

STATE OF ILLINOIS	}	REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY OF CHRISTIAN	} SS.	September 8, 2025
VILLAGE OF STONINGTON	}	

The Board of Trustees met for a regular meeting on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

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

Trustees: Tara Ramsey, Tammy Wilson, Andrew Callan, Jeff Graham, Caleb Grover, and Scott Kuntzman

Clerk: Jill Gilpin

Office Manager/Treasurer: Kari Scott

Superintendent: Jake Heberling

Village Engineer: Mark Bingham (Absent)

Village Attorney: Scott Garwood (Absent)

Chief of Police: Travis Peden (Absent)

Zoning Officer: John LeVault

Others in attendance: Lisa Grover, Library Director for the Stonington Township Library; Denise Evans, Safe Passage; Assistant Chief of Police Phil Deal; Earl Good, Village resident; Carol White, Village resident; and, Lynne Callan, Village resident.

Minutes from August 4, 2025, regular meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Ramsey, that the minutes be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

Minutes from August 18, 2025, committee meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Kuntzman, seconded by Callan, 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 August to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Graham, 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 August to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Grover, 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 August to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Kuntzman, 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 August to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Kuntzman, 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 August to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Graham, seconded by Ramsey, 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 Graham, to approve and issue warrants for all bills. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Zoning Officer’s Report: Zoning Officer LeVault issued no zoning permits in the month of August.

President’s Report: President Dowdy asked for a motion to grant the liquor license to Beer Vault Saloon, LLC. Motion by Callan, seconded by Kuntzman, to grant the liquor license to Beer Vault Saloon, LLC. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

There were no bids for the three lots on Main Street to open.

President Dowdy welcomed Lisa Grover, Library Director for the Stonington Township Library. Lisa was pleased to state that the Stonington Township Library is beginning to see an increase in numbers as they have had six new families join this year and that this summer was the biggest summer reading program they have had. She discussed that the Library operates on a very small budget so most of the children’s and teen programs are funded by donations and the community. Also, through grants they have been able to create space for children for a stem program. She handed out a list of upcoming events that will be held at the Library this fall. She also reminded the Board that the Library has their Angel Tree program that they run every year that helps buy children’s and teens books around Christmas time and that the Library tries to offer as many free programs as possible for children, teens, and adults. They will be having the Third Annual Ugly Art Night on September 30, 2025, which starts at 6:00 pm and has been a huge success. She was able to get a few of the Board members to volunteer to be judges at the event.

At this time, she stated that less than 20% of the adult population of the Village of Stonington have a library card and this percentage is reported to the State every year. She encourages everyone to get a library card even if you don’t check out books.

Lisa informed the Board next year the Stonington Township Library will be celebrating its 55th anniversary and their plans are to have celebration events throughout the year. In moving towards the 55th Anniversary, Lisa’s hopes are to promote the Stonington Township Library strongly by getting the word out and she asked the Board to consider sponsoring an event or helping with an event.

Office Manager Kari Scott stated that they would again include the Stonington Township Library's hours on the Village of Stonington bills.

President Dowdy moved to the discussion regarding insurance for employees and that the current health insurance policy expires October 31, 2025, with renewal to take effect November 1, 2025. He stated it was his understanding from previous discussions that the Village was going to do away with health insurance when the renewal came due this year and then change the salaries for Travis Peden and Billy Brunk since they are the only two employees on the health insurance. The discussion of Travis Peden and Billy Brunk's salaries will be placed on the October Agenda.

President Dowdy read the Police Chief work week language from the approved August 4, 2025, minutes and that language will be replace the current language in the Employee Handbook.

President Dowdy discussed that the LED sign works but is stuck in an endless loop and can not be changed. One of the options is to stay with the current company with the understanding that it is not easy to repair and they struggle to get parts; the subscription is expired and to renew the subscription at the cost of \$1,200. Bids from Bendsen were received for the other two options. One bid is \$35,300 for a 3x8 ft. sign and the other bid is \$42,654 for a 4x8 ft sign and this cost can be paid out of the TIF District. After much discussion the subject was tabled.

