

**Village of Bellaire
Downtown Development Authority
Minutes
September 27, 2023**

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Taylor Sutherland at 9:00 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance:

Members present: Michael Belanger, Dan Bennett, Michelle Dayton, Dave Gajda, Don Hoyt, Tracy Lareau, Doreen McGuire, Cindi Place, Taylor Sutherland

Members absent: None

Public present via Zoom: None

Public present: Jean Bedell, Janet Koch

Consent Agenda:

T. Sutherland said to add under New Business the purchasing policy and older survey priorities from local business. Under Unfinished Business he said to add Square.

Motion by D. Gajda to approve the consent agenda, second by M. Dayton. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

None

Unfinished Business:

Buy Local Update

Shelly Dayton shared that they group had their meeting yesterday. The next event scheduled was a poker run but this will be cancelled. The next event will be the Holiday Open House in November.

Village Update

Dan Bennett shared that they believe the DDA is working much better than in prior years. The Village is in trouble financially. The Village has a lot of money in water and sewer but it can't be transferred to the general fund. The Police are paid out of the general fund and is why the millage in November. One officer was laid off, another is now at part time, and the Village has been impacted by inflation and costs have gone up and the income has not gone up.

The Village has had one police Chief for years, but the Village has grown. The Village Council members are also no longer being paid. Cuts are being made and the Village will need to look at more. The Village welcomes ideas. The millage for Police this November is very important. The vote is in November because after January 1, 2023 the voting would have to go for 10 days and the Township would have to pay for this.

The Village received the plan for Richardi Park, but does not have the \$5M+ for the enhancements. The dugout work is underway and was paid for by donations. The roof for the BBQ area has been completed.

C. Place asked if the interest off the restricted monies for Water/Sewer restricted for the same? D. Bennett shared that is does.

D. Hoyt asked if there are firms or financial consultants that do advising for municipalities?

D. Bennett said that they are looking into that and evaluations. He also shared that the office people have had their hours reduced to 32 hours per week.

D. Hoyt shared that early on the DDA looked at Richardi Park but it is outside the current boundary...but "if" the boundary was expanded, could the DDA help with this.

C. Place asked if it was the footprint to the park was expanded, there is no tax collection from it. T. Lareau offered to volunteer her time to assist the Village to look at the monies needed for the park and to map out a comprehensive fundraising plan and phases for the park. T. Lareau will follow up with the Village Clerk to understand the next date for the Parks Committee.

D. Gajda shared that the Village can do a cost allocation to have a consultant create a plan for allocation and charge back the Village staff and look at their time allocation and then charge back time, benefits, etc. to the Water and Sewer monies but the Village would need to hire a consultant so that there is an objective perspective for the plan and something the Village can point to if the government ever questioned it.

Public Wi-Fi

C. Place had nothing to report. She did share information about the Municipal League about \$1.5B available for infrastructure and she did ask the League if the monies could be used for Wi-Fi, Parking studies, etc.

Parking Committee

T. Sutherland shared that C. Place's comments actually took care of the parking committee report. C. Place shared that parking is so busy now with the County's building parking closed. M. Dayton has seen a couple of local workers, moving their cars every two hours around the main streets. D. McGuire shared that the lot for the bank area that is vacant has a sign for employee parking but no one is there. She shared that some of the people living in the apartments tend to park on the on the main street as well.

M. Dayton brought up again the concept of parking meters and that we are losing spaces because people are using them for longer than two hours. C. Place shared that you can cover the meters in off months if you don't want to charge and then use them when needed and also people are taking up 1 ½ parking spaces and we lose spots. M. Dayton shared an example of a nice looking sign used in another community about 2-hour parking and talked about another community that has temporary signs that can be put up/down that reads in part, "...not RV or trailer parking." C. Place asked if when we meet in November, can we make parking an emphasis. M. Dayton shared that she continues to send out emails and it's just like the sidewalks and being responsible, it is the same for parking...employees should not park on the main streets.

M. Belanger asked if business owners understand that parking like this impacts their business. T. Sutherland shared that not everyone understands. M. Dayton shared that businesses are losing business because of this. C. Place shared that there are always spots by the Library and Hardware store that are open. D. Hoyt shared that there are also spots behind Inspire Health.

C. Place asked Janet Koch from the County if the employees are asked to park in the street. Koch shared that employees have been directed to park in the designated parking areas.

