

**Bellaire Village Council  
Meeting Minutes  
February 3, 2021**

1. **Call to Order:** President Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **Roll Call Attendance:**
  - Present:** President Dan Bennett, Council Trustees Eldon McPherson, Trish Drollinger, Pat Boyd, Dave Ciganick and Helen Schuckel.
  - Absent:** Trustee Bryan Hardy
  - Staff Present:** Cathy Odom, Treasurer & Nicole Essad, Clerk.
  - Also Present:** Louise Wenzel, Terry VanAlstine, Dave Gajda, Jennifer Hodges, Tracy Muscat, Doreen McGuire, Heidi Shafer, Don Seymour, Joe Short, Scott Newman-Bale, Maggie Maul & Linda Gallagher.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved with the replacement of new business item d, from Richardi Park Key to Meeting Per Diem.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to approve the agenda with the replacement of new business item d, from Richardi Park Key to Meeting Per Diem. Motion carried by voice vote.**
4. **Conflict of Interest:** Trustee Drollinger noted a conflict with Resolution #03 of 2021, the public safety budget.
5. **Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda was approved. President Bennett noted that the newspaper last week stated he voted against renting the street sweeper and he did not. Treasurer Odom noted that the minutes reflect the correct vote.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by McPherson, to approve the consent agenda as presented.  
Motion carried by voice vote.**
6. **Public Comment:** None presented.
7. **Old Business**
  - a) **County Update-Mr. VanAlstine:** Mr. VanAlstine informed Council that the County opened for business on Monday, they have one new commissioner, Jarus Rubbing, & Kevin Giar was appointed to the Road Commission Board. They approved the County 2021-26 Parks & Recreation Plan. The election lawsuit hearing is scheduled for May and the non jury trial is set for June 7-8. Mr. VanAlstine also said he is working with HR and Admin to employ a mechanic for ACT.
  - b) **DDA Update:** Ms. Wenzel informed Council that the DDA received a FOIA request for the recordings of their minutes. They received a Village update from President Bennett. Mr. Irwin provided an update of the Steering Committee. They reviewed their action plan and determined the projects to complete and placed them in order of importance. These include the completion of the RRC, Wi-Fi, restrooms downtown and Richardi Park improvements. They would like to continue keeping the lines of communication open. At the DDA meeting, Mr. Short provided an update of the Kegger Campground and a financial report of the sale of firewood. The net profit will be donated to the DDA. They accepted the resignation of Christy Wilson from the DDA. The DDA Board conducted interviews of applicants that will fill the three vacant positions on the DDA. Recommendations include Dave Gajda to fill Christy Wilson's seat, Tracy Muscat to fill Rolland Fink's seat and Doreen McGuire to fill Doug Dawson's seat. Ms Wenzel asked about providing the Oath of Office to the new board members virtually as two of them are not permanent residents at this time. Mr. Hoyt's term is also up for renewal and he would like to be reappointed. DDA officer positions were approved. The DDA would like to have a discussion about placing more trash cans downtown. They also discussed developing a parking map that could be given to visitors so they know where and when they are allowed to park downtown.

Trustee Ciganick asked the intended use of the requested parking map and how will it be communicated to the visitors who use need them.

## 8. New Business

- a) **Harbor Street Canal:** Heidi Shafer from the Conservation District would like to apply for a Watershed Council Support grant for the Harbor St. canal with the goal being to protect the Intermediate River from polluted runoff, dredge the channel and stabilize the banks. She explained that there is a storm water outlet that empties into the canal. The canal was probably built in the 50's/60's with a contractor digging the canal using the fill to make a shoreline to allow for buildable lots. Wooden retaining walls were installed to protect the bank. More recently, the storm water outlet was installed with the runoff going into the canal. With the storm water runoff and the deteriorating retaining walls, the canal is diminishing. The Conservation District is writing a grant to hire engineers to look at the storm water outfall and the condition of the canal. They would like to see some kind of treatment mechanism for the storm water to help avoid pollutants from getting into the river. They would like a letter of support from the Village to help secure the grant to get the engineering work completed. If all works out, the residents along the canal said they will restore their retaining walls to be able to once again use the canal. She said she is not seeking financial support at this time, but depending on the status of future grants she would very much appreciate any help the village can give. If they do receive grants to complete the work, residents restoring their retaining walls could be considered the match that most grants require. Trustee Ciganick asked if there are other areas in the village that may be a concern with Ms Shafer saying she would be happy to discuss researching this with the Village if they want to look into it. She said every village in the county that is by a waterway may have storm water issues that may be a concern. The villages and Conservation District can work together if anyone wants to pursue it. If we can find ways to get storm water into the ground, it can be filtered before it hits the waterways. There are a number of things that can make that happen. This is a long term project and costly.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by McPherson, to give a letter of endorsement to the conversation district in their efforts to write a grant for the correction of the storm water runoff at the bottom of the Harbor Street canal. Motion carried by voice vote.**

