

# On Thursday, The Relief Route Will Open At Last

The Potsdam Relief Route, under construction for the past two years, will be opened this Thursday and the related return to two-way traffic downtown will follow on Nov. 24, five days later, according to state Department of Transportation officials.

The Relief Route, a four-lane, limited-access highway incorporating a new bridge across the Racquette River, will be officially opened at a

ribbon cutting ceremony at 11 a.m. Nov. 19, according to Ray Powers, an engineer with the regional office of the DOT in Watertown.

Instituting the return to two-way traffic around the downtown "circle" will be done on a more "piecemeal" basis the following Tuesday, Powers said. It is expected that the two-way traffic pattern will be restored by the end of the day, he added.

He said the return to two-way traffic would be phased in by construction workers with flags, and hopefully, cooperation with local police. Workers will place traffic cones around the loop in the wee hours of Tuesday morning, he said, "and work our way around backwards," opening up one intersection at a time.

In fact, he said it was hoped that drivers would use the new Relief

Route bridge and avoid downtown traffic that day. "Frankly, we would urge people to avoid the loop next Tuesday," he said.

Opening the new road brings to a close a \$6 million-plus, two year construction project. The prime contractor has been handled by the Bouley Construction Co. Although the bid amount was \$5,000,000, Powers said the project has cost "slightly over" that

amount. "For all intents and purposes," he explained, "they came in on the money."

In addition to the efforts of the Bouley crews, 18 subcontractors had a hand in the construction of the road.

The road is being opened more than a month ahead of the contract's expiration date of Dec. 31.

Among the subcontractors was the firm Tuxill Building Movers, which

presided last summer over the move of the Potsdam Depot. The old sandstone railroad station was moved to avoid demolition after a local outcry arose. As part of the project, the depot is to be turned over to the Village of Potsdam and then sold to interested bidders. As of Monday, however, there was no word on when it would be turned over to the village, Powers said.

LAST WEEK'S WEATHER

	Hi	Lo	Pcp
Tues. 38	15	0	0
Wed. 41	27	.01	0
Thurs. 29	21	0	0
Fri. 45	23	0	0
Sat. 50	25	0	0
Sun. 47	34	0	0
Mon. 48	39	tr	0

# Courier Freeman

A PARK NEWSPAPER

Don Purcell recalls days in Haiti, page 11.

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## Crowd Airs Police Complaints At Stormy Norwood Village Meeting

BY HAL STOKES

NORWOOD — The Norwood Police Department took it on the chin Monday night as a sometimes-angry crowd of detractors complained to the village board about

"harassment" from the officers and demanded changes in the department.

The board, meeting in the Municipal Building for a regularly-scheduled session, heard complaints that ranged from selective enforcement of the law to allegations of officers drinking before reporting for duty.

Norwood's police chief and the only full-time member of the four-man force, James Lahey, refuted the charges. And he was defended by the village trustees.

But those who stalked from the board room before the meeting ended left the impression that the dispute was far from over and some questions lingering behind. Among them:

— The \$34,200-a-year police department is a duplication of service and should be dissolved; there may be a referendum drive to place that on the ballot in the spring.

— There is no written police policy.

— Why two of the part-time officers also hold full-time jobs in the village's Public Works Department.

— Why the officers take the village's only patrol car out of the village for lunch and coffee breaks.

— A lawsuit may be in the works over several arrests made at a local tavern, The Bullpen, on Nov. 7 and the subsequent investigation about a week later by village police and deputy sheriffs for Alcoholic Beverage Control Board violations at the bar.

Indeed, it appeared that the complaints may have been sparked by the happenings at The Bullpen. Gretchen LaShomb, whose brother-in-law Lynn owns the bar — he faces four charges following the Nov. 7 incident — told the board of "harassment of the people of this village by their own police force."

She said that police run computer checks on the license numbers of cars parked outside the bar. "Why call in the sheriff every time something happens at The Bullpen?" she asked.

Lahey denied the charges. In an interview later, Lahey said that the department is presently in a "transition period," moving toward tighter law enforcement and upgrading training.

One of his particular concerns, he said, is enforcement of laws for driving while intoxicated — enforcement that would lower the amount the village needs to borrow, thereby reducing the total cost of the filtration plant project, Claffey said, adding that the rates could go as high as \$4.50 or \$5.

Trustee Robert Burns agreed "in principle" with Claffey, but said he wanted more information on how high the increase should be.

Trustee Richard Murphy and Mayor James Pennock said that other

no bones about it, admitting that they have been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Chief Defends Department

And Lahey, while acknowledging that the Norwood department is "small," defended it and explained the present set-up. He is presently the only full-time officer and, as such, is considered the "chief." He holds a provisional appointment from the Civil Service Commission until he takes an examination for the post of police chief.

