

Village of Wapella Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Village Hall – 7:00 pm

Meeting called to order by Village President, Dennis Boyce.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Dennis Boyce

Mark Miller

Sara Goergen

Jane Buraglio

John Goergen

Dalton Spencer

Sean Holland

Steve Mahrt – Attorney

Absent:

Robin Morrow, Clerk

Approval of Minutes

John Goergen made motion to approve the minutes for the November 19, 2025 board meeting. Second by Mark Miller. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Approval of Bills:

Jane Buraglio recapped some of the bills:

Casey's & Evergreen FS: Now that John has switched our on-road diesel at the shop out for gasoline, Jane gave a little more detail on the prices per gallon and breakdown of taxes.

GA Rich & Sons Inc: We received the invoice for the main break repair at 104 S Locust. Jane will be sending this to Julie at USDA. She sent her an email with other questions regarding available grants but has not heard back from her. If Jane does not hear from her about this invoice next week, she will go ahead and pay this from the Water Project Fund.

Kinder Company: We have three invoices from Kinder Company.

The work at the pumphouse on the chlorine alarm system was EPA required for safety purposes.

Kelly did work on the Christmas lights. It looks like now we are waiting for Ameren to complete their portion of the work. Jane is not sure how much longer we may have to wait. Kelly called Jane yesterday and told her there is a new person in charge giving orders for work to be done. Jane contacted Jeff McCollum and he is sending her some documents. It seems the Village never entered into an agreement with Ameren for Holiday lighting. Jane believes the wreaths were purchased in 1999 or thereabouts. Jane does not know what this will involve but will keep everyone posted. Jane had told him she would be at the village hall all day tomorrow.

The third invoice is for receptacle work done in the community center gym.

USDA: This is for our second interest payment this year. So, in 2025 we paid \$10,000 toward the principal and \$12,075.01 in interest. According to the Bond Schedule our balance due beginning January 1, 2026, is \$455,000 of the \$500,000 loan. We will only be paying \$10,000 per year toward the principal until 2039. From 2040 to 2052 the principal payment will increase to \$15,000 per year. From 2053 to 2058, the principal payment will increase to \$20,000 per year. The interest payments will gradually decrease, but in the end, we will be paying a total of \$782,896.88 for this loan.

Reimbursements & Payments:

TKS: TKS submitted another bill. Rodger told Jane earlier this week that Troy still has not met with him to provide his measurements. Rodger is still holding the original check. We will continue to hold off paying this invoice until Jane hears from Rodger that he is satisfied with the information he gets from Troy.

Jane Buraglio made motion to approve the bills as presented to the board. John Goergen second. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Department Reports:

STREETS & ALLEYS: John Goergen

John started wanting to commend Buck and Rex with the snow plowing. They came in early a few times and did a good job. Only a few hiccups but everything worked out. This was Buck's first winter plowing and Rex's second.

In the past there were two tanks at the shed one for diesel, and the other was only used for the red truck. It was mentioned that they use more gas than diesel. The guys are making several trips to fill up gas cans. So, John spoke with FS and they switched one of the tanks to gas with a padlock on it. This will be much more convenient for the guys. The red truck will now be filled up at Casey's when needed. This will also be discussed further in new business.

John further discussed the concern with the Christmas lights and how they were put up. It appears that this has been done this way for quite some time. John had Kinder repair two of the poles on Main Street for the wreaths and just waiting on Ameren to hook them up.

John also had Kinder repair some outlets in community center for Christmas decorations. Kinder noticed that others needed to be GFI so those were replaced as well to meet code.

Another incident on Locust with a break right across from the Firehouse. There was a little trouble isolating the line so they ended up doing it hot so there was no boil order.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Sara Goergen

Rescheduled the vendor event to March 2026. This will allow for vendor spots outside.

Sara was at the community center on Friday and noticed that the gym lights were on. A neighbor could see the hall light on. She just wanted to bring it to everyone's attention in case there is an issue or concern. John suggested possibly getting cameras down there too.

WATER: Sean Holland

Sean thanked John and Rex and Rick for containing "incident #4".

ZONING: Mark Miller

Nothing until new business.

