

VILLAGE OF WAPELLA
Village Hall
312 Main Street – P.O. Box 148
Wapella, Illinois 61777

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – MINUTES
FEBRUARY 2, 2021

CLOSED SESSION/EXECUTIVE SESSION ZOOM

7:10 PM CLOSED SESSION ROLL CALL

Name	Title	Status
Sherry Mears	President	Present – Remote
Mandy Huff	Trustee	Present – In Village Hall
Jane Buraglio	Trustee	Present – In Village Hall
Trevor Karr	Trustee	Present – Remote
Carl Spath	Trustee	Present – Remote
Tracy Mann	Trustee	Present – In Village Hall
Melissa Taylor	Trustee	Present – In Village Hall
Steve Mahrt	Village Attorney	Present – Remote
Allie Sprague	Village Clerk	Present – In Village Hall

No one else was in the village hall except board members and President Mears indicated everyone else was in a private room on Zoom. Mears told the board three people resigned and there are no village employees. Mears wanted to let Trustee Spath take over the meeting to tell about the plan that they had come up with. She wanted Spath to explain their plan and the attorney would explain the ordinance. The board would then come out of closed session and finish the meeting.

Spath told the board that Todd Beecher had been volunteering his time for the past two weeks and was just trying to stay afloat getting things up to speed. Picking up brush because of the storms that had been coming through. Trying to basically learn the job as they go. Spath said it is at least a two or three person job. He has collected applications and we have narrowed that down to about three applicants that we are going to interview within this next week. The Clerk said she had two more applications. Spath said he would pick them up.

Trustee Huff asked if the board members get to see the applicants, too, and isn't it a board decision also. Mears said it is but we need to get people hired immediately because there are no employees. Trustee Karr stated there was a meeting in two weeks. Mears said the problem is there is so much work that needs to be done and Spath is donating his time. There is another guy donating his time. Dale (Karr) is donating his time. Mears told Huff it has been done in the past,

right or wrong, where we have allowed somebody to work and when the board hired them on. That is when they were brought before the board.

Huff said she would bring somebody on, they did their 60 days and then they get brought before the board; either to say this is not working or they get hired. Mears agreed that we allowed them to work and they were brought before the board to keep them or let them go. Huff asked what the difference is now and why was the board here now. Mears said Beecher would be on a probationary period.

Mears said Spath and she have decided to hire Beecher because he is working. More than one board member present in the hall told Mears that it is the board that decides to hire. Spath said we could sit here and go at it as a board and hire him in two weeks, which was fine, but he did not think he would be working for two weeks. Spath said he has been volunteering his own time and he doesn't think he will be working for two more weeks. He was totally okay and would follow the rules all the way through, but if there is snow or ice, the roads will not be plowed. The limbs will not be picked up. Buraglio said that was fine and that has happened before. Spath said he was okay with whatever the board wanted and he was letting the board know that Beecher was volunteering his time. To sit here and say we will wait another two weeks, that was absolutely fine, but when the flakes come rolling in that he will let them know that this was a whole board decision and everybody's hands are on it. Buraglio said it should be. Spath said he would say it is everybody on the board so they can all talk to you guys.

Huff understood Spath volunteering his time, but she could not begin to tell him how many hours she has volunteered; that is just part of the job. Mears said we all understand that. Huff did not think some board members do. Mears said Spath is getting a taste of it. Mears asked the board to come out of closed session and vote on these things and have somebody working. Huff explained this is what she was trying to get at. Mears was telling the board they were going to hire someone, but it is a board decision. That's by Code. That's by Book. If we signed in all of these things, why are we not going to go by them?

Mears told the board that Beecher is the one definitely tonight that will be hired tonight. The other three are being interviewed this week. Buraglio asked wouldn't he be on probationary period and not technically hired? Can't we do that tonight? Buraglio asked Huff if she brought somebody on in a probationary period and when the period was over, she would bring them to the board to be hired. Mears said ok, but we are not bringing him on at \$13.50 and that is what the board is going to be talking about. Buraglio asked Mears to talk about it. Huff asked what are you bringing him on at?

