

STATE OF ILLINOIS }
COUNTY OF CHRISTIAN } SS. April 4, 2022
VILLAGE OF STONINGTON }

The Board of Trustees met in Regular Session Monday, April 4, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Bruce Dowdy with the following Members present:

Trustees: David Blakeman, via GoToMeeting; Tara Ramsey, Tammy Wilson, Andrew Callan, Korey Bailey, and Anthony Rusher
Clerk: Jill Gilpin
Treasurer:
Superintendent: Jake Heberling
Village Engineer: Mark Bingham
Village Attorney: Scott Garwood (Absent)
Chief of Police: Travis Peden
Pro Tem Office Manager: Kari Scott
Zoning Officer: John LeVault

Others in attendance: Debbie Niles, Village employee and Rex Wheeler, Village employee

Minutes from the March 7, 2022, regular meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Rusher, that the minutes be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

Minutes from the March 28, 2022, Finance Committee meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Ramsey, seconded by Bailey, that the minutes be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Treasurer's Report was presented for the month of March to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Rusher, that the Treasurer's Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Gas Report was presented for the month of March to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Rusher, seconded by Callan, that the Gas Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Water Report was presented for the month of March to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Wilson, that the Water Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Sewer Report was presented for the month of March to the Board for their

approval. Motion made by Bailey, seconded by Ramsey, that the Sewer Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

The Police Report was presented for the month of March to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Rusher, seconded by Wilson, that the Police Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Bills against the Village were presented for the approval of the Board. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Callan, to approve and issue warrants for all bills. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Zoning Officer’s Report: Zoning Officer LeVault issued three zoning permits in the month of March.

Permit # 776-22 to Keith Westbrook located at 509 W. First for a driveway.

Permit # 777-22 to Linda DeVore located at 301 S. Locust for an addition.

Permit # 778-22 to Steve Boldini located at 411 W. Wabash for an addition.

President Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the Zoning Report for the month of March. Motion made by Bailey, seconded by Callan, to approve the Zoning report for the month of March. Motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Mayor’s Report: President Dowdy requested a motion to appoint Mike Blakeman of Pulley, Martynowski & Blakeman as the Village Auditor. A motion was made by Rusher, and seconded by Wilson, to rehire Mike Blakeman of Pulley, Martynowski & Blakeman as the Village Auditor. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy reminded the Board that at the Finance Committee Christine Lerch submitted her letter of resignation as the Village Treasurer and to offer the position to Debbie Niles.

President Dowdy requested a motion to appoint Debbie Niles as Village Treasurer. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Rusher, to appoint Debbie Niles as Village Treasurer. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy sworn in Debbie Niles as the Village Treasurer.

President Dowdy requested a motion to approve the wages as discussed at the Finance Committee meeting to take effect the new fiscal year starting May 2022. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Ramsey, to approve the wages as discussed at the Finance Committee meeting. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

There was discussion regarding Kari Scott’s vacation pay since going full-time. They discussed one-week paid vacation and one-week unpaid vacation for the first year.

President Dowdy requested a motion to approve vacation time of one-week paid vacation and one-week unpaid vacation for the first year of Kari Scott's full-time employment. Motion made by Rusher, seconded by Ramsey, to approve vacation time of one-week paid vacation and one-week unpaid vacation for the first year of Kari Scott's full-time employment. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy requested a motion to authorize Kari Scott to sign Village checks. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Bailey, to authorize Kari Scott to sign Village checks. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Kari Scott is now authorized to sign checks and added to the signature card at the bank and Christine Lerch will be coming off the signature card.

Trustee Rusher confirmed that there must be two signatures on checks written for the Village.

The discussion moved to health insurance provided by the Village. President Dowdy said at this time there are no Village employees on health insurance provided by the Village. President Dowdy explained that a current employee is on the spouse's insurance and is being penalized because health insurance is offered through the Village and suggested taking out health insurance as a benefit.

Trustee Rusher questioned if the Village does not say that health insurance is offered as a benefit will that be a deterrent for future hires.

Trustee Blakeman suggested keeping the health insurance benefit in the employee policy.

