

The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held at the Village Hall on Wednesday September 13, 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”, Dianne Brenning “Here”, and Larry Baer “Here”. Also present was Superintendent Rhodes. Police Chief Paul Carpenter was absent.

A motion was made by Bukantos, seconded by Olson, to approve the minutes of August 23, 2023. The motion passed 6-0.

Baer made a motion, seconded by Brenning, to approve the bills. The motion passed 6-0.

Visitors

Sara Peterson, representing UCB, was present to share information on Clover Flex. Clover Flex would allow customers to charge their utility bill at Village Hall using Clover Flex. Village residents can already pay on-line via the Village website. More research is needed before a decision can be made.

Marlayna Nelson was present to see if the Village could provide any relief in covering the cost of her high utility bill due to two leaking toilets. Nelson was unaware of the one toilet leak when she purchased the house, but repair was completed as soon as it was discovered. A leak in the second toilet was discovered soon after and was repaired right away. A motion was made by Baer, seconded by Bukantos, to adjust the water and sewer to the normal rate, and waive the late fees. The motion also included allowing Nelson to pay ½ the outstanding bill before September 20th and the remainder by October 20, 2023. The motion passed 6-0. Bukantos stated that he feels like it’s highway robbery when he sees such high bills like this, particularly as it relates to the sewer charge. Baer pointed out that the water is lost and if the customer doesn’t pay, the Village will have to cover the cost.

Public Works:

Superintendent Rhodes stated that street maintenance was completed. Feedback from residents was positive stating the rock used was better than the white rock. Bukantos stated that the public works staff had done a great job preparing the streets by filling holes.

Police:

Mayor Copelin stated that all reports are that Chief Carpenter is doing a good job. Hedges shared that he had acted on a background check needed for liquor and gaming licenses that had been in the works for a several months. The background check was due to expire within the next week, so he met with ISP only to find out that the report was available all along under the prior chief’s name. Chief Carpenter worked with ISP to get the contact changed to his name, and the report was released just before the background report expired. Copelin also reported that Chief Carpenter has stopped officers from taking vehicles home which is against Village policy. Only the chief is approved to take a vehicle home. Copelin stated that schedules are being reworked to promote better coverage. Sara Peterson, UCB, has asked that officers stop by and introduce themselves so bank staff are familiar with the officers. Brenning reported she was awakened by loud noises late Saturday night lasting until Sunday morning around 1:30 a.m. It didn’t sound like music. Carpenter will be looking into part-time officer’s schedules to make sure they are working at least the minimum amount of time allowed.

Copelin also discussed the issue of traffic not stopping at the crosswalk on Brown St. at State St. to allow for pedestrian's and bicycles to cross. Chief Carpenter will monitor the situation on school days in the morning and after school to ensure safe crossing.

Committee Reports:

Economic Dev., Zoning, TIF, Building Permits:

Mayor Copelin has asked the Village attorney to look into whether the Planning Commission/Zoning Board can be disbanded. Chair Randy Rhodes has resigned being the third of seven seats to be vacated. Superintendent Rhodes has been the Zoning Administrator for years. With his increased public works duties, he doesn't have the time needed to continue in this role. Research and further discussion will take place before action can be taken. Dollar General has withdrawn their contract for the south gas station property due to the property being a former gas station having had remediation. Mayor Copelin asked Busch to contact the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance to discuss marketing the two gas station properties.

Public Utilities Water, Gas and Sewer

When discussing the excessive water bill for Marlayna Nelson due to leaking toilets, a question was asked should a cap should be set? If the resident of the housing unit isn't responsible, then it would be the responsibility of the Village (Village residents) to cover the cost.

Finance, Personnel, GIS:

Baer made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve the Unifirst Contract. Baer shared with the Board the Staples' Advantage and Sourcewell Program, which the Village currently has, that can offer even lower prices and an unlimited number of individuals at no cost. The Village is happy with the Staples products and response time. It was a consensus that we should continue with the program. Baer also reported the \$175,000.00 CD with UCB has been rolled for one year and thirteen days at a rate of 5.40%.

Public Safety, Health and Safety:

Olson stated he had talked with numerous people who feel the 30-mph speed limit is too high. Mayor Copelin stated that more information is needed in order to consider changing the speed limit. Copelin also stated that enforcement is an issue. With only one officer on duty, it's impossible to be in all places at all times. Research is being done on technologies available that can assist with enforcement. Rhodes reported the property on Lewis Street has been mowed. When the new owner of the property was contacted, they were angry the property management company had not taken care of the property as required.

Public Works, Streets, Alleys, and Sidewalks:

No Report. Brenning will meet with Chief Carpenter to further discuss parking around the square.

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

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Busch, to approve a 2-year contract with Comcast Business for internet service. The contract increases the internet speed to 250 Mbps at a cost of \$164.90 per month. The motion passed 6-0. An activity will be planned to introduce Chief Carpenter to the community. Mayor Copelin stated that over the next 2-years, the Board will look into expanding the Village Hall as more room is needed and safety concerns for staff and board members need to be considered.

Old Business:

Olson stated that 7-days to abate an ordinance violation isn't long enough and suggested two weeks. Mayor Copelin stated a ticket is issued when an ordinance violation occurs giving 7-days to abate. If there is a reasonable explanation as to why the 7-day timeframe can't be met, the person can come to the board to request additional time. As long as the request is reasonable, the Board more than likely will grant the request.

Baer reported that several homes in Hi Acres have hail damage and suggested the Village Hall roof be inspected for damage before contacting the insurance company.

New Business

Hedges reported that Mimi's Kitchen had satisfied all requires for liquor and gaming licenses. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve both the liquor and gaming licenses for 2023. The motion passed 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion from Baer at 8:35 p.m.

Jim Copelin
Mayor

Gail Hedges
Clerk