

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday
November 9, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

➤ **Call to order**

- Mayor Kalaj called to order the Village Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on November 9, 2020, at the South Blooming Grove Fire House located at 819 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
- Johnny Belfort - Trustee
- Yitzchok Feldman – Trustee
- Scott B. Ugell, Esq. – Village Attorney
- Marvin Nyman – Village Accountant
- Holly Brown – Village Treasurer
- Kerry Dougherty – Village Clerk

➤ **Correspondence:**

- None

➤ **Mayor's Comments:**

- The mayor stated that he and some board members met with Senator Skoufis and Assemblyman Schmidt and that both were pleased to meet with the new mayor and look forward to working with the new mayor.

➤ **Public Comments**

- **Sue Anne Vogelsberg** – At the September 30, 2020 at the re-organizational meeting there were appointments of Joel Stern as Confidential Assistant to the Mayor and Isaac Ekstein as Legislative Aide to the Mayor. October 22, 2020 correspondence from the Orange County Human Resources Commissioner indicated that these newly created positions were not acceptable. Why are Mr. Stern and Mr. Ekstein continuing to operate in these positions? Were the village procurement policies followed with regard to obtaining Reliable Computers for the Village. The Moodna Watershed Council is looking for Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts for service projects to make Kiosks similar to the Merriewold Lake Kiosk, if interested, please contact Jay Belmont at jaybelmont49@gmail.com. Attorney Ugel stated that the observation made by Ms. Vogelsberg with regard to what the October 22, 2020 letter says is completely incorrect. The letter states that if someone is not being paid or given benefits, they are volunteers and are not regulated by the Orange County Department of Personnel. He had a conversation with the director of personnel. The letter says that these gentlemen are not regulated by the County to the extent that they are volunteers and to the extent that they are appointed by Resolution which is duly appropriate. Ms. Vogelsberg continued to ask, how

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- can the Mayor know the volume of work 2 days after the election and feel he needs volunteers to assist him when he has a village board. The application regarding volunteers was returned.
- **James LoFranco** – I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight. First I would like to congratulate the Mayor and the new board members, I wish you success because if you succeed, the Village succeeds. It is important that I bring to light troubling incidents that transpired prior to the original election date in March, my comments will show deceit and deception of what was to come. Myself, other board members and supporters were accused in frivolous law suit of fraud in acquiring the candidate petitions. This while your team was engaged in ballot harvesting. On the Friday prior to the scheduled March election, Isaac Ekstein and Joel Stern while in the village meeting room at Village Hall discussing other village matters, seized the opportunity to offer that if I endorsed Mr. Weiss and Mr. Felman for Trustees, they could guarantee my re-election. This clearly was contrary to what is ethical. I was offended because in the past I had stated many times, I cannot be bought or intimidated. I make these comments to appraise you Mr. Mayor of the character of your chosen special assistant Joel Stern and legislative aide Isaac Ekstein. To see them seated at the board dais at the last meeting was further troubling. One must question the integrity and/or autotomy of the new board. I served this village with honor and integrity and hoped that honor and integrity would prevail with this board. That is in question. During my tenure, I make sure that I utilize professionals, legal and otherwise, to do the business of the village. At the last meeting you were asked the criteria used to hire a new village attorney. You weren't able to answer that question, suggesting perhaps others made that choice and you were told to make the selection. A village attorney with nor municipal experience cannot well serve the village. You commented in emails that you inherited incompetence, neglect and outright deterioration from me and my board. That is absurd and I don't believe those were your comments. I and my board achieved much and considered all village residents without fear or favor. You also commented that the village willfully drove away good business and tax ratables due to blind hate biased. That is a ludicrous statement. Mr. Mayor do you believe those words or are they the words of another that were told to you. We began the improvements to our archaic infrastructure with the upgrade of the Merriewold Well Field which includes a filtration system and the approval of an additional well. While securing grants close to One Million Dollars to defray the cost. We also paved numerous roads and upgraded and improved the exterior of Village Hall to come into compliance with the ADA standards of today. We faced every challenge head on, we didn't serve to appease or favor certain residents, I hope you can serve with that clarity. I hope you didn't sell your soul to serve as a puppet for personal agendas. Thank you.
 - **John Hickey** – Mr. Mayor I propose this question to you and to your Special Assistant Mr. Stern; has the Orange County District Attorneys Office communicated with either of you regarding the election. He asked that they answer separately. They Mayor and Mr. Stern answered No. Could you please notify the Hasidic Community regarding the deer crossing at this time of year.
 - **Doug Vogelsberg** – Where is the sign up list for the volunteer position? He would like to volunteer. The Mayor advised a little bit too late. Did the Mayor receive any letters regarding the volunteer positions. Trustee Feldman advised that the attorney clarified this issue. Why do the Village volunteers have village emails?
 - **Bonnie Rum** – At the last meeting I submitted a bunch of questions that she hasn't gotten any response to. According to the Commissioner of Human Resources, these positions are not acceptable, even voluntary. She doesn't know what the attorney found out, but it is not what the commission said to her and she spoke with him directly. The fact that they are illegal, means that

