

Village of Wapella Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 19th, 2025

Village Hall – 7:00 pm

Meeting called to order by Village President, Dennis Klatt.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Dennis Klatt

Mark Miller

Jane Buraglio

Sean Holland

Todd – Attorney

Absent:

John Goergen

Robin Morrow, Clerk

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mark Miller to approve minutes from January 15, 2025, Village Board Meeting. Second made by Jane Buraglio. All voting yes including Dennis Klatt. Motion approved.

Bills:

Jane reported and updated the following:

- FS Custom Turf
- Getz
- Julie
- U of I Extension

Motion made by Jane Buraglio to approve the bills as presented to the board. The second was made by Sean Holland. All voting yes including Dennis Klatt. Motion approved.

Before moving on Jane wanted to inform the Board that on Saturday, she tried to renew the Microsoft Office Suite on the shed computer. It kept sending emails regarding payment. She found out the email account had been secured with a former employee's private email account. Jane took a screen shot to prove this. She is sure codes were being sent to either his private email or phone. She finally sent new security information and managed to pay for the renewal. Jane feels our email and computer have been held hostage to some extent.

Department Reports:

STREETS & ALLEYS: Jane Buraglio

Jane stated that she was not sure where to begin tonight with her report so she will just start here:

Jane mentioned that she was told that Dennis is planning on removing her from the Street Department and appointing John Goergen. She continued by explaining that same day Dennis ran screaming from the shop saying he quit and was resigning. She stopped Dennis on Saturday as he was dumping in the village dumpsters to tell him the men were coming in to remove the deep slush off the roads before the deep freeze. He looked at her and said, "I got nothing to say to you." He has refused to speak to her ever since.

Dennis interjected and stated that what Jane was saying was not the truth. He asked Jane to explain the reason he got upset and walked out of the shop. Mark asked if this was appropriate to be discussed at this meeting. Dennis stated that if Jane wanted to discuss this matter that she should at least tell the truth. Jane stated that he had gotten upset because he had asked to be trained on Julie's, and she had told him no. Dennis stated that he actually asked to be trained on Streets when Jane responded that they aren't doing Julie's anymore. He then responded that if that was true then she would be able to train him on Streets and she said no.

Jane continued stating that she has learned during the 19 years she has been involved with Wapella Village government – we are here to serve and provide services to the village residents to the best of our capabilities. There is no room for personality conflicts. She stated that people should leave personality conflicts outside the realm of village government when they take the oath to serve their community.

Jane means no offense to John, but she is concerned about how much experience he has running the Street Department, aside from being a maintenance worker for a short period. It is a complex department and is the hub of ALL work done for ALL departments in this village – Streets, Health & Safety, Water, Drainage and Finance. All these departments essentially work out of the Village Maintenance Shed and Shop Office. Financial records are at the shop.

Jane and John have worked well together with the Water and Drainage Departments. She hopes to see that continue. Jane is also offering her assistance with the transfer of the Street Department. There is a tremendous amount of paperwork behind the scenes, including receipts, billings, coding, payroll, reporting to other entities, and many other things. Jane stated that if John wants to navigate those waters by himself, that is fine. She is willing to work with him on this transition. The last thing she wants to see is citizens other than Dale criticizing the work being done by the Village Street Department.

Snow Plowing

The men have done a great job keeping our streets clear. Jane thinks they may have done more snow plowing so far this winter than we did all last winter. She really doesn't care what Dale says, but the use of the grit that we have on hand to use on the streets for ice control is extremely beneficial. Rodger Sprague agrees. People notice due to the dark color; it melts the ice and snow quickly when the sun shines.

Railroad Mowing

The railroad mowing bill was sent to CNCA on February 12th. The men spent 175.75 hours mowing, repairing ruts, picking up debris and railroad ties and abating the weeds. The total bill was \$13,181.25. Last year they paid by direct deposit. I will let you know when we receive payment.

Rabies Clinic

The Second Chance Rabies Clinic will be held at the Village Shed on Saturday, March 15 from 9 to 11 am. We do a lot of housecleaning before and after the clinic. It's a shop and the fine dust gets everywhere. Men aren't the greatest at housecleaning, so most of the housecleaning in the office and bathroom has been done by her in preparation for the public. Jane also bought breakfast out of her pocket for the maintenance men who worked that morning and have been on site to help Second Chance and greet people as they come in. She intends to continue that tradition if John doesn't mind.

