

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

DAYTON LEGAL BLANK, INC. FORM NO. 10148

Held

February 20

20

24

The Village of Weston Council Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2024

Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Jeremy Schroeder at 6:00PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and presentation of the agenda. A roll call was taken: Ms. Brittney Klockowski, Mr. Dean Babcock, Mr. Craig Warner, Ms. Jessica Susor, Mr. Rob Myerholtz, and Mr. Rick Easterwood. A motion to approve February 5, 2024 council meeting minutes as written was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Mr. Myerholtz; Approved unanimously.

Old Business

A resolution (RES 2024-4) authorizing the sale of Village property by internet auction received a final reading. A motion for passage of RES 2024-4 was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

An ordinance making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024 received a second reading.

Reports

Attendance: Stephanie Monts (Fiscal Officer)

Mayor: Nothing to report.

Fiscal Officer: A notice to legislative authority was presented to council for a name transfer of the liquor permit at the Weston Marathon. A motion was made by Mr. Easterwood to approve the liquor permit, seconded by Ms. Susor; Approved unanimously.

Administrator/Maintenance: Not in attendance. Mr. Easterwood asked for the pictures of the intersection of Taylor Street/235, the asphalt on the corner of both sides is sinking.

Code Enforcement/Zoning: Not in attendance. Clerk shared that Ken received an email from Ambrose stating he will be checking into Sycamore Street & Russ Street.

Committee Reports

WSIB: Advertising launched for town ball sign ups, and as of 2/6 over 100 kids had signed up for OTB. In person sign ups at the Village Hall are 2/17 and 2/18 from 1-3PM. Had discussion over a moveable mound so softball can play on the big diamond. Tabled adjusting business sponsorships until Mr. Myers can survey teams this season for input. Information gathering has started on how to improve and update the concession stand. Will be allowing the local adult league to use the field this year, August - November. Sponsor letters are being sent out.

Administrative Process: Committee meeting summaries were discussed. Harold has requested Tom Patton to cover for him while on vacation in the case of a snow storm. Tom is already on payroll but the pay rate is outdated. Stephanie recommended having the pay schedule updated to include pay for Regular Part Time Maintenance, Seasonal Part Time Maintenance, and Per Diem (as needed). Committee is recommending Maintenance get on the same pay rate as the cemetery employees, which is \$16/hour. EMS contracts are up on 12/31/24, and the recommendation by AP committee is for the Fiscal Officer to put together an informational packet of current contracts with the entities and possible increases/changes, and recommendations from the billing company for Safety Committee. The Village of Milton Center has over \$4,000 of outstanding checks for unpaid run refunds, multiple letters have been sent and attempts of contact with no responses. Stephanie has proposed to void the checks and apply it as a credit to their contract amounts, and if there are any credits due these will be applied toward future contract amounts until contact has been made. Stephanie did extensive research on financing (through State Infrastructure Bank - SIB) and other grants. Discussed the history of the past sidewalk program, and comments from citizens regarding sidewalks. A sidewalk income tax discount was proposed. Stephanie spoke to RITA about this proposal and they did not recommend this, instead they said that if the Village would like to offer a discount the individual would have to file with the Village and the Village would pay out the discount. The sidewalk repair program will have continued discussion. AP Committee is recommending Safety Corridor for CDBG grant, details will be sent to Community Development & Public Affairs committee when the grant information becomes available. Will post on the village Facebook page and in the newsletter for a basic call out for a grant writer. Maintenance and Vehicle logs are not kept, and it was recommended to use a maintenance log for vehicles and buildings, Jeremy shared he would work on putting something together with Harold. It was proposed to hire a building inspector or contractor to inspect both Village Hall and Post Office buildings and get a detailed list of repairs and maintenance needed.

