

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

*Revised
 3-31-21 - 10:30am
 By Allie
 MT*

BOARD MEETING – MINUTES
JANUARY 19, 2021

Regular Meeting - 7:01 pm

- 1. Meeting called to order by President Sherry Mears**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance led by President Sherry Mears**
- 3. Roll Call by Allie Sprague, Wapella Village Clerk**

Name	Title	Status
Sherry Mears	President	Present
Mandy Huff	Trustee	Present
Carl Spath	Trustee	Present
Trevor Karr	Trustee	Present
Tracy Mann	Trustee	Not Present
Jane Buraglio	Trustee	Present
Melissa Taylor	Trustee	Present
Steve Mahrt	Village Attorney	Present
Allie Sprague	Village Clerk	Present

4. MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 5, 2021.

Moved:	Jane Buraglio
Seconded:	Trevor Karr
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED

5. MOTION TO APPROVE ALL VILLAGE BILLS AS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD

Trustee Buraglio asked for an explanation on the \$149 Zoom bill that was on the Bills List. President Mears said the payment was for a year. Buraglio said another payment not on the list was the payment for the loan - \$6496.87. Mears asked if it was paid. Buraglio said it was paid automatically. Treasurer Penny Nichols said it was paid in November. Buraglio said it was never on a Bills List.

Moved:	Mandy Huff
Seconded:	Melissa Taylor
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED

6. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- A.) STREETS, ALLEY AND DRAINAGE – MANDY HUFF:** Everything is good.
- B.) HEALTH & SAFETY – TREVOR KARR:** Everything is good.
- C.) WATER – CARL SPATH:** Nothing to report right now. All caught up pretty much on shut offs. Buraglio asked if the two new hydrants were installed. Spath did not know. Huff said not yet. Buraglio said we really need fire hydrants in those two places and if they were ordered a couple of months ago why weren't they installed. Cody McCoy, village employee, said they hadn't even ordered the hydrants yet. Buraglio asked how many meters were left to install. Huff said 20.
- D.) ZONING – CODY MCCOY:** No permits issued.
- E.) FINANCE – TRACY MANN:** Not present. Mears said he would be here next week. Buraglio asked for the audit. Mears said she was not sure. Buraglio said the Comptroller says it was due December 27th. Was there a reason the village is filing late? Mears said Mann was not here and she does not know.
- F.) WATER OPERATOR – STEVE WESTERFIELD:** Not present
- G.) CLERK – ALLIE SPRAGUE:** No report
- H.) FOIA OFFICER – MAX SCHWARTZ:** Schwartz reported she did 2 FOIAs. Buraglio asked about a FOIA log. Mears asked if she had been filling it out. Schwartz said yes. Buraglio asked if the board can get a copy of it and Schwartz said yes.
- I.) WEBSITE – MELISSA TAYLOR:** Mears said it was up to date. Buraglio said the account numbers were visible. Taylor said the numbers couldn't be seen. Buraglio there are account numbers still not redacted. Taylor went through it today. Buraglio did, too. Motor Fuel, Water Project – second page always has the account numbers and are visible. Some FOIAs are posted under the wrong dates – Buraglio's included. Some minutes are still missing pages. The board members should be concerned about village bank account numbers on the Internet for over 5 weeks. Buraglio suggested shutting down the website until it got revised. Mears asked Buraglio if she would like to take over the website. Buraglio said sure. Mears assigned Buraglio to the website. Taylor said she was done. Mears told Buraglio to fix it. Buraglio told Mears she had to get her into one of the computers to do it. Mears said all right. Taylor said she was using her own home computer to do the website. Buraglio said she would not do the website from home. Mears said they'd have to order another computer and they would talk about it later.
- J.) ORDINANCES – JANE BURAGLIO:** Buraglio had the two ordinance books on the table. The books go from 2013 to present. A third book contained ordinances from 2000

to 2008 that were in the box of papers given to her to sort. They need to be inserted in those other ordinance books. All the ordinances that are tagged need to have minutes with them because they aren't signed. Attorney Mahrt indicated that was correct. Buraglio said all the ordinances were there. None were missing.

