found refuge in Stillwater, adding to the poignancy of the incident.

The first of seven articles on World War I, “Who Will Keep Us Out Of War,” analyzed voting results in all election districts throughout Saratoga County in the hotly-contested 1916 Presidential election waged between Woodrow Wilson and Glens Falls native, Charles Evans Hughes. Although total returns were quite close on national, state and community levels across the board, there were wide differences in voting districts within communities, particularly in Saratoga Springs and Mechanicville.

“LaFayette- We Are Here,” discussed the impact the outbreak of war had on the local economy, the attitudes of different immigrant groups, and population changes affected by American entry into the conflict.

““Over Here”” Helps The Boys ““Over There”” discusses how local industries adjusted to labor shortages caused by increased demands for their products at the same time that 450+ men of prime work age left the community to serve in the military. Solutions included the so-called “importation of 200 Southern Negroes” from Louisiana [probably convict laborers] by the Delaware and Hudson Ry.; the recruiting of Williams College students to work in the Boston & Maine rail yards on week-ends; and the enrollment of local high school students in New York’s State Farm Cadet program. Students 14 to 18 years of age with parental permission were excused from all classes between May 1 and November 1 to become resident farm hands on local farms.

“A Case of First Impressions” recounted the experiences of the Boucher brothers who were cooks with the 105th Infantry who used a series of clever ruses to supply American men on the front-lines with mail, food, and cigarettes without getting shot by Germans manning the Hindenburg Line. At first glance, the role of military cook appeared to keep men out of harm’s way. However, the reality was quite different, and both Boucher brothers were wounded and gassed while engaged in combat in October 1918.

“I Suppose You have Heard of Flanders,” based upon letters written by three local soldiers who participated in the first American penetration of the Hindenburg Line by the 105th Infantry on September 29, 1918, while two of these soldiers later were awarded the Silver Star for their actions in battle.

“Blue Collar City-Blue Collar Army” analyzes the backgrounds of all 450+ local men who served in the military in World War I, comparing their service ranks with their employment in the pre-war era. Because a major concern arose regarding the ability of American farmers to feed both the American and Allied armies, many farmers were granted military exemptions reflecting the belief that “Food Will Win the War.” Partly because of this, it appears that industrial communities like Mechanicville provided a disproportionate number of men serving in the military at that time.

“For Whom The Bell Tolls-Honoring Veterans” examines both the celebration of the first Armistice Day in 1918, as well as transformation of November 11 from Armistice Day into Veterans Day beginning in 1954 that celebrates all of those who have served in America’s wars. The article recalls the original annual tradition of tolling church and community bells “on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month” that has fallen by the wayside in recent years. Hopefully, local communities might wish to resurrect this practice while celebrating the Centennial of the end of World War I on November 11, 2018.

I conclude with my annual reminder that according to APHNYS and State Education Department guidelines, municipal historians should be provided with a mail

drop, office space, and other services needed to fulfill their responsibilities. For the record, I use my home and telephone for office purposes, and provide my own internet, computer, Xeroxing, postage, and e-mail services. Of necessity, I store historical artifacts and documents in my home, a matter about which I have grown increasingly uneasy. My employment in another profession permits me to operate in this manner, but these arrangements will not be permanent. I am well aware of the fiscal constraints faced by the City and raise these points merely as a reminder that there are established guidelines for conducting the office of municipal historian that hopefully can be met in the future. In the meantime, I trust that my continued service will meet your expectations.

Mechanicville Fire Department

36 North Main Street
Mechanicville, New York 12118
Tel: (518) 664-6121 Fax: (518) 664-6123

Chief
John Dunn

Deputy Chief
Matthew Dunn

Assistant Chief
David Zecca

February 13, 2018

January 2018 Chief's Report

Alarms YTD- 44

City Alarms – 42	Mutual Aid - 2
Structure Fires – 1	
Fire Alarm activation – 3	
Water Problem-3	
EMS Assist – 28	
Natural gas odor - 3	
Cover assignments – 1	
Auto Accident-1	
Odor of Smoke-1	
Gas spill-1	

Month Total – 44

Training

Drills: 4

Details: 3

Drills: (3) – Engine Co Ops, Hands on structure fire training & Continuing medical education.

