

Village of Wapella Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 15th, 2023
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
John Goergen
Sean Holland
Carl Spath
Steve Marht – Attorney
Robin Morrow – Clerk

Absent:

Jake Simons

Approval of Minutes:

Motion made by John Goergen to approve minutes from October 25th meeting. The second was made by Jane Buraglio. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Bills:

Backhoe Repair: Jane reported at the last meeting that the backhoe was down and needed repaired. Birkey's came to the shop and made the repair. Since the Backhoe is used for both water main repairs and street work, she has split the bill between the departments.

Stop Payment Fee: Carri Scharf said they did not receive a check mailed to them in July. It was a substantial check and if you recall, the last time a check to Carri Scharf went missing, we ended up with two bogus checks written on our account. Jane stopped payment and had Pat issue another check. Scott, from Carri Scharf, came to Wapella and did an in-person pick up.

United States Treasury: We had to pay some back income tax and late fees from a 941-return filed in 2019.

Winter Gear for the shop: We have been going through the winter gear at the shop and making sure everyone is outfitted for emergencies. We started with Brandon, and Jane expects we will do some more replacing in the next month. Each man has a cabinet to store personal belongings and emergency gear.

Motion made by Jane Buraglio to approve the bills as presented to the board. The second was made by Mark Miller. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Department Reports:

STREETS: Jane Buraglio

Jane wanted to make it clear that brush pick up, mowing and other work has taken a back seat to a tremendous amount of JULIE locates. The men were able to do a half day of pick up on Nov 7th. She wants to thank the many people who have been very helpful by taking their own and even their neighbor's brush and leaves to the burn pile. She has not personally received one complaint about brush pick up. Once we have time and manpower to focus on brush and leaf pick up, she suggests that residents put their leaves in big piles rather than long windrows to speed up the process. Our men shouldn't be out raking leaves all day when other things need to be done. Residents can also put leaves in disposable bags and leave them out for pick up. They can burn their own leaves according to our ordinances on their own properties. I expect we will hopefully have one or two more brush pick up days in the next two weeks and that will be it until Spring.

She would rather see the men doing projects that generate income for the village. While the weather is nice, she would like to see one more mowing on the railroad right-of-way – a billable expense. We also have six holes opened for us by MR Systems during their down time that are ready for meter pit and meter installations, which will result in accurate water billing. The men have assisted in FEMA reimbursable projects hauling tree parts. The men have repaired damaged water valves – the most recent one done yesterday that controls the water to this building – with MR opening holes for easier repairs. Signposts and fence posts have been set up in the last few weeks in holes opened by MR.

We had to do a Water Shut Off due to non-payment this month and could not locate the shut off valve. The men were told the shut off valve had been hit by a snowplow years ago, bent over and not repaired. Thanks to MR, they opened several holes to expose the water line and buried valve. The area is now ready for the meter pit and meter installation. We are hoping to get these done before the weather turns extremely cold.

We have had 49 JULIEs since October 1st – the bulk of those JULIEs coming from fiber optic installations. MR hired a company from Mediacom to run a major installation for them from Hickory Street to the north end of Walnut Circle. That water Julie alone took three days to locate. Clyde helped and had no luck. MR opened several holes and helped us locate with accuracy several sections of the water main. In the process, Steve discovered tracer wires literally in wrong places, sometime over three feet away from a gas line. The boring by Mediacom was successful. One thing Scott and Paul learned in the JULIE training school last year was once you mark that blue, yellow or orange line, you are committed to it, and you are telling the contractors they can believe your marks. No one wants to put down a wrong mark.

All this work takes time. There are some people in town who believe and tell others that the men are doing nothing unless you see them picking up sticks. Jane is tired of hearing it and that is far from the truth.

Signs and Posts: Jane finally got a good inventory of the signs and posts that were damaged in the storm. She learned there are several parts and pieces to complete a sign installation. Everything has been delivered this week except for the sign blades. Once these get installed, we can bring in our barricades and flashing lights.

MFT Sidewalk Program: As you could see walking into tonight, the sidewalk program has begun. The men expected to begin some meter installations on Monday, but plans changed when TKS got their equipment stuck trying to remove concrete in what appeared to be saturated dirt. Our men had to pull off their job and come to investigate where the water was coming from. A JULIE was called in. It seriously looked like a main break, but they finally determined that over the years water was seeping between the street and the old sidewalk and could never dry out. All the saturated dirt had to be cored out and removed. Large rock we had in stock was put in the bottom layer. Then CA-6 road pack from our stock put in over that. For added strength, the decision was made to pour 5" rather than 4". The water shut off valve to the village hall had to be replaced before the concrete was poured. That was all done yesterday. Rodger Sprague was on site both days and will be here as they move on to other sidewalk areas. Jane hopes they can get several sites done before the weather changes.

