

Slate Valley Center staff wear green on World Mental Health Day

Keeping in mind of those around the world who are living with a particular form of mental illness, the staff at Slate Valley Center in Granville wore green for World Mental Health Day on Oct. 10.

The day was designed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health.

There are many people globally who suffer from the many types of mental illnesses and the awareness of this day is so important for people globally. This is also the day that researchers in this area present their latest findings in order to find a cure for these types of illnesses, according to Slate Valley Center.

"We are keeping in mind for those throughout Washington County, New York state and throughout the world who suffer from mental illness," said Slate Valley Center Recreation Director Bailey Greenough. "They could be someone in your family, a friend or neighbor, so we have to be there for them and hope there is a cure for their condition somewhere on the horizon."

Paperwork glitches stymie board

By EJ Conzola II

A mistake in printing a proposed local law granting volunteer firefighters a 10% exemption on their town property taxes nearly derailed a vote on the proposal – despite all five members of the Town Board agreeing they wanted the measure to be approved.

Supervisor Paul Ferguson erroneously printed copies of legislation granting the tax break approved by the Washington County Board of Supervisors that he distributed to the Town Board prior to a vote on the proposal at the board's Oct. 9 meeting. The town law needed to implement the tax break "mirrored" the law already approved by Washington County; the only difference being the words "Washington County" instead of "Town of Dresden," Ferguson said.

But that difference prompted other town officials to balk at approving the law, despite Ferguson's assurance that he would correct the municipal reference before submitting the law to the state.

"You're asking your board to pass something that's not even before our town," Town Clerk Marci Wilbur complained.

Ferguson reiterated that the town law and the county law are identical except for the municipal reference and that any mistake could be corrected in the 10 days between passage of the law and its required submission to the Secretary of State. But Wilbur insisted the document before the board be corrected before any action was taken.

"I just think you should have taken a little more time," she said. "This isn't even our law."

Other board members and some town residents joined Wilbur in expressing concerns about the version Ferguson had given them. Resident Meghan Ashe worried that if the board

did not have the correct document in front of them when they voted, the error could "invalidate this whole process."

Ferguson then printed out what he thought was the correct version of the document. But what he printed turned out to be supporting materials rather than the law. So he went back into the town office and printed out a version of the local law that had been emailed to all town officials by town attorney Matt Fuller, which referenced the correct municipality.

After more than 30 minutes of back and forth to obtain the correct document, the board voted unanimously to approve the tax break for firefighters without any significant discussion of the provisions of the law.

But document difficulties continued to plague the board.

Ferguson gave board members printed copies of the minutes from the town's August meeting, rather than the September meeting. The incorrect version of the printed minutes touched off another debate about the need for the proper documents after a motion to approve the minutes failed to receive a second.

Ferguson noted that each board member had received the correct minutes via email prior to the Oct. 9 meeting and had had a chance to review them for any errors. But board members said they wanted the printed document in front of them before voting.

"I'd like to have some sort of paper trail," board member Marc Brown said in explaining his refusal to act on the minutes.

So Ferguson once again went into the town office and printed the minutes from the email the board members had received. With paper copies in hand, Brown seconded the motion to approve the minutes, which was approved unanimously.

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