

Village of Wapella Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 19th, 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
Robin Morrow, Clerk

Approval of Minutes

Jane Buraglio made motion to approve the minutes for the October, 15th, 2025 board meeting. Second by John Goergen. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Bills:

Jane Buraglio touched on the following bills:

Feller & Kuester: This is the invoice for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024. She will go into more detail in her Finance Report.

Fryman Tree Service: This bill is for two storm damaged trees – Wickenhouser and Sunken. We have not received an invoice for the tree at Beecher's. Jane believes this is due to his stump grinder needing repaired.

GA Rich & Sons Inc: The first three bills totaling \$14,665.98 are all coded 704 and have been paid from the Water Project Fund. Jane could not get timely approval to pay these bills from the Short-Lived Asset Fund due to the USDA being closed during the Government Shut Down. We have a fourth GA Rich bill (\$5,218.25) for the service line repair to the Lingle Lane trailer park. The fifth GA Rich bill (\$3306.00) is for the Main Street water main break repair. The stark reality is we have had \$23,190.23 in water infrastructure repairs in the past two months. Jane predicts it is going to be a long and expensive winter. The last two repairs are the first time we have had a hydrovac on site.

Julie Beer is back working for the USDA now that they are open. Jane has been in contact with her and is submitting the paperwork to get permission to pay these bills from the Short-Lived Asset Fund. What will happen is the Short-Lived Fund will be repaying the WPF \$14,665.98. By ordinance, the WPF is where we collect utility taxes and water billing surcharges to cover our loan payments.

Hawkins: Everyone will notice a rather large Hawkins bill. This is for the larger Chlorine cylinders.

Illinois EPA: This is for the 2026 service period. Jane asked Steve Westerfield about the large increase. Last year's bill was \$1,554.90 and this year it is \$2,352.69. The Total Chemical Analysis charge increase is due to the additional EPA required testing.

Water Products: This is for the parts needed to make the Service Line Repair at Lingle Lane Trailer Court.

TKS: TKS submitted a bill in October for \$16,614.00 for sidewalk work, which is higher than the \$15,264.00 they quoted TO Rodger Sprague in 2023. They added \$990.00 for extras. Rodger Sprague told Jane this bill will not be paid until he approves it. We did issue a check to TKS for \$12,242.52 to close out the 2024 MFT year. Rodger is still holding that check. He told Jane that he is still trying to get with Troy Smith to clarify these charges. Rodger says their measurements do not agree.

1 Stop Auto Shop: Jane had to go to the office to get the bills. She has no idea when they planned to mail them.

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 reported that the Christmas Wreaths have been put up and will be turned on next week.

The water leak in the alley by the trailer park was not a main break. It was a service line leaking that fed the trailers and was repaired. A boil order was issued for the trailers only and lifted the next Friday. John confirmed that it was copper which was replaced with flex.

There was a water main break on main street across from Casey's. Rex and John tried to shut the valve off by where it was leaking to see if they could isolate it, but could not get the valve to turn. So, at the time he made the decision to wait for GA Rich. On Sunday morning, John met with Steve and he confirmed that the pressure at the pump house was good and there was plenty of storage in the tower and it would be ok to wait for Monday for GA Rich. GA Rich showed up Monday morning and had it repaired in three hours without a boil order.

John stated that Jane sent Rex and Buck to OSHA class as it is a requirement for insurance. They attended Tuesday from 9am-12pm.

Meters were read a couple days early as Rex was going to be gone for three days.

John is hoping to get the park mowed one more time before winterizing and putting them away for the season. Jane asked about mowing at the railroad and John confirmed that has been done for the season.

Working on getting snow plows out and checked over. Mark asked about the plow list and Jane will find the list and review it to make sure all seniors are on there.

John pointed out that Rex had brought up a question about Julies and doing it from the meter to the house. He feels that the village should not be responsible for that. The village should only be responsible from the meter outward. Mark agreed that we should not be doing Julies on private property. John and Jane both agreed that going forward we just go to the meter and stop and not from meter to the house. Robin mentioned that Bakers still does have a leak.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Sara Goergen

Sara reported that the bathrooms at the park have been closed and water is off.

The bushes at the park have been removed. She and John will start to put up Christmas decorations at the park as well. The plan is to put up a few more than last year and make it a bit more festive.

WATER: Sean Holland

Sean complimented John for doing a great job in covering the events pertaining to water that has taken place over the last few weeks in his report. He gave a big to John, Dennis, and the guys for coming out and helping like they did during these situations.