FINANCE: Jane Buraglio

Overall Account Balances as of November 30, 2025

General Fund Checking	\$119,774.71
Park CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 59,067.58
Police CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 19,420.78
Water Fund Checking	\$ 17,624.01
Motor Fuel Checking	\$ 62,632.67
Water Project Fund	\$ 47,591.98
Restricted Debt Service	\$ 12,361.86
Short Lived Asset Account	\$ 75,968.42
Total:	\$414,442.01

About the Short-Lived Asset Fund: USDA tells Jane there should be \$130,000 in this account. We only have \$75,968.42. We continue to deposit \$2289 each month into this account. She had to send proof (bank statements) that we are doing this.

Sales Tax Revenue: Jane was impressed by the amount of sales taxes we have collected. \$10,789.43 in November and \$10,587.63 in October. The bulk of the sales tax comes for Wapella from Casey's.

Audit: Jane is meeting with Neal Kuester tomorrow to work on the 2024/2025 audit. They were going to meet last week but had to reschedule.

Litigation: Our case with Circle M Properties concluded on Monday, November 24th with the Judge finding in favor of the Village of Wapella. Our Ordinance stood enforceable. John, Mark, Steve and Jane attended the hearing. Our claim with the insurance company has been closed.

Frontier Fiber Optics: Jane has been contacted by a new construction company (Ervin Cable Construction) that is doing fiber optics work for Frontier. They are following up on a 2022 request to install fiber optics in the village along the roads and some alleys. They have provided a new submission that involves 876' of Aerial Overlash, 29,074' of buried fiber optic cable and 213 new handholes. Jane needs to know what the board wants to do. Do we need two fiber optic companies in the village? This is a huge project involving basically all the digging and road borings that MR Systems did two years ago. Is the board allowed to deny the request? Do we want to invite the company to attend a meeting?

Jane asked Steve if the board is allowed to deny a request. He stated no. The board needs to provide them with the right of way ordinances and then issue a permit. Steve stated that they do have the right to do it. Jane will reply and let them know when the next meeting is if they would like to attend.

Letters from Jim Hull: Sean and Jane have been receiving letters from Jim Hull regarding ordinance violations. Jane received another one today. One of the letters he would like to be read into the minutes. Jane and Sara will get together as these violations need to be sent from Sara. Sean mentioned that this is just a slow process. Mark mentioned possible sending him a letter explaining the process.

DRAINAGE: Dalton Spencer

Nothing to report.

WATER OPERATOR: Steve Westerfield

Nothing to report.

CLERK: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

FOIA OFFICER: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Jane Buraglio

Nothing to report. All up to date.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/Village Organizations: NONE

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL, AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

- 1) Discussion and possible approval of an ordinance levying a tax on the property subject to taxation within the Village of Wapella for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.**

2026 Levy: Jane provided two worksheets. One provides the calculations to arrive at our Estimated Assessed Valuation (EAV) and the other shows what we levied last year per line item. Jane could not believe the Village's EAV has surpassed \$10 Million..

Motion made by Jane Buraglio to approve the ordinance levying a tax on the property subject to taxation within the Village of Wapella for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026. Second made by Sean Holland. All voting yes. Motion approved. 2025-12-17A

- 2) Discussion and possible approval of an ordinance amending Section 51.01 – Wapella Code of Ordinances – Water Rates – January 1 2026.**

Water Rates Increase:

Before we discuss this proposed ordinance, Jane wanted to review some of the numbers she went over last month regarding the solvency of our water department. These figures came from our auditor beginning in 2019.

- 2019 – the Water Department made \$22,473
- 2020 – the Water Department made \$44,474
- 2021 – the Water Department made \$47,557
- 2022 – the Water Department made \$29,628
- 2023 – the Water Department lost \$13,742
- 2024 – the Water Department lost \$10,289

According to the June 30, 2025 Treasurer’s Report, the water department lost \$42,284.91.

The treasurer’s report for the year October 31, 2025, showed the Water Department made \$810.

The treasurer’s report for the year ending November 30, 2024 shows the water department has lost \$2051.38.

Our auditor has seen this pattern and has stressed that the village must address raising the water rates. He said bluntly that our rates at least need to be doubled to sustain our Water Department activities.

Last month Jane presented to the board the option of selling our water department. What Illinois American Water offers is attractive – budget billing, low-income incentives, senior discount and an attractive purchase price depending upon the appraisal of our water plant and system.

