The Westfield Republican

"First Republican Newspaper Printed in U. S. A."

Also serving the communities of Chautauqua and Mayville since 1856

Volume 194, Number 16 THURSDAY, October 15, 2026 Westfield, New York

Meeting Outlines Stanley Hose Co., Sherman Relationship

By DAVID PRENATT
editorial@westfieldrepublican.com

Sherman area residents filled the Stanley Hose Company Fire Hall on Sept. 30 to hear an explanation of how, according to New York state law, the fire company is recognized as being under the umbrella of the municipality.

Mayor Colleen Meeder explained to those present that in May the village was made aware that they had to conform to state law regarding the political alignment for fire departments.

"There is an 80-year-old belief that the Stanley Hose Co. runs the fire department. The reality is that the Stanley Hose Co. supports the fire department," Meeder said. "The fire company is a not-for-profit corporation under the political subdivision, the village and its volunteer fire department."

Meeder said that there are five political subdivisions which must all follow the same state laws. The subdivisions are county, city, village, town and Fire District. "Within a fire department, you have fire companies - you can have five companies, you can have 20 companies in your fire department. We have one," she added.

Meeder explained in May, she was informed that the village needed to realign the structural and strategical reporting element of the fire department. She emphasized the Stanley Hose Co. is its own legally separate entity, but their financial reports must be "blended" into the village budget.

"Stanley Hose Co. completely controls its members. We have no access, no control over assets," she said. "The accounting is going to be very messy because currently the two have different fiscal year periods. We are still trying to figure out how to correct the last three years with our auditors."

Meeder emphasized the village oversees the fire company at an "arm's length." She offered the example of a 16-year-old out driving the parents' car. "He is independent and he's on his own, but, at the end of the day, the parents are responsible for him," she said.

Meeder said there were four reasons behind the state's mandates: state law that governs all fire departments; the protection of the fire department; risk of liability exposure; and financial reporting compliance.

There are several activities of the fire company which now must be approved by the Village Board of Trustees, including confirmation of all members and ratification of the fire chief and officers, fund raisers, blending budgets and approval of contracts, Meeder said, while having insurance covering all activities. "The fire company's existence is inextricably linked to the municipality. It is a component of the village," she said.

Meeder posed the question of how this will affect the Stanley Hose Co. "Not at all," she said. "Joel Fisher (Stanley Hose Co. Financial Secretary) and I will have a lot more work to do, but eventually it will become routine," she added.

Meeder stressed there would be no operational or financial changes to the Stanley Hose Co. "There is no question here about the excellence of the Stanley Hose Co.," she said. "I'm only a few months ahead of you in this . . . this is not the village; this is every fire company in the state."

Village of Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder explained about state-mandated structural changes regarding the fire department to a packed house.