

EDITORIAL

Lysander should control its meetings, not the media

The Jan. 5 Lysander Town Board meeting conjured flashbacks of the previous administration's shouting matches. After resident Georgia Gillespie spoke out about social media mudslinging, resident Fred Burtch exchanged words with Supervisor Joe Saraceni, Councilor Roman Diamond and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Falconer.

The result was an hour-long free-for-all of a public comment period, with a brief recess during which Supervisor Saraceni asked PAC-B videographer Jim Houghtaling to stop recording. To Mr. Houghtaling's credit, he refused, and the meeting will appear in full on PAC-B.

Supervisor Saraceni said he fully supports the rights of the press and was a journalism major at the University of Tennessee. While the *Messenger* was not asked to stop recording during the recess, we still find it disturbing that a public official would ask one of our media colleagues not to do his job. While Supervisor Saraceni reasoned that the barbs residents traded were not part of the town's official business, what goes on within town hall is certainly the public's business, no matter how ugly it gets.

More importantly, it did not have to get ugly. When Supervisor Saraceni and councilors Bob Ellis and Pete Moore took office in 2016, the town board expanded opportunities for public participation. Residents are now allowed to ask questions during work sessions, and there is no time limit for the public comment period during town board meetings. We applaud the town board for giving residents more avenues to speak their minds, but perhaps a little more regulation would go a long way.

While this is by no means the only solution, many municipalities place a limit on how long a resident may speak during the public comment period. The Baldwinsville Central School District Board of Education has a strict three-minute limit; a timer counts down and the microphone is silenced when the three minutes are over. Most other bodies with a time limit, such as the Cicero Town Board, are more flexible and will entertain longer comments, but the idea of a time limit exists so the municipality can spend a meeting conducting its business. Often, residents with specific concerns are asked to contact the municipality in writing so citizens' comments do not dominate the meeting. In no way do we advocate limiting public participation, but a gentle reminder to keep one's comments concise could be helpful in maintaining the flow of a public meeting.

Moreover, all constituents should be treated equally. We sympathize with the pain Ms. Falconer has suffered at the keyboards of anonymous Facebook critics, but no one should be given special attention, nor should any resident have their concerns continually brushed off. If Mr. Burtch is not allowed to direct his comments to a specific department head or town employee, then Ms. Falconer as a town employee should not be allowed to direct hers to a particular resident. If the town board answers resident Jim Stirushnik's specific questions during a meeting, then they should offer the same consideration to Mr. Burtch.

Residents also should act respectfully when they approach the microphone. They should not raise their voices or swear while addressing a public body, as Mr. Burtch did. They should respect the town board's time, and their neighbors' time, by addressing concerns about an individual issue or employee outside of town board meetings.

Supervisor Saraceni told Ms. Falconer, "You are a resident of the town of the Lysander. You have every right to make a comment. There's no prerequisite that you have to act a certain way." Perhaps there should be a prerequisite for acting a certain way, for both the town board and residents wishing to participate in the public comment period.

BALDWINVILLE HISTORY MYSTERY

Do you know anything about this picture?



Question: Do you know the location of this photo? The buildings in the background still exist; one of them in a different location. Why was it moved? What do you know about them?

If this train engine still existed, it would be impossible to put it in the location shown here. Do you know why?

Last week's answer: Last week's photo shows the stables of Chapman Bros. In December, 1891 the Grace Episcopal Church Auxiliary hosted a "Trades Carnival," a showcase of Baldwinsville businesses and organizations. Chapman Bros. participated in the event where they were hailed as "our new baggage men." Using horsepower and seasoned handlers (teamsters), the company moved everything from grain to people and buildings. While the man second from left in the photo is unknown, the others are identified as (left to right): Vosburg, Charles Chapman and Shorty Trowbridge.