John wanted to add something. He wanted to let every one know that the guys would be off Thanksgiving day and the day after, and if anything was needed to give him a call.

John also mentioned that there are only five meters left. We have about 29 more to replace. It appears that we are short a case. This would mean we are missing approximately 20 meters that cannot be located. Jane stated that enough were purchased and that Robin has a list of all those serial numbers available. Jane said she would check with Devon at Kamstrup to get pricing. In 2018 they were \$192 a piece.

ZONING: Mark Miller

Mark stated that he didn't have anything to report and what he needs to discuss is under New Business.

FINANCE: Jane Buraglio

Overall Account Balances as of October 31, 2025

General Fund Checking	\$125,411.99
Park CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 59,067.58
Police CD (DeWitt Savings)	\$ 19,420.78
Water Fund Checking	\$ 21,361.89
Motor Fuel Checking	\$ 60,680.79
Water Project Fund	\$ 52,731.91
Restricted Debt Service	\$ 12,189.77
Short Lived Asset Account	\$ 82,203.91
Total:	\$433,068.62

Brenntag Refund: It appears that about 8 years ago the village overpaid or double paid an invoice from Brenntag. Brenntag issued a refund check on 12/10/2017 and the village neglected to cash it. Jane completed the paperwork for MarketSphere Unclaimed Property Specialists that was required to reissue the check for \$1,484.06 and it has been deposited into the Water Fund.

Police CD Renewal: We got a pre-renewal notice that our Police CD is going to be renewed for a 12-month period on December 1, 2025, at the current rate of 4.34%. The maturity value will be \$19,777.97.

RMA Insurance: Jane received confirmation from Brice Griesemer that our employees, Rex & Rick, attended the required training class in Forsyth yesterday. We are to keep these sheets for our records in case IDOL is ever on site and asks for them. Jane will get copies to Rex for his files. Topics covered were Lock Out/Tag Out; Confined Space Entry Safety and Trenching and Excavation Safety.

JOB DUTIES: Jane hoped that everyone has been reviewing the Village Code to learn about our job duties. She wanted to explain her job duties as Chair of the Finance Department.

The Chairperson shall have general supervision and control over all matters relating to the finances or revenues of the village and shall have supervision of all the activities of all officers, boards and departments in so far as said activities directly affect the city's finances or revenues.

There are not many department activities that don't directly affect our finances or revenues.

Further, the Village Clerk, Village Treasurer, Village Collector, Village FOIA Officer and their respective offices or departments, and all employees therein, etc. shall be under the direction of the Chairman of Finances.

Jane knows our mayor keeps coaching our Village Clerk to get more involved with the Water Department and makes it sound like it is to the exclusion of the Finance Department. She sees nothing wrong with sharing information with other departments. There should be nothing to hide between departments. Jane does need it understood that the water billing and all it entails being done by the Village Collector is under her supervision. She and the Village Collector work well together and we make sure that revenues are collected for the Water Department to use to operate.

She then led into her discussion about our audit.

AUDIT: She and Neal Kuester met last week and went over our Financial Statements ending June 30, 2024. We reviewed all our funds, the expenses and the revenues. He directed her to page 16, where the restricted funds are discussed. This is Motor Fuel Tax Fund. Also, the \$17,816 in unspent levy allocations, which can only be spent per our levy line items. There is also \$61,671 restricted for bond reserve requirements.

She then referred to page 10. This is a hard look at our Enterprise Fund, which is the Water Department. It shows Cash received by customers (\$137,245), which is our only income for the Water Department. \$36,098 of this Cash is for collected Garbage Fees. The Water Department paid \$35,842 to GFL. So far, the Water Fund is not supporting garbage charges. The difference is attributed to customers who do not pay their bills on time.

It shows Cash paid to employees (\$46,019) and Cash paid to suppliers and vendors (\$101,515). This audit shows our Water Department lost \$10,289 of revenue in the 2024 fiscal year.

Jane has provided the Statement of Cash Flows from 2019 to 2024 in your packet.

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

Jane looked at the June 30, 2025 treasurer's report and could see that the Water Department lost \$42,284.91

If you look at our current treasurer's report ending October 31, 2025, the Water Department has only made \$810. This is troubling and we should be concerned.

Our auditor has seen this pattern and is stressing to her that the village must address raising our water rates. He said bluntly that our rates at least need to be doubled to sustain our Water Department activities. Jane knows we have an ordinance in place dated November 16, 2022 that automatically raises our water rates 6% each January. As we can see from the losses beginning in 2023, this increase is not keeping up with the inflation of costs.

