

Special Meeting
Of the Town Board of the Town of Cuba
Announcement of Special Election for Cuba Joint Fire District

Held at 5 Bull Street, Cuba, NY 14727

Present:

Supervisor: Barbara Deming

Council Persons: Robert Carney, Lynnford Sweet, Joseph Miller, Jeffrey Dahill

Also Present: Nancy Orcutt, Town Clerk

Supervisor Deming called the meeting to order at 6:30PM with the Pledge of Allegiance. She then announced to the large number of members in attendance that the purpose of the meeting is to set the agenda, date, and pass the resolution to hold the Public Referendum for the formation of the Cuba Joint Fire District. Deming then turned the meeting over to Nancy Orcutt, Town Clerk, to explain the proceedings. Orcutt explained that the Public Hearing held on November 21, 2011 led to the majority agreement of the Town and Village Boards to pass a Resolution forming a Joint Fire District. This resolution was subject to a permissive referendum. This means that if a petition circulates and receives enough signatures, (the number is determined by law) and is turned in within a certain period, the decision would go to a public vote. This is exactly what happened. The Town will hold a public vote scheduled for Thursday, March 1, 2012 at Town Hall, 5 Bull Street, Cuba from 1PM until 8PM. The Town Board has determined that the Town and Village registered voters will all be able to vote. Absentee ballots will be available early next week.

There was a period of question and answer with some very good points brought up. Lee James asked if anyone has researched that if there were no volunteer department, what the cost would be to the Town to provide fire protection. Deming responded, "I don't think so." Judy Zayac stated no one did the research because the decision to make the department a district was never an open and public issue. The issue was presented to the Town and Village Boards for a decision. It was never given proper publicity.

James then enlightened the attendees of the meeting that if one or two pieces of equipment were to fall out of service, or the number of volunteers dropped below a specific number, then the business owners and homeowners insurance rates could be in jeopardy. Those who reside outside of the village could no longer be protected or semi-protected. You would be self-protected. She asked that consideration be given to the Town's two largest employers, Stauffer's and Empire Cheese, when making our decision. The volunteers are trying to provide quality service as they have in the past. Without a district, it is becoming harder to do so.

Zayac pointed out that based on what the village and Town now budget for the department, the budget under the District is a 49% increase. David Hardman stated some facts in defense of the District. He explained how the District could set up reserve accounts for replacing equipment, as it becomes necessary. With the 2% Tax Cap it is now even harder for the Village and Town to supply these large expenditures. The cost of gear and equipment is rising, grants are fewer and harder to secure. The District formation and tax is a means of preserving the ability to continue providing quality service for this community and keeping it protected. Much of the gear on hand was purchased with grants in the past. The District would continue to apply for these grants to help keep costs down as much as possible. It would also continue fund raisers.

Lynn Sweet, Board Member, had a few comments on the situation. He asked that we not think about the money as opposed to what this means to our community. Our firefighters

are dedicated, responding to disasters all times of the day and night without receiving a dime. These dollars are going toward their equipment and going to keep them available to provide the services they do so well. It is not going into a black hole, it is not being wasted. It is going to keep our firemen and our community safe.

Tab Loftis reminded everyone of the two open houses the department will have at the Fire Hall on Thursday, February 23 at 7PM and Saturday, February 25 at 10AM. All are welcome and encouraged to come see the facility and ask questions.

Deming asked to be able to continue with the meeting, as there is business that needs to be conducted. She also encouraged everyone to attend the open houses and continue this discussion.

The Town Clerk then read the resolution for consideration by the board. The Resolution was introduced by Sweet, and seconded by Carney. The Inspectors appointed on a volunteer basis are Barbara Deming, Town representative, Lois Lester, Village representative, and David Hardman, Fire Department representative. The Tellers appointed on a volunteer basis are Joseph Miller, Town representative, David Crowley, Village representative, and Tab Loftis, Fire Department representative. The vote to pass the Resolution was unanimous, 5 ayes and 0 noes. The Supervisor declared the Resolution adopted and directed the Clerk to proceed with the preparations for the Special Election.

Next Carney made the motion to send out absentee ballots to all those listed on the permanent list provided by the Board of Elections. Miller seconded it all in favor, motion carried

At 7:45PM Carney motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel, seconded by Sweet. All in favor, motion passed.

At 8PM the Special Meeting reconvened where Carney motioned to appoint David Pullen as Attorney for the Town. Deming second, Sweet and Dahill voted aye and Miller abstained.

Carney motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:04PM, seconded by Sweet, all in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy A. Orcutt
Town Clerk
Town of Cuba