

**Village of Wapella Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 20th, 2024**

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

Steve Mahrt – Attorney

Robin Morrow - Clerk

Absent:

N/A

Approval of Minutes

John Goergen made a motion to approve minutes from October 16th board meeting. The second was made by Mark Miller. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Bills:

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

Department Reports:

STREETS & ALLEYS: Jane Buraglio

Town Clean Up (October 14-20): We were able to use the final 8th free roll off for Clean Up. Jane approved the men assisting many residents getting debris removed. We were able to extend the Clean Up one more weekend.

Brush/Leaf Pick Up: The men have been trying to stay ahead of the brush and leaves this past month. Jane would like to recommend to the public that if they want their leaves picked up, it would be very helpful to have them in piles rather than long rows. She also wanted to remind the public that burning yard waste is allowed by ordinance on their own property. The ordinances clearly say that burning is prohibited on the street or alley rights-of-way.

As you know, we maintain a burn pile at the Village shed lot and when we burn, Paul always calls in a Control Burn. We do appreciate the residents who are able to bring their own yard waste to the Village burn pile. However, quite often residents bring yard waste after hours or

on the weekend and deposit the waste on top of the actual burn pile. When this happens, things ignite, and flames can be seen in the dark.

Brandon has received calls. Jane has had to sit in the dark by the burn pile until those flames go down. Paul is called in the middle of the night from CenCom asking if he knows the pile is on fire. It would be helpful if residents could remember to put yard waste to the south side of the burn pile after hours and the men will take care of getting it burned during working hours. We may have to install some signage as a reminder.

Stump Removal: The men were finally able to get the stump removed from the empty lot on Main Street. This stump had metal inside of it discovered by Kevin Mandrell while removing the trees that came down in the tornado in July 2023.

Septic at the Bank: The new septic system was installed at the bank. It seems our system, wherever it is located, wasn't compromised. The men were given the opportunity to reclaim quite a bit of good dirt. We used the dirt to fill in the hole at the stump removal site, places in the park and at various other village locations.

Request for Work in our Right-of-Way: Jane received a call from Roger Massey yesterday asking if he could cut our road at Walnut Circle to install a septic field on his property located on the west side of Walnut Circle for a new building to be located on the east side of Walnut Circle. He said he is hiring Matt Tool to do the work. He told me there would be a bathroom in the new building. Jane asked why they couldn't use the existing septic system at the Auction House, and he said it was 500 yards away. The lot where the Auction House sits is only 220 feet x 270 feet. It would not be 500 yards away. Jane told him he could not cut our road. He could probably bore under the road, but that would take a permit.

Jane had a discussion with Rodger Sprague, and he advised against cutting any roads in Wapella, except in the case of the Village having to install new water mains, etc. We all know what our roads look like after a main break. She does have a Right-of-Way Work Permit like what we issued to MR Systems, Frontier and Campus Group while they were boring fiber optics in our right-of-way and under the roads. Before she sent this permit application, she is wondering about the implicated risks of placing septic system lines on our right-of-way over our potable water main which runs along the west side of Walnut Circle. As far as she knows, there are no septic systems running on top of or under our water mains or anywhere in our rights-of-way. All septic systems are installed on private property. Should this be a concern we should investigate before she sends the permit application?

No Parking Signs: Seven new No Parking signs were ordered and arrived. Spaces were marked out with the help of Rodger Sprague beginning on the north. Six were installed on Friday, November 15, 2024. Jane needs to order a few more signs. We have room for three more to go on to the stop sign. We can go south to the curve at Maple, which is still Walnut Circle if the Board wishes, but she believes that the east side of Walnut Circle from Hickory to Maple is IDOT right-of-way. It will take permission from them to install signs in their right-of-way.

We have been discussing the parking situation on the west side of Walnut Circle since August after receiving numerous complaints about parking problems from property owners on Walnut Circle. Jane has been given pictures. She has seen children running into the street from between parked cars. All the gravel parking directly in front of CrossFit is on our right-of-way. She has seen the lot behind CrossFit filled with parked vehicles. There are plenty of parking spaces available. Jane understands it may be inconvenient for some people wanting to exercise to have to walk a few more feet to the building. She wants to remind the Board of the various reasons we decided that these signs were necessary when we approved the new Ordinance in September.

- Safety
- Snowplowing
- Road Erosion
- Road Blockage
- Driveway Blockage
- Fire Department Access to Hydrant
- Eliminate illegal trespassing and parking on private property

HEALTH & SAFETY: Sean Holland

Jane reported to Sean status of Pavilion Restrooms: The pavilion restrooms were winterized on October 28th after the Halloween Party in the Park. The water service also was shut off and closed for the winter.