Brothers Charles and Jerry Chapman were the principals. The business office was located in the Skinner Block office of Walter Carpenter at 9 E. Genesee St. The entire work operation was based on the southwest corner of lower Canton Street on the Seneca River. In addition to the stables, there were buildings and sheds to house equipment and assorted vehicles: wagons, buses and even a small tank wagon that was used to haul oil to local Standard Oil customers.

Calling themselves "The Hustling Transfer Company," Chapman ran frequent display ads in the *Gazette and Farmers' Journal*. No job was too small (they would sell and deliver one bale of hay), nor does it appear that any job was too large based upon the following news item printed in the *Gazette*, June 24, 1897:

"Recently the Syracuse dailies contained an item to the effect that the new safe for the Onondaga Savings Bank was moved with great difficulty, owing to the inability of those in charge of the work to find a truck strong enough. Finally one was secured from out of town, but was barely equal to the strain of nineteen tons weight. When Syracusans want any of the necessary adjuncts for business or pleasure they should remember that Baldwinsville is on the map. Chapman & Co., our transfer agents, have just completed a truck which is guaranteed to carry twenty-five tons. The truck complete weighs of itself lacking fifty pounds of two tons. The axel trees are of steel four inches square, and were made by Morris Machine Works. The wood work was done by that skilled workman, E. A. Woods, while J. M. Fugett had charge of the iron work. The tires are six inches wide. Mr. Chapman has drawn five tons on this wagon up the incline from Morris Machine Works with one team. If Syracusans want houses or other heavy weights moved they should address Chapman & Co., Baldwinsville, NY."



Loads were as diverse as transporting men to lay pipe for Syracuse Heat & Power Co. to drawing hook and ladder trucks for the village at times of fire. The village paid one dollar for each one of the fire assist calls.

Skilled teamsters were needed to use the equipment effectively and safely. Given the apparently high volume of work handled by Chapman, the newspaper records relatively few accidents or incidents. However, injury to one of the men seen in the photo was reported in some detail in the Oct. 15, 1896 issue of the *Gazette*: "James Trowbridge, who is employed by Chapman & Co., while drawing tobacco from the Tobin warehouse to the freight house Saturday morning was kicked by a horse. He was sitting on the front end of a platform wagon, when he hit the near horse with the end of the lines and as he did so the horse in play kicked and struck Mr. Trowbridge on the left knee, breaking off a piece of the knee pan and opening the cavity of the knee joint. Dr. Wasse attended him and it is feared that the patient will be confined to his home for some time. Mr. Trowbridge is a most faithful employee and will be missed by both his employers and the public."

Jerry Chapman sold his interest in the business in 1901 and the firm became formally known as Chapman & Co. Although the advent of the gasoline-powered engine brought the end of commercial horse-powered transport, its legacy continues today as the name "teamster" continues to identify those who handle and drive the loads.

Contact Editor Sarah Hall at editor@baldwinsvillemessenger.com or leave a message at 434-8889 ext. 310 with your guess by 5 p.m. Friday (**please leave the information in the message; we are not generally able to return calls regarding History Mystery responses**). If you are the first person to correctly identify an element in the photo, your name and guess will appear in next week's *Messenger*, along with another History Mystery feature. History Mystery is a joint project of the Museum at the Shacksboro Schoolhouse and the Baldwinsville Public Library.

LETTERS & ADVERTISING POLICIES

The *Baldwinsville Messenger* welcomes letters to the editor, and reserves the right to edit for space, clarification or to avoid obscenity, but ideas will not be altered. Letters should be legible and no more than 500 words long.

Letters used do not necessarily reflect the newspaper's opinions. Send letters to editor@baldwinsvillemessenger.com or *Baldwinsville Messenger*, 2501 James St., Suite 100, Syracuse, N.Y. 13206. Anonymous letters receive no consideration.

The *Baldwinsville Messenger* reserves the right to reject any advertising it does not deem appropriate. Refunds for errors and omissions in advertising are limited to the cost of the original ad.

Legal Notice deadline is Thursday at 5:00 p.m. for the next week's paper. For more information call 434-8889 x 303 or email legals@eaglenews.com.