

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday
October 13, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

➤ **Call to order**

- Mayor Kalaj called to order the Village Board Meeting at 7:01 p.m. on October 13, 2020, at the South Blooming Grove Village Hall located at 811 State Route 208, within the Village of South Blooming Grove, and having a mailing address of Monroe, New York.

➤ **Roll call**

The following persons were present:

- George Kalaj – Mayor
- Abraham Weiss – Deputy Mayor
- John L. Ross - Trustee
- Yitzchok Feldman– Trustee
- Scott B. Ugell, Esq. – Village Attorney
- Isaac Ekstein – Legislative Aide
- Joel Stern – Confidential Assistant

Absent

- Johnny Belfort – Trustee

➤ **Correspondence**

- *None*

➤ **Mayor’s Comments**

- Good evening. For those who had a holiday last week, I hope everything went well and you enjoyed your holiday with your families.

➤ **Business**

- **Resolution No. (60)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Yehoshua Bitman as a member of the Village Zoning Board of Appeals. Motion to accept by Trustee Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *Resolution passed. 3 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman, 1 No - Trustee Ross and 1 Absent – Trustee Belfort.*
- **Resolution No. (61)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Simon Schwartz as alternate member of the Village Planning Board. Motion to accept by Trustee Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *Resolution passed. 4 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Ross and 1 Absent – Trustee Belfort.*
- **Resolution No. (62)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Reliable Computers to provide computer services to the Village. Motion to accept by Trustee Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *Resolution*

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passed. 4 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Ross and 1 Absent – Trustee Belfort.

- **Resolution No. (63)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove scheduling a public hearing on October 26, 2020 regarding the proposed Budget for the Village’s 2021 fiscal year. Motion to accept by Trustee Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *Resolution passed. 4 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Ross and 1 Absent – Trustee Belfort.*
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➤ **Public Comment**

- Sue Anne Vogelsberg, Prospect Road – If the bus has been reinstated, where is the schedule posted, how will social distancing be maintained and how will the bus cleaning be conducted? The Mayor replied that State Law will be applied to the bus regarding social distancing. The schedule will be presented to the board and they will look into it.
- ?? - How did you pick Reliable Computer and are they local. Trustee Feldman advised that the board had three proposals and Reliable Computer was the best option, they are local, and they will respond quickly.
- Mr. Mullan – The village election was a travesty and we should be ashamed many voters waited up on chilly temperature for hours to vote. The Orange County Board of Elections needs to be contacted regarding this. Masks and social distancing were not enforced. The elderly and those who work were not able to vote. Trustee Feldman advised that the election held in September had nothing to do with this administration, it was the old administration. Masks and social distancing were enforced. We will work in the future to make sure it goes smoothly. Additionally, everybody had the option to vote via absentee ballot.
Trustee Ross advised that the long lines had nothing to do with the old administration. Questions were sent to the Board of Elections. For the number of votes that were cast, it is incomprehensible to Trustee Ross that it took 12 hours for about 500-600 live votes to be cast and questions have been raised with the Board of Elections. I myself, son and daughter stood outside for over two hours and it was after midnight before the last ballot was cast. He would love to get a concrete answer on how this could occur.
- Christie Johnson – It was posted on the Village of South Blooming Grove’s web site that the September 30, 2020 meeting would be online only and that no one would be at Village Hall. Then when the meeting started it was only the attorney, clerk, Mayor and two newly elected trustees. Why is that? Were Trustee Belfort and Trustee Ross made aware of these changes? Trustee Ross answered that he was not available for the meeting. There was mixed communication with Trustee Belfort who later came personally to the meeting.
- Mr. Mullan – Are fines being issued for overflowing garbage cans, it’s causing rodents and unsanitary conditions. Also, are fines being issued for not pulling in garbage cans? The Mayor advised that they are working on that and it will eventually be resolved.
- Christie Johnson – why were their no applications taken for the appointed positions? Attorney Ugell advised because they are exempt on competitive positions.
- Mr. Mullan – Many cars are parked on the road facing the wrong direction, residents need reminders of the law. Trustee Ross suggested calling the Blooming Grove Police on matters like that.

