



Mayor
Brian Pugh

Trustees
Ann Gallelli
Sherry Horowitz
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Len Simon

Village Manager
Bryan T. Healy

Treasurer
Daniel Tucker

Village Clerk
Pauline DiSanto

To: Mayor & Board of Trustees
From: Bryan T. Healy, Village Manager
Date: December 31, 2021
Re: Abolition of Village Justice Court

In advance of the 2022-2023 Village Budget preparations and the 2022 General Election, I have begun investigating the procedures and repercussions of abolishing our Village Justice Court.

As you are all well aware, the Village has suffered significant revenue losses since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. With the realization that some reduction in parking at the Croton-Harmon Train Station may be permanent, it has become a priority of mine to develop various ways to reduce expenses and increase revenues so that Village taxpayers are not overburdened. Abolition of the justice court is one such proposal.

In the case of a Village having no justice court, under the state law, the town in which the Village is located assumes all justice court matters in relation to the Village. In our case, the Town of Cortlandt would assume these court matters. It is important to note that the Village has full power to make this decision; permission from the town is not required. With regards to court fees, the town would be entitled to keep fines issued for Vehicle & Traffic Law violations (such as speeding) as well as any fines from criminal offenses (misdemeanors, felonies, etc.). The Village would be entitled to keep fines arising from any Village ordinance violations (such as zoning violations), dog control violations, parking tickets and the state handicapped parking ticket surcharge.

With regards to specific numbers, the Village Justice Court personnel expenses totaled \$339,545 in the current fiscal year. An additional \$23,725 was spent on supplies and contractual services such as the stenographer and interpreter. The Village would no longer have these expenses if the court was abolished. In terms of revenue, the justice court earned \$294,688 in 2019 (using the revenue figures from the last pre-pandemic year). Based on the breakdown explained in the previous paragraph, the Village would be entitled to keep \$209,360 of that revenue (99% of which came from parking tickets).

New York State Village Law Section 3-301(2) details the process which would need to be undertaken if the Village Board ultimately chooses to abolish the court. Under the law, the Board would need to adopt a resolution, subject to permissive referendum, to abolish the court. The resolution can only take effect upon the expiration of the Village Justice's current term of office, which ends December 31, 2022.

I look forward to continuing this discussion with the Village Board, officials of the justice court and the Town of Cortlandt. Please let me know if you have any questions.