Details: (7) Wake Detail, Monthly Dinner, First Responders Recognition Night at ST. Lukes Church

Good Evening,

My name is Gina Kenyon and I have been a resident of the City of Mechanicville all my life. My husband and I own our home here in Mechanicville, so I am a taxpayer and I am also Secretary to the Mayor and I wish to speak to you this evening as both. First of all I want everyone to know that Dennis did not know I wrote something, he did not know I was speaking, he did not ask me to write something, I feel as his secretary I need to say something.

All my statements tonight are regarding the January personnel complaint posted on timesunion.com by the officers and members of the Mechanicville PBA.

On a personal level, I would like to begin by saying I have worked for Mayor Baker for a little over 4 years now and I go on record as saying he has never spoken to me in tone or attitude anything like the allegations made about him by the PBA. On the other hand, I must say that many derogatory things have been said to me, in my capacity as secretary, about the mayor. I do not want to call out and name names that is not my intention, but be assured that some of them were very awful. I will say, though, that what was alleged in the post as being said by Mayor Baker about these individuals, many remarks were also said about the mayor by those making the charges. I guess the point I'm trying to make here is that these things need to be ironed out in-house by all those involved instead of going to lawyers and charging our taxpayer dollars.

Another personal statement: Regarding Item 207 quoted in the posting, it was noted that I made a remark coming to the defense of Desk Officer Cebula and that Mayor Baker retorted derogatorily towards Cebula. Seriously, I do not even remember that conversation happening or what was said, but in any case, I resent it being attributed to me and printed in those charges without being asked about it. Since these were posted for all the public to see, I have found myself feeling uneasy and uncomfortable in social situations by people approaching me and asking me about this situation which I will not talk about.

Regarding another item, #1008, I feel I must again defend my position. I personally take many complaints on a weekly basis from City residents about the Police Department and their duties and it is part of my job to pass them on to the mayor. It follows that as an elected official in charge of the department, it is then

the Mayor's duty to act on these complaints. As taxpayers, don't we expect the mayor to do the job he was elected to do? So, if someone calls and complains he needs to act on it.

Finally, in another personal matter, regarding Item 1009, Code of Ethics, it was been brought to my attention that some of the police officers questioned bereavement time I was allotted, saying it was extended beyond what I was being allowed when my Uncle passed away, now mind you I was my Uncle's caregiver and in July he passed away and I was granted 2 days. Once my file was pulled, which I don't think it should have had to of been, it was confirmed I took my 2 days bereavement and my 3 days personal time. This ruling is part of the City Handbook, and I maintain that all city officials, myself included, should be made to follow the City Handbook and be allowed the same time for bereavement purposes, no more, no less, which I did.

What you've just heard are some of the personal issues I have with the letter that was made public to citizens of Mechanicville. Before giving up the floor, I have some taxpayer issues as well that I would like to bring up.

- What are we trying to accomplish out of this entire matter.
- What are the motives involved?
- Will it become a "he said, she said"?
- Are we taxpayers now going to be made to pay for two outside lawyers to represent the matter of the PBA versus the Mayor? Has the City Council given any thought as to how expensive these charges could be to our city residents?
- Shouldn't these PBA complaints have tried to have been settled "in house", Should they have risen to this level and be made public?
- And, what happens if I, or any other employee of the city, am made to feel we are working in a hostile environment? Should we go public and submit a formal grievance or complaint for residents of the city to foot the bill for a lawyer's fee? Because, I can tell you, since these allegations have come up and been made public, I have been in the position of feeling harassed, uncomfortable and angry on my job. I loved my job and now not so much. Is my recourse the same as the PBA's, or for that matter, the same as anyone

involved in City Hall or our city government? How out of hand will this become for us taxpayers if we all follow the same path?

I come here tonight not expecting answers, since I have raised a lot of issues that you need time to think about. But, I am expecting that you take my personal issues and my taxpayer issues into account. I am hoping you can move forward to resolve these disturbing allegations in a manner that is the least embarrassing to all those involved and the least burdensome on the taxpayers of Mechanicville.

Thank you for listening to my concerns, and I am hoping that you can come to some reasonable, fair, equitable resolutions.