President Dowdy said it is not hurting the Village, it is just hurting an employee. In order for the employee to be added to the spouse's health insurance and not be penalized, the employee needs a certified letter stating that the Village does not offer health insurance.

Trustee Rusher said when he was appointed to the Board, he was told it's for the greater good of the Community and in the future of the Village not for an individual.

Trustee Wilson expressed that it is not like one way is right or the other way is wrong, it is what is the best way to go forward as the Board.

Trustee Ramsey feels that either leaving in health insurance or taking out the health insurance as a benefit is not costing the Village any money. And down the road, if a new hire is looking for that benefit that could deter the new hire.

After much discussion regarding health insurance was tabled for a couple of months.

President Dowdy discussed buying new flag poles and flags. Currently there are twenty-one flag poles and a lot of them are broken. The Women's Auxiliary at the American Legion has donated \$1,000.00 towards the purchase a new flag poles and flags. The cost for new poles, pole brackets, and flags is \$85.00 each. The cost for the Village would be \$785.00.

Trustee Ramsey questioned if TIF funds could be used for the purchase of flag poles and flags.

Debbie Niles stated banners are not TIF eligible. Lighting and landscaping are TIF eligible.

President Dowdy requested a motion to approve the Village's portion of the purchase of flag poles and flags not to exceed \$785.00. Motion made by Blakeman, seconded by Rusher, to approve the Village's portion of the purchase of flag poles and flags not to exceed \$785.00. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy discussed the purchase of new flowerpots. He suggested taking out the concrete flowerpots and replacing them with decorative flowerpots. Bayer purchases the flowers and President Dowdy and his wife take care of the flowers. The cost for the decorative flowerpots is close to \$500.00 each. There would be a total of eight decorative flowerpots purchased. Two of the decorative flowerpots will be used at the Village Hall and the other six will be placed downtown. TIF funds would be used to purchase the decorative flowerpots.

Motion made by Rusher, seconded by Bailey, to purchase eight decorative flowerpots using TIF funds. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Trustee Blakeman suggested putting up a plaque in memory of Allen Barringer and a plaque in memory of Frank Paulek to mount on the flowerpots or near the flowerpots.

Discussion moved to Ordinance No. 22-681. Trustee Callan questioned line E) of 7.106 stating "there will be a \$5.00/month meter upgrade fee. The \$5.00 debt repayment fee will sunset after 8 years."

The \$5.00/month meter change out fee was established at the March 7, 2016, meeting.

Trustee Blakeman questioned if the water increase listed in Ordinance No. 22-681 also effected SNAWS. President Dowdy said it is a separate contract with SNAWS and if there needs to be an increase in the water rates they should be discussed in a committee meeting.

Trustee Blakeman asked the comparison of the water rates that are charged to SNAWS and the Village residents. Kari Scott is to send out the comparison amounts to the Board.

A Water Committee meeting was set for Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the water rates for SNAWS.

President Dowdy requested a motion to approve Ordinance No. 22-681, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7. Water, Article 1. General Provisions, Sections 7.106 And 7.107 And Chapter 10 Utilities, Article 9. Rates Of the Municipal Code of Ordinances of The Village of Stonington, Christian County, Illinois. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Blakeman, to approve Ordinance No. 22-681, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7. Water, Article 1. General Provisions, Sections 7.106 And 7.107 And Chapter 10 Utilities, Article 9. Rates Of the Municipal Code of Ordinances of The Village of Stonington, Christian County, Illinois. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy asked for a motion to grant the liquor license to Triangle Pub. Motion by Wilson, seconded by Callan, to grant the liquor license to Triangle Pub. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Discussion moved to cell phone plans. President Dowdy said that currently the Village has only one cell phone on the plan and there are five devices between computers and laptops. AT&T's plan for five data devices and a phone is \$233.49 and Verizon's plan for five data devices and a phone is \$231.30. The Village is currently through Verizon and Verizon does not work in the metal buildings.

President Dowdy asked Engineer Bingham if the data plans for the communication from the wells to the pumps will work through both AT&T and Verizon services. Engineer Bingham said they will work with cellular communication and what the Village needs to do is set up a cellular business plan.

