

**Bellaire Village Council
Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2023
7:00 PM**

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 Trish Drollinger, Pat Boyd, Eldon McPherson, Dave Ciganick, Bryan Hardy (Left Meeting at 8:00 pm) & Helen Schuckel.

Absent: None

Staff Present: Cathy Odom, Treasurer, Nicole Essad, Clerk & Bill Drollinger, Chief of Police.

Also Present: Terry VanAlstine, Margie Boyd & Linda Gallagher.

3. **Approval of Agenda:** Kearney Township Contract was added under old business item c, ballfield update and also added was new business item f, Glacial Hills Request.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Schuckel, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried by voice vote.

4. **Conflict of Interest:** None presented.

5. **Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda was approved as presented.

Motion by Schuckel, seconded by Hardy, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

6. **Public Comment:** None presented.

7. **Old Business**

a) **County Update:** The County hired Bud Randall as a new building inspector. Noah Tucker, at the sheriff's office, started at the academy. Household hazardous waste is scheduled for September 30 at the Antrim County Road Commission in Mancelona. The façade project and the health department building renovation are moving forward. A notice will be sent out to see the potential support for a new public safety center. This will be completed to see if there is enough support to place it on the ballot for a millage in 2024. Torch Lake Township has been working on a septic ordinance for time of transfer testing, in which, waterfront owners will have to have their septic tested. Central Lake Township is also working on a similar ordinance. There was a meeting to discuss a potential Brownfield Development, the Bellaire Flats project, which is a housing development.

b) **DDA Update:** The DDA is required to file an Annual Status Report for the TIF Plan with the State of Michigan. A copy of the report was presented to Council. Paintings are now up for auction. Bids can be presented online.

- **Hydro Study Update:** Nothing presented. Leslie Meyers was going to present the results of the study but was not in attendance.

- c) **Ball Field Update:** Kearney Township approved \$6,000 to help toward the cost of the dugouts. We received a donation of \$12,000 and the Friends of Bellaire Athletics will provide the other \$6,000, which will now allow for the construction of four (4) dugouts for the high school fields.

- **Kearney Township Contract:** Kearney Township has approved \$6,000 to help toward the cost of the dugouts, our attorney drew up the contract and it is ready for approval.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by McPherson, to approve the Kearney Township contract for \$6,000 to help with the construction of the high school field dugouts. Motion carried by voice vote.

- d) **Walking Path Bridge Repair:** The repairs needed on the walking path bridge were discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Keiser provided a memo discussing the repairs and cost of the boards to resurface the top deck of the bridge. It was noted that staff has been checking it regularly.

8. New Business

- a) **Richardi Park Design Plan:** The redesign plan is complete. There are several phases in the plan and includes the cost of the phases. The total cost of all phases is \$5,781,000. If the council likes the plan, we can accept it, which will then allow us to apply for grants when they become available. As funding becomes available, the plan can be implemented.

Motion by McPherson, seconded by Drollinger, to accept the Richardi Park Reimagining plan as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

- b) **Women's Resource Center Proclamation:** This proclamation supports the Women's Resource Center and names October as Domestic Abuse Awareness Month.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Hardy, to approve the Women's Resource Center's Proclamation naming October as Domestic Abuse Awareness Month. Motion carried by voice vote.

- c) **Resolution #19 of 2023, MTTP Grant:** The resolution will allow the Village to apply for cameras outside of the downtown restroom building. It is part of our insurance risk reduction program. The projected cost of the project is \$2,000 and if awarded, the price of the cameras will be paid for through grant funds.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Hardy, to approve Resolution #19 of 2023, supporting the Michigan Township Participating Plan Grant Application. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Boyd, Hardy, Ciganick, Drollinger, McPherson, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None.

- d) **SRF Funding-WWTP:** Treasurer Odom informed the Council that we did not receive the SRF funding for the WWTP repairs. She spoke with our financial advisor, and they are currently working on numbers for the USDA and the open bond market. He is available to attend our meeting on October 4 to go through our other funding options.

