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Mastic Beach hires firms to determine why some village records are unaccounted for

June 24, 2015 By DEON J. HAMPTON deon.hampton@newsday.com



Mastic Beach Deputy Mayor Bruce Summa inside the Village Hall on Monday, June 22, 2015, in Mastic Beach. (Credit: Joseph D. Sullivan)

A variety of files are unaccounted for in some village offices in Mastic Beach, and officials have hired two firms to get to the bottom of it.

The village hired the companies in April to determine how many and what documents are missing from the treasurer's, clerk's and code enforcement offices. The village authorized spending \$80,000 on the accounting.

Village officials have paid \$75,000 to a Melville-based company, Radius Investigations LLC, to conduct an information and technology investigation to determine how computer documents and files were stored in the offices.

In addition, officials said they have paid \$5,000 to Kings Park-based Cramer CPA to conduct an audit to ensure that accounting and financial records are in order.

Village officials said both investigations are ongoing. Deputy Mayor Bruce Summa said he will wait to see how many files and documents are unaccounted for before speaking further.

"I'm waiting to find out how big the problem is," he said.

Village clerk Susan Alevas, named to the position in October, said she properly maintains records in file cabinets that are lockable and uses a secure safe to store important documents, but declined to comment further.

The village board manages the code enforcement office. Attempts to reach former deputy treasurer Jennifer Brojer, who ran the day-to-day operations in the treasurer's office, were unsuccessful.

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Village Mayor Maura Spery said that, while the audits will review procedures dating to when the village was formed nearly five years ago, a focus of the investigation will be the past year in the treasurer's department.

In an interview, Spery characterized that department as "very dysfunctional." She said "what piqued our interest" was a check paid to a development company without any supporting documents.

"We want to make sure everything was done properly and that we're in compliance," Spery said.

Newsday has reported that Spery and Summa in February asked state Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman to investigate whether village officials improperly awarded a \$46,378 drainage project in November 2013. Spery said that files related to that project are unaccounted for.

Brojer went on medical leave on Dec. 30. On May 4 she resigned her village post. There have been five village treasurers since the village was incorporated in August 2010.

"It is very troubling that for some reason nobody seemed to keep very good track of the records. There are problems with all of these records," Spery said.

Some residents have asked board members during recent meetings about village projects, contracts and official records.

The response often has been that files and records can't be located. There have been issues with official resolutions, financial records, PDF files and unsaved computer documents, the mayor said.

"We have to protect our residents to make sure their money is spent properly and make sure that taxpayers' information is being protected," Spery said.

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