Kari Scott said that two of the devices are for the communication from the wells to the water plant. If the Village switched to AT&T, tablets would not have to be purchased for the Public Works employees to use because the tablets are transferrable between the two plans.

President Dowdy requested a motion to switch to AT&T cellular and data service. Motion made by Bailey, seconded by Callan, to switch to AT&T cellular and data service. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Superintendent Heberling discussed the request from Nolen Plumbing to put a concrete pad behind his shed to put the porta-potties on. The concrete pad will be 20x20 or 25x25, no bigger than that. Superintendent Heberling voiced his concern on how to keep the water running off the concrete pad out of the sewer system.

President Dowdy said that this is not the actual dumping of the truck. He dumps his truck through a hose directly into the first sewer pond so there is no wear and tear on the sewer system.

Trustee Blakeman suggested that if this is approved, there needs to be something done

so that rainwater does not get in the sewer system and said that individuals have been penalized for hooking up sump pumps to the sewer system.

President Dowdy informed the Board that Village resident, Donnie Bouvet was at the hall before the meeting started. Mr. Bouvet is trying to clean out his ditch that runs West to make the water run that direction.

President Dowdy suggested getting the ditch cleaned out, so the water runs through the ditch better. He said that all the ditches have filled up with leaves and debris all these years and in the next few years they need to start getting the ditches cleaned out.

Superintendent Heberling said that another Village resident has contacted him to get a ditch cleaned out in front of his house because it is backed up and not flowing.

Village Engineer Report: Engineer Bingham reported approval was received for the media that was removed from the softeners to be hauled off to Sangamon Valley. Next steps are to look at the condition of the tank, get the media back in, and get it operational.

Engineer Bingham discussed switching from radio to cellular communication. There has been testing done on the old antenna cable and found there is something wrong with it between the tower and the water treatment plant.

In the original project, he has figured replacing the cable from the top of the tower to the water treatment plant and that is roughly \$1,800.00.

New radios and antenna have already been installed out at the wells and unfortunately if the switch is made to cellular communication, they will not be able to be used. He does not recommend putting the cable back into the old conduit. When the project started two years ago, he didn't know that there was an issue with the communication and that there has always been an issue.

His recommendation is to switch to cellular communication. The quote is \$8,635.00 which does not include installing the cable. If the Village would like to switch to cellular, he is requesting approval to submit the quote to the EPA to get it turned into the loan program. There will be a little markup for management fees which is usually 5% to go through the general contractor which is Burdick, Plumbing and Heating.

Engineer Bingham said for the next meeting there would be a formal change order to get approval to submit to the state. If the state says it is loan eligible then there will be formal paperwork for the next board meeting.

Motion made by Rusher, seconded by Callan, to authorize Engineer Bingham to submit the paperwork to the EPA to make sure it is eligible for the loan program. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Engineer Bingham said since the media has been disposed of there will be a disbursement request for the next meeting.

He also updated the Board on the chlorine pumps. He has submitted the supplemental permit to the state. The old chlorine pumps have been removed and he is waiting for the supplemental permit to come back from the state to make the switch.

Village Attorney Report: Nothing to report.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Heberling reported the gas pressure gauges have been installed at the gas plant and seem to be working okay.

Superintendent Heberling told the Board that he talked to Jack Trimble with Trimble Construction, Inc. who is working at the United Methodist Church. Trimble Construction, Inc. would like to build up the road in front of the church and down on the northeast end with roughly a foot to 18 inches with road pack. Then Trimble Construction, Inc. would like to have road oil put over it.

Superintendent Heberling's concern is there will be nothing to hold the road pack until there is road oil put over it in the next couple of years and until Trimble Construction, Inc. gets his laser set up he is not exactly sure how high he would like to build it up. Trimble Construction, Inc. is also planning to build up the triangle of grass with dirt and put a catch basin in the northeast corner of the triangle. They did find an old culvert that goes under the road. Superintendent Heberling inquired if the Village was interested in donating a catch basin.

President Dowdy feels it is not a good idea to put a catch basin in if there is nowhere for the water to go. He questioned if there are gutters installed on the church.

Superintendent Heberling said they have gutters in place but don't have the downspouts connected yet. An old tile was found at the back of the church, and he is not sure if the six-inch tile is going to flow. They connected a sump pump from the basement that runs nonstop to that tile.

