

# **TOWN OF KIRKWOOD WORK SESSION**

**August 6, 2024**

Present: Supervisor Lewis Grubham  
Councilmember William Diffendorf, Jr.  
Councilmember Katie Legg  
Councilmember Sandy Wasson  
Councilmember Robert Weingartner

Also Present: Robert McKertich, Attorney  
Kelley Diffendorf, Town Clerk  
Duane Travis, Zoning Board Chairman  
Karen Ferguson, Historian

Absent: John A. Finch Jr., Commissioner of Public Works

## **1. Discussion – Town Court.**

Josh Shapiro, Special Counsel for Town and Village Courts of the 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, spoke to the Board about the current staffing issues with court clerks in the state. He briefly explained what a court clerk does and the importance of their job. He pointed out there is a staffing crisis at this time and with this crisis clerk's salaries have exploded since 2020. He noted that the Town of Dickinson and Vestal have recently started paying their fulltime court clerks \$60,000 annually. Mr. Shapiro also referenced a State salary schedule he handed to the Board stating the court assistants start at \$56,000 annually. He claimed it is hard to fill these positions and even harder to replace an experienced court clerk if you lose them. Mr. Shapiro explained the Kirkwood Court has excellent records, it is being run phenomenally. He recommended that keeping the salaries up to par with other municipalities will help keep the current staff from leaving. Mr. Shapiro acknowledged the other towns mentioned were working 35-hour work weeks as far as he knew, while the state jobs were 40 hours per week.

Justice Michael Mucci also spoke to the Board about the current salary issue and his concern of losing his two experienced court clerks. Justice Mucci is proposing a salary increase for each of his court clerks, which includes one fulltime position and one part-time position. He explained there is money in the budget for a third position, a second part-time clerk, instead of hiring that position he

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recommended using that budgeted money to increase the salary of his current clerks. He said they have a great team and the clerks know what they are doing. He is concerned he is going to lose one or both of them. The Town of Dickinson raised the bar on everyone. Justice Mucci continued and stated that Kirkwood is one of the top four courts in the county and is a very busy court. He listed all of Paula Hashem's reports and duties and commented that she is more like a legal assistant.

Supervisor Grubham explained that all of the information would be taken into consideration.

- 2. Discussion – Resolution scheduling a Grievance Day Hearing on the 2025 Unit Assessments for September 3, 2024 at 6 PM. (LCG)**
- 3. Discussion – Resolution authorizing Karen Ferguson to attend the APHNYS 2024 Annual Conference, September 16-18, 2024, at the Danfords Hotel Marina & Spa at a cost of \$325 for the conference fee and \$537 for the hotel, with all reasonable expenses paid. (LCG)**

Karen Ferguson mentioned the conference is in Long Island therefore the costs are a little bit more this year.

- 4. Discussion – Resolution appointing Chad Moran as Dog Control Officer PT Provisional, effective August 7, 2024, at a salary of \$14,000 per year, pro-rated for the remainder of 2024. (LCG)**

Councilmember Diffendorf reported the Town had received over 20 applications for Dog Control Officer. Chad Moran's application came in at the end, after it was decided that he could do his current job as Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) and also Dog Control Officer (DCO), which was a civil service question.

Therefore, since it was decided at the last meeting by the Board to look for a new DCO, Councilmember Diffendorf wanted to be sure the Board discussed this before moving forward. To be sure the Board was ok with the jobs being done in combination with each other, or if they should be kept separate.

Councilmember Weingartner explained his thoughts on the amount of money the Town would be saving by not buying an additional vehicle. The CEO is always

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around town, he sees things, knows people, has good relationships with people, and has helped out other DCOs. It's a good idea and the jobs fit together.

Councilmember Legg agreed it was a good idea and has witnessed Chad Moran in action helping two dogs already. He has a relationship with many people in the town and the court. He doesn't let people get to him, he'll get the job done. Councilmember Wasson agreed.

Councilmember Legg wanted to be sure Chad Moran was able to get his CEO job done and not have the DCO job interfere.

**5. Discussion – Resolution Confirming the Designation of Hays Avenue in accordance with Town Law §64(9), in accordance with the attached resolution. (LCG)**

Supervisor Grubham explained there was some confusion over the spelling of Hays Avenue. After extensive research, Historian Karen Ferguson was able to determine the correct spelling is Hays.

**6. Discussion – Resolution authorizing the 2024 Town of Kirkwood Midyear Budget Adjustments, in accordance with the attached Budget Adjustment Sheet. (LCG)**

Councilmember Legg questioned the line item, building of river park pavilion, it was noted it was the first one that was built.

**7. Discussion – Resolution, on the recommendation and approval of the Code Enforcement Officer, pursuant to section 304.3 of the Mobile Home – Trailer Ordinance, authorizing the Town Clerk to issue a license for the following mobile home – trailer park, such license will be for the year 2024:**

**Kirkwood Parksites, LLC,  
1794 NY Route 11, Kirkwood, NY 13795  
Owner: Gary Johnson (LCG)**

Supervisor Grubham noted many issues have been taken care of at this mobile home park and they can now be licensed.

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- 8. Discussion – Resolution authorizing the Supervisor to enter into an agreement with Broome County to accept the \$28,000 grant for the Valley Park Playground, in accordance with the attached agreement. (LCG)**

Supervisor Grubham explained there are issues with the equipment at Valley Park. The swings are the only things that are ok at this point. Supervisor Grubham applied for a grant to help replace some of the playground equipment and the County awarded the Town \$28,000. He is expecting the total cost to be around \$33,000 but will get that finalized soon.

- 9. Discussion – Resolution ratifying a resolution hiring Steven Paugh as Laborer to work in the Parks Department, effective July 5, 2024 through September 30, 2024, at a rate of pay of \$16 per hour. (JAF)**
- 10. Discussion – Sewer station on Industrial Park Drive, Penske, remove and replace check valve. (JAF)**
- 11. Audit of Claims.**