Our auditor gave her another suggestion. Sell our Water Department. Illinois American Water is in the business of operating Municipal Water Departments. He has seen municipal clients be handed multimillion dollar checks. If we sell our Water Department, the proceeds can be used to pay off outstanding municipal debt, upgrade infrastructure, economic development and recreation/parks. This company does water billing and collecting. They offer customer assistance programs, budget billing, income-based discounts and installment plans. This company offers charitable grants, volunteer fire fighting support grants and community involvement.

Jane provided information about this company for everyone's review. We could invite them to come speak about their company and find out what they can offer our village. She believes they are visiting Atlanta now. She can guarantee that if they own our Water Department, they will raise our water rates to double or more.

In the meantime, if we don't want to lose control of our Water Department, we can do as our auditor suggested and double our existing water rates and try to stabilize our Water Department. We need to decide as soon as possible. She suggested we put this on the agenda next month and have a serious discussion.

2026 Levy: Next month we must approve our Tax Levy. It is due on the last Tuesday in December (December 30th). Jane will have worksheets and an ordinance ready.

MR Systems Phone Call: Jane is not sure why Sara found it necessary to go to the MR System office in Clinton and tell them that they are not allowed to ever call her. She received a phone call immediately after she left the office and Jane was told they would call her whenever they wanted to. Jane has other business with them besides village business. Sara told them that they were only to call John about the generator.

Jane then told John, that it works the other way around. He would never get a call from MR about the generator. He would need to call them to tell them when Wapella has no power and tell them that you will have the generator turned on no matter what time it is. They will then check their system and the battery backup. The last time we lost power in Wapella, MR was unaware of the outage in Wapella because they still had power.

Water Bills: Jane and Robin have had discussions about the fact that there are several residents who leave town for the winter and expect not to receive a water bill until they come back. Our ordinance says all customers who are provided with water service are to receive a water bill. It is the same for the garbage bill. We are charged by GFL for the number of customers who are provided with garbage services. GFL does not deduct the cost from us for customers who are not home to put out garbage. As a solution, Jane has recommended that Robin draft a letter to the customers who have turned off their water before leaving town about the continued billing and include a copy of the ordinance. The customer would have the choice of paying ahead or paying monthly. Jane offered to help Robin draft that letter. We also have the option to change the ordinance.

Food Truck: Speaking about water bills, Jane was asked by Sara to put her HoHoHo Holiday Vendor Event on the December water bills. This reminded me of a discussion the board had last December. She provided the section of the minutes where Sean pointed out that we had an issue of patrons pulling

through the north side of the fence to park by the front doors. This area was not designed for parking, and the grassy area was destroyed. The food truck that was there last year drove right over our water service lines when leaving from the inside of the fence. All parking in this area should be outside the fence only. Natalie has been doing a great job keeping renter's vehicles off this area.

DRAINAGE: Dalton Spencer

Dalton wanted the board to know that he was looking into the FS tile damage by the fiber line and is working on a plan and working with another company to have corrected. Would probably have to dig up and hydrovac.

He also called Mackinaw Valley Plumbing about jetting out culvers. Still working on this since he has to go around and measure the culverts around town. He will get a list together to see if they can do this.

WATER OPERATOR: Steve Westerfield

Nothing to report.

CLERK: Robin Morrow

Robin was going to touch base on the "snow birds", Jane had already covered in her report.

Also, wanted to point out that Rex did do the reading early and we are going to be posting shut offs on Friday and they will have Monday to pay or shut off on Tuesday. Currently have 10 residents that have not paid in three months.

Final thing is that she will be on vacation from 12/11 through 12/19 and will not be able to attend Decembers Board meeting. Will have minutes completed and will leave the recorder.

FOIA OFFICER: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Jane Buraglio

Nothing to report. All up to date.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/Village Organizations:

Kris Hedrick – just the tree which is on the new business agenda.

Ben Lowers – introduced himself. He is a DeWitt County and Clinton native. He is a career law enforcement officer. He is retiring from Clinton police department and looking forward to running for Sherrif. Large part of his platform is Community Engagement and wanting to get more involved in the smaller surrounding areas.

Dale Karr – he is glad to see that the sidewalks have been taken care of. He then asked about the charging of the use of the ball field at the park. It was mentioned by Sean and Natalie that nothing was officially decided about charging the ball teams and it is too late in the season but will be discuss before next season.

Natalie Barr asked about mowing the community center one more time as well.