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- Sue Anne Vogelsberg stated that both Bitman and Schwartz do not reside in the Village of South Blooming Grove, how can they be appointed to the Planning Board and Zoning Board? Trustee Feldman advised they do reside in the Village.
- Mr. Mullen – Who is Joel Stern and how was he appointed and is he getting paid? Attorney Ugell advised Mr. Stern was appointed and is not getting paid.
- Mr. Mullen – Who is Isaac Ekstein, what was the process of his appointment and is he getting paid? Mayor Kalaj advised he is appointed by the Mayor and he is not getting paid.
- Mr. Mullen – stated children are not wearing masks on private school buses and public school bus children are, how is this fair? Mr. Feldman advised to reach out to the school and/or bus company.
- Sue Anne Vogelsberg – She has received no reply to her emails for the Mayor. Why are the civil service jobs not listed? Attorney Ugell advised that they are not civil service jobs required to be posted.
- Anon - When will the Village continue the public hearing regarding Clovewood? Attorney Ugell stated he did not know and the Mayor advised it is up to them.
- ?? – Where do the Village’s new appointees reside? Mayor advised they live in the Village of South Blooming Grove.
- What will the Village do about masks at Synagogues and Temples? The Mayor advised that if a violation is reported he will contact the police department and the New York State Task Force and they will deal with that.
- Motion to close the public comments by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Weiss, *Motion passed 4 Ayes, 1 Absent.*

➤ **Abstract**

- Motion to adopt the Abstract by Deputy Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *4 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman and Trustee Ross; 1 Absent - Trustee Belfort.*

➤ **Trustee Comments**

- Trustee Ross asked, with regard to Resolution 60, if Sonia Ayala was asked if she wanted to continue on the Zoning Board of Appeals, was she given that opportunity? Trustee Ross advised he wasn't aware of this change. The Mayor advised that we have discussed it with the Village Attorney.
- Trustee Ross asked the Board what was the urgency of reinstating the bus, he pointed out that there was no public comment regarding same, there was no attendance or discussion and when the bus was running in the past he only witnessed very few people utilizing the bus. The Mayor replied stating that the bus will divert 300-400 additional cars traveling within the village and that is why the bus was reinstated. The Mayor feels it is a good thing to keep additional cars out of the village. The bus will be monitored. The Mayor advised that all of them discussed before the meeting and at the meeting.
- Trustee Ross asked if the Mayor or other members of the board had experience or ever worked with the new engineering firm. Attorney Ugell stated that he spoke with attorneys for other municipalities and did not hear the greatest things regarding the prior engineers, they are unresponsive, they cost more money. The new firm is less expensive and they did speak about the new firm quite a bit. They need to get things done and the prior firm did not move as quickly as they'd like. We need someone more responsive and affordable. Trustee Ross advised that due diligence is having a good rapport with surrounding municipalities would be appointed while the village was in the middle of a large

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project (filtration project). He also asked if there was any past experience with the new engineers. The Mayor advised that the prior engineering firm was not responsive and were more money.

- Trustee Ross asked how the liaison appointment come about and why the new appointees be involved in all of these matter instead of the entire board taking care of that. The Mayor advised that these two gentlemen are a huge help and they are very aware of what they are doing, therefore he decided he wanted them under his wing to help him out. The Mayor needs the help from the entire board and them. Trustee Ross does not know of any other village that have done this and what credentials make these appointees so worthy and not your board. Traditionally, this is not how it was done so he would like to clarify for himself and the people. Village Attorney Ugell advised that mechanically researched other surrounding areas such as Rockland, which is little more advanced. The village has the exact same employment description in Rockland County and wants to make this a better place. They are going to help the mayor and will not cost a nickle. Trustee Ross because this has not been done the people want to know why. Attorney Ugell advised that the Mayor wanted to have somebody who could help the mayor and not cost any money. Trustee Ross asked for examples from Rockland County to be forwarded to him.
- Email was received by the board from Sonia Ayala personally and he was curious if her questions would be answered. Attorney Ugell advised that her questions have been answered.

➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the meeting at 7:39p.m. by Deputy Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *4 Ayes - Mayor Kalaj, Trustee Weiss, Trustee Feldman and Trustee Ross; 1 Absent Trustee Belfort.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Clerk