Mug-A-Bug Classes

We have purchased three sets of study books and workbooks. Paul, Rex and Steve Evans are all enrolled in the Spraying Classes for April 3rd and 4th at Mug-a-Bug in Forsyth.

Weather Spotting Classes

The Weather Spotting Classes will be held at the Kenney Fire Department on Wednesday March 5th at 6:30 pm. This is a basic SkyWarn Storm Spotter Class. It will be an introductory course. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Community Outreach - St. Patrick's Church

Jane received an email from Jay Barth, who lives in Wapella and a member of St. Patrick's Church. He said:

He is a member of the Men's group at St. Patrick's Catholic Church. We have been discussing different ways to provide outreach to members of our community and Dewitt County. There are several groups in Clinton that provide services to those in need, as well as the Catholic Church in Clinton. He has been tasked with reaching out to local organizations to determine if there is an outreach need in Wapella, and how we can best serve that need. Does the village hall have any knowledge, or information that may be shared for any homeless or residents in need? A response to this email is fine, or he can be reached on his cell, at 309-310-5220. He also knows Josh Gorrie at Wapella Christian Church and has reached out to him as well.

Jane replied to Jay about the worthy cause and directed him also to the Wapella Township Supervisor, Jay Haycraft. The Township provides some assistance and may know of any homeless or residents in need.

Transparency

In view of transparency, Jane states that she has done her best to provide this board with reports and pictures of all the projects that have been happening in the village shed and office. Pretty much every project was accomplished with repurposed materials. All the employees have pulled items out of the dumpsters. They must make sure items not allowed at the landfill are pulled out or the trucks will refuse to empty the dumpsters. We have had to order a special roll off to sort out what has been dumped. Many items have been pulled out that can be repurposed rather than end up in a landfill. Many residents set those items on the ground. So, she is providing pictures again of all the repurposed items that have ended up benefitting the office and shop.

The Mayor's Assigned Projects

Dennis assigned several jobs to her that he wanted to be done at the shop. Jane is not certain he had the authority to do this, but we have been working on these jobs as time allows between main breaks, Julies, snow plowing, ice control, resident's requests and all the unexpected numerous jobs that arise daily.

Dennis didn't give them a deadline for these projects, but apparently things aren't happening as quickly as he would like.

- Eyewash Station

They addressed the eyewash station, which took more than just moving things on the floor. The eyewash station was installed incorrectly with black iron pipe and is considered basically non-functional. The entire area was remodeled. The loft area was lowered above the eyewash station and a wall was constructed between it and the sink area. The light was reinstalled to light up both areas. Spacing was provided for the new plumbing. Jane won't oversee this project now and expects John will want to get his own quotes to bring to the board for this work to be completed.

- Removal of what Dennis determined to be junk

Dennis assigned the removal of items he considered junk. When the last metal dumpster arrived, we took care of removing items Dennis wanted to be junked.

- Clean out cold storage

Another job Dennis assigned them was to clean out cold storage. Jane is not sure anyone but maybe John realizes that they have inherited decades of discarded or usable materials. She thinks it might be safe to guess that John might have left items in cold storage when he worked as maintenance. Some of the items sitting in cold storage have been donated by the Wapella Township, village residents or collected for shed projects and upgrades. Most of the upgrades you can see in the shop came from repurposed materials. Jane has provided countless pictures to the board.

- CONEX Container Organization:

As Jane explained last month, they are now in the process of trying to clean and organize the Cold Storage area. To begin the organization, they purchased the CONEX container, and it is on site. The first step in the cold storage job is to move out the items they intend to store in the CONEX. To do that, the CONEX must be prepared for organized storage. The signs have been carried out of the shop, hung on fabricated hooks and stored off the floor. They opted not to purchase lumber to build racks which would have taken up useful floor space. The men traveled yesterday to pick up pallet racking, which will be installed in the CONEX. Once the pallet racking is installed, they can continue hauling away posts, barricades, cones, and other things into the CONEX. Once that is done, it will make room to pull out the things behind and under the existing shelving to inventory what is there.