- e) **Administration Committee Recommendation:** The Administration Committee met to discuss the financial issues of the general fund. Staff noted that we have cash flow concerns that need to be addressed. They also provided financial information outlining these concerns. Due to this, the committee discussed several options to help alleviate some of the financial burden. The council needs to review these options, which include potential cuts such as non-essential spending, voluntary layoffs, eliminating cleaning staff, reducing mowing, meeting pay, reopening union wage negotiations and cashing in CDs for additional cash flow. A lengthy discussion about the options occurred. Trustee Boyd noted that will have to make some tough decisions tonight. The council looked at potential cuts that would be sustaining, which means it would provide continuous savings on an annual basis. Some of these include cutting staff hours, cutting pension benefits and having employees pay for some of their health care benefits. Trustee Boyd noted that if we consider a layoff, which positions would be considered, the police department and office staff were noted. Trustee Ciganick said he would look at all items on the list. He said we must look at every dime. Portable restrooms, cleaning and chimney repair at the pavilion were discussed. The proposed police millage and increasing the general operating millage was also discussed. The police millage would bring in approximately \$149,000 which would eliminate some revenue transferred from the general fund to the police department. This would then help to eliminate the problems in the general fund because it would no longer be the police department's only revenue source. Eliminating the DDA to recoup the tax capture was mentioned. Trustee Ciganick said he would like to move forward with each of the options discussed. He stated that he would like to finalize a decision on options 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6. This includes cashing in the CDs, voting to eliminate the balance of the cleaning budget for park restrooms and community hall, freeze any non-essential spending, look at raising the cemetery rates and reduce the mowing of the village parks. The process which will determine what is an essential expense was discussed, noting that a department's supervisor or council member could be tasked with choosing what can or can't be purchased.

Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to approve recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6 as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

Trustee Drollinger noted that we ask the soccer organization to pay for the soccer park portable restroom for next year's soccer season. We will not need portable restrooms next year.

Motion by Drollinger, seconded by Boyd, to pull the portable restrooms from the boat launches immediately. Motion carried by voice vote.

Reopening union wage negotiations was discussed. President Bennet would like to see if they would reopen negotiations to eliminate the first-year increase and place it under the third year of the contract, which would eliminate the wage reopener that is currently in the contract. Chief Drollinger asked if the Council would allow him to ask the union for the reopener. Trustee Ciganick said that as a consensus of Council we ask Chief Drollinger to speak with the union on behalf of the Village of Bellaire to move the 3.5% to the third year and reopen the contract negotiation.

Motion by Hardy, seconded by Boyd, to propose a reopening of the union negotiations to discuss wages. Motion carried by voice vote.

The council discussed foregoing their meeting pay, which is \$50.00 per meeting, for the balance of the fiscal year. This doesn't include planning commission, staff or committee meeting pay.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Ciganick, to have Council forego meeting pay for Council meetings for the balance of the fiscal year. Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to accept Chief Drollinger's, Clerk Essad's and Treasurer Odom's offer of foregoing their night meeting pay for the balance of the fiscal year. Motion carried by voice vote.

Trustee Ciganick noted that these actions demonstrate to the constituents that we are all affected, and it is an effort to look at everything that can help remedy this issue. In light of asking for a voluntary layoff, Trustee Ciganick asked if anyone has spoken to the police department or the office staff about what would work for them. He would like to ask them about how cutting hours or benefits would work for them. He would like the opportunity to speak with them before Council makes any decision on a layoff. Laying off a police officer and the process by which to do that was discussed. Cutting hours was again discussed. Having another Council meeting to discuss the results of the meetings with the employees was scheduled for September 7, 2023 at 5:00 PM.

- f) **Glacial Hill Request:** Glacial Hills would like to know if they can put a map of the trails at the new restrooms. Each kiosk is for a different organization, but they could put a smaller size map in the village kiosk. They would also like permission to place an emergency access sign on the village owned property of the trail.

Motion by Drollinger, seconded by Schuckel, to approve Glacial Hills request to place an emergency access sign on the village owned property of the trail system and to approve their request to use part of the village kiosk to place a glacial hill trail map. Motion carried by voice vote.

- 9. **Discussion Items:** Trustee Ciganick asked for an updated lead line replacement completion report for the October 4, 2023 meeting.

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:** We have two developments coming up and she has sent a letter to the old greenhouse property owner discussing clean up.
- c) **Treasurer/Deputy Clerk:** The language for the ballot was officially approved and has been sent to the printer.
- d) **Department of Public Works:** A written report was presented.
- e) **Police Department:** Chief Drollinger presented a call report per council request.
- f) **Planning Commission:** Nothing presented.

11. Closing Member/Public Comment:

- **Terry VanAlstine:** As a taxpayer, Mr. VanAlstine would like something in writing that explains how we came to be in the financial position we are currently in.
- **Dan Bennett:** President Bennett says we should look at working with townships on VRBO's.

12. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Compiled by Cathy Odom
Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: _____

Date: _____