Ms. Klockowski asked why the income tax discount for sidewalks would not work. It was shared by the Mayor and Mr. Warner that it could not be done exactly how it was proposed. The discussion was left off that Stephanie would reach out to other municipalities about their sidewalk programs, and is just awaiting responses. Mr. Myerholtz questioned the income tax discount. Mr. Warner said it is just an idea and Ms. Klockowski explained that it would be for property owners that still currently live at the property that were forced to put in a sidewalk by the previous administration. They could apply to get a discount, example was a 0.5 income tax discount until the sidewalk is paid off, so it isn't a big lump sum from the Village as a payout. Mr. Myerholtz indicated this would be a hard thing to do and Howard Lashuay asked if the Village is going to take the sidewalks over and handle snow removal. Ms. Klockowski expressed that the Village already owns the sidewalks, and snow removal could be included in the discussion. She also added the end goal is to make everyone happy. Mr. Myerholtz expressed that the debate seems to be that the Village owns the sidewalks, but the taxpayers are paying taxes for the right of way (to the center of the road) and the sidewalk is in the right of way. Mr. Warner pointed out that Ken already talked about this and whether you own an in-lot or an outlot. Mr. Myerholtz pointed out all the maintenance required of the right of way, Mayor added that there is an ordinance in place that requires maintenance of the right of way. Mayor expressed that we need to get legal clarification on sidewalk ownership. Mr. Lashuay expressed the Village needs advice from a better legal counsel that is in Wood County, which was pointed out by members of council he is in Wood County. Mr. Lashuay expressed some feelings including calling the legal counsel a clown and stupid, told council and the Mayor the dictating stuff and running the show is terrible, and shared he has more to unload. Mayor made note again before moving on, that the Village legal counsel is from Wood County.

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Special Ball Committee: Discussed 501c3 monetary transfer between the Village and the nonprofit organization. Discussed different timelines for the transfer and pros and cons of each. Mr. Myerholtz, who is part of the special committee, added that he was under the impression that the transition to 501c3 is not going to take place this year. Ms. Susor continued the committee report adding that the purpose of the committee is to look into types of insurances, bank accounts, accounting, exit strategy, 501c3 transfer details and the Village role going forward. The goal is to dissipate this committee by the end of baseball season and have all the information for the board in order for them to become a 501c3. Would like to see where the board stands at the end of season. Funds were questioned and the concern that the program may not have any funds when they start in the new organization. It was pointed out that while the board is operated under the Village that the Village has to collect/deposit the money. The money can still be spent down with the permission of council because it is set up specifically for baseball/softball.

Rec Board: Discussed changing the meeting date, tabled again until all members are present. Set a tentative schedule for the year: March - Leprechaun Hunt 16th & 17th, April - Earth Day 21st 1-3PM, May - Color Run and W.I.L.D Program, June - School's Out Glow Event and W.I.L.D Program, July - Ice Cream & Tie Dye and W.I.L.D Program and possible community field day, August - Block Party and W.I.L.D Program and Space Night, September - Grandparents Day, October - Fall Fest and Monster Mash on Main & Trick or Treat, December - Holiday Hoopla & Tree Lighting Ceremony. Leprechaun Hunt will be done a little differently this year similar to the Grinch Hunt. Clues will be placed at Old Schoolhouse Park and Alumni Park for two different age groups. Each park will have 5 different clues to find on your own time on Saturday (the 16th), and then on Sunday (17th) Parks & Rec members will be waiting at the Village Hall for the "hunters" to enter the codes they discovered from the clues to unlock the Leprechaun's "treasure". Budget of \$200 unanimously approved for the Leprechaun Hunt. Presented details of the Weston Wild Kids program: Wonder, Imagine, Learning, Discover (W.I.L.D.). Will learn about outdoor related topics, activities, read a book, and have a snack. Each lesson will be set at a max of 1 ½ hours. Will be held May-August on a Wednesday from 6-7:30PM and Saturday from 10:30am-noon. Topics include: Rainbow, Squirrels, Clouds, Sun & Space, 5 Senses, Growing/Gardening, Insects, Frogs/Turtles. Earth Day will consist of planting a tree, birdhouse contest, crafts (dirt cup, earth cootie catcher, seed starter), and scavenger hunt. Unanimously approved a budget of \$25 for geocaching supplies to place a geocache at the park. When the walking path is complete Stephanie shared an idea for an evening walking program called "Holy Walkamolies".