The downside of selling our system is the loss of control over our water rates. American Water is a business, and they run their business to make a profit.

Our Water Department is a business, an enterprise business not supported by tax dollars, but supported by the water we sell. We need to operate this business to make a profit and to use that profit to continue to upgrade our aging water system.

Jane proposed we retain control of our water department and try to get our water rates in line with rising costs of operating the water system.

We have an ordinance in place dated 2022 that automatically raises our water rates 6% each January. We can see from the losses beginning in 2023, this increase is not keeping up with the inflation of costs.

This proposed ordinance shows our current water rates. It has a blank for the percentage of the initial water rate increase beginning January 1, 2026. It also provides for percentage rate increases to take place annually.

The auditor suggested last month that we double our water rates. Jane has worked up several scenarios of rate increases and showed the totals for a minimum water bill.

Jane used Sean Holland's last water bill usage of 4500 gallons as an example for residential and she used Breaker's last water bill usage of 8600 gallons as an example for commercial. Most commercial accounts have minimum charges. Places like the bars, Casey's and Evergreen FS have higher water usage. Most commercial accounts are in the position of passing on rate increases to the customers.

Options – cut services or raise rates. We legally can't cut services, especially if they are EPA regulated. John said he wanted another month to think about it.

Letter to the Public about rate increases: Sean and Jane briefly discussed sending a letter with these next water bills explaining the need for a rate increase. She thinks that would be a good idea. We can compose a letter and include a copy of the ordinance.

There was concern about what caused this situation. The board continued to discuss things that happened with past boards and how this has happened over the years as this is such a controversial issue. Sean wants to see everything laid out on paper to the entire village of how we have come to this situation. This is not just with the Village of Wapella. This is affecting many other villages as well.

Motion made by Jane Buraglio to table this ordinance and provide a FAQ letter to the public to be mailed out before the next board meeting. Sean Holland made second. All voting yes to table this ordinance for now.

3) Discussion and possible approval of zoning recommendations from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mark reported that The Zoning Board of Appeals met on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 to discuss the rezoning of property at 100 S. Fourth Street. It is three parcels and one is zoned Residential and the other two are zoned Commercial. They are recommending that the Village Board approve the ordinance rezoning this property as B-1 – General Commercial.

Mark Miller explained to the board about the process of this and pointed out several reasons why this would be in the Village's best interest to rezone.

John Goergen made motion to approve the ordinance for rezoning property at 100 S. Fourth Street to B-1 General Commercial. Mark Miller seconded the motion. All voting yes. Motion approved. 2025-12-17B

4) Discussion and possible approval to have fuel pumps hooked up to portable generator.

John just wanted to inform the board about when power is lost to the shed the pumps cannot be used even with the generator. Therefore, these pumps or at least the gas pump should be hooked up to the generator in the event of a power outage. He did provide a quote to have this done but did not like it. He has another quote that he is waiting on and reaching out to a few more.

Jane also stated that they are waiting for quotes on the stand-alone generators. Once quotes are in, it will be put back on the agenda.

5) Discussion of main break preparedness.

Sean just wanted to have a quick discussion about anything we can do to prepare for what may be a long winter. One never knows when there will be a break. The equipment we have will be sufficient for now according to Rex. Not exactly sure what can be changed or what can be done differently, but any suggestions are welcome.

John stated that they do pretty good at keeping on parts and most of what is being paid for is labor with these repairs. They discuss putting pins on the locations and be able to use GPS to locate and work on getting them cleaned out when weather permits.

MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:

Motion to enter Closed Session made by John Goergen at 8:25pm. Seconded by Sean Holland. All voting yes. Moved to Closed Session.

- 1) Discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee(s).

Entering back into Open Session: 8:46 pm

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Dennis Boyce

Mark Miller

Sara Goergen

Jane Buraglio

John Goergen

Dalton Spencer

Sean Holland

Steve Mahrt – Attorney

Absent:

Robin Morrow, Clerk

- 1) Discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee(s).

John Goergen made motion to raise Rick Lord and Rex Haycraft pay by \$1 each to be retroactive from 11/3/25. Jane Buraglio made second. Voting yes – Mark, Sara, Jane, John, Sean. Dalton – abstained. Motion approved.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion made by John Goergen to adjourn. Seconded by Dalton Spencer. All voting yes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Morrow, Village Clerk