

**Bellaire Village Council
Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2023**

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 Dave Ciganick, Trish Drollinger, Bryan Hardy, Pat Boyd, Eldon McPherson & Helen Schuckel.

Absent: None

Staff Present: Cathy Odom, Treasurer, Bradley Keiser, DPW Supervisor & Bill Drollinger, Chief of Police.

Also Present: Terry VanAlstine, Linda Gallagher, Doreen & Jerry McGuire, Jennifer Hodges & Margie Boyd.

3. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved with a name change to new business item b to read, Professional Services-CWSRF, the addition of new business item i, Letter of Support.

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

4. **Conflict of Interest:** Trustee Drollinger noted her conflict with the police department budget which will be addressed at the meeting later this month.

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

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

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

7. **Old Business**

a) **County Update:** County opened bids for a timber sale around the Alba Rd. Forest area. High bid was \$51,084 and the work should be completed within a year and must be paid for before work begins. New software was installed at the jail. The County received extra funds from the state for secondary road patrol. These funds will purchase two new speed signs. The Treasurer's office will be purchasing new folder/sealer equipment. The two animal control officers will be attending a horse academy to learn more detailed information about them. They had a meeting concerning the facade of the building and will be reviewing a revised set of numbers for the project. They will be receiving a settlement of approximately \$119,000 from their opioid litigation. The Sheriff's office will probably use the funds to train officers in mental health conditions related to opioid use.

b) **DDA Update:** The Buy Local Group will be hosting an artist week bake off. Tickets are \$10.00. They are waiting to hear about the Art grant application. They are working on their art items to display; brochures and they are creating a list of sponsorship opportunities for the exhibition. The College of Creative Studies will be hosting an alumni event on August 19 in downtown Bellaire, and they will be introducing the exhibit to the attendees at that event because Charles Culver was a faculty member of the college. The DDA would like the Village Council to consider hosting the next meet and greet event on Monday, May 15 at Terrain from 5:30-7:00 pm. They will introduce

the exhibit to the community at this event. They also interviewed 3 candidates to fill the vacant seat on the DDA and are recommending that the Council appoint Mike Belanger.

- **Member Appointments-Cindi Place & Michael Belanger:** President Bennett would like to appoint Michael Belanger to fill the vacant seat on the DDA and to reappoint Cindi Place for another term.

Motion by Bennett, seconded by Hardy, to approve the appointment of Michael Belanger and reappointment of Cindi Place to the DDA Board. Motion carried by voice vote.

- **Resolution 02 of 2023, DDA Budget Amendment:** The DDA would like Council approval of a budget amendment which will cover an unbudgeted expense accrued for their work on the art project.

Motion by Hardy, seconded by Bennett, to approve Resolution #02 of 2023, a DDA budget amendment. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes: Hardy, Boyd, Ciganick, Drollinger, McPherson, Schuckel & Bennett. Nays: None.

- c) **Ball Field Update:** The backstops at the ball fields are complete and paid for. Mr. Keiser has scheduled a meeting on February 22 with all the sports groups to discuss fundraising for the balance of the projects that need to be completed. Dugout types and costs were discussed.

8. New Business

- a) **Friends of the Veteran's Request-Flagpole Bench:** The Friends of the Veterans (FOV) are asking to place a bench at the flag pole in Richardi Park. This was previously discussed two other times with Council saying no to both requests. Trustee Boyd stated that the original request was for the flag pole then the bricks were added, then planters and now they want a bench. The future redesign of the Richardi Park and the fact that there is a veterans Memorial at another location was discussed. Trustee Boyd said there was we already said no, twice. Trustee McPherson said he didn't see a problem, veterans like to see kids play and we can share a little bit of the park with them. Further discussion to approve or disapprove took place. Council discussed having to approve the type of bench that they want to place there. It was noted that they provided a picture of the bench they would like to use. If you don't approve this one, then they will have to pick another type for you to approve.

Motion by Bennett, seconded by McPherson, to accept the Friends of the Veteran's request for the bench that was provided with their request, to be placed at the flag pole in Richardi Park. Motion carried by voice vote with two nay votes from Hardy & Boyd.

- b) **SRF Professional Services:** These services will help with the application for the SRF funding/grant program from the state and the project list for the second phase of work that is needed for the wastewater treatment plant. We have filed a required notice of intent to apply in November and the next step is to develop an engineering report, which is due by May 31, 2023. One was already completed by our previous engineer and will be used to update a current report, which will keep costs down. We will also need to use Baker Tilly for financial services, which will help make sure our revenue sources will pay for the SRF funding if we are able to get it. We will also have Bond Counsel fees to work through the proper bond documents we will need if these funds are awarded. Once this is complete, the state will base our application on a point system. If we fall within the acceptable points, we could be awarded the funds. Once awarded, the

determination for how much might be forgiven as a grant would be determined. Current terms are 20 years at a 1.875% interest rate or 30 years at a 2.25% interest rate. Treasurer Odom informed Council that the engineering fees for this phase will be \$26,000, professional fees for the financial side from Baker Tilly will be \$18,600 and Bond Council fees will be \$19,500 for a total of \$64,100. If approved this will have to be placed into the budget.