- Making a Work Schedule for the Street Employees

Dennis assigned having a daily schedule made up of what job duties are to be done for each day of the week/month. This has been a huge topic of discussion at the shed, and Jane has consulted other street departments in the area to see if they have anything like this. They do not. In our case, they would have to get daily schedules from all the departments – Water, Health & Safety, Drainage, & Finance – in order to incorporate daily schedules.

- Picking up items from the Streets

Dennis is going to show you pictures tonight taken by a former employee while he was supposed to be working on the clock. One shows a chair formerly owned by Ron Mills and was deposited on the right-of-way and picked up by the employees in the backhoe. Jane is wondering if there are pictures of the other things they have picked up for residents that are unable to bring their items to the shop. Stoves, furniture, broken concrete, landscaping materials, dirt, appliances, window air conditioners, dehumidifiers, and

many other things. They get calls at the shop from residents asking if they can pick up items. People stop her on the street or call her at home asking if they can help pick up items. People have stopped employees on the street with the same question. If we have the means of disposing of these items, we help when we can. Does the board want us to tell the residents NO? As far as she is concerned, this is a courtesy offered to the public just as brush pick up. One of the initial job duties described in the interview process is to keep the streets and alleys clean.

A lot of these items picked up from residents or pulled from the dumpsters have been repurposed into useful shop resources. A discarded countertop replaced the shop workbench top. Discarded swivel wheels have been attached to work carts. A discarded wheelchair has been repurposed as a rolling maintenance chair to work on equipment at eye level. Scrapped cardboard in the dumpsters was repurposed to use under the equipment to lay on. Discarded school lockers were repurposed into tool and supplies storage. John Deere scrapped all kinds of storage bins during their remodel and gave them to us. They were repurposed and now installed in the shop. When the Clinton Journal closed their office, Jane was called to see if we could use anything. We got file cabinets, office supplies and numerous other items, all headed to their dumpster if we weren't able to repurpose them.

· Ordinance Enforcement:

We have a situation again at the property owned by Bravo. There are multiple cars parked in the driveway. Several unlicensed. There are two vehicles with the same license plates. Another vehicle with the front plates displayed on the back. Jane spoke to the Sheriff about this. He said it is a violation when these vehicles are driven on the road. In the meantime, it appears people can decorate their vehicles with fictitious license plates and keep them on their property.

· Poultry Application letters:

Jane mentioned she sent out the letters accompanied by the application and ordinance.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Sean Holland

Sean stated that his main piece of business is under New Business for Discussion. Jane brought up the community center and the repairs of the toilets.

WATER: John Goergen (reported by Jane Buraglio)

Kamstrup Representative

They met with the new Kamstrup representative, Devin Peterson, who works for E J Prescott. He showed them many new tips and tricks with the REAdy system. He corrected some points on the tablet map. He is a phone call away and can access our system to work remotely for additional help. We have used him already to run some test reads on 107 Hickory and he did that from Atlanta GA.

New Meters

We installed a new meter at 411 S Walnut. The realtor got the men inside. Whoever winterized the house pulled the old meter and it was sitting on the floor. The meter is not activated because the water is off until further notice. There is a sale pending.

There is a new meter installed at FS, but it is not activated yet. Their plumbers will complete the installation to the new building. At that time the service will be discontinued at the corner of Main & N Oak and the new meter activated. FS is continuing to receive and pay estimated water bills on this account since the service is still available.

Leaks and Emergency Julies

There was a major residential leak at 107 Hickory. This is the trailer south of the auction house. The pipes had frozen earlier and in the process of thawing the pipes, they caught the trailer on fire. After the next thaw, they called dispatch to have the water shut off so they could repair the leak.

We received an emergency Julie for 311 S Locust calling for an emergency sewer repair. It took two trips to be able to locate and mark the water where it enters the house.

The men got called to 611 N Chestnut. A huge garage is being constructed, and the renter thought they hit a water line because the post holes were filled with water. It was determined it was ground water. There was no Julie called in for this project. That afternoon the shed got an emergency Julie because the contractor had hit a gas line. Several Ameren trucks and several locating trucks were on site by the time Jane got back to town after work. She can't imagine that bill the property owner will get.

