

**FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

4.1  
**VILLAGE OF NEW ATHENS**

6:30 p.m. The regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees was called to order by Mayor Behnken. A roll call was answered by Trustees Newbold, Politsch, Feder and Kearns. Trustees Geppert and Fitzgerald were absent. Also present were Tim Buehler, Chief of Police, and Chris Remick, Superintendent of Public Works.

**VISITORS**

None present.

**READING OF THE JOURNAL (MINUTES)**

The minutes of the January 15, 2024, regular board meeting were submitted to the Board for approval.

A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Kearns, to approve minutes from the January 15, 2024, regular board meeting as presented. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION**

**MAYOR**

No report.

**VILLAGE CLERK**

Paula shared information on the St. Clair County Health Department's grants they received regarding Sharps containers and free Narcan doses to be shared with the community. A date will be arranged for them to set up at the Community Hall for distribution of said items. Motion was made by Trustee Newbold and seconded by Trustee Feder to approve the event. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

No report.

**POLICE CHIEF**

Chief Buehler presented the activity logs for the time frame of June through December, 2023. He briefly discusses the burglary last week and commended Officer Jacob Renner on an outstanding apprehension, which was very dangerous, but thankfully no one was hurt. The arrest was a success and warrants have been issued. Officer Jason Berry came in to assist with logging the evidence.

**SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS**

Superintendent Remick reported that between October, 2023, and January, 2024, we had 7 major leaks. The six trees at 601 S. Benton are hazardous and two are close to the power poles. He has a resident complaining about them this past summer. He feels our Public Works department should be able to remove them safely, with the help of Ameren. It will take multiple days to get the job done. They will have to temporarily block the street to get them down. He spoke with the homeowners, and they are happy to let them go, as they are on village property. Paula has contacted Hudson Energy regarding our contract with them. We are currently waiting for Ameren to call us back. Currently, our contract with Hudson is still viable. Public Works did get the water meter change completed at the trailer court successfully. It was a big job, and everything is flowing good. The lift station pump at the sewer plant was not working correctly, the volute on the motor separated and turned. Vandeventer came out to inspect it. After about a day of working on it, they replaced the wear ring and everything is working fine now. It saved a significant amount of money, about \$30,000, rather than changing the entire thing out. Ralph is doing well in his new position; he is a hard worker and learning quickly. Chris takes readings every day at the master

meter on how much water we use in a 24-hour period and for December we purchased a little over 5 million gallons of water, in January, it was 3.8 million gallons, 1.2 million gallons less water purchased. He feels we were losing that much because of leaks. He still plans on continuing changing meters out. Matt changed 10-12 meters in January. Ralph and Bob learned to install meters, too. Fifteen a month is probably going to be the max number installed due to the department being so busy. The tree at 509 S. Clinton is still waiting to be cut down. Chris would like the village to pay half of the stump grinding only since it is partially on village property. We can repair the sidewalk following the tree removal, which the resident is responsible for.

### **AMBULANCE SERVICE**

No report per se. Debby has discussed with Josh as far as ALS. She told him we should technically put this on hold till we see what is going to happen with the ambulance service. He has done a lot of research and she is curious as to how the village would be supportive if they formed an ambulance district. It would have to be in a referendum. If it became an ambulance district, it would be a full-time service. It would be on a separate taxing bond.

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE**

### **STREETS AND ALLEYS**

The guys from Public Works have been patching potholes on village streets.

### **FINANCE AND AUDIT**

Motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Feder to approve bills. A vote to approve bills was answered aye by all trustees present.

### **WATER AND SEWER**

Mayor explained that we could purchase water meters out of capital equipment or finance 500-600 water meters and finance them at 6.2% or so, payments would be \$1800-1900 a month, so we are not bankrupting ourselves here. Motion was made by Trustee Newbold to purchase 30 water meters out of capital, seconded by Trustee Kearns. A vote was answered aye by all members present. Motion was made by Trustee Newbold to pay for the large water meter installed at the trailer court for \$1,674.19, seconded by Trustee Kearns. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

### **PERSONNEL**

No report.

### **PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PARKS**

No report.

### **CEMETERY**

Steve spoke with Countryside Lawn Care about mowing at the cemetery at the same rate as he charged us last year. Paula will find the previous contract and create an updated contract for 2024.

### **ORDINANCE**

Steve mentioned the comp time business for the employees and stated we need to come up with an ordinance update regarding such. It was discussed in the Committee of the Whole and needs to be finalized.

### **IMPROVEMENTS AND GRANTS**

Debby is going to look at the road by the school with Dean at school, so that is a work in progress. Paula has placed the order at Ultra Site for the picnic tables and pet stations, they should arrive in approximately four weeks.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY, AMBULANCE AND ADA**

No report.

## **MARINA**

No report.

## **REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Nothing to report.

## **COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDERS AND ORDINANCES**

We have an ordinance to increase the Water and Sewer fees by 8%. Motion was made by Trustee Newbold to accept the Water and Sewer rate, seconded by Trustee Politsch. Discussion on how this increase will affect the typical bill amount, especially for those on a fixed income. The average increase would equal .17 a day. An annual review is suggested to evaluate further increases in the future. Roll call vote was taken. Those voting no were Trustees Feder and Kearns. Those voting yes were Trustees Newbold, Politsch. Tie breaker was by Mayor, who voted aye. Ordinance passes.

Resolution 2023, which memorializes we are not going to apply for the 2024 Community Development Block Grant. Trustee Newbold made a motion to not apply for the 2024 CDBG, seconded by Trustee Kearns. Roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes were Trustees Feder, Kearns, Newbold, Politsch. Motion carries.

Resolution 2023, Revised Appropriation Ordinance, in which the ordinance we passed in the first quarter of the fiscal year, increases the appropriation so we can spend and not exceed our appropriations. Discussion about when the settlement over the Marina is due to be paid. Trustee Newbold stated that some of the Fidelity accounts will have to be liquidated, then funneled into the general fund and then the monies will be paid out. Motion to approve the appropriation changes made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Kearns. Discussion regarding certain revisions. Roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes were Trustees Feder, Kearns, Newbold and Politsch. Motion passes.

## **CURRENT UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Debby discussed the campgrounds and a camper desiring some activities in regard to the solar eclipse. Someone suggested a magician who can put on a show. Debby has been working with Roverpass so Paula can get the updated financial information so the electronic fund transfers for payments can be directed to the correct account and to remove Amy Ohlendorf off the account. We are in line with the eclipse and Debby asked if anyone was interested in doing something in the village to mark the event, including asking the local restaurants if they want to run eclipse specials. Debby suggested using the "robocall" method to remind people about the cemetery clean up day, which will be April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The call could go out March 15<sup>th</sup> so residents will be aware that the arrangements and such will be picked up, in accordance with the ordinance.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting @ 7:34 p.m. by Trustee Politsch, seconded by Trustee Newbold. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Joe Behnken, President

Paula Allard, Village Clerk/Collector