WATER: John Goergen

Hydrant Flushing: Hydrant Flushing began on November 4th (interrupted by a main break on November 5th) and finished on November 7th. The men discovered a hydrant located south of the water tower on N Oak will need some work since it was spraying water in all directions at the base.

Main Break Recap: A main break was discovered on November 5th in the 100 block of S Poplar. Paul has the main break backhoe experience and the main break repair in-the-hole experience, but he cannot do both at the same time. After consideration and planning, we determined it was necessary to call GA Rich for assistance.

This repair was done in the rain. Jane was on site while most of the work was being done. Kevin Mandrell assisted. Paul provided the backhoe work. Rex and Brandon removed the debris as it was loaded and made runs for additional parts. We provided the band clamps and other materials needed for the repair.

This break was unusual. It was not the normal crack in the pipe, but was a circular hole on top of the pipe that appears to have been etched by circulating debris over a long period of time. The cast iron eventually got so thin that the water pressure finally broke through. The water service line to 113 S Poplar was only buried 2 feet deep and that service line was compromised, but it was quickly repaired.

A Boil Order was issued to 11 residents personally, and it was lifted on Friday, November 8th.

New Water Service at FS: A payment was collected of \$18,190 for the new water service installation at Evergreen FS. GA Rich should be scheduling this installation soon. The Village is responsible for the new auto read water meter, which was delivered last week, and the dumpsite for the spoils.

New Meter and Pit Installation: The men have replaced another old meter and installed a new auto read meter and pit for the residence at 315 S Poplar. The old pit was completely compromised by tree roots, which made what should have been a simple job turn into an all-day job. It was stated that it was unsure of how many old meters we can get swapped during the winter, but we will keep moving forward. Most of these exchanges involve new meter pits and, in some cases, new curb stops and shut-off valves.

ZONING: Mark Miller

A permit was issued for a fence in October for Ooms on Thomas Court. Neighbors to the south have complained that the fence is on their property line and had someone come in and survey it. Mark told them that this had to be addressed between them as the Village does not get involved with that.

The four residents that had sheds put up without a permit and have now gotten their permits and all is good.

Mark has received two applications so far for poultry licenses/permits.

FINANCE (Jane Buraglio / Pat Good)

Overall Account Balances as of October 31, 2024

General Fund Checking \$ 61,167.16
Park CD (DeWitt Savings) \$ 57,335.30
Police CD (DeWitt Savings) \$ 18,746.20
Water Fund Checking \$ 39,773.02
Motor Fuel Checking \$ 95,310.58
Water Project Fund \$ 69,456.21
Restricted Debt Service \$ 10,164.09
Short Lived Asset Account \$ 59,534.20
Total: \$411,486.76

BUDGET: You have budgetary information in your reports this month. The only line item over budget is 608-6 (Contractual work). We spent \$22,007.44. We are \$17,007.44 over the budget of \$5,000. So far \$10,770 has been reimbursed to the Village by HNC for their new water service and \$6,564 reimbursed by Kyle Koons for the new service at 4 Valerie Lane. The auditor will see the reimbursements of \$17,334 in the audit.

We have paid \$4,673.44 for the new water service for Jeff Finger's new shed and the meter pit at Tom Powers. This expense leaves only \$326.56 to spend on Contractual Services. This month we are spending \$1,554.90 on the Illinois EPA for a renewed service period. This is a contractual service. Maybe \$5,000 was too low for this line item, but the Village does expect reimbursements for new services.

All old meter swap outs for auto read meters, including new meter pits, is a village expense. The pit for Tom Powers is a Village expense. The isolation valves are a Village expense. The cost of the new service to the new shed has not been reimbursed to the Village by the owner. In addition to the contractual work for this new service, the Village has spent \$1,083.40 for the materials at that job and provided an auto read meter.

The auto read meter is not an expense to the owner. The Village is in the hole for approximately \$3,420.12 providing new water service to the shed, which according to the ordinances should be paid for by the owner.

This expense would not have occurred if Jeff Finger had not illegally hooked himself up to free unmetered Village water. He obviously wanted the water service and even picked out the placement of the water meter pit. Financially, I believe the Board should direct that a bill for this installation be sent to Jeff Finger and paid before any water is turned on to this new service. It should be placed on the agenda next month for a decision.

Words of advice from our attorney, Jane quoted:

- 1) Finger cannot connect to village water and run his own service line to a hydrant without village consent.
- 2) The cost of installing water service to a customer should be borne by the customer, not the village.
- 3) Finger should be billed for unmetered water he used at the hydrant.
- 4) Everyone connected to the village water system should get a minimum water bill. The village has loan payments to make.
- 5) The snowbirds should be billed a minimum amount even if they shut off their water for the winter.

