

STATE OF ILLINOIS }
COUNTY OF CHRISTIAN } SS.
VILLAGE OF STONINGTON }

REGULAR MEETING
December 5, 2022

The Board of Trustees met in Regular Session Monday, December 5, 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, Anthony Rusher, and Nathan Frisch
Clerk: Jill Gilpin (Absent)
Treasurer: Debbie Niles
Superintendent: Jake Heberling
Village Engineer: Mark Bingham, via GoToMeeting
Village Attorney: Scott Garwood (Absent)
Chief of Police: Travis Peden
Officer Manager: Kari Scott
Zoning Officer: John LeVault

Others in attendance: Rita Paulek, Village Resident, Bob and Kim Brown, Village Residents, Earl Good, Village Resident, Judy Wade, Village Resident, and Chris Wade, Village Resident

Minutes from the November 7, 2022, regular meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Frisch, 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 November to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Ramsey, 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 November to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Blakeman, 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 November to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Blakeman, 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 November to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Frisch, 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 November to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Ramsey, 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 Blakeman, to approve and issue warrants for all bills. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Zoning Officer’s Report: Zoning Officer LeVault did not issue any zoning permits in the month of November.

Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bruce Dowdy informed the board that the generator has been installed at the Village Hall and was operational. He added that after speaking with Joe May, he discovered it cost an additional \$125 to add coverage to our building that the post office is in, so he had them hooked up as well.

Dowdy updated the board on continuing to remove the animals living at 402 W 2nd Street. He suggested trapping the animals every other month now, instead of every month. Trustee Blakeman added that if there were an increase in animal activity, we would resume trapping every month. Chief Peden advised that the fines have been paid by the homeowner, and that he had not trapped this month, but would trap again next month.

Mayor Dowdy began a discussion regarding a \$100,000 grant that the Village of Stonington received from the state through Senator Doris Turner’s office. The funds were specifically earmarked for improvements at the Stonington Community Center to be used to purchase new bleachers, and tables and chairs for events being held there. Bruce informed the board the grant could be handled one of two ways. The Village of Stonington is already set up and qualified to receive grants. The grant could be run through the Village. If that option were chosen, there would need to be a legal agreement between the Village of Stonington and the Stonington Community Center waiving any kind of liability if funds were misused or if documentation was not completed correctly. The second option would be for the Community Center to apply for the grant themselves. This would require an additional six to eight months wait after the spring veto session. After some discussion, the board thought it would be best to check with the Village’s attorney and auditors and get their opinion on the matter and discuss at the next meeting.

Village Engineer Report: Engineer Mark Bingham reported that now is the time to decide if the Village wanted to start the paperwork for an MFT (Motor Fuel Tax) Program for 2023. He said if the Village wanted to proceed, he would need to submit the application by March 31, 2023. Mark stated he would get with Superintendent Jake Heberling to discuss what projects he wanted to include in the program and to discuss costs, etc. Mayor Dowdy asked for a motion to begin putting together a program for next year and to hire Mark Bingham, Chastains & Assoc, LLC. to be the engineer for the project. Trustee Rusher made the motion, and Trustee Blakeman seconded. The motion passed.

Engineer Bingham informed the board that the Water Treatment Project was nearing completion. He stated they are working on a punch list of things to finish up, and felt the project was approximately 90% complete, but could not give an exact percentage.

Village Attorney Report: Nothing to report.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Jake Heberling addressed the board concerning Legacy Grain. They have asked permission to close American Legion Drive at Route 48 and west of the railroad tracks when loading out rail cars. Kevin Walker with Legacy Grain is concerned about vehicles driving around the crossing arms when they are loading out, assuming the arms are down for the rail cars and not an oncoming train. Heberling informed the board that Legacy Grain would cover all expenses for the barricades. The board wholeheartedly agreed to allow Legacy Grain to close down the street when loading out rail cars.