Motion by McPherson, seconded by Boyd, to approve Gourdie-Frasier's contract for \$26,000 for engineering for the SRF funding program. Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Schuckel, to approve Baker Tilly's contract for financial services for \$18,600 for the SRF funding program. Motion carried by voice vote.

- c) **Cherry Capital Cycling Club Request:** The Cherry Capital Cycling Club would like to use a small area of Craven Park on Sunday, July 16, for use as a food stop for their 36th annual Ride Around Torch bicycle tour. It will be from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. They will clean up and remove their trash when done. They have used it for several years now and would like to use it again this year.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Drollinger, to approve the Cherry Capital Cycling Club's request for the use of Craven Park for their 2023 event. Motion carried by voice vote.

- d) **Water/Sewer Request-905 N. Bridge St.:** New owners of 905 N. Bridge St. is requesting an exemption of ready to serve fees on their water/sewer billing due to having no connected plumbing within the structure. They do plan to tear it down this year and would like the exemption until a new structure is built, at that time they would gladly pay the fees. The service is currently shut off but there is water and sewer service available. Mr. Keiser noted that any house that has a tap viable and water hookup has a ready to serve fee. Cutting and capping the line was discussed. However, it was noted that the house is currently for sale and any new prospective buyer that purchases the house may want to rehab it. It may be premature to allow the service to stop. Giving them a choice of disconnecting and then having to pay another tap in fee or keeping the ready to serve fees in place was discussed. It was noted that because it is listed for sale and ownership can change within a day, disconnection may not be the option. We have a resolution in place that states ready to serve fees will be charged if there is a water tap. When the house is torn down, and it becomes a vacant lot, this can be readdressed.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by McPherson, to leave the ready to serve fee in place since the house is existing and the property is for sale. Motion carried by voice vote.

- e) **Thayer Lane-One Way:** Mr. Keiser is requesting that Council make the section of Thayer Lane from Division to Birch St. into a one-way road from east to west. He explained that pulling out onto Division from there is already difficult, and with the potential new businesses going in, it will be more difficult. MDOT is good with the idea. The property owners and the police department support the request.

Motion by Drollinger, seconded by Ciganick, to make Thayer Lane from M-88 to Birch St. one-way going from east to west. Motion carried by voice vote.

- f) **Village-County Land Swap:** The documents for the property swap are complete. Our attorneys have reviewed them. There were some minor changes that all parties agreed to. We did receive some amended documents with some minor recording language that had to be changed and those changes were presented to Council. There are three different documents, two Quit Claim Deeds, one for the parking lot, one for the park and the easement for the County to access their Dam

when work is needed to be done. Trustee Ciganick noted that there were no stakes in the ground that outlines the easement. He stated that all is probably fine, but he would like to see the actual location of the easement. It was noted that this could be tabled until it can be verified and bring it back to Council for approval at the next meeting. It was also noted that this should be completed as quickly as possible so we can move forward with the work at Richardi Park. Council tabled to be able to see the actual location of the easement and will place it back on the Council agenda scheduled for February 15, 2023.

Motion by McPherson to clarify the easement by placing stakes in the ground. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

- g) **Administration Committee Recommendations:** The Administration Committee met to discuss several items and the following recommendations were brought to Council.
- **Employee Reviews:** Admin is recommending the elimination of review's for department heads and exclude this year's documentation. Trustee McPherson if this change affects what is in the handbook. It was noted that the handbook will be reviewed and amended if it needs to be.

Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Boyd, to terminate the review process for the Chief, Clerk, Treasurer and DPW Supervisor to begin with this year's reviews henceforth and to make necessary adjustments to the handbook to reflect the same. Motion carried by voice vote with one nay vote from Trustee McPherson.
 - **Merit Pay:** The committee also recommends that merit pay not be distributed for this year.

Motion by Ciganick, seconded by Hardy, to not distribute merit pay for this year. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - **Employee Health Insurance:** The Admin committee reviewed health insurance policies for 2023-24 and is recommending that Council approve a community blue plan with a \$500 deductible which provides a cost savings to the employee as well as the Village.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Hardy, to accept the recommended employee health insurance policy. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - **Wage Scale:** The Admin committee also reviewed the current wage scale and discussed changing it from a 5-year to a 3-year step, allowing employees to get to the top of the wage scale sooner.

