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Border issue revealed at Sherman meeting

By **DAVID PRENATT**

editorial@westfieldrepublican.com

SHERMAN — At their regular meeting on Jan. 11, Village Board members passed a resolution to authorize Mayor Colleen Meeder to engage the services of White Land Surveying to provide a legal description and map of the incorporated village limits.

The legal description and map are to be done for an amount not to exceed \$20,000, board members agreed, and are to be consistent with the existing village of Sherman tax roll and the 1908 Village of Sherman map, to the extent that it is reasonably practicable.

Meeder explained that this measure is necessary "to correct the error of the Chautauqua Office of Real Property Tax which altered the village municipal boundary without the village's acceptance or approval."

Meeder explained that she and village attorney had a meeting at the Chautauqua County Tax Office in August of 2018 and the

attorney expressed that the village would not accept the county's proposed changes to the municipal boundary map because there is evidence of an updated map from 1908.

In new business, trustees approved several resolutions pertaining to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project. "The change orders are required to extend the completion date by 99 days due to shipping and manufacturing delays," Meeder said. "The remaining major equipment is expected to arrive on site early this year, and start-up of the plant is anticipated to occur in late February."

Change orders were approved for the general contractor, electrical contractor and the mechanical contractor, moving the substantial completion date to May 26 and the final completion date to June 30. "There will be no change in scope and no change in contract prices," Meeder said.

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Trustees also approved the scheduling of a joint public hearing to be held with the Town of Sherman on Feb. 2, at 6 p.m. at the Stanley Hose Co. The purpose of the public hearing and joint meeting is to review the petition to annex territory in the Town of Sherman to the Village of Sherman, Meeder said.

In another matter, Mike Greiner of Bemus Point addressed the board regarding a notice he received about the Vacancy Law registration requirement, which included a \$750 fee.

Greiner received this notice in January of 2022 and paid the fee with the June, 2022 taxes. He is now requesting that the fee be refunded so he can donate it to the Fire Department, which he believes to be a better use of his money than the

Village General Fund. Meeder explained that the Village General Fund supports the Code Department.

The property for which the Greiner's received notice a year ago belonged to Mike Greiner's aunt. The Greiner's have explained the complications of the estate, Meeder said, noting that the aunt passed away in June of 2021.

"I believe the Greiner family took the notice as a personal affront," Meeder said. "The personal offense they took to the Vacancy Law Notice was greater than that of the \$750 fee."

Meeder responded by explaining that the enforcement of the law is not personal and it does not make exceptions for life circumstances. She went on to explain, in detail, what constitutes a

vacant dwelling, noting that the criteria is "black and white," not personal.

Meeder emphasized that the vacancy registration fee is meant to be a deterrent. "I believe this to be the most important of adopted laws for the stability and sustainability efforts of maintaining three multimillion-dollar utility services," she said.

Meeder further explained that public participation at a board meeting is a privilege, not a right. "Typically, a specified time period is allotted to members of the public to speak, like 2 minutes each," Meeder said. "Board members are not required to respond, at all."

Meeder also stressed to Greiner that neither the Code Officer nor the board can arbitrarily suspend the law, or make concessions because of family histo-

ry or service to the Village". The Code Officer must remain objective and consistent in following the same procedure regardless of whether he is personally familiar or not at all familiar with a property owner," she said.

Meeder addressed several more of Greiner's comments, which regarded a property on West Main Street which, although not vacant, he believes to be in a worse situation and the fact that water and sewer base charges must be paid for vacant properties.

Meeder said she can relate to Greiner's situation regarding his aunt's property. However, before he makes accusations and erroneous statements, Greiner should educate himself about the law and the purpose and responsibility of the Village of Sherman in its service to the community.