Our Ordinances clearly speak about the owner bearing the cost of installation. Our Ordinances do not speak about allowing "snowbirds" to skip minimum water bills while they are away for the winter. We have several customers in the Village that use no water at all, but they pay

minimum water bills and have never complained. Jane suggested we review the ordinance about water billing and abide by them or make revisions.

Mark suggested this get put on the agenda for next meeting about placing accounts in active when they leave for the winter. John agreed. John made the decision to go ahead and put the Finger account as inactive and credit the charges from the last bill for now.

AUDIT: Jane has contacted Neul Kuester several times trying to get our audit date scheduled. Last year we were scheduled for November 4th. The last time she called they were finishing up quarterly tax returns and would get back with her. She tried again Friday, but there was no word. At this rate she expects our audit will be filed late.

2024/2025 TAX LEVY APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE: Jane has the current estimated 2024 EAV for the Village of Wapella and have done some preliminary calculations for our Tax Levy. She will have the estimated 2024 EAV in December that will reflect all the assessor's work plus the 1.098 equalization factor everyone in DeWitt County will receive. She can present more definite 2024/2025 Levy line items at our December meeting.

POLICE CD: As you know we have a Police CD that contained levied funds that can only be spent on Police Protection. This CD matures on December 1, 2024, and will roll over in the new amount of \$18,942.61. At this time, we will just let it roll over and keep earning interest. The Sheriff asked me if the Village would be interested in having a few cameras placed in various places to help them with traffic control and investigations. She said absolutely. It would come with an expense though.

DeWitt County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee Meeting: They met on October 17, 2024 to reviewed all our mitigation action tables. Our final Mitigation meeting will be on December 10th. All Jane's reports and proposed projects for the Village of Wapella have been submitted. This next meeting is a Public Forum and will be held from 4 PM to 6 PM. If any of you can attend, Jane believes you will be impressed by the work all the entities have put together. Once everything is finalized, the Mitigation Plan will be submitted to FEMA and if our projects meet all the criteria, we hope to see funding grants available. The next important step will be for her to properly apply for those grants so we can begin the projects of purchasing generators and fortifying the Community Center into a shelter if needed.

FEMA Claim: Jane heard from John Martin, our IEMA State Disaster Services Planner on November 4th. He sent all her project worksheets approved by FEMA for my review. There were no changes. He said our organization should receive the initial payment in 6-8 weeks. That amount should be \$59,815.35. Once that payment is received, then she will close out the claim. At that time, she can submit the Category Z claim for the time she spent in meetings and compiling all the reports. That should be an additional \$3,987.69 to the Village. John is going to help me with the close out process. Jane is hoping for a Christmas present for the Village.

WATER OPERATOR: Steve Westerfield

Nothing to report.

DRAINAGE: John Goergen

John stated he didn't have much but was hoping Dale was there as he wanted to thank him for doing a good job with the drainage covers.

CLERK: Robin Morrow

Nothing to report.

FOIA OFFICER: Robin Morrow

James Walsh Complaint (in addition to the FOIA Clerk Report): This is the same tree he complained about after the tornado. It was determined at that time with aerial maps that this is not a village tree. He was told this and was asked by the attorney if he had a survey of his property. It is believed he has not responded.

On July 15, 2024, there was another windstorm. Two village trees did damage to two residential properties. Claims were submitted for both to our Risk Management Pool insurance. Both claims were denied by RMA. The tree on James Walsh's property did damage to his shed on the same day. He did not notify the Village this time and hired Fryman Tree Service to remove the tree from his shed and do some trimming to the tree.

Jane stated she does not understand why he is waiting until November to contact our attorney directly. He asked for our insurance company and policy number. We belong to a Risk Management Pool. A claim form was attached to Robin's FOIA response, and he was asked to return it to the Village for submission. He has not responded.

WEBSITE: Jane Buraglio

All updated. No issues

PUBLIC COMMENTS/Village Organizations:

Brandon Karr wanted to bring to the Boards attention that leaf pickup is strenuous and very time consuming. They are sometimes wet and very heavy. He was hoping the Board could explore options such as requesting residents' bag their leaves or possible vacuum. Trying to pick up leaves they sometimes scalp the residents' yards and leave tire tracks. Everyone agreed but the cost would have to be researched.

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION, APPROVAL, AND POSSIBLE VOTE:

- 1) Discussion and possible approval of the Employee Yearly Bonus to be paid in December 2024.

Jane mentioned that is customary to issue annual Holiday bonuses to the employees. John made motion to issue Holiday bonuses to the employees in the amount of \$125 after taxes. Mark Miller seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

Motion to adjourn made by John Georgan. Second by Sean Holland. All voting yes. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned @ 8:07pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Morrow, Village Clerk