D. Hoyt asked if everyone had the time to read the information about the parking study that was sent out. C. Place asked about what the added \$3,000 was for. D. Hoyt shared that the added monies were about identifying grant opportunities and support further down the road. C. Place said that the information shared looked great.

D. Hoyt shared that the initial memo proposed was for a short-term/long-term plan. He said that the other quotes were around \$20K.

D. McGuire said that there is nothing in the quote for signage. D. Hoyt shared that we should invite the firm out to look at it. D. McGuire said that she is against this and that she would prefer the monies to go for the creation of a website for parking, signage and more. D. Hoyt said that we should slow it down, we should all understand it and all on board. He

said that when we started fresh with the DDA, D. Hoyt put a lot of stock in the survey results from our downtown businesses, this was the top need and that when he talks to people who know more about parking than we do, they say you need to start with a parking study. He said that this came up at the Chamber and some people see it as a good thing, others don't see a parking problem and Hoyt's thoughts are that this is the starting part. D. McGuire asked "who will educate the employees?" Hoyt said that his hope is that people who have experience in this field, they might see solutions that we do not.

M. Dayton shared that she sees the pros and cons of the parking study and that if there was a definitive carrot, like filing for a grant, that she would feel better about doing this and that perhaps we are putting the cart before the horse on this related to the money. However, if we are doing it just to do it so we have a plan, this does not make sense to me. Not saying we should not do this in the future but we need a reason.

T. Sutherland asked C. Place if a grant is feasible. C. Place shared that perhaps half of it but that she doesn't think we need to pull a trigger yet and that we have a little bit of time but a parking study is not going to get cheaper. She said that she believes that a parking study is going to tell us what we know and if the study showed us how to solve this problem more so than validating you have a problem, then perhaps this is not needed. M. Dayton shared that one and two business violate this and it adds to the problem and if someone is parking all day, if they don't get a ticket, they are going to continue to do it. Same with the sidewalks, if you don't get a fine to not clearing them, you are still going to do it.

M. Belanger asked if the Village still has courtesy parking tickets? D. Bennett shared that they do. D. Hoyt said that he believes that the parking is going to get worse before it gets better and that we need a parking study. He said that for the past seven years we have talked about this and beyond the temporary signs, we haven't done much and have a road map to say here is what we are going to do systematically and we need to try a different philosophy and need something with more structure. C. Place offered to look into more funding opportunities and perhaps we can find a \$5K grant. M. Dayton said even \$2K would help.

D. McGuire asked if MDOT offers these? C. Place said that federal grants are tough. D. Hoyt suggested that the parking study firm should come up to a meeting and T. Sutherland will invite them out for November. T. Sutherland asked that we continue to look for grants and that the study is not in this year's budget. He inquired about how often grants come up and C. Place shared that they are rolling schedules and pop up.

T. Lareau suggested that inspired by a comment from the Village Clerk about considering street scape grants, that we not look at the parking study as a stand-alone item but rather, a pathway to "streetscape evolution" and also look at grants for streetscapes and that a streetscape might tie into the Village's efforts and conversations with MDOT about a streetscape plan

Janet Koch suggested that MEDC as a potential grant opportunity.

Square

C. Place shared a summary about how to use square as requested at the last meeting. M.

Dayton shared her support for the use of Square for the upcoming auction. T. Sutherland shared that his business did look at Square and M. Dayton shared thoughts about Venmo but that she uses Square and C. Place shared that Square has been around for years and that all the DDA needs to start an account is an email and bank account.

C. Place said that it is 15 cents per item if you are processing or if it is online purchase, there is another cost. D. McGuire inquired if there is an option if someone can cover the costs of the Square fees and C. Place said that for the auction, there is an option for via Square for people to do so. M. Dayton said that Square can also generate an invoice and that if we secure donations, the information can go in via Square and an invoice is automatically generated.

D. McGuire asked who would manage this on the DDA, is it D. Gajda? C. Place said that it does not have to be, it would be who is handling the specific transactions and that this could be perhaps a part of the new finance policies.

D. Gajda said that he could set up the account but given his schedule, someone else would need to take possession of the reader and doing the transactions but that he should be the one responsible for the reporting. He asked “who” the reader should go to?