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL, AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

1) Discussion and possible approval to allow Kris Hedrick to remove a village tree located in the easement.

John provided pictures of the tree on the easement on Kris's property and he would like to have it removed at his expense. Jane had contacted our attorney about this and stated it would need to be brought up to the board since it was not being paid by the board.

John also mentioned another tree by the Catholic Church to be taken down and Steve mentioned it would require a permit.

Kris did state that he is hiring a professional. Jane will get the permits for John.

Motion made by John Goergen to allow Kris Hedrick to remove village tree located in easement. Seconded by Sean Holland. All voting yes. Motion approve.

2) Discussion and possible approval of engagement letters to hire Feller & Kuester CPA's to audit the village financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

Jane updated everyone about the Audit. These are the standard engagement letters from Feller & Kuester. His fee remains the same. We have an appointment to meet at the Village Hall to begin the 25 Fiscal Year audit. Jane recommend that we continue to use Feller & Kuester as our auditors.

There is a questionnaire he requires from all the village officials. Please fill them out tonight and get them back to her so she can send them back with the signed engagement letters in the morning.

Motion made by Jane Buraglio to approve the engagement letter to hire Feller & Kuester to audit the village finance statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Seconded by John Goergen. All voting yes. Motion approved.

3) Discussion and possible approval of employee yearly bonus to be paid in December 2025.

Jane wanted to discuss the Annual Employee Bonus: This is on the November agenda every year. For quite a while now, the employee bonuses have been \$125 after taxes. The board can choose no bonuses, leave the bonuses the same, or change the amount. Our employees this year are:

Paul Schmid
Rex Haycraft
Rick Lord
Natalie Barr
Steve Evans
Steve Westerfield
Robin Morrow

Motion made by John Goergen to approve the employee yearly bonus to be paid in December 2025. Seconded by Dalton Spencer. All voting yes. Motion approved.

4) Discussion and possible approval on zoning code to annexed property at 9500 Thorps Rd.

Mark stated that we annexed HNC and he found one sentence in the ordinance that he read to the board. This property was zoned industrial by the county and they have one employee. Jane mentioned that they had asked for water and the agreement was that the village would give them water if they allow the village to annex them in.

Steve asked if Mark was planning on going through the process to have that zoned industrial. The process still must followed. Jane mentioned that it should be zoned "I". Steve mentioned that it would still have to go through the ZBA process and then back to the board.

Mark made motion to initiate the zoning for HNC as industrial as it was with DeWitt county. Seconded by John. All voting yes. Motion approve.

5) Discussion and possible approval for members of the ZBA.

Mark mentioned that there has been a request to rezone a property in the village. He is forming a Zoning Board. Mark nominated the following people to the Zoning Board: Members who are staying: Lisa Merida, Vicky Holland, and Ed Fleck. New members: Kris Hedrick, Cheri Miller, and Mathew Chapman.

Motion made by Mark Miller to approve the above members to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Seconded by Sean Holland. Steve asked about the terms. Mark mentioned that it does state that terms should be staggered. All voting yes. Motion approved.

6) Discussion and possible approval for flooring in the Community Center.

Sara provided a quote from Carpet Weavers to replace the flooring at the Community Center. She stated that measurements were taken. She also asked the board as to how

they want to proceed whether it be with carpet or laminate. Carpet Weavers was the only quote. They provided a quote for carpet squares and for laminate. John asked if the board wanted to go with carpet, vinyl, or tile. Jane asked what was under the floor. It was stated that the asbestos tile was gone. Sara stated that when he pulled up the carpet there was no tile. The board continued to discuss. Jane asked if there was anything discussion about professional cleaning the carpet. It was mentioned that there should be some additional quotes. After much discussion it was decided unanimously that this be tabled for now and get additional opinions and quotes. Natalie recommended tile as it was easier to clean rather than carpet. John suggested that if carpet was decided on, it would be best if it was the carpet tiles. After much discussion it was decided unanimously that this be tabled for now and get additional opinions and quotes.

MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:

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

- 1) 2 C (11) Discussion of Pending Litigation
- 2) Discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee(s).

Entering back into Open Session: 8:57 pm

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Dennis Boyce
Mark Miller
Sara Goergen
Jane Buraglio
John Goergen
Dalton Spencer
Sean Holland
Steve Mahrt – Attorney
Robin Morrow, Clerk

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion made by John Goergen to adjourn. Seconded by Sean Holland. All voting yes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Morrow, Village Clerk