ZONING: Mark Miller

Jane included the following in her Streets and Alleys Report:

Ordinance Enforcement:

We have a situation again at the property owned by Bravo. There are multiple cars parked in the driveway. Several unlicensed. There are two vehicles with the same license plates. Another vehicle with the front plates displayed on the back. I spoke to the Sheriff about this. He said it is a violation when these vehicles are driven on the road. In the meantime, it appears people can decorate their vehicles with fictitious license plates and keep them on their property. Mark stated that the man had been told that he could not run a body shop at a residence. Mark felt that the owner needs to be sent another letter.

Poultry Application letters:

Jane stated she sent out the letters accompanied by the application and ordinance. Mark mentioned that he had received applications for everyone, except one person.

Mark reported that he had one permit this month for Roger Massey for the construction of an additional building.

Mark also wanted to clarify and correct the rumors about him running for a Village Trustee position in the upcoming election. He stated that he will be running as a "write-in candidate" for the second two-year Trustee position and not running against Sara.

FINANCE (Jane Buraglio / Pat Good)

Overall Account Balances as of January 31, 2025

General Fund Checking	\$114,730.46
Park CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 57,333.30
Police CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 18,942.61
Water Fund Checking	\$ 23,621.20
Motor Fuel Checking	\$ 82,278.98
Water Project Fund	\$ 68,227.12
Restricted Debt Service	\$ 10,680.35
Short Lived Asset Account	\$ 66,402.82
Total:	\$442,218.84

On the Treasurer's Report, page 2 of the General Fund Profit & Loss. You will see 410-11 John Deere Gator. This is a typo, and the code should be 404-11. It will be corrected next month.

USDA Loan:

On January 1, 2024, we began with a total of \$477,056.73 due to the \$500,000 loan. After paying \$12,337.49 in interest and \$10,000 principal payment, our ending 2024 balance due is \$467,012.52. This loan will not end until 2058.

WATER OPERATOR: Steve Westerfield

Nothing to report.

DRAINAGE: John Goergen

Nothing to report.

CLERK: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

FOIA OFFICER: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Jane Buraglio

American Legal Supplement S-3

It is time to send the 2024 ordinances to American Legal Publishing. Does the Mayor still want me to do this?

PUBLIC COMMENTS/Village Organizations:

Nelson Thorp – wanted to announce that they will have free Narcan on the side of the firehouse. This is being implemented by DeWitt County and the Health Department. Should anyone have any questions about it please contact the Fire Department. He also wanted to mention additional changes taking place in the County, such as the purchase of new radios, appointment of additional personnel, etc. Nelson also added that they had tested all the fire hydrants in town for flow and pressure to put together a report and will be testing them once every five years.

Dale Karr – mentioned sidewalk again and the concrete and that it is a safety concern.

Rex Haycraft – wanted to speak about an agenda item listed in the Closed Session #2. He wanted to express that there are only two of them down there now and he is not sure what the situation is, however, he asked that if there was a situation with a specific employee, would there be an initial discussion, and then maybe a written warning, prior to terminating that employee. Mark agreed that there is a protocol. Rex continues to explain how his co-worker can be a plumber, electrician, welder, carpenter, etc. Rex wanted to ask the Board to not terminate anyone. Dennis confirmed that no one was getting terminated.

Steve Thomas – announced that last year's Car Show went well and they planning to do another Car Show this year on same date. He also wanted to ask if anyone wanted to plan anything else that same day in the park or somewhere else, that they do not schedule it during the same hours of the car show. There are four bands lined up already. Should anyone want to set up something they can contact him.

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL, AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

1) Reappointment of Head of Streets and Alleys.

Dennis started by discussing with Jane about a Monday meeting when they met. Dennis continued by explaining how the conversation went. Dennis and Jane continued to debate exactly what was said by who on that given day. Mark moved to table this discussion and be approved until the New Board is elected and seated. He feels that there needs to be a full Board. Mark made the motion to table this discussion until after the election and a full board was in place. Jane made the second. Mark stated that this should be put to a vote. Dennis started calling names. Sean did not want to walk away from the meeting without getting something resolved. He didn't understand why table it and wait a few more months to resolve anything. Mark stated that there needed to be a vote as the motion was already on the table.