7. VILLAGE ORGANIZATIONS

- A.) **FRIENDS OF WAPELLA VETERANS** – Max Schwartz reported they are still taking donations and names for the wall. They are no longer taking names for the pavers through the winter, they will start again in the spring. Mears wanted to know what the donations are for if anyone asks. Schwartz said they are paying the man who puts the names on the wall.
- B.) **WAPELLA SAYS YES** – No report
- C.) **FIRE DEPARTMENT** – Dale Karr reported they were doing the Chili & Oyster dinner as a drive-up. He did not know the date.
- D.) **WAPELLA CHURCHES** – No report.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Armstrong – passed out a packet of papers he had copied by the Treasurer, Penny Nichols, prior to the meeting. He asked that the letter be reflected in the minutes. (See Attachment A)

Armstrong put his keys on the board table, followed by Cody McCoy, officially resigning their positions as employees. The Clerk and Buraglio both said they wanted to speak. Mears stopped the clerk from speaking saying everybody will get their turn. Mears said she was discussing with her board there were no employees. There is snow coming. She and Trustee Huff will be plowing snow unless they find someone to do it. Mears wanted to explain what just happened and Dale Karr asked if they get three minutes now. Mears said they would after she was done. She was not taking sides, but wants people to understand how they feel as employees. No one should have to feel that way as an employee anywhere. The Clerk tried to speak. Mears said she was not recognized. Mears continued a discussion about what the village would do with no employees to do any work. Buraglio said a discussion about employees was not on the agenda.

Trustee Huff said they would have to figure it out because she was stepping down from Streets and Alleys and would not go through what she has been through in the past. She said because of boards and because of citizens she has lost employees. She will not bust her butt anymore to get employees in here to do the job.

Brian Armstrong interrupted about someone coming outside with a camera.

Huff continued she was sorry, but it was not in her to do it anymore. Mears offered the department to Melissa Taylor. She said no.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT THE HANDBOOK WITH THE CORRECTION ON PAGE 11
3.3 – ADDING THE WORDS AFTER: FORFEITED WITHOUT COMPENSATION,
“UNLESS CASHED OUT”.**

Moved:	Melissa Taylor
Seconded:	Carl Spath
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED

Buraglio qualified her motion wanting to know if the board will follow the handbook. Trustee Karr said the village is starting from scratch with the employees and if we have to find new employees, it will be by the book. Buraglio asked Mahrt if the board would get a new copy. Mahrt said yes.

B.) ORDINANCE AMENDING REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY

Mears asked what needed to be changed on the ordinance. Mahrt told the board that the Remote Participation Policy Exhibit A is the new State Statute. The legislators changed the Statute to allow Zoom meetings during a pandemic. There are new provisions. The meeting has to be recorded. All the votes have to be by roll call. There are other provisions in that Statute. This basically adopts that Statute as an addition to the Village Remote Meeting Policy so you can have Zoom meetings during the pandemic.

**MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE 2021-01-19 AMENDING PROCEDURES FOR
REMOTE PARTICIPATION**

Moved:	Trevor Karr
Seconded:	Mandy Huff
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED

10.) NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL AND POSSIBLE VOTE

A.) CUT TREE DOWN AT 100 S OAK REQUESTED BY OWNER

Mears stated that they found out the tree in question is not on Village property. Buraglio offered to send a map for confirmation. Mears said she would then send it to the property owner. The tree limb fell and they thought it was a village tree.

11.) CLOSED SESSION

MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR LITIGATION AND FOR THE REVIEW OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES.

Moved:	Trevor Karr
Seconded:	Melissa Taylor
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED @ 7:40 pm

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 @ 7:55 pm

MOTION TO APPROVE AND RELEASE CLOSED SESSION MINUTES FOR 11.20.2018; ALSO TO APPROVE FOR CONTENT AND NOT RELEASE CLOSED SESSION MINUTES FOR 5.21.2019, 6.25.2019, 8.20.2019, 11.19.2019, 2.11.2020, 7.28.2020, 9.15.2020, 10.20.2020 AND 12.15.2020

Moved:	Jane Buraglio
Seconded:	Melissa Taylor
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	PASSED

Mears wanted it noted in the minutes that she gave Spath and Karr each a set of the Village maintenance shed keys. Mears collected all the trustee's copies of unreleased closed session minutes to be shredded.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved:	Melissa Taylor
Seconded:	Mandy Huff
Ayes:	Mandy Huff, Trevor Karr, Carl Spath, Jane Buraglio, Melissa Taylor
Nays:	
Abstained:	
Action Taken:	MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:00 pm

Armstrong interrupted again and said someone needed to take care of her and wanted to make a police report about a camera. Mears called him out of order and asked him to be quiet because the board was conducting a meeting.

Mears again offered Streets to Taylor who refused. Mears offered it to Trustee Spath. Mears offered it to Trustee Karr. Karr said we would have to find a contractor to plow roads. Mears said she and Huff plowed and Karr said he didn't know the first thing about plowing. The Clerk told the board that Tyler Morris plowed her road and alley around her house.