M. Dayton said that the free readers require a device plug into your phone, but there are new readers that work that are blue tooth and it is \$50 and then you can tap and pay or manually add it on the app. C. Place replied that the Library would be more than happy to handle the readers for the auction transactions and suggested that perhaps a retail business should most likely not be doing this and that if the Library does this, then the device would be dedicated for this.

M. Belanger asked if the monies go into the DDA account? C. Place said yes, it goes into the DDA bank account but that you can set up various account lines for items such as “Charles Culver Exhibition Auction” and “DDA donations. and there is a report that you can pull to see how much and easy to balance. D. Hoyt asked if there are upfront costs? C. Place said that we should have a dedicated DDA device and it can be at the Village but that she is not suggesting they Village employees need to do this, but using that as an example that it can be used by anyone.

D. Gajda asked if that we are collecting a cash or check, doesn't this bypass the Square? C. Place said that you could but that she likes Square because you can still put the donations into the system but that the cash and checks would still be deposited. C. Place said that you are “recording” the donations into Square so the system tracks all of it, but the deposits are still going through the normal process but that the DDA policies read that only the DDA Treasurer is the one to accept funds and that this should be addressed. D. Gajda said he would set it up and asked if we want the Blue Tooth reader? M. Dayton said yes but that we need to identify who else is designated to accept funds other than D. Gajda. C. Place said that there is a checks and balance and we can record in the minutes moving forward about “who” from the DDA will be at an event or related that they can accept the funds as the Treasurer's proxy. D. Gajda suggested that since this is for the auction, that someone from the Grants Committee be responsible for collecting payments since the reports will go to D.

Gajda.

C. Place said that she would be happy to manage the Square for the exhibition auction.

M. Dayton is making a motion that we use Square, purchase the device, and that C. Place will accept the funds from the auction, and D. Gajda will set up the account with Square. Seconded by D. McGuire. Motion passed unanimously.

Grants Committee

- Outdoor Art

D. McGuire said that she checked this morning that we are a ¼ of the way on bids for the auction and are at \$2,500. News 9 & 10 conducted interviews yesterday about the exhibit yesterday and the reporter said that this is one of the best interviews. It will air in a few weeks.

The Grants Committee will meet on October 3 at 9:30 am to talk about the Culver Exhibition, images and related.

D. Hoyt asked how did 9 & 10 come to us? D. McGuire is the one that contacted them and shared how they started at M88 to get to know each other and started with Charles Culver and then they went through to film the images and walked with D. McGuire and C. Culver and C. Culver gave insight to the pieces. J. Bedell said that McGuire gave a wonderful interview. C. Place shared how this puts Bellaire in a different light and that during the interviews included conversation about art and more.

M. Dayton said that this has attracted about a different person to our town and a nice addition and C. Place shared that people are excited to see what we do next.

- Funding for New Project

T. Lareau shared that we have been approved for a grant from the MACC in the amount of \$3,600 (total available was \$4,000) for the art exhibit previously approved by both the DDA and the Village.

D. Hoyt suggested that the grant committee document their work so that if this is turned over to another group like a new arts council for Bellaire that we will have good notes to give them. C. Place said that there is momentum and cited the Antrim Foundation and the Arts Trail map but that there is no existing group outside of the recent DDA efforts to take on the rest of this arts area. M. Dayton offered that the Antrim Women's Alliance would want to participate in an arts council type of group.

C. Place shared the success of the newly implemented story walk in collaboration with Antrim County Conservation District.

D. Hoyt shared that this art concept could support an ongoing event.

M. Dayton shared that this new round for the outdoor exhibition will have a new energy to it because it will be local element to it.

C. Place shared that as part of the Antrim Writers Alliance they have to write something that will be placed in a permanent location.

T. Lareau shared that perhaps we can look at something in the future about Max Ellison.

D. Bennett said that he would like to volunteer his wife to serve on any arts committee as she was the head of art for MEA.

T. Muscat inquired about receipts and these were taken care of before by D. Gajda. T. Muscat inquired about the Fair Market Value (FMV) for the auction. D. McGuire shared that there was a very detailed conversation to include the cost of the materials, what a price would be for reproduction and more and this is reflected on the auction website.

