

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
PUBLIC HEARING
Monday
August 23, 2021
8:01 P.M.**

➤ **Call to order**

- Mayor Kalaj called to order the Public Hearing regarding extending the terms of Mayor and Trustees from two (2) year terms to four (4) year terms at 8:01 p.m. on August 23, 2021 at the South Blooming Grove located at 811 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
- Yitzchok Feldman – Trustee
- Asher Guttman – Trustee
- Zalmon Rosner - Trustee
- Daniel Kraushaar, Esq. – Village Attorney
- Kerry Dougherty – Village Clerk
- Joel Stern – Confidential Assistant

➤ **Absent**

- Scott B. Ugell, Esq. – Village Attorney
- Alfred Fusco, Village Engineer
- Isaac Ekstein – Legislative Aide

➤ **Mayor's Comments:**

- The Mayor asked Confidential Assistant Joel Stern to make a statement. Mr. Stern stated that the public hearing is to revise the election term, from a two-year term to a four-year term. The reason for doing this is two-fold; 1. We would like to cut costs, the elections are associated with additional costs and additional work of the village. 2. It gives the village more time to actually focus on governing versus campaigning and elections. There are a lot of things that aren't processed and stuff that needs to get done, whether it is our water system, moving towards ultimately being able to remove the water restrictions, same goes for our sewer problems and much, much more. Giving the Village Board, the trustees and the Mayor ample time to actually focus on problems in this village instead of maintaining elections, will allow them to spend much more time on extra issues that elections can't obtain.

➤ **Public Comments**

- Sue Anne Vogelsberg, she believes that a two-year term is in the best interest of the village for the following reasons: a two-year term is more responsive to changes; with the village's addition of two employee positions, Legislative Aide and Confidential Assistant, there is more shared responsibility and a decrease workload among the four trustees which she believes decreases the need to stay in the term longer.
-the cost of elections was mentioned, but that is an expected part of government in a democracy. Trustee Elections would still need to be held yearly on a staggered basis as its currently done to

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- provide continuity to the residents. Our village government has so far funded two payments totaling \$900.00 to our new position of grant writer. Our village government is currently financing \$8,000 over budget for our new village vehicle. Our village government is currently paying both Joel Stern and Isaac Ekstein, \$300.00 each per week, which is more money than what the elected trustees receive. She doesn't think expense is an issue here. Those three examples were not included in part of the 2021 budget and yet funds were found. I believe our village government can and will find the funds to conduct our elections annually. These reasons to change from a two (2) year to a four (4) year trustee position is no warranted, at this time.
- Sonia Ayala – She sees that the resolution is going to be voted on by the board this evening. For change of terms, you have to hold a permissive referendum, you have to adopt a local law and if you want to have the terms start in March of 2022, you would have to hold an election this year no earlier than November 23, 2021. You need to work with the Orange County Board of Elections for assistance with this election. She went to the local government handbook, and it says "...in practice, matters subject to permissive referenda, a referenda on petition are seldom brought to referenda unless they become the subject of particular local controversy. Matters subject to referenda in which elections are included, increases in terms of local offices from 2 to 4 years..." There are eight other reasons. She wanted to make sure that the board does the right thing. This is something that you want to do, leave it up to the voters for that. Thank you.
 - Simon Gelb – He believes that if you have the right people sitting on the boards and they are using their power to help people, they should stay more than four (4) years. It all is decided by the people. If they are helping all the people, four (4) years is better than two (2) years.
 - Ken Morrice – If the right people are on the board, they will be elected every two years. Terms should not be extended just because people want to stay in office. If you are the right person to be in office and the voters agree, you will be elected every two years. Extending terms is not always good.
 - Attorney Kraushaar advised that typically, public comment is listed for things that aren't on the agenda.
 - Trustee Feldman made a motion to open the public hearing and Trustee Guttman seconded, 5 Ayes. All previous comments will be added to this public hearing.
 - Attorney Kraushaar advised it is subject to permissive referenda. There are two types of referenda in New York State. One is a permissive referenda, the other is called a mandatory referenda. Mandatory referendums are no matter what you have to have a vote of the public at the next election. Permissive referendum requires a signature and then it would be either on a special election or depending on timing it could be at the next general elections. It would probably involve a separate special election depending on time. A local law has to be filed like all local laws with the NYS Secretary of State's Office after it has been adopted.

➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the public hearing at 8:16 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Weiss, seconded by Trustee Feldman., 5 Ayes, *Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Rosner and Trustee Guttman.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Village Clerk