Motion by Hardy, seconded by Bennett, to change the wage scale from a 5-year step to a 3-year step. Motion carried by voice vote with one nay vote from Trustee Ciganick.
 - **Wages-License Holders:** Admin discussed the wage scale in reference to employees who hold a license. Water/sewer license holders have higher responsibilities than a DPW worker. The discussion was about these employees not being compensated for the extra responsibility. Those hold a medical license was also a part of this discussion. The committee is recommending employees that hold a water license receive an additional

\$1.00 per hour, those that hold a lagoon license receive an additional \$.50 per hour and those that hold a treatment plant license also receive an additional \$.50 per hour.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Hardy, to accept the recommendation for an additional wage for license holders as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

- **Police Millage:** The committee is recommending that the Public Safety Committee meet to discuss implementing a millage to help cover the costs for the police department. Trustee Ciganick noted that when we hired the third officer, we anticipated an increase in revenue and unfortunately we haven't seen that. We continue to transfer funds from the general fund and we are tracking in the wrong direction. We need to find something that will generate revenue. We are spending more than we are taking in, we cannot do that for too long. Chief Drollinger noted that he was never asked to make cuts. Treasurer Odom noted that the police department is supported by the general fund. With the revenue for the police department at about \$8,000 and their expenses about \$300,000, the difference has to come from the general fund. The general fund, fund balance, has been depleting since the hiring of the third officer. She said she remembers telling Council a year ago to keep an eye on the fund balance. It was also noted that Chief Drollinger is doing a great job on his budget. Treasurer Odom reminded Council that this has to go to a vote of the people and also what is generated is up to Council. We can have a millage to support a part of their budget, which could help. It doesn't have to support the entire budget. The committee can discuss other possible revenue options as well. We have to find a way to generate revenue to cover our expenses.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Ciganick, to have the public safety committee meet to pursue additional revenue sources. Motion carried by voice vote.

- **Employee Wages:** Admin originally discussed and recommended a 6% cost of living increase. They met again, rescinded that recommendation and changed it to a 3% wage increase. This increase was calculated into each step of the wage scale. Trustee Ciganick noted that the increase in health care amounts to a value of about 3% and with the 3% wage increase, it is being considered as a total compensation of 6%. Mr. Keiser noted that employees are happy with the health care coverage and does not object to a 3% wage increase. Trustee Ciganick reminded Council again that the bottom line is we are spending more than we are bringing in and we are not getting back to what we said we were going to do, to have a 30% fund balance. He explained that the new wage scale accelerates employee reaching the top of the wage scale and with the 3% value of health insurance, we still have a great package offered, and feels the wage increase is too high. He noted that all employees deserve it, but the revenue is not there. Mr. Keiser also noted that two employees are still waiting to negotiate their contract.

Motion by Hardy, seconded by Bennett, to adopt a 3% wage increase for employees for the FY2023-24. Motion carried by voice vote with three nay votes from Trustees Ciganick, Boyd & McPherson.

- **Wage Scale Matter:** Treasurer Odom noted that due to the new 3-year wage scale, one employee who started at the two-year rate on the 5-year scale will be making less than where he started. She would like Council direction to resolve this. If Council approves we can give him the 3% cost of living increase on his current approved rate, he will then move up to the two-year rate on the new wage scale on his anniversary. Keeping current employees on the 5-year scale and new employees on the new 3-year scale was discussed. Discussion of both scales occurred.

Motion by McPherson, seconded by Boyd, to rescind the motion approving the 3-year wage scale and reinstating the 5-year wage scale. Motion carried by voice vote.

- h) **ZBA Alternate Member Appointment:** Mr. Alan Shumaker would like to fill the alternate position on the ZBA. President Bennett would like to appoint him to the Board.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Drollinger, to approve the appointment of Mr. Shumaker as the alternate on the ZBA Board. Motion carried by voice vote.

- i) **Letter of Support:** The County approached the Village for a letter of support for application to the ROBIN (realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks) Grant Program by Peninsula Fiber Network (PFN). If awarded, it will create a fiber backbone in central and southeast regions of Antrim County, and connectivity options for underserved areas in the same region, which includes the Village of Bellaire.

Motion by Boyd, seconded by Schuckel, to approve the letter of support for PFN's application to the ROBIN Grant Program. Motion carried by voice vote.

9. Discussion Items:

- a) **FY2023-24 Budget:** Please review the budget and let staff know if there are any questions or recommended changes.

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:** Nothing presented.
- c) **Treasurer/Deputy Clerk:** Treasurer Odom provided Council with a copy of the fund balance policy which is supposed to be reviewed and approved on an annual basis. Our risk management company provided a report from their risk assessment they completed for Council to review. Tracey LaReau from the DDA is interested in having a set of the skates that are located on the stage of the community hall. She is happy to make a donation for them. Council agreed to allow her to make a donation for them.
- d) **Department of Public Works:** A representative from the Three Lakes Association has asked for a tour of the WWTP. Mr. Keiser will set up a time with him for the tour.
- e) **Police Department:** Chief Drollinger asked about the status of the fire department/village property transfer. Because it is already approved, it can be signed when complete. He provided a call log report.
- f) **Planning Commission:** Nothing presented.

11. Closing Member/Public Comment

- **Trustee McPherson:** Trustee McPherson suggested that everyone visit the Food Pantry to see all of the improvements that have been made. All of these improvements were done by donation.

- **Dave Ciganick:** Mr. Ciganick informed Council that he spoke with Bradley & Aaron about placing an open/close sign for the ice rink just to make sure the public knew when it was opened and closed.
- **Jerry McGuire:** Mr. McGuire addressed the condition of the sidewalks downtown during the winter. He stated that the businesses need to do a better job on them.

12. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:58 P.M.

Compiled by Cathy Odom
Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: _____

Date: _____