D. Hoyt inquired about if we need to do more advertising for the auction. M. Dayton shared that we have done a lot and D. McGuire will follow up with the Antrim Review about writing a story about the auction and she will talk to John at the Antrim Review. J. Koch shared that the County does the same thing for the Antrim Review and the Michigan Municipal League and that the auction might be a nice story for them. D. McGuire shared that the 9 & 10 news will help with awareness for the auction and that for future events, we might do a billboard.

New Business:

- Website update

C. Place shared that this is on hold for now. D. Bennett shared that the Village Clerk is the contact for the website.

T. Sutherland asked if we have come up with something for the sidewalk related to the snow removal. M. Dayton asked if the Village could give us an official letter about the laws. D. Bennett indicated that the Village Clerk has a letter and M. Dayton will follow up in this regard.

T. Sutherland inquired about where business can go to share that they do the snow shoveling. C. Place shared that the Chamber was noted in the last DDA newsletter.

T. Lareau shared that she is still committed to visiting businesses, will provide M. Dayton information for a survey to businesses about who is responsible for their sidewalks.

- Table and Chairs

- T. Sutherland asked if there is a plan for removal. M. Dayton scheduled a time for November 8 at 9 am for removal. C. Place asked about if we need to remove the tables and chairs and M. Dayton recommended that they are removed as well.

- Meet and Greet

C. Place asked if we have a date. D. McGuire connected with the Fireside Lounge and they are supportive of hosting and we can bring food in.

M. Dayton recommended that we host the next meet and greet the week of November 6. D. McGuire will follow up with Fireside to host the meet and greet from 5 pm – 6:30 pm. M. Dayton also offered to host the meet and greet if it does not work with Fireside.

C. Place made a motion for the week of November 6 to host at Fireside and if not available, the Flying Pig. T. Sutherland will coordinate food and D. McGuire. T. Lareau seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Gajda shared that this will also serve as the Informational Meeting and that the Ambulance Authority, County, Village and Kearney will all be invited formally. T. Sutherland committed to do this and will do so 10 days in advance.

C. Place committed to sending out a communication about the meet and greet.

- Purchasing Policies

D. Gajda said that the committee met about who places an order, makes a payment, and related. Gajda asked that we can either review the policy today and approve it or review offline. A list of common used vendors will be needed as well as identifying approved purchasers. This policy creates a separation of duties and eliminates conflicts. D. McGuire asked about #8 of the proposed policy related to “solicitation criteria” and do we need to have every purchase approved? Gajda said no but the requirements at various levels are needed. D. McGuire used Pro Image as an example because we paid them \$2,500 and she would have to get two quotes. C. Place that would fit under “sole source” because they were the only vendor that could provide this service. Gajda agreed and that the main focus of the language is that because we are using tax payer dollars, we need to be mindful of how we are using the funds. C.

Place said that there is nothing in the policy that says we must go to the lowest bidder. D. Gajda said that we should but that he was trying to keep the policy simple and consistent with what the Village uses. T. Sutherland shared that there are vendors who already have things like a “map of our downtown” and background information and we can go with them. D. Gajda said that establishing a list of vendors will help with this and that he believes a policy is needed and we are doing more and paying more invoices and we are okay with that, but we need to be more formal in the best interest of the tax payer. T. Sutherland said that as long as there is room for logic, he is supportive. C. Place asked is getting three quotes for purchases of \$500 is appropriate or \$1,000. D. Gajda asked if updating the levels to start with \$1,000 is more appropriate. The feedback was yes and eliminate B all together.

T. Sutherland made a motion to remove item B under #8 and M. Belanger seconded and the motion passed by quorum (D. Hoyt had to leave early).

Ranking of Priorities

- T. Sutherland asked members to review the information provided by D. Gajda offline and that we should discuss it in November. Gajda said that we should discuss and vote in November.

Miscellaneous Business of the Authority Board:

None

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

Janet Koch shared that siren on top of the building off Cayuga has been removed. The progress for the County building is on target and is on progress for early 2024. The County has a new Undersheriff, George Lasater. M. Belanger asked about the color of the building. Koch said that it is similar to the color of the storage building near the Village Offices and shared that the first load of bricks has been delivered. D. McGuire suggested that it would be nice to have the County’s bulletin at the upcoming DDA meet and greet. Koch said that if possible, she will provide us with something but sometimes they are waiting on information.

M. Dayton and M. Belanger motion to adjourn. Motion passed by quorum.

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 am.

Meeting minutes compiled by T. Lareau