Spath asked Karr if he could co-chair with him. Co-chairmen of committees are not allowed. Two chairmen can come together and get a job done, but co-chairmen would cause an illegal meeting. Spath agreed to take Streets and Karr would help if needed. Mears said she knew the name of a man who is looking for a job and she would get together with Spath and let him know more information.

PUBLIC COMMENT (CONTINUED)

Allie Sprague – Explained her husband's only interaction or knowledge of any Village of Wapella employees was with Josh Byrd. Countless times he came by and brought rock, picked up branches and helped carry concrete to a trailer. It took a few times for him to introduce himself. That is the knowledge that her husband has of the town and it boils down to character. Cody does not have it. Mears interrupted and said we are not bashing people. Buraglio said we just got bashed. Sprague said it is not bashing. Her husband on Facebook pointed something out because he doesn't know anybody. Mears said as a representative of the Village of Wapella, she could have talked to Huff if she had an issue. Sprague said she did not have an issue. There was a pile of brush by the road and there was one comment made. Mears claimed she didn't care what was on Facebook. It was all BS anyway. Mears said everybody gets bashed on Facebook, but she didn't want bashing of each other on Facebook. Sprague asked when did she bash anybody except to say McCoy threatened to take somebody outside and beat them up. He acknowledged and said it was the truth. Mears wanted the arguing to stop or she would ask people to leave. McCoy continued and Mears asked him to leave. McCoy left the building.

Dale Karr – Reported he went to Casey's for a break and drove up Main Street. The employee was standing on the street waving his hands at him. He does not follow employees around. He takes bags to the dumpster at the shed. Every time he comes through town he drives around town even at 10 pm. He is a senior citizen and he lives in Wapella and pays taxes. He can't go to the employees if he has a complaint and if he did he would get the law called on him. Mears said he could come to her. He is very upset about it. They said he is lying to them and he doesn't even talk to them. He pointed out that they didn't start plowing snow until 10 am. He had to use his snow blower and his blade. It is the taxpayer's right that if he has a complaint to bring it to the

board meeting. Why should they threaten him for bringing his complaints in the open to the meeting? He isn't hiding. He isn't online. He doesn't read online. He had ten people call him about the comments made by McCoy that he was a liar. Dale Karr made other complaints about the employees and Mears said he didn't have to worry about it because there are no employees and they will figure it out. Mears told him he had 40 seconds. Karr said the new employees should to know that they are working for the people in town and it doesn't matter who is looking at them if they are working.

Jane Buraglio – Mears told her she was out of line and Buraglio reminded her she was a board member and wanted to speak to Karr. Buraglio continued that she had apologized a couple of meetings ago for the way the employees treated him. She said she has an issue with employees that are on social media while they are on the clock and calling Dale Karr a liar. Mears cut Buraglio off and said next. Buraglio asked the Clerk to make sure this got in the minutes.

Sharon Riddle – Stated obviously the village has a problem. She follows no one. The police report is very complete. McCoy started it all. He followed her to the country. He drove around the country while he was on the clock. He doesn't even know her name. Why did he come to the country and choose to take a picture of her while she was on private property? He stopped right in front of her while she was sitting there waiting to get on the road and took my picture. She wanted someone to tell her how that has anything to do with her. She did following him back to the village to make sure he did not come to her house because she didn't want him there. She is glad he is gone because he doesn't deserve to be in the town and not treat the people correctly. She told the board if they want to know who is right to read the police report. If they want a copy she would give provide it. He was in the wrong all the way around. He admitted it in the report. He came up to her at Casey's and stopped and snared at her. She went to the highway and pulled over at the Waynesville rock pile to answer a phone call and he followed her there. She thinks it is a good thing he is gone. This town does not deserve an employee like him. Mears told Riddle if she ever had a problem, she knew her phone number and Huff's phone number. Mears said she would not hesitate to talk to the employees. Riddle reminded Mears that her suggestion was to file a police report. Mears said her employee told her that she was following them around town constantly and pulling out in front of them. Riddle said he was a liar. Mears said she couldn't do anything because she is at work and to protect the village and her employees she told them to call the police to deal with the matter.

9.) TABLED ITEM FOR DICSUSISON, APPROVAL AND POSSIBLE VOTE.