Community Development & Public Affairs: Due to referencing the Mayor's vacant property program proposal, the group had a lengthy discussion about derelict properties within the Village. The conditions and legal processes of finding solutions for problem properties, including lack of compliance with ordinances, such as trash, vehicles, health violations and uninhabitable structures, were clarified with attendees. Mr. Myerholtz brought up concerns about deteriorating conditions in parts of Lawndale, fearing that it would eventually need to be addressed by the Village. Mr. Myerholtz also mentioned the drop in population of the Village which shifted the discourse to the downtown business district. The lack of accessible space for commercial purposes was noted, Mr. Dallas expressed the need for making the downtown in particular, and the Village in general, a "destination", and felt that an influx of businesses would be vital to that end. Several attendees felt that there was a lack of support for existing businesses, including the Farmer's Market, both by local consumers as well as local government. Mrs. Myerholtz felt that the Village charging local establishments for listings in the newsletter and on the Rt 235 sign was a "slap in the face" and should be remedied. Another possible avenue of expansion brought up, was the desire to see an industrial park created on the land adjacent to Dollar General. It was suggested that the Village attain a first right of refusal for the property and aggressively promote its commercial use. It was universally agreed that a more vigorous pursuit of grant money needs to take place. The extreme difficulty in finding grant writers was noted. Mrs. Myerholtz mentioned that the Mayor of Van Buren has allegedly been successful in acquiring grants for his village and it was agreed that it would be wise to reach out for advice. Citing a successful situation in his New York hometown, Mr. Dallas is of the belief that town sports is the most unifying force in a small village, contributing to the "destination" theme. He noted in that instance, the ball program, on becoming a non-profit, was awarded the ubiquitous \$1 lease and that all mowing, maintenance, and desired facility development become the responsibility of the ball program. Down the road, this would free up money and labor for the town maintenance department. It was also expressed by a few, that the area encompassing parks and some features within are oversized for this community and it was their belief that they are underutilized and have minimal impact as well. Lastly, when asked, the main request of the attendees was simply for more support.

Cemetery: Dawn Blandy was sworn into a second term. Discussing the addition and/or updated version of decor removal rules for fall and spring due to warmer seasons in preparation for holidays. Request was made to place a privacy fence on the north side of the cemetery in front of the abandoned house. Tom and Harold are going to check and mark the property line, and get quotes for natural arbor fencing options. Tom Patton would like to apply for the mowing position. The board decided to send a copy of the Village proposal for the Administrator to take on the sexton duties to Robin for additions, subtractions, and revisions. The board will then resume discussion in March in hopes of having all three members to vote in March. Voted to have Arbor Barber remove the dead maple for \$1,200. Discussed levy options including replacement, renewal, or renewal with addition and the process of filing with the fiscal officer to be placed on the November ballot. Discussed the donations to the tree memorial fund and potentially completing the next phase of the memorial tree program.

Upcoming Meetings: Safety 2/22 at 5:30PM, Public Works 2/27 at 6PM, WSIB 3/5 at 5:30PM

New Business

Ordinance 2024-3 received an emergency reading; establishing employee wage schedules. The only update in this ordinance is increasing the base pay to \$16/hour in the Maintenance Technician position. The pay schedule and positions will be looked into further in general. A motion to suspend the rules for emergency reading of Ordinance 2024-3 was made by Mr. Babcock, seconded by Mr. Warner; Roll Call Vote: Ms. Klockowski - Yes, Mr. Babcock - Yes, Mr. Warner - Yes, Ms. Susor - Yes, Mr. Myerholtz - Yes, Mr. Easterwood - Yes. A motion for passage of Ordinance 2024-3 was made by Ms. Susor, seconded by Mr. Warner; Approved unanimously.