After much discussion, it was decided that Trimble Construction, Inc. needs to come up with a game plan for the road and a game plan to get rid of the water.

Superintendent Heberling discussed sidewalks. He has some residents are willing to split the cost of a new sidewalk.

President Dowdy suggested that it could probably be worked out with the homeowner to hire someone to put in a sidewalk and then reimburse the homeowner.

Superintendent Heberling questioned if it would be better if the Village paid for the concrete and the homeowner pays to have the sidewalk installed.

Trustee Wilson questioned if this would be opened to the public like a sidewalk program.

President Dowdy stated that every year there is money allowed for sidewalks in the budget. The last couple of year's sidewalks have not been replaced. The Village still owes a partial sidewalk to Dooley's because it was broken due to the water project. He feels some research needs to be done with homeowners and see what the best approach will be in splitting the cost.

Trustee Rusher suggested that the Village pull the sidewalks and get someone to finish the sidewalks.

President Dowdy suggested getting bids for someone to finish the sidewalks.

Engineer Bingham said if Motor Fuel Tax funds were used you would need to make sure that sidewalks are eligible.

Trustee Rusher suggested using what was in the budget to fix the sidewalks.

Trustee Callan suggested doing some research on the worst sidewalks and fix those first.

After much discussion, sidewalks were tabled until the next meeting.

Superintendent Heberling informed the Board that the old propane truck did sell at Micenheimer Auction for \$2,500.00 and the radiator is being installed in the other dump truck.

Trustee Callan questioned who was responsible for replacing the lights in the streetlights because the lights are out at Swim and Pine.

Discussion moved to streetlights. President Dowdy said there are some streetlights in alleyways that the Village pays for, and the Village needs to decide which streetlights to eliminate. If the Village choses not to pay for the streetlights, Shelby Electric suggested giving the choice to the homeowner to take over that expense and have the cost added to their bill.

Superintendent Heberling stated he checked with Shelby Electric about the expense being added to the homeowner's bill. Shelby Electric said the cost could be from \$18.00-\$20.00 a month depending on if the lights are LED or not.

President Dowdy suggested getting a list together showing the location of the streetlights and email Shelby Electric to find out who pays for them.

WATER – The Water Report for March 17, 2022 – March 31, 2022, billing period was presented.

GAS – The Gas Report for March 17, 2022 – March 31, 2022, billing period was presented.

SEWER – The Sewer Report for March 17, 2022 – March 31, 2022, billing period was presented.

Committee Reports: STREETS & ALLEYS – Nothing to report.

HEALTH & SAFETY – Trustee Rusher informed the Board that he has had several complaints about brush laying around town.

Superintendent Heberling said he would ask to borrow Stonington Township's truck to gather the brush and Trustee Rusher suggested borrowing the Village of Blue Mound's truck.

Trustee Rusher asked about the elevator ditch.

Superintendent Heberling stated they dug that ditch out last year and fixed the tile, so it is actually taking water now. The reason the Elevator is helping dig out the ditch is because they ran a pump from the new lake to the ditch and they said they would help keep the debris out of the ditch.

Trustee Rusher stated that Officer Peden let him know that the owner of 210 S. Pine next to Jim Cunningham is going to start cleaning it up and possibly tear down the home.

Trustee Rusher questioned who broomed around the Park.

Superintendent Heberling said they had someone out of Decatur come down and broom around the park.

Trustee Rusher asked about the status of a timeclock.

President Dowdy stated he has not purchased one and has received information about another timeclock. He said it comes down to whether or not to allow the employees to clock in electronically or use a timeclock that is installed in the buildings and Village Hall.

FINANCE – Trustee Wilson asked for confirmation that the owner of 210 S. Pine is going to clean up the property.

Officer Peden said he spoke to the owner of 210 S. Pine, and the owner apologized for allowing the home to get as bad as it is and will be cleaning up the bushes around the house this weekend. He is also going to contact Hutchinson Excavating to see about tearing down the home.

President Dowdy asked about the property at 301 S. Pine.

Officer Peden said he has been doing some research as to owns the property.