There are three part-time officers: Joseph Ramie, who used to be the police chief before resigning some time ago and who is employed by Norwood's Public Works Department; Danforth Peacock, who is also the head of the Public Works Department for Norwood; and Andy French, a new man on the force.

Lahey reviewed the qualifications of the personnel: he holds a four-year degree in criminal justice from Clarkson College and has attended the basic and intermediate police academies given by the Bureau for Municipal Police; he has attended various schools for radar and breathalyzer certification. Ramie, he said, has a two-year degree in criminal justice from Canton ATC and has attended the basic police academy and school for radar certification. Peacock, he said, will complete the basic police school in mid-December. French, with a two-year criminal justice degree from Canton ATC, has up to one year to obtain the police academy training, he said.

The department has just one police car; it is due to be replaced soon with a second-hand police car, a former State Police vehicle.

At present, there is no police dispatcher and Lahey acknowledged that some residents might have difficulty in getting a police officer when they want one. Lahey said that he could fill the position with trusted high school or college students at minimum wage, but he declared, "The village board refuses to give us a dispatcher."

As to who is responsible for the police department, Lahey said that the village mayor is "technically the head of the police department."

But Mayor Willard Smith, under fire from the crowd Monday night, said he did not want to get involved in police work. "I'm not a law enforcement officer; I don't have the training," he said, defending the department. "I stand behind our police department."

At that, one of the dissidents, Harry "Red" Adner, said he wanted to "impeach the mayor." Another, Glenn

Kuenzler, vowed that he would work to have the question of dissolving the police force on the ballot in the spring.

Yet another man simply stalked from the room muttering, "Why, this town stinks."



GRETCHEN LA SHOMB: Police "harassment"



JAMES LAHEY: Defends department

## Village To Hike Water, Sewer Rates

BY BETSY BAKER

When the smoke cleared last night it was back to square one — as originally proposed, water users in Potsdam will pay 20 percent more for water and sewer services — the water rate will be \$1.40 per 1,000 gallons as of Jan. 1, 1982, while the sewer rate will jump to \$1.10.

But it was getting there that posed the problems, as the trustees argued over whether to raise the rates little by little or all at once to finance the new \$5 million-plus water filtration plant.

As he had at a public hearing on the

proposed rate hikes, Trustee Paul Claffey argued that the 20 percent raise is too small, that rates should immediately be raised to \$3 per 1,000 gallons.

Raising the rates substantially now would lower the amount the village needs to borrow, thereby reducing the total cost of the filtration plant project, Claffey said, adding that the rates could go as high as \$4.50 or \$5.

Trustee Robert Burns agreed "in principle" with Claffey, but said he wanted more information on how high the increase should be.

Trustee Richard Murphy and Mayor James Pennock said that other

increases would be needed; Mayor Pennock said it would be better to wait until all the figures are in and raise the rates gradually rather than all at once.

Trustee Barbara Lenhart said she also favored a higher increase, and when the vote came, the motion to raise the rates from \$1.17 to \$1.40 failed, with only Murphy and Mayor Pennock voting approval.

But things have a way of going from bad to worse, as the trustees found when they tried to propose higher rates and instead, came up against several deadlines. Claffey suggested a new public hearing on Nov. 30 to propose raising the water rates to \$3 per 1,000 gallons. A vote on a local law changing the rates would then come in December.

But Village Administrator Sanford D. Dewey pointed out three factors: complete financial data from the firm handling marketing of the bonds to finance the filtration plant will not be received until midweek this week; the legal notice announcing a hearing must specify the rate increase proposed and that notice must be published ten days before a hearing; the copy of the proposed local law must be in the hands of the trustees ten days prior to their vote on it.

And Village Treasurer Mary Welch added that the village must borrow some \$4.5-\$5 million in December. To go to the bonding people, Mrs. Welch said, the village must show that it has taken some action to raise the rates. The appearance of indecision could hinder the village in its efforts to borrow money, Mrs. Welch said.

"You mean we've just thrown the baby out with the bath, Mary," Ms. Lenhart commented.

An amendment to consider a raise to \$2.34 on the 30th failed, the motion to hold a hearing on a raise to \$3 on the 30th failed, and the trustees went back to the original motion.

Mrs. Lenhart moved to reconsider the original motion, which passed with only Claffey voting "no."

Burns added his intent to propose a January 1982 public hearing on a proposed April 1982 rate increase, saying that raising the rates in three month increments might be preferable to six month increments.