A.) EMPLOYEES HANDBOOK FINAL COPY

Buraglio asked Attorney Mahrt if there were ordinances that needed amended before approving the handbook. Marht said it was hard for him to tell because he was not sure he had the complete ordinance book. Mahrt said he could review the book he has and report

back next meeting. Buraglio questioned passing the handbook prior to his review for ordinances. Mahrt thought it would be okay to pass it subject to any ordinance changes. Buraglio pointed out a conflict on Page 11. One place says vacation time cannot be carried over from year to year and it must be used or cashed out each year. The next place says vacation time not used by the employee's anniversary date will be forfeited without compensation. Buraglio asked what that meant. Mears said the employees could work the same week they get paid for vacation. If they forget and don't say anything they lose vacation time. Buraglio suggested since the Treasurer tracks and is paying vacation time; she could make sure they get their vacation pay.

Buraglio said Jodi Head got 20 hours of vacation pay and asked who approved that. Mears said she approved it. Buraglio asked why because that wasn't allowed in the existing handbook. Mears said she has been here three years and we didn't even pass this yet. Buraglio agreed. Then why did she approve vacation pay? Mears said technically she would get a week's vacation from the old handbook. Buraglio disagreed. The old handbook said full time. Huff said she remembered bringing it up that the village had no full time employees and said Mears had said it was fine. Buraglio said it never got in the handbook. Mears told Buraglio she's been here three years and if you can do that job, she can quit and not give her the 20 hours and she would be cool with that.

Mahrt believed it could be more clearly written. Mears said so we are not going to pass this again. Huff wanted to pass it now and get the correction done. Buraglio said she would like to read the correction. Mahrt suggested that the correction read vacation time not used by the employee's anniversary date will be forfeited without compensation, unless cashed out. Buraglio believes the two things needed to be coordinated or combined.

Mahrt asked Buraglio if there were any other parts that needed a correction. Mears didn't see any place. Buraglio said the issues she had were with the employees that were here. She wanted it made clear to future employees that they don't work 8 hours and 2 minutes and then try to claim the 2 minutes as over time. It is wrong. It says in the handbook that we don't do that. The board is not following the handbook; even the old one. Mears said there is a new chairman and he can make sure. Spath told the board he checked the radar and saw snow predicted for the next three days. The only thing that he was thinking about right now was how to run a snowplow. Mears told Spath that Dale Karr would be willing to help him out. Dale Karr asked if there was an Alcohol and Drug policy in the handbook. Buraglio said the handbook says we do follow it. Mears said it was on page 31 and they could drug test at any time.

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

Village of Wapella:

First, I would like to state that I, Brian Armstrong (Village of Wapella Maintenance Employee), would like my statements reflected in the meeting minutes of January 19, 2021.

I am speaking on behalf of both myself and Cody McCoy, as he has given me permission to do so and does not wish to speak.

Cody and I do our jobs and we do them well. Timely, effectively and unquestionably. Our jobs as village maintenance employees is a thankless job. When we do things right, as instructed by our direct supervisors, it still isn't right as dictated by a handful of village residence. The bashing, bullying, slandering and harassment that we have endured over recent months has become tumultuous, repetitive and downright degrading. No village resident should have the "right" or "power" to dictate how our job is done. Being followed around town by village residents (Dale Karr, Sharon Williams, Kim Donovan) is harassment. We do not answer to residents. There is a maintenance shop phone number that can be called and a voicemail system in place to contact us. The public comment letters that you will find attached in your packet is a perfect example of slander and bashing. No village resident (even though they do not technically live in town) has any right to dictate how we do our jobs or how much we are compensated.

Upon finding the "News Happenings Wapella, IL" Facebook page, it was clear that the bashing of both Cody and myself has been going on for quite a while (see attached print outs concerning Allie Sprague and her husband, Kim Donovan, Sharon Williams, Brandon Karr just to name a few). While it's a social media platform and public forum, this isn't acceptable, as we are slandered and bashed about our pay rate and how "ineffectively" we perform our jobs, while having pictures taken and posted of us doing our jobs. We are two men with ZERO benefits, working for minuscule pay as compared to any other village or town. When we do our jobs, it's never correct and/or it's not enough.

It bares mentioning that Jane Buraglio was also brought onto to Village of Wapella Board, as a sitting member, without proper protocol. Jane was both nominated and motioned by Sherri Mears (Mayor), August 25, 2020. This is not proper protocol. It's also been stated, by village residents of reputable accord, that when Jan Buraglio is elected in April 2021 on to the Village of Wapella Board, she is going to fire all maintenance and clerical employees.

In closing, the bashing, bullying, slander and harassment have come to an end. To alleviate the problem of "over-paying" village employees, effective immediately, I am resigning my position with the Village of Wapella Maintenance Department.

Kind regards,
Brian Armstrong