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The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held at the Village Hall on Wednesday July 26, 2023. Mayor Jim Copelin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Clerk Gail Hedges called roll: Craig Busch “Here”, Joe Bukantos “Here”, Chuck Apgar “Here”, Randy Olson “Here”, and Dianne Brenning “Here”, and Baer “Here”. Also present was Interim Chief Reardon. Superintendent Rhodes was absent.

A motion was made by Busch, seconded by Bukantos, to approve the minutes of July 12, 2023. The motion passed 6-0.

Baer made a motion, seconded by Brenning, to approve the bills with the addition of a donation to the Auburn Football and Basketball Programs at the same amount as last year, $39.00 each. The motion passed 6-0.

*Visitors*

Bob Harbison was present to discuss the overgrowth of properties in his neighborhood. Specifically, he was speaking of 630 S. State St. which has concrete piled up, and trash and weeds growing in the chain-link fence making the property appear trashy. Another trashy property is located at 615 S. Lincoln St. where tall weeds and volunteer trees have grown up along the fence in the back yard. A shed in the back yard has holes in the roof and is dilapidated with the potential of wild animals taking up residence. Harbison is interested in seeing these properties cleaned up so as to keep property values from decreasing. Baer stated he felt the backyard should only be addressed if it creates a health and safety issue. Bukantos stated it was a personal preference of the property owner. Mayor Copelin stated that the problem is the lack of maintenance of the properties. Lack of maintenance should not bring down the value of others property. Copelin asked board members, particularly Randy Olson, the chair of the Public Safety, Health and Safety Committee, to bring to the police department a list of properties that appear to be in violation of Village ordinances. The police department will then review and take action or bring before the full Board for action. Letters will be sent out to those in violation.

*Public Works:*

Superintendent Rhodes was absent, but Brenning recommended that public works staff be allowed to leave at noon on Friday, July 28, 2023 due to extreme heat unless they are working on a project assigned by Rhodes.

*Police:*

Interim Chief Reardon requested the recognized purchase of the VPShare which will replace LERMS making the Village compliant with NIBERS, a national incident-based system. The cost is $2500.00 plus $180.00 annually. The Village has received a $900.00 bill for the first quarter of 2023 for LERMS. The $900.00 is for 12 people, but the Village only should have 7 which includes systems in vehicles. When the LERMS system was presented to the Board, Chief Martin stated there would be no cost for the system. Reardon will try to find out the names of the officers with access to the system. Interim Chief Reardon brought to the attention of the Board the email address used in the posting of the Divernon Chief Position is incorrect and should be corrected. Reardon reported he called Sangamon County Animal Control while checking on the dogs reported as emaciated. Animal Control found the dogs to be okay and indicated there was nothing to be done.

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*Committee Reports: Economic Dev., Zoning, TIF, Building Permits:*

Busch reported that he continues to try to reach Charles Branch at Nextsite to discuss marketing of the two gas station properties. Mayor Copelin shared with the Board the remediation process requires a two-tier approval process. The approval from the State Fire Marshal should occur fairly quickly. The EPA will take longer most likely pushing the start of the remediation until fall. Copelin stated he has informed the party that was interested in the south gas station property that the Village will begin to market the property within the next week if he hasn’t been advised of their decision. Bukantos stated that he feels the Village should consider building and operating a gas station.

*Public Utilities Water, Gas and Sewer*

Olson and Bukantos will work on revising the pool policy to allow the waiver of the sewer fee for one-time annual filling of a swimming pool. The existing policy only allows for waiver of the sewer fee for the first filling of a swimming pool.

*Finance, Personnel, GIS:*

Baer made a motion, seconded by Brenning, to purchase 3 fireproof file cabinets for the clerk and treasurer for a total cost of $13,591.00 plus shipping and handling. One 3-drawer lateral at $6999.00 and 2- 4-drawer vertical at $3299.00 will be purchased. The motion passed 6-0. The ad for the Divernon Police Chief is posted with interviews scheduled to begin August 7, 2023. Brenning made a motion, seconded by Baer, to approve the Annual Treasures Report with corrections. The motion passed 6-0.

*Public Safety, Health and Safety:*

Apgar reported that he had called Gene Crain to ask about the old IGA frame and concrete still remaining, but there has been no answer. Reardon reported Officer Lavin had responded to a call about someone using a torch to cut the frame. Crain was given a deadline for final demolition which he has failed to meet. The Village will move forward with demolition, and a lien will be placed on the property. A motion was made by Apgar, seconded by Busch, to approve a bid up to $2700.00 or the lowest bid to demolish the remaining frame. Olson continues to try to talk to someone at IDOT to request approval to put in a pedestrian walkway over the tracks on Brown St. He has reached out to the Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission for assistance in identifying a contact. Brenning mentioned the mattresses on 1st St. needs to be removed by the owner of the property as it is trashy looking. Olson will add to the list of other properties identified as in need of maintenance.

*Public Works, Streets, Alleys, and Sidewalks:*

Parking on the Village square has become an issue as correct parking in spaces has created problems. Baer and Brenning will be reviewing the parking ordinance and making revisions as necessary. It was mentioned that the weeds along the tracks need to be sprayed to allow for better drainage and better control of trash. The railroad should spray, but the Village has sprayed in the past to allow to improve drainage.

*Village Communication/Building, Grounds & Lights, Parks, Recreation*

Discussion took place on the proper avenue for reporting issues/complaints. Mayor Copelin indicated that issues/complaints should not be made via telephone call or text message to Board members, but rather to contact the non-emergency dispatch at 217-753-6666. This will ensure a record will be maintained of the matter including follow up. Something will be added in the newsletter providing this

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information. Apgar reported the next newsletter will go out in early August. Apgar reported the Village website has been updated with current dates and will continue to be updated so residents receive additional information that will encourage increased use of the site. Apgar has determined the website can receive messages, and is investigating why the messages are not being forwarded to the office manager. Busch reported he has been in contact with Vital Records Control to look into digitizing older Village records.

Old Business:

Baer asked the status of the printer in the treasurer’s office. Mayor Copelin reported the problem was related to the feed of paper. Because the printer is so old, the printer will be replaced. Busch questioned whether the Village should do something in honor of Rettberg’s 75th Anniversary. It was suggested maybe a plague or proclamation be presented. Baer suggested the Village put together a Stop the Bleed training for interested residents. Training would be offered by HSHS St. John’s Regional Trauma Center. The center is a Department of Defense contracted provider. The training would provide basic bleeding control concepts, to be able to provide immediate aid until help arrives and takes over. Notice will be posted on the Divernon Community FB page to seek interest in order to determine if the Village should move forward with scheduling training.

New Business

Interim Chief Reardon shared with the Board that he and our police department had received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Village of Sherman for their assistance after the tornado. Mayor Copelin stated the executive session minutes sometimes include information on employees or former employees that should be protected. Copelin has asked the Village Attorney to review the executive minutes prior to the review by the Board in order to protect those persons.

Baer made a motion to go into executive session at 8:47 p.m. Apgar made a motion to return to regular session at 9:33 p.m.

Busch made a motion, seconded by Bukantos, that due to an oversight the salary of Craig Cox be increased by $1.00 per hour retroactive back to May 1, 2023. The motion passed 6-0.

The meeting ended with a motion by Olson at 9:34 p.m.

Jim Copelin Gail Hedges

Mayor Clerk