Sean voted no. Jane voted yes. Mark voted yes. Dennis thought he needed to vote, but Jane and Mark stated that he did not. Motion approved 2-1.

2) Discussion and possible approval of an Ordinance revising Section 31.080 (A) of The Wapella Code of Ordinances Regarding Supervision of Departments and Employees.

Dennis presented the Ordinance to be updated and stated that as the mayor he really has no say about what goes on in the Village when people knock on his door with issues and concerns about what is going on. He asked Steve to write something up that would give him more authority to step in when needed. Dennis stated that he will work with the head of each department but would like to have some say so about what is done. He asked if he needed to read it or if everyone had a chance or needed a chance to read it. Jane stated she had not had the chance to read it, but felt she understood what Dennis was trying to do. Jane asked Dennis that if he had an issue with a department head, wouldn't he need to bring it to a Board Meeting and let the Board decide. Mark stated that according to the Ordinance the Mayor has the authority to view any records and to speak to any trustee/committee chairperson, but he does not have the authority to have direct contact with an employee. Mark mentioned that in order to not get into another heated discussion as in item #1, do they allow the mayor to have direct contact with the employees. Discussion between Dennis and Mark about how other villages are structured. Jane stated that with Ordinance such as this, she agreed with Mark and felt this should also be tabled until a full board can be in place. Therefore, Jane made the motion to table this Ordinance until it can be presented to a full board in May. Mark Miller seconded the motion. Sean voted no. Jane voted yes. Mark voted yes. Motion approved.

Dennis stated that at this point he is done. Mark said he didn't think that was necessary. Dennis said that he is resigning, and he does not get paid enough to deal with this. He asked if there was anything he needed to do besides turning in his keys. The lawyer stated that he would just need a letter in writing of his resignation given to the Village Clerk. Jane mentioned it would need to be notarized. Dennis asked for confirmation that it actually had to be notarized. The lawyer did not recall. Dennis thanked everyone and apologized. He felt that he did not get a chance to defend himself tonight. Mark told Dennis that he has a chance to revisit this when he is calmer and all the seats are filled. He felt Jane called him out on several things and he did not have the opportunity to respond to anything. He stated that he still has no say, zero power, and looks like an idiot. Mark tried to explain that he does have certain authority but not authority to fire anyone. Dennis said that he was here for the Village and feels others are here for themselves. He turned in the keys and left.

Jane asked if they could continue the meeting. The lawyer stated that there was a quorum present. Sean asked why to continue the meeting as he did not want to sit there and continue. Mark stated that if Sean left there would be no quorum.

The lawyer stated that they could nominate an acting Chairman to continue the meeting. Jane nominated Mark. Mark said no and referred to Sean.

Jane made a motion that Sean step-in as temporary Chairman to get through the meeting. Mark seconded. Sean, Mark, Jane – all voting yes. Motion approved.

- 3) Discussion and possible approval of MFT 2024 Close Outs and MFT 2025 as presented by Rodger Sprague.

Roger Sprague is not present.

- 4) Discussion and possible approval for the purchase of a new Furnace for the Community Center.

Jane had brought to Seans attention about the furnace in the Community Center was out. He pointed out the estimate from Hale Mechanical for a new Furnace rather than to repair the existing one. The air conditioner will stay. Sean made a motion to accept Hale Mechanical's bit for \$6,261.52 to replace the Furnace at the Community Center including equipment, materials, and labor. Jane seconded the motion. Mark, yes. Jane, yes. Sean, yes. Motion approved.

- 5) Discussion and possible approval for replumbing eye washing at shed.

Jane stated that she would go back and get that quote.

- 6) Discussion and possible approval of hiring a new auditor.

Jane has been trying to get Neal Kuester to set a date for the audit since October. The latest several emails go unanswered. She called the office and was told they are in a busy season with submitted quarterly returns. Our audit was due December 31, 2024, to the Comptroller's office. Julie at USDA has asked me twice for the audit. Jane thinks it might be time for Dennis to go shopping for an auditor.

Motion to adjourn made by Mark Miller. Second by Jane Buraglio. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned -8:09pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Morrow, Village Clerk