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they cannot be going into various liaison meetings with, for example the supervisor of the Town, because they are not legal positions. They can enter as citizens but not with the Mayor and that is not the only committees they have been assigned to and in some cases, they are the only person assigned. If you have a voluntary situation you need to make it public and cannot do it in the back room. What does undertaking mean from Resolution 33 of re-org meeting. Attorney Ugell explained that it authorizes the village members to act in their capacity to undertake obligation on behalf of the village capital projects, contracts and other items. It a standard boiler plate provision that any government would typically have.

- **Scott Morrice** – Who from the village went to the meeting with Senator Skoufis and Assemblyman Schmitt? The Mayor advised himself, Attorney Ugell, Volunteers Joel Stern and Isaac Ekstein. Trustee Ekstein advised that Joel and Isaac arranged the meeting and the meeting will hopefully only bring good things for all of us such as water, infrastructure and a light at Mountain Road.
- **William Finney** - Were any or all of the Trustees asked to go to this meeting. Trustee Feldman advised that you are not allowed to have a quorum. Attorney Ugel advised its called the Sunshine Law.
- **Sonia Ayala** – For future meetings, you can have three people. You should bring one of your trustee.
- **Joseph Rosenfeld** – Thank you for fixing the leak on Houston Avenue, he is awaiting the pavement to be fixed.
- **Pete Castellano** – 31 Merriewold Lane South was demolished, what is next? Speeding is an issue on Merriewold Lane South. The Mayor had a meeting with the Police Chief and plans to have more in the near future.

➤ **Business**

- Resolution No. (68) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Village Clerk to submit a list of all delinquent village water and sewer charges, rents, fees, assessments and the like to the County of Orange for re-levying on the next fiscal year’s real property tax bill. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (69) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Blooming Grove for street sweeping/sweeper services. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (70) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Blooming Grove for capital road work and water main services. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (71) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Blooming Grove for central garage vehicle repairs and services. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (72) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Blooming Grove

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for building inspection services. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*

- Resolution No. (73) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Blooming Grove for temporary reconstruction of Lone Oak Circle necessitated by the Merriewold Well Improvement Project. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (74) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting a Standard Work Day. *Motion to accept by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*
- Resolution No. (75) – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting the Water, Sewer, and General Fund annual budget for the Village’s 2021 Fiscal Year. *Motion to accept by Deputy Mayor Weiss, seconded by Trustee Ross, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.*

➤ **Abstract**

- Motion to adopt the Abstract by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort, 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.

➤ **Mayor and Trustee Comments**

- Trustee Ross would like all, on both sides, to be more civil.

➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the meeting at 8:40 p.m. by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee Belfort. 5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Belfort, Trustee Feldman, and Trustee Ross.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Village Clerk