FEMA Update: Jane has attended three FEMA related meetings and had one phone call meeting so far. She will have an in person meeting this Friday here at the Village Hall at 11 pm. Mike Weaver has sent her a very formal Recovery Scoping Meeting Agenda. They are going to discuss Objectives and discuss Environmental and Historic Preservation, Mitigation, and Interagency Recovery Coordination. From what she understands, all the trees we lost, including the ones in the park, have historic value. We could possibly recover funds to replace those trees. Jane has 60 days to report all disaster related damages, 6 months to complete Emergency work, and 18 months to complete Permanent Work. The signs have been ordered and will need to be installed. We still have the park flagpole issue and believes the men have figured out how to replace sections of the pole rather than dig into the concrete. Item 5a on the agenda says Schedule Weekly Meetings. Jane will do her best to get everything completed. She is not looking forward to entering all this information online in their format. It does not look easy.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Sean Holland

Sean stated that they met with the health department to determine what needed to be done at the concession stand in order to get it up to code. So much needs to be done, such as a soil test, a septic installed, and so much more. Of course, he wanted everyone to know that Chris has offered to donate materials and time to get some of this work done. Nothing has been determined at this time of how to proceed and whether this work will be completed before the next season.

Sean also suggested the board consider possibly start renting out the ballfield in order to help raise the funds to do the repairs needed.

Fireman were called during the Wapella Says Yes meeting due to a strong gas odor in the Community Center. Ameren also came and checked as well. Ended up being sewer gas coming from bathroom drains.

WATER: Carl Spath

Need a new hydrant which is part of the New Business.

ZONING: Mark Miller

Issued 1 permit for a Shed Building.

FINANCE: Jane/Pat

Account Balances as of October 31, 2023

General Fund Checking	\$112,155.73
Park CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 55,644.72
Police CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 18,452.87
Water Fund Checking	\$ 28,442.83
Motor Fuel Checking	\$ 96,518.86
Water Project Fund	\$113,234.78
Restricted Debt Service	\$ 8,099.18
Short Lived Asset Account	\$ 32,061.65
Total:	\$464,610.62

Audit 2022/2023: Jane met Neal and Ashley on Friday, November 3rd to begin the audit. They were here until about 5:30 and she believes they got all the documents and reports they needed. Neal said they plan to complete the audit and get it submitted on time to the Comptroller in December. He plans to attend the January meeting and give his reports to the Village Board.

Heartland Bank Mistake: A check for \$72 from Urbana IL was drawn on our Water Fund account. Jane went to the bank, and they said it should be credited back into our account on our next bank statement.

WATER OPERATOR: Steve Westerfield

Nothing to report.

CLERK: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

FOIA OFFICER: Robin Morrow

Nothing to Report

WEBSITE: Jane Buraglio

All updated. No issues

PUBLIC COMMENTS/Village Organizations:

Dale Karr – 1) requested permission to repair drainage tiles west of FS. Board instructed him a permit would be needed to do work on village right-of-ways. 2) Complain regarding village brush/leave pick-up not getting done.

Mark Miller – on behalf of Wapella Says Yes, expressed concerns with the use of the Community Center gym with the baseball/softball hitting practice and possible damage being done, and the cheerleading mats that are being stored there. These groups are not paying rental on the use of the space. He stated the Christmas Party is coming up and the space is needed.

John Goergen – commented on loose gravel (boiler slag) in the street and stuff washing up by the park. Jane Buraglio stated that this was the county and not the village.

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL, AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

- 1) Shawn Horve to discuss another possible plan for Park Playground upgrade.

Shawn was not in attendance.

- 2) Discussion and possible approval for Fryman Tree Service to remove 2 dead trees on Village right-of-way in Cherry Street Alley.

Dead Trees in Cherry Street Alley: Two trees in the alley behind 303 S East are dead. We are planning to clear the alley of the two dead trees and the overgrown brush clogging the alleyway. Passage through this alley has become increasingly difficult for utility vehicles. The dead trees have power lines through them, and thought is wise to hire a professional with the proper equipment.

Motion made by John Goergen to approve for Fryman Tree Service to remove two dead trees in Cherry Street alley for \$1800. Second made by Carl Spath. All voting yes.

- 3) Discussion and possible approval to pursue ownership of the local Constellation siren and to retain Fulton Sirens Services when appropriate.

Siren Ownership: We know the County is going to end their support for the Warning Sirens. Some communities have already taken over ownership and maintenance. Jane has a maintenance schedule from Fulton Siren Services that seems very affordable. She believes keeping an active siren in our community is beneficial for safety purposes.