- b) **Central Lake/Bellaire Non Motorized Trail:** Addressed at a previous meeting, the committee working on the project is ready to complete the first step and get a feasibility study done to see if the trail can even be done. Jennifer Hodges from Gourdie Frasier will be doing the work. Maggie Maul said the study will investigate all potential routes for the trail. It will also survey businesses, residents & people along the trail to see if there is support. The cost of the study is between \$15,000-\$18,000. They are planning to apply for a Rotary Grant to help cover the cost. The maximum to apply for is \$10,000 and will require matching funds. The Rotary Grant would like to see the matching funds come from the municipalities involved equally divided. This includes the Bellaire, Forest Home Twp, Central Lake Village and Central Lake Township. They are requesting no more than \$2,000 from each municipality. She said she also reached out to Antrim County to see if they would like to be involved in the project. She said the Rotary also wanted to see a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all of the entities. They are recommending that Central Lake Village be the administrative entity. It was noted that an MOU is not a legal binding document, just an understanding that all entities have agreed to work together. If the construction of the trail moves forward, donations will be accepted and different types of grants will be applied for. President Bennett asked how the Village of Bellaire will fit into this project since we already have a path from one side of the village limits to the other. Ms. Maul agreed and maybe the Village of Bellaire doesn't have to be included since a trail already exists. She also said connecting to our current trail may have to be considered. Trustee Ciganick asked if we are able to spend money on something that starts at the north end of our Village. Ms. Hodges noted that all entities were invited due to the potential of economic growth, which will benefit all

communities. Mr. VanAlstine noted that once the trail is complete who will maintain it and cover the costs of maintenance. It was noted that all of that will be considered in the feasibility study.

**Motion by Bennett, seconded by Boyd, to support the Memorandum of Understanding for the non motorized trail between Bellaire and Central Lake at a cost of no more than \$2,000. Motion carried by voice vote.**

- c) **Property & Building Recommendation-Village Property:** We received an offer from Joe Short to purchase the Village owned property north of the pub. This is the section where the Village has plans to place public restrooms. Property & Building met to discuss and their recommendation is for Council to decide if they want to place restrooms in that location or to redo the locks on the front of the community hall to be able to access the restrooms in the basement. President Bennett noted the cost to redo the front doors to include the locking mechanism needed for use of the community hall restrooms was approximately \$28,000-\$30,000. Trustee Drollinger asked about swapping property. Clerk Essad stated that we cannot just swap property; it has to be done by fair market value. Also, for him to sell a portion of his lot, it would have to be split, which is a zoning issue. She also stated that the property he would like to purchase is only 26' x 60' and does not go all the way to M-88. For Short's to have their wraparound porch, the Village would have to abandon that section of Broad St from the property to M-88. Trustee Drollinger suggested that they could wrap it around the back of the pub. Mr. Newman-Bale said they are still willing to go through with the purchase of the property in light of it not going to M-88. Trustee McPherson said to keep in mind the piece of property that doesn't go to M-88 is also being used by the Chamber of Commerce, the other piece is in our major restroom plan and he is not comfortable just selling public property. He said we have a plan in place and we have not spoke with the Chamber about it. Trustee Ciganick said he is not opposed to selling the land if we have another location for the restrooms. President Bennett noted that there seems to be more discussion needed. Trustee Ciganick suggested it go back to committee for further review. He also stated that he doesn't like the idea of putting funds into the community hall restrooms because it is not conducive to anyone in a wheelchair and they are kind of removed from the downtown area.
- d) **Meeting Per Diem:** Technically Council & staff are paid for two meetings tonight, once for the public hearing and once for the regular meeting. In the past, Council has always voted to be paid for one meeting when we have two in the same evening. A motion is needed if you want to be paid for only one meeting.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to be paid one meeting per diem instead of two for this evenings two sessions. Motion carried by voice vote.**

- e) **DDA Board members-Resignation/Appointments:** The DDA received a letter of resignation from DDA Board member Christy Wilson and it should be accepted by Council.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to accept Christy Wilson's letter of resignation from the Board of the DDA. Motion carried by voice vote.**

With her resignation from the DDA Board, there are three open seats. The DDA is recommending three new applicants be appointed this evening. The candidates are David Gajda, Tracy Muscat Lareau and Doreen McGuire. Each candidate introduced themselves and provided some background information at the request of President Bennett. Treasurer Odom informed Council that Dave Gajda will be taking Christy Wilson's seat with a term expiration of 2025, Tracy Muscat Lareau will fill Rolland Fink's seat with a term expiration of 2024 and Doreen McGuire will fill Doug Dawson's seat with a term expiration of 2022. Clerk Essad noted that Don Hoyt would also like to be reappointed as his seat expires this month. His new term will end in 2025. Mr. VanAsltine asked if board members are supposed to be residents of the DDA district and it was noted that we meet the rules of the bylaws which state that a majority of the nine member board have to be residents or have an interest in the district. There are currently five that meet those criteria.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to approve the DDA Board member appointments of Dave Gajda with his term ending 2025, Tracy Muscat Lareau with her term ending in 2024, Doreen McGuire with her term ending in 2022 and to reappoint Don Hoyt with his term ending in 2025. Motion carried by voice vote.**