WATER – Trustee Callan referred to the list that Debbie Niles put together listing what her duties were as a full-time employee. He asked if Kari Scott could become a Notary Public and go through FOIA training.

Kari Scott said she is currently working on the FOIA and is registered for a webinar on FOIA.

Debbie Niles stated she has already spoke to Likes Insurance about Kari's Notary Public bond.

SEWER – Nothing to report.

GAS – Trustee Blakeman reported that gas prices are running about \$5.65 on the current market and the futures is running around \$5.77.

President Dowdy stated that every month the Village contacts the gas commission and ask what the current billing will be. The gas commission estimates at the time what the Village will be invoiced. Our billing cycle does not coincide with the gas commissions billing cycle, and the estimate given is never the same amount as is billed. For example, last month they were almost \$1.00 a dekatherm off so the Village ate nearly \$1.00 a dekatherm.

President Dowdy felt it was not fair to bill the whole dollar amount and made the decision to bill half the difference.

Debbie Niles said that it is never been this much off for the billing from the gas commission. The board questioned if the billing dates could be changed. She stated they can be changed, but it would involve changing several things. All the changes would affect penalties, due dates, etc.

After much discussion, this issue was tabled.

President Dowdy asked if the dates for the Village wide garage sales have been set.

Trustee Ramsey said that the dates have not been set yet. She said the American Legion Auxiliary would like to schedule a breakfast for the Saturday of the Village wide garage sales.

Debbie Niles questioned if it was possible to light up the big flag along the highway.

Superintendent Heberling said we could get a flood light to point in the direction of the flag for a fee and he will find out what it will cost.

Trustee Ramsey questioned if keeping the streetlights in the alleys helps keep the Village safer.

President Dowdy said that some of the streetlights have been installed in the alleyways at the customer's request and the Village is billed for them.

Debbie Niles said she ordered flowers for Frank Paulek's service and memorials can be made to the Taylorville F.A.A. or the Stonington Library

Trustee Callan suggested giving \$100.00 to the Stonington Library in memory of Frank Paulek.

President Dowdy asked for a motion to give \$100.00 to the Stonington Library in memory of Frank Paulek. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Rusher, to give \$100.00 to the Stonington Library in memory of Frank Paulek. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Debbie Niles discussed two accounts that are listed on the audit. An e-pay account through Illinois Funds and a clearing account with Illinois National Bank. The Village used to use an e-pay account for the credit cards to go into and it went through the Illinois Funds. Illinois Funds used to be a savings account and now it is more of an investment account. The e-pay account is no longer used. The e-pay account has a balance of \$50,807.03 and the clearing account with Illinois National bank has a balance of \$973.41. Auditor Mike Blakeman recommended that we get rid of the account because we must pay to have it audited and there is no activity. She said that the Village is actually losing money because of the fees charged from Illinois National Bank. She asked permission to close the Illinois Funds and move the funds to the local bank account.

She discussed the general fund, which has \$10,000.00 and the enterprise fund that has \$157,265.00. She explained that when Kevin LeVault was Treasurer, money would be moved back and forth between the accounts if there was an abundance of money but at that time they paid a high interest rate, which they do not now.

Trustee Callan confirmed that the accounts that she would like to close are 107 and 109, both accounts have to do with e-pay.

She confirmed that the only account that the Village has to have through Illinois Funds is the Motor Fuel Tax because it is direct deposited into the account. There is also an account with the bank for Motor Fuel Tax. The balances from both of these accounts are how we get our balance for Motor Fuel Tax.

Kari Scott updated the Board on the past gas bills. April 1 was the disconnect day for those who had not paid their bills. Currently there are three customers in collections, and one has been disconnected until the balance is paid off.

President Dowdy said that he received notification about the lawsuit regarding the fire hydrant damage from two or three years ago. The person who caused the damage was supposed to be making a \$100.00 payment each month starting March 2021 and there have been no payments received from the Village.

President Dowdy set the date and time for the May Regular Meeting as Monday, May 2, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

With no further business coming before the Board, a motion was made by Callan, seconded by Rusher, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

APPROVED:

Bruce Dowdy, Village President

ATTEST:

Jill Gilpin, Village Clerk