Spath said it would be \$17.50. Huff asked for the reasoning behind \$17.50. Spath said because of his time he has volunteered and more importantly we have not found anybody that will start working at \$13.50. Buraglio understood that. Huff said \$13.50 is above minimum wage. 2025 it will be \$15.00. Huff asked what are Beecher's qualifications that warrants the \$17.50/hr? Mears

said he is more than capable and has been driving the backhoe and doing whatever he needs to do to get things done. She thinks that warrants him making that and starting out that and then once he gets things rolling, then he could take over that department. Trustee Taylor said it sounds like he wants to be the supervisor down there. Huff asked if he had a CDL. Mears said no. He is going to get it. Spath said he has started working on it. He has the book and has started to read through that as well. He would like to have him get his CDL and one other worker with a CDL. If we up the wage on this we will not be going through so many employees. She had brought this pay raise numerous times to the board and it has never followed through and she did not understand. She had three capable employees who knew exactly what to do, how to do it and when to do it. You didn't want to give them incentives, but you want to give these incentives now. She was not just talking about the three. She had been through 14 employees that none of this would have flown.

Mears thinks Spath was trying a different avenue to entice somebody to actually stay on the job instead of being a revolving door like we have been for the last several years. Spath took the department and not knowing the trials and tribulations that they have been through because he is new to the board. Huff said everything that is on the agenda she had tried and nobody wanted to do it. The board went from \$10 to \$13.50 and now Mears and Spath want to give people who have no idea how to do the job \$17.50. Trustee Mann said we didn't even give the guys who worked for us last time \$17.50 and they knew what they were doing. Huff said they all came in at \$13.50. Mann said if we had stuck up for them at that meeting we wouldn't have this problem. Mears said she couldn't do anything because she was mayor. She brought it to the attention of the board and was for giving them a raise because there were no benefits. Eventually it is the board's vote. The board needs to decide what you are going to bring them in at, but Beecher has already said he is not going to do it for less than a certain amount.

Mears said we won't have any employees and would be paying out the ear for the County or Township to come do the work. Huff couldn't justify it because we are not paying for experience. Mears asked Huff if she realized how much it would cost if we were using Township and using Clinton to fix our main breaks. Huff said she could understand the \$17.50 if we were paying for experience, but we are not. Mears asked for a solution - \$16? Huff said no. She was not on board with the \$17.50. Everyone else has come in at \$13.50. She did not think it was right. It would be different if we were paying for experience. If he came from Heyworth, Clinton or another small town doing this same job, then she was onboard.

Mears asked if all the board was saying they wanted him to start at \$13.50. All the board members agreed. Trustee Taylor wanted to know the three applicants they were going to interview besides Beecher. Spath did not have them in front of him. Buraglio suggested to Spath that he talk to Beecher and tell him he could start working at \$13.50. There is a board meeting coming up on the 16th and it can be discussed then. Mears said he wouldn't do that. Buraglio said

he is not willing to hold on to that job until the 16th? Mears said no. He has been working for free for two weeks. Buraglio said then start paying him. Mann suggested back-paying him for the two weeks. Taylor thought that was illegal.

Mears said they were beating a dead horse and said to Spath that if he wanted to quit the department she didn't blame him. She wouldn't want to be in that situation. Mears had put the position out on Facebook. She had been sending out a ton of emails and applications and she had done her part, too. Buraglio asked if we had advertised in a paper like was discussed at the last meeting. Mears told Buraglio to go ahead and she was capable. Buraglio said it was going to be in the Journal. Spath asked if anyone was willing to run through applicants with him. Buraglio said absolutely. Mears stated there were three in the stack – do not hire. Buraglio asked why. Mears said she knew their work ethics and they won't work out for us. Two of them have jobs right now and she knows where they live and they are trying to leave that job to find a job where they can just hang out all day.

Spath asked if there was somebody who wanted to take over the maintenance department. Buraglio said sure. Mears said she offered the Streets to her at the last meeting and Buraglio said no. Buraglio said what – you never offered me a department. Taylor said Mears looked at her and then looked at Buraglio. Buraglio said she never refused anything. Mears said she didn't want Buraglio to have Street because she didn't want Paul working. Buraglio said what? Huff said hires have to come before the board.

Mears said when the board comes out of closed session she would reassign departments. The board can come out of closed session and basically won't vote on anything because she didn't think anyone agrees with the ordinance either that Mahrt typed up. All the board members in the village hall said no.

MOTION TO EXIT CLOSED SESSION

Moved:	Melissa Taylor
Seconded:	Trevor Karr
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	EXITED CLOSED SESSION @ 7:33 PM

**Respectfully Submitted,
Allie Sprague
Wapella Village Clerk**