Heberling advised that the SNAWS (Sharpsburg and Neighboring Area Water System) lacks one easement to complete Phase 3. They are planning on moving forward with submission of the project this spring or early summer, and hope to begin construction after harvest next year. They will have 46 new customers, with a potential of upwards to 93 new customers.

Mayor Dowdy brought up that the Sewer Operator certifications had been received by the public works staff. They will now be able to sign off on sewer reports. The employees will receive a .50/hour pay increase for receiving their certificates. Mike Lebshire with the Village of Edinburg has been notified that his services will no longer be needed to sign off on sewer reports as of February 1, 2023. A 30 day notification has been given to Mr. Lebshire. Trustee Callan asked if the public works staff was any closer to receiving their water licenses. Heberling stated they are focusing on gas training right now.

Public Comment:

Mayor Dowdy invited public comments. Village resident Bob Brown stood to address the board. Mr. Brown presented a petition with 250 signatures requesting that the leaf burning ordinance be returned to how it was previously which stated that leaf burning could take place on any given day, with the exception of windy days and major holidays. Mr. Brown stated that he has been here before at meetings to ask that the ordinance be amended but has not received an answer. Residents in attendance spoke, stating their reasons for wanting the leaf burning ordinance to be amended. Mayor Dowdy explained why the ordinance was changed: that some residents in town were complaining about the smoke causing breathing and health problems. He also informed the attending residents that the decision has to be a board decision, that it cannot be changed without a vote. The question was also asked if the leaf burning ordinance could be put on a voting ballot. Mayor Dowdy stated we would have to check with the county clerk regarding the questions. After much discussion, Trustee Rusher suggested putting the leaf burning ordinance on the agenda for the January meeting, as a vote cannot be taken on it without it being on the agenda to be voted on. The board agreed.

WATER – The Water Report for October, 2022, billing period was presented.

GAS – The Gas Report for October, 2022, billing period was presented.

SEWER – The Sewer Report for October, 2022, billing period was presented.

Committee Reports: STREETS & ALLEYS – Trustee Ramsey asked if the \$100,000 grant for the Community Center were to be ran through the Village, would it affect us getting any grants in the future. Mayor Dowdy said it would not.

HEALTH & SAFETY – Nothing to report. (Rusher)

FINANCE – Trustee Tammy Wilson asked where the village was regarding the person living in a camper on Livergood Street. Mayor Dowdy advised that he has spoken to the attorney about it, and he felt Section 11.2007 e. in our ordinance should prevent that from happening. It states that a person cannot live in a travel trailer for more than 180 days. Chief Peden advised that he has since learned of another person living in a camper in town. Trustee Blakeman stated that if a person is remodeling a house, they can live in a camper on the property, but no more than 180 days. Trustee Frisch stated he thought a notification should be sent to the person living in the camper advising him of the ordinance. The board noted that this situation had been discussed at the October meeting, and the time since then is included in the 180 days. Trustee Wilson asked if any utilities were on at the location. Village staff informed her that all Village utilities had been disconnected. Chief Peden suggested in the future, we have a cut and dry ordinance, and there should be no question if the person is in violation.

WATER – Nothing to report. (Callan)

SEWER – Nothing to report. (Frisch)

GAS – Trustee Blakeman updated the board regarding the gas markets and what they are doing. After some discussion on the gas rates, Superintendent Heberling informed the board that they only need to be looking at the PEPL (Panhandle Eastern Pipeline) market, as that is all that we can buy gas from.

POLICE – Chief Peden informed the board that due to the new Safety Act going into effect January 1, 2023, police training is going to increase significantly. He questioned how our part-time police officers would be able to attend training and classes. Trustee Rusher asked if a new part time officer had been hired. Chief Peden informed him that someone had been hired and was currently enrolled in part time officer training for the next 8-9 months.

President Dowdy set the date and time for the January Regular Meeting as Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 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 8:08 p.m. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

APPROVED:

Bruce Dowdy, Village President

ATTEST:

Jill Gilpin, Village Clerk