President Dowdy welcomed Denise Evans from the Safe Passage Program. Ms. Evans is the coordinator of the Safe Passage Program in Taylorville which began in 2019. She explained how it originated, how many people the program has helped, and how the program works by helping individuals with substance abuse to get into rehab. She stated that since the program has been around in Taylorville the crime has dropped by about 55%. She proposed to bring Safe Passage to the Stonington Police Department which is at no cost to the Village. The Board agreed to recognize that the Village of Stonington is affiliated with Safe Passage and will post information on how to contact Safe Passage on the Stonington Police Department door.

President Dowdy welcomed Earl Good to the table. He voiced his concern regarding cars sitting on properties that no longer run.

President Dowdy stated he would discuss this with Chief of Police Travis Peden and Assistant Chief of Police Phil Deal to check this out around town and reiterated that by law, the Village does not have the right to step on private property to remove abandoned vehicles.

President Dowdy welcomed Carol White to the table. Ms. White thanked Superintendent Jake Heberling, Village Works employees and the Village for repairing her water problems.

Village Engineer Report: Nothing to report.

Village Attorney Report: Nothing to report.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Heberling reported Shelby Electric will be parking some of their trucks at the sewer plant while they are installing fiber. And in exchange, Shelby Electric will rock the lane at the sewer plant.

Superintendent Heberling also reported the lift station was installed and they have installed about 1400 feet of tile around town; about 90 feet installed by the tavern and 900 feet installed around Nolen's shop. Ben Briggs will be installing the lift station by the little ditch and pump it under the bridge at no cost to the Village, but the Village will have to remove a tree on private property for the lift station to be installed. He also stated the catch basin will be replaced by the elevator after harvest is over.

Superintendent Heberling informed the Village based on his own observations, there has been a lot of trading and selling of natural gas and LP to the European Union overseas. And reading articles that say natural gas and LP are going to be a little higher this winter.

President Dowdy spoke about the TIF funding which is through the year 2034. He stated TIF funds will accumulate every year however, the TIF funds must be used or accounted for in a project at the time 2034 comes around when the existing ceases and if the funds are not allocated to a project or not used, the funds will be divided up amongst the taxing bodies. The TIF funds will have to be allocated and used within a year. He stated that the Village is going to start looking at infrastructure and replacing some water lines since the funds are available for that.

WATER – The Water Report for July 1 – July 31, 2025, billing period was presented.

GAS – The Gas Report for July 1 – July 31, 2025, billing period was presented.

SEWER – The Sewer Report for July 1 – July 31, 2025, billing period was presented.

Committee Reports: STREETS & ALLEYS – Trustee Ramsey reported the community garage sales is scheduled for October 10 and 11, 2025. A dumpster will be available starting October 13, 2025.

Trustee Ramsey also reported she has had some complaints about speeding on side streets.

President Dowdy asked that Chief of Police Travis Peden and Assistant Chief of Police Phil Deal sit on the side streets more.

HEALTH & SAFETY – Trustee Graham voiced his concern about the dry conditions and

to be mindful that there are burn bans issued.

FINANCE – Nothing to report.

WATER – Trustee Callan reported a complaint that at the stop sign at Division Street coming off Route 48, cars are exiting the highway at high speeds and people sitting at the stop sign almost get hit.

SEWER – Nothing to report.

GAS – Trustee Gover reported some complaints from citizens who brought to his attention regarding the discussion of cleaning up abandoned vehicles and abandoned lots, that the Board should not cherry pick who receives notices and fines. He stated that he is unsure of the details on who the citizens are referring to or what they heard or read.

Trustee Wilson inquired if the discussion was from a Board member or if it was something that somebody in the audience spoke about since there are times when the audience has discussions amongst themselves that are not involving the Board members. Trustee Grover was unsure.

Trustee Grover commented that he realizes the Village has been trying to improve the main drag but hoped in the future the Village will be able to attract businesses.

President Dowdy stated that he has ongoing efforts to contact Dollar General.

President Dowdy set the date and time for the October Regular Meeting as October 6, 2025, 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 Grover, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

APPROVED:

Bruce Dowdy, Village President

ATTEST:

Jill Gilpin, Village Clerk