Approval of Expenditures

Council reviewed a summary of the bills (\$24,191.22) and outstanding invoices (\$5,383.29). A motion to approve the summary of the bills and payment of outstanding invoices was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Mr. Myerholtz;

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Miscellaneous Business

Mayor spoke to Mr. Easterwood about the plan to change the committee notes form from bullet points to something more similar to council minutes to then be published to the website. Mr. Easterwood expressed he plans to stick with the bullet points, other council members also added they prefer the bullet point style. Mayor pointed out it is meant to be informational and doesn't have to be an elaborate narrative. Mr. Myerholtz expressed that the committee chairmen should have the right to determine how they will present the information. He also feels the public could potentially be confused when both council minutes and committee minutes are posted, Mr. Warner added: put the minutes out there and let the public come and ask questions. Mr. Myerholtz also conveyed that it seems like council members are out on social media representing council, Ms. Klockowski asked "how are they representing council?" She pointed out she is a council person in general, and has a personal Facebook page and doesn't say she is a council person. She pointed out and asked that if she is not using the Village of Weston Facebook page, was she representing the council or herself in or her own personal thoughts. She pointed out that she has been approached by people wishing they could read committee minutes online since they sometimes cannot attend those meetings. There were some comments on how social media comments could be interpreted. The updates are to encourage detail in committee minutes to be able to put on the website. Ms. Susor suggested adding a disclaimer that the information is transitory and subject to change and to stress the contact information of who to reach out to.

Mr. Warner wanted to say, for the record, that Brittney represents herself very well on Facebook and in the Facebook groups.

Citizens & Visitors

Howard Lashuay, Shirley Moore, Gary Gustwiller, Jigar Patel & Greg Stevens (virtual), Ron Dallas & Erica Rupp (virtual)

Howard Lashuay was in attendance to ask a couple of questions/make suggestions:

1. Is Gary using his truck for Village business, and what is the liability?

Mayor shared that as far as he knows it has been cut off. Mr. Lashuay pointed out that he was seen unloading stuff to above the post office using his truck recently.

2. What is the final cost of the walk way?

Council asked for clarification because there is the sidewalk to Dollar General or the walking path. The walking path was proposed in 3 phases, phase one is excavating and stoning which is approximately \$23,000. The blacktopping would be sought out through a grant in upcoming years. This project was not awarded a grant, due to needing more buy in. Mayor pointed out doing phase 1 would show them the Village's efforts. Another cost was purchasing trees, which were purchased with the remainder of the tree fund from last year.

3. Suggested the Village look into selling/giving away the property of the old pump station (by Sand Ridge and Custar Road) to the family of the two boys in the memorial out there. Mr. Easterwood expressed he would like to look into this property more because we do not have a lot of information on it. Clerk shared that she plans to put a list of the Village properties together.

Gary Gustwiller was in attendance to express that the walking path is a lot of money and the Village does not need a walking path because you can walk in the grass. Mr. Easterwood shared that the phase 1 of the project is coming from the remaining ARPA money, and not the general fund.

Jigar Patel joined virtually to express that there seems to be a lot less interactions from citizens at the Village Hall versus the Weston Market because they don't know what is going on, and would suggest the agenda has a one liner with the titles. Jigar also pointed out that nobody has time to read the minutes.

Greg Stevens joined virtually to clarify information on the cemetery levy proposal, asking if funding would be 100% paid by Village land owners for property that is 100% in the township. Mayor expressed that is how a levy works, the levy is expiring so it is being discussed by the cemetery board. Clerk pointed out that non-Village residents have higher fees when it comes to lots/burials.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:19PM.

Jeremy Schroeder, Mayor

Stephanie Monts, Fiscal Officer/Clerk