Postmaster Named

The Village of Potsdam will have a new postmaster as of Nov. 28.

Patrick Conant, originally from Canton, and most recently the postmaster in Chittenango, N.Y., will become postmaster in Potsdam late this month, according to Robert Fay, officer in charge at the Post Office. Conant was formerly postmaster in Norfolk.

## Robar's Reopens Taxi Service; But Taxi 'Monopoly' May End

Robar's Taxi, which closed Nov. 4, was to reopen this morning (Tuesday) at 6 a.m., but the firm is likely to lose its exclusive "maxi-taxi" franchise within the village.

The village board of trustees voted last night to set a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 7 on a plan to repeal the 1980 local law which gave Robar's sole right to operate the multi-passenger destination-to-destination maxi-taxi van service within the village.

And the trustees set a second public hearing, at 7 p.m. Dec. 7, to approve the establishment of a multi-passenger taxi service within the village, without naming a sole operator.

After Robar's announced it would close Nov. 4, Leon LaForty, of LaForty's Bus Lines, Inc., met with village officials on his plan to provide local taxi service with two vans and a car. Under the present local law, LaForty could not operate a service here.

Frances Conrad, co-owner of Robar's, said Monday afternoon that the firm is re-opening because local people "want us back in business," and she said "a few people have given us donations." Until other phone lines are connected later this week, customers can reach Robar's at 265-9437.

Robar's will still be trying to repay students who paid in advance for round trip van rides to locations throughout the state last month.

In the aftermath of that long distance transportation scheme, which saw students stranded without rides back to Potsdam, Robar's fired the consultant, Robert Londraville, who apparently devised the plan. The firm said that financial losses, including efforts to repay the students, forced them out of business.

No charges have yet been filed in the matter, but Ms. Conrad said Monday that any decision on charges is still in the hands of the firm's attorney.

The State Department of Transportation is also investigating the long distance scheme; charges may be pending based on the result of that investigation. A DOT permit is required for a long distance transportation operation; Robar's did not have a permit in October.

## Police Chief Moves To Town

Village police chief Clinton Matott has moved into the village as of Monday (yesterday), according to Mayor James Pennock.

Moving into the village was a condition of Matott's employment as chief; appointed in October 1980, he requested a six month extension last April, saying that he was talking to contractors about a house.

The question of Matott's residency was raised last night at the village board meeting by Kathryn Del Guidice, a former village employee.

Mrs. Del Guidice said she had "objected strenuously" to the village's residency law at a public hearing held last summer on a plan to repeal it. She noted that several women employees were forced to move into the village because of the law, while other, male employees received exemptions.

Matott is not subject to the residency law, but his employment was dependent on moving into the village.



FINISHING TOUCHES — Construction workers finish up painting in preparation to the Nov. 19 opening of the Relief Route. (Bill Short photo)

## Food Co-Op Eyes New Location; Would Share Space With Recyclers

The Potsdam Consumer Co-op may soon have a new location — an old coal warehouse off Willow Street that it would share with North Country Recycling and Resource Recovery.

That move was outlined to members of the Co-op, a food-buying cooperative whose 1,000 members are also owners, at the annual membership meeting in the Methodist Church Saturday night.

According to reports given by the Co-op's board of directors, the organization has acquired a purchase option on a warehouse belonging to the Potsdam Feed and Coal business on Willow Street.

The group will need to raise \$80,000 for the move and to renovate the old warehouse to shopping space. It is projected that \$20,000 would come from increased membership dues,

\$20,000 could come from membership loans, and the remaining \$40,000 would be loaned by the National Co-op Bank for six years at 16 percent interest.

Sharing the storefront would be North Country Recycling and Resource Recovery, the brainchild of former St. Lawrence County Planner Richard Grover. Grover told the Co-op members Saturday that he hopes to be in the new location soon.

## Tax Increase Okayed By Town

Property owners in the Town of Potsdam can look for their town taxes to increase about \$6 to \$7 per thousand next year, following the town board's passage of a \$479,406 budget for 1982.

The \$50,000 cost of the warehouse, owned by Elmer Gordaniers of Potsdam Feed and Coal, would be split equally by the Co-op and NCRRR.

Grover's group was recently stymied by the Potsdam Town Board after trying to reach a contract with them for space at the town's landfill. Negotiations ended in a stalemate this fall.

The budget passed at last Tuesday night's board meeting, calls for some \$164,678 to be raised in taxes to finance the general fund portion. The highway budget will be up slightly, from \$351,047.98 this year to \$369,647.70. Taxpayers will have to come up with \$101,930.15 to finance highway costs.