The other item Council needs to discuss concerns the oaths of office for the DDA board members. They would like to have the oaths administered virtually, however, they have always been completed in person due to required signatures. President Bennett noted that staff would make the time on a Saturday if needed. Trustee Ciganick noted that they use Docusign for many of their property transactions. It is secure and he can help the office staff set it up. President Bennett noted that a motion would be needed. Clerk Essad explained that we would provide the oath virtually and then use Docusign to send them the oaths for their signature. Mr. Newman-Bale pointed out that the State had very specific rules about swearing in due to Covid. He is not aware if they have been rescinded and we may want to look into it to make sure it is done properly. President Bennett suggested approving the motion, find out the proper details from the Covid orders and then if possible move forward with the virtual swearing in.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by McPherson, that we arrange for the swearing in of the three new members of the DDA this Saturday and make arrangements for the signatures to be handled through Docusign or Dot Loop to accommodate the swearing in done in a proper manner. Motion carried by voice vote.**

- f) **2021-22 Wage Scale:** Council annually reviews the Village wage scale, which this year includes a 1.6% cost of living increase. If Council agrees, it is ready for approval.

**Motion by Boyd, seconded by McPherson, to accept the wage scale with a 1.6% increase. Motion carried by voice vote.**

- g) **Resolution #01 of 2021, DDA Budget:** This resolution will approve the FY2021-22 budget for the DDA.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Drollinger, to approve Resolution #01 of 2021, approving the FY2021-22 DDA Budget as presented. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Ciganick, Drollinger, Boyd, McPherson, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None Absent: Hardy.**

- h) **Resolution #02 of 2021, Operating Budget:** This resolution will approve the Village general operating budget for FY2021-22. Treasurer Odom updated Council on amended items placed in the proposed budget based on discussion at the public hearing. This would include expenses for the EZ Rink and an increase of \$1,000 for Craven Park equipment rental. The revenues now include an increase in proposed tax revenue. The proposed operating millage to support this budget is also included in this resolution.

**Motion by Boyd, seconded by Bennett, to approve Resolution #02 of 2021, approving the FY2021-22 general operating budget as amended. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Boyd, Ciganick, Drollinger, McPherson, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None Absent: Hardy.**

- i) **Resolution #03 of 2021, Public Safety/Total Budget:** This resolution will approve the FY2021-22 public safety budget and total overall budget. The total numbers were updated based on discussion at the public hearing.

**Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to approve Resolution #03 of 2021, approving the FY2021-22 public safety and overall total budget as amended. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Ciganick, Boyd, McPherson, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None. Abstain: Drollinger. Absent: Hardy.**

- j) **Resolution #04 of 2021, FY2020-21 Budget Amendments:** This resolution will approve budget amendments needed for the FY2020-21 budget.

**Motion by Boyd, seconded by McPherson, to approve Resolution #04 of 2021, approving budget amendments for the FY2020-21 budget. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Boyd, McPherson, Ciganick, Drollinger, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None. Absent: Hardy.**

**9. Discussion Items:** None presented.

**10. Department/Committee Reports:**

- a) **Committee Reports:** Committee minutes, for the committees that have met, were included in packets for review.
- b) **Clerk/Zoning Administrator:** Clerk Essad noted that there are a couple of potential zoning items she may be working on in the future. No other news was reported.
- c) **Treasurer/Deputy Clerk:** Nothing presented.
- d) **Department of Public Works:** Nothing presented.
- e) **Police Department:** Nothing presented.
- f) **Planning Commission:** Nothing presented.

**11. Closing Member/Public Comment:**

- **President Bennett:** President Bennett informed Council that Mr. Keiser is looking into an EZ Rink for our skating rink next winter. Trustee Drollinger said Elk Rapids and East Jordan use them; they set it up in the fall, flood it and when it's cold enough, it freezes, creating the ice rink. There is a lot less maintenance required and the cost for this type of rink is \$6,000-\$7,000. This item has been placed into next year's budget and if approved Mr. Keiser will work on getting it for next winter. President Bennett also noted that the calls for our officers have increased and we need to begin thinking about how to handle the increased load. He also noted that Joe Short has asked for a map that will show visitors where parking areas are located. We have a map that can be updated to show these areas. Staff will get it updated.
- **Mr. VanAlstine:** Mr. VanAlstine informed Council that he has plans to seek volunteers in the spring to help level off and plant seed on the old bank property.
- **Trustee Ciganick:** Trustee Ciganick asked if Chief Drollinger could update the Council on the increased call load at the next meeting. He also informed Council of the accident with the fire hydrant at North Street. It was noted that the repairs have been completed.
- **Trustee Drollinger:** Trustee Drollinger asked when virtual meetings are supposed to end and Clerk Essad noted that they are scheduled to end March 31, 2021.
- **Nicole Essad:** Clerk Essad asked Council's thoughts on returning to the office. Council agreed. The plan is to still keep the office closed to the public but after discussion it was recommended that the decision be left up to the office staff. Staff will return on Monday morning and open the building to the public.

**12. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Compiled by Cathy Odom  
Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_