

401

MARCH 4, 2024

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 Geppert. Trustee Fitzgerald was tardy. Trustees Kearns was absent. Also present were Tim Buchler, Chief of Police, and Chris Remick, Superintendent of Public Works.

VISITORS

Alicia Hanna joined the meeting late.

READING OF THE JOURNAL (MINUTES)

The minutes of the February 20, 2024, regular board meeting were submitted to the Board for approval.

A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert, to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024, regular board meeting as presented. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

MAYOR

Nothing to report.

VILLAGE CLERK

Nothing to report.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

POLICE CHIEF

Chief Buchler presented the activity logs for the month of February. He taught a Driver's Education Class at the school; they performed mock traffic stops so students would know how to handle various scenarios and reviewed Fourth Amendment vehicle search and seizures. He also talked to the 8th Grade. He received word from the MDC that the computers were in and should be shipped in the next two weeks. He called the place where the new squad cars are at to let them know they'll bring all the equipment with them and get on the list to get them installed. They informed Chief they do not have white Ford Explorers, but they do have black and dark gray. He asked the board if they would care which color they would prefer. Everything is behind because of the strike. No one really had a preference. Jake Renner is taking Sargent training this week and will be finished on Friday. Next week he has 20 hours of training. He will go to Edwardsville to get at least 8 hours done.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS

Superintendent Remick stated IEPA released their round four of grants. He has been watching closely so we can apply for some grant money. He was able to work with the Mayor and it was turned in last week. He feels pretty good we may receive at least \$30,000, to assist with the lead and copper report. The pavilion concrete has been completed and looks good. He has contacted a company called Diamond Map and they have software that is a cloud-based GPS type mapping software. It costs \$40 a month. The idea behind it is to map manhole covers, water and sewer lines and other utilities. The benefit is that they can use it on their phones to assist them in doing their jobs. They provide a 30 day free trial, and it is cost effective to use. He mentioned the idea of purchasing glasses for the upcoming eclipse in April and handing them out to visitors. The cost is around \$.50 per pair, and he asked to purchase 200 of them to be given out, especially to the campground visitors. Mayor announced we need to hire a seasonal employee for grass mowing this year. Trustee Feder made a motion to hire a seasonal

employee, and Trustee Politsch seconded the motion. During discussion, Trustee Politsch requested to further discuss the position in executive session. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Nothing to report.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE

STREETS AND ALLEYS

Nothing to report.

FINANCE AND AUDIT

Trustee Newbold made a motion to approve all bills as presented. Motion was seconded by Trustee Geppert. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

WATER AND SEWER

Mayor reported that Reliable trash service has raised their rates by 4% per their contract. Motion was made to increase the village's charges by 4% by Trustee Fitzgerald, seconded by Trustee Newbold. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

PERSONNEL

Nothing to report.

PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PARKS

Trustee Newbold reported that the boy scouts would like to donate basketball chains for the park.

CEMETERY

Discussion involving the 3 cemetery plots that the Nuernberger family would like to donate back to the city, in the event a family would financially need them. Mayor said per his discussion with Tom Nuernberger, we could also sell the plots. Trustee Newbold made a motion to accept the 3 cemetery plots and the Village will pay for the preparation and transfer of deeds, if required. Motion was seconded by Trustee Politsch. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present. Plots will be donated if someone in need needs them.

ORDINANCE

Trustee Geppert questioned if we were enforcing the ordinance about putting decorations and mementos on the graves in the cemetery. It makes it difficult for the mowers to mow around the area when there are items around the headstones. Trustee Newbold said it is an enforcement issue not an ordinance issue.

IMPROVEMENTS AND GRANTS

Trustee Politsch reported that the concrete at the pavilion has been completed. Wachtel will begin working on the walking trails soon. If St. Clair County Park Grants become available, she would like ideas on how to improve the ball diamonds if it can be included in that grant next year. The diamonds have some issues with drainage and base pegs need to be reset. There are also issues with the lights and the concession stand needs more outlets and may need to have more circuits installed.

PUBLIC SAFETY, AMBULANCE AND ADA

Trustee Geppert announced the tornado sirens will sound on Tuesday for monthly testing and Wednesday for National Tornado Week. When she took the ambulance down to Iron Ford, they discovered the fuel pump needs to be replaced but it is under warranty.

MARINA

Trustee Politsch made a motion to increase the rates for the campground to \$30 per day, \$120 per week, and \$450 per month. Motion seconded by Trustee Newbold. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present. Mayor recommended creating an ordinance for removal of the River House from the Marina and a contract. Motion was made by Trustee Newbold to authorize Trustee Feder to oversee and furnish equipment and labor to remove the River House from the Marina and to reimburse his out-of-pocket cost. Motion was seconded by Trustee Politsch. Trustee Feder said he wasn't going to charge anything to the village, and he may consider keeping the River House, depending on the condition of it when it is removed. He will move it to another location. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present, except for Trustee Feder, who abstained from voting.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Nothing to report.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDERS AND ORDINANCES

Roll call vote was taken on Ordinance 2023-09 regarding Compensatory Leave of Absence for full time salaried employees. All those voting aye were Trustees Geppert, Feder, Newbold, Politsch, and Fitzgerald. Motion carried. Mayor announced that Paula and Nancy will research the Executive session minutes and suggest to the board which ones need to stay in confidence and which ones can be released to the public. Roll call vote was taken on Resolution 2023-21 Establishing Executive Minutes Review Procedure. Those voting aye were Trustees Feder, Geppert, Newbold, Politsch, and Fitzgerald. Motion carried.

CURRENT UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Motion was made by Trustee Newbold and seconded by Trustee Feder to furnish labor and/or contractor cost to install lights in three locations, furnished by the New Athens Commercial Club for signage at the entrance of the Village. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

VISITOR STATEMENT

Alicia Hanna, owner of 202 St. Clair St., wanted to discuss the issue with the railroad tie retaining wall that is dangerously leaning over the sidewalk. She has a special medical needs child and she stated she cannot afford the cost of removal of the wall. She has attempted to contact and hire five different contractors to come do it for her but cannot find anyone that would do the job at a reasonable rate. Trustee Feder asked for her phone number, and he will put her in contact with someone who would help with the situation. She offered the proposal of tearing the wall down as a reasonable solution. She also questioned how to dispose of the railroad ties. Trustee Newbold told her we were willing to work with her to get the issue resolved. Alicia also complained that the postal workers are hitting the corners of the wall and the truck that delivers the mail at 3 a.m., also hits it when it is backing in. She understands the need to get this situation remedied.

MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

7:20 p.m. Motion was made by Trustee Politsch to enter into Executive Session, seconded by Trustee Newbold. A vote was answered aye by all trustees present.

MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Motion made by Trustee Newbold to return to regular session, seconded by Trustee Geppert. Time was 7:40 p.m.

Motion was made by Trustee Newbold to discontinue the ambulance service per the proper procedure through Illinois Department of Public Health. Seconded by Trustee Geppert. Roll call vote was taken. Those voting aye were Trustees Newbold, Geppert, and Politsch. Those voting no were Trustees Feder and Fitzgerald. Motion carried. Trustee Politsch requested that Van Lear be present at the next regular board meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting @ 7:40 p.m. by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Joe Behnken, President

Paula Allard, Village Clerk/Collector