Motion made by John Goergen to pursue the ownership of the Local Constellation siren and retain Fultan Sirens Services when appropriate. Second made by Sean Holland. All voting yes.

4) Discussion and possible approval to pursue payment from Marshall Asphaltting and/or other action.

Marshall Asphaltting bill for lost materials: A letter was sent to Shari Marshall on October 26, 2023, in which Steve pointed out the fact that she failed to get a permit to do any kind of work on village streets or right-of-ways. She also failed to get a permit to install any asphalt from her property line to the hard surface of Thorps Road. The letter said it is a demand for payment of \$164.18 for the calculated cost of the lost materials removed from our road. The village has not received any payment from Marshall's Asphaltting. However, the man from Marshall's Asphaltting managed to cause quite a scene in front of our employees while they were trying to eat lunch at the Irish Circle. He loudly quizzed Paul about the letter and said he showed it to his attorney who he said laughed at it. The letter says failure to provide payment may cause the Village to take further action for work done in the village right-of-way without obtaining the necessary village permit. We need directions from the Board on how to proceed – either we seek payment and permit fees as the letter demands or drop it.

5) Discussion and possible approval to make Simple Plan IRA's available to the eligible village employees with Employee and Village contributions.

Simple Plan IRA: I had a couple of meeting with Jim Harrold in Clinton. He has put together the necessary papers for the Village to be able to establish Simple Plan IRAs for eligible employees. The plans start January 1, 2024. If we offer this, eligible employees are expected to earn \$5000 or more in 2024.

We have six employees that will fit that criterion. Paul Schmid, Brandon Karr, Rex Haycraft, Natalie Barr, Steve Evans, and Steve Westerfield. Each employee will meet with Jim Harrold to complete their forms. I don't expect all six employees to participate, but we would be required to make it available to them. If an employee decides not to participate, there is a form to be signed saying they have declined.

Each employee may choose how much to contribute from their pay checks. An employer is required to contribute as well, and Jim recommended the matching option since it gives more control over the contributions and acts as an incentive to retain and attract employees.

If the employee decides to contribute 1%, the employer matches 1%. If the employee decides to match 2%, the employer matches 2%. If the employee contributes 3%, the

employer matches 3%. An employee can contribute higher percentages, but the employer is only required to contribute the 3% maximum rate. Pat Good can manage all the contribution through the payroll program. Employees' contributions will be directly deposited from each payroll check. The employer's contribution will be paid quarterly at the same time Pat does the quarterly payroll tax deposits.

6) Discussion and possible approval to purchase and replace the leaking hydrant at the corner of S. Fourth and S. Locust.

Leaking Hydrant: The fire hydrant at the corner by St. Patrick's Church has a serious leak in it. The hydrant is so old we can't get parts for repairs. We need to replace it. I have two quotes – one from Water Products and one from Core & Main. After we decide on where to order the hydrant, we will need to contact GA Rich & Sons for the installation. We have used this contractor before for all our water system services and I would like to stick with GS Rich & Sons.

Low Pressure Hydrants on Division: We are going to ask GA Rich & Sons to do further inspections to the hydrants located on Division. The past three water flushes have proved there is something wrong with the water pressure servicing those hydrants. Paul has a theory that one of the valves somewhere was left partially closed or blocked when the water main was installed on Locust Street and the problem is in the main that runs on the north side of N Second Street between Locust and Poplar. We need to get them operating correctly before they are needed in an emergency.

7) Discussion and possible approval of the Employee Yearly Bonus to be paid in December 2023.

Employee Yearly Bonuses: I put this on the agenda this month since our next meeting isn't until December 20, 2023. I would like to see the bonus checks issued prior to Christmas as is customary. I believe those eligible for yearly bonuses would be Paul Schmid, Brandon Karr, Rex Haycraft, Natalie Barr, Steve Westerfield and Steve Evans. Rex will have his performance review at the December meeting having met the 90-day probationary period. He will be 18 days past his anniversary date by that time. Typically, the bonus checks are for \$125 after payroll taxes.

8) Preliminary tax levy numbers

2023/2024 Tax Levy: Our Levy must be filed at the County Clerk's Office on the last Tuesday in December. Our next meeting is on December 20th and it will be on the agenda. As soon as we have our 2023 EAV, I will work through the calculations and send it on to Steve so he can put together our 2023/2024 Tax Levy Ordinance for our approval

next month. In the meantime, Steve sent a copy of the Tax Levy with some suggested numbers for you to look at.

Motion to adjourn made by John Goergen. Second by Carl Spath. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned @ 8:33pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Morrow, Village Clerk