

## Letter from the Mayor:

Well, 2020 is in the rear view, and another election year is upon us. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be your Mayor for the last eight years. In the Fall of 1995, Mayor Carl Otto came to my home to ask if I would be interested in the position of Deputy Village Clerk. I was a stay-at-home mom at the time, working off and on for the school district as a sub. We discussed the duties of the position and I felt this was a great opportunity to stay current with my business skills while raising my family. And a little extra money is always welcome. So, I reluctantly informed him that I was pregnant, thinking this news may prompt him to renege his offer. "So? he said, does this mean you do not want the position?" and congratulations!" I accepted his appointment and now, after 26 combined years of service in various capacities in my Village government, I find myself at a crossroads.

As a resident of the Village of Delanson we hold the key to the future of our community. We have the unique opportunity to run for a local government office on our own terms and only Village residents may vote. Sadly, I believe life has become so busy that folks just don't stop to think about how we got here. More importantly, who got us here.

Our small independent government has been maintained for nearly 100 years by our neighbors and families, past and present. Folks who cared enough to provide service to our community while creating a sustainable way of life within our boundaries. They worked full-time jobs, had careers, raised families, and provided what time they could in support of the Village.

All of us — whether we are elected officials, civic leaders, professional planners, activists and practitioners, or simply good neighbors — *all* of us can do better at acknowledging the ripple effect our decisions (large or small) have on our family, friends and community, both now and into the future. The decisions we make should both reflect and reinforce the love we have for our community.

I do not know if I will be your Mayor for another 4-year term. Perhaps now is the time to consider fresh ideas and new perspectives as they are essential components of a progressive local government. Although 2020 changed my life in unimaginable ways, there is no place I'd rather live than right here in the Village of Delanson. I hope I am not the only one who feels that way. So, just in case you wonder what it's all about, I have provided answers to some questions I've been asked over the years.

### **Q: How do you become Mayor or Trustee?**

**A:** You simply ask a few neighbors to sign your Independent Nominating Petition, hand it in and you are on the ballot! **This petition is time sensitive** and must either be mailed in or dropped off to the Village Clerk or the Schenectady County Board of Elections.

### **Q: What are the qualifications?**

**A:** A candidate must be at least 18 years old, a village resident and a registered voter. It helps if you love your community and wish to become a positive part of what makes it great! A good candidate is interested in the future, responsible growth of our community.

### **Q: What type of experience do I need?**

**A:** Past officials have been lawyers, engineers, master plumbers, surveyors, business owners, tax and finance, housewives, bartenders...etc. If you have a particular skill set, the desire to learn and the ability to communicate and troubleshoot situations with integrity and respect, then you'll do great! We work together as a team. We don't always get it right, but we always give situations our good faith effort and decide based on what is best for the residents.

### **Q: What are the hours?**

**A:** Other than monthly board meetings, there are no structured hours. You work on your schedule, from your home or the office, whichever is more convenient for you. Sometimes you will work 5 hours a week, sometimes you may work more. Sometimes less. You decide! Well, sometimes the state, county and life decide for you, but mostly you make the service to your community conform to your schedule and what you can contribute.

**Q: It works, so why fix it?**

**A:** Because residents for generations have benefitted from the knowledge and expertise of past members and hopefully, we can continue that path. It is an ever-changing world out there. As Board members, we have the power to make the world within our boundaries better and we have the obligation to future generations to make sure we are good stewards of our community.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”* I did not write that, Margaret did, but I believe it.

**Q: What if there are no candidates?**

**A:** The effectiveness of our government is directly related to the interest, participation, and commitment of our Village residents. When no one has interest in holding office, it begs the question, why have a local government if no one wants to participate? We risk losing our independence, and so much more.

**Q: What happens to the Village if no one participates?**

**A:** The Village Government would be dissolved. The Village of Delanson would cease to exist...history! The Town of Duanesburg will absorb and control all Village property including the water distribution system and the fire department. The cost of trash collection would be the property owner's responsibility. A water and fire district would be created, and a separate tax for each would be assessed on residents. The process of dissolution could take years, will be very costly and we lose the ability to decide what is good for our community and our family's future.

As we move into 2021, I encourage the Village Board to seek guidance on the process of dissolution of the Village of Delanson. I hope the outcome of these discussions will be to remain the proud independent community we have always been, but with a more enlightened focus on our future.

Honorably yours,  
Mayor Gayle Gifford

Independent Nominating petitions are available now and are time sensitive. Please contact the Village Clerk to obtain one or contact the Schenectady County Board of Elections.

For an absentee ballot visit [Delanson.net](http://Delanson.net) or call the Village Clerk or Schenectady County Board of Elections.

Currently voting will be in person with CDC guidance on physical separation and mask wearing in place. Voting will take place at the Village of Delanson Firehouse from 12pm – 9pm.

DELANSON  
VILLAGE GENERAL ELECTION  
March 16, 2021

ONE MAYOR & ONE TRUSTEE 4 YEAR TERM