

STATE OF ILLINOIS	}	REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY OF CHRISTIAN	} SS.	March 3, 2025
VILLAGE OF STONINGTON	}	

The Board of Trustees met in Regular Session Monday, March 3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

The Meeting was called to order by President Bruce Dowdy with the following Members present:

Trustees: Tara Ramsey, Tammy Wilson, Andrew Callan, Jeff Graham, Caleb Grover, and Scott Kuntzman

Clerk: Jill Gilpin

Office Manager/Treasurer: Kari Scott (Absent)

Superintendent: Jake Heberling

Village Engineer: Mark Bingham (Absent)

Village Attorney: Scott Garwood (Absent)

Chief of Police: Travis Peden

Zoning Officer: John LeVault

Others in attendance: Elizabeth Wood, *Breeze-Courier*, Kim Brown, Village resident; Don Bouvet, Village resident; Earl Good, Village resident; Carol White, Village resident; Leslie DeVore, Village resident; Jackie Dowdy, Village resident; Jodi Rusher, Village resident; Shane Bouvet, Village resident; Kathy Bouvet, Village resident; Beth Rogers, friend of Don Bouvet; and, Carol Craig, friend of Don Bouvet.

Minutes from February 3, 2024, regular meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Graham, that the minutes be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

Minutes from February 10, 2025, committee meeting was presented to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Graham, seconded by Kuntzman, for approval of the committee minutes and file them as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Treasurer's Report was presented for the month of February to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Callan, that the Treasurer's Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Gas Report was presented for the month of February to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Callan, seconded by Grover, that the Gas Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all "Yea" votes.

The Water Report was presented for the month of February to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Grover, seconded by Ramsey, that the Water Report be

approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

The Sewer Report was presented for the month of February to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Kuntzman, seconded by Graham, that the Sewer Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

The Police Report was presented for the month of February to the Board for their approval. Motion made by Graham, seconded by Ramsey, that the Police Report be approved and filed as presented. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Bills against the Village were presented for the approval of the Board. Motion made by Wilson, seconded by Kuntzman, to approve and issue warrants for all bills. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

Zoning Officer’s Report: Zoning Officer LeVault issued no zoning permit in the month of February.

President’s Report:

President Dowdy asked for a Motion to approve Ordinance No. 25-699, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 3. Licenses And Permits, Article 3. Intoxicating Liquors, Section 3.303 A), And Article 4. Peddler’s License, Section 3.403 A) Of The Municipal Code Of Ordinances Of The Village Of Stonington, Christian County, Illinois. Motion made by Ramsey, seconded by Wilson, to approve Ordinance No. 25-699. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

The Village received a Chicken Application from Anna Bostrom. President Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the Chicken Application submitted by Anna Bostrom. Motion by Wilson, second by Kuntzman, to approve Anna Bostrom’s Chicken Application. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy reported he had been approached by Bayer, who was represented by Jackie Dowdy, to purchase three more flowerpots matching the current flowerpots through the TIF fund. The cost, minus shipping, is \$600.00 each. He stated one of the Church groups has shown interest in planting flowers in a pot and is grateful the Community wants to participate. The proposal would be to spend up to \$2,500.00 towards the purchase of three flowerpots to match the current flowerpots,

Motion made by Ramsey, seconded by Wilson, to spend up to \$2,500.00 using TIF funds for the purchase of three more flowerpots. Motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

President Dowdy moved the discussion regarding health insurance. It was discussed a few meetings back and nothing was every finalized if the Village was going to continue with providing health insurance or do away with it.

A Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to further discuss health insurance along with wages which will be approved at the April meeting to be effective the new fiscal year for the Village which is May 1, 2025.

Superintendent Heberling reported Engineer Mark Bingham needed to schedule a Public Hearing for the loan forgiveness from the EPA and that the Public Hearing is required by the EPA. The Public Hearing will be held before the Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, March 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

President Dowdy stated he had been looking further into the Villages Municipal Code about ways to enforce residents to clean up their property. He quoted Chapter 4, Article 4. Public Health Nuisances, Section 4.402 Disposal Requirements and feels that by this ordinance the Village could send out letters to those residents to try to get them to clean up their property. He stated letters have been sent in the past for residents to clean up their property and some have made little effort. He asked for guidance as to where to start with the fines and whether they should fine them weekly or daily.

Trustee Grover stated he thought that if there were past offenders, to start with fines.

The discussion was to send letters, along with a copy of the Ordinances, to first offenders and give them a week to clean up the property. For repeat offenders the fines will start at \$100, unless the Ordinance states the first fine is \$35.00.

President Dowdy stated there are a couple of alleys that have stuff in them and don't know how long it would take to clean them up.

Trustee Graham questioned where he could find out what alleys have been abandoned because if they are still viable, that is a safety hazard if the alley has items in them.

President Dowdy stated he would check with the Assessor's Office to see if he can find out what alleys have been abandoned and to work on getting the ordinances violations and fines in order by the next meeting.

Chief of Police Peden stated that Assistant Chief of Police Deal has been working on one property and getting the residents to clean up their property.

President Dowdy welcomed Mr. Don Bouvet to the table.

Mr. Bovet felt he was thrown under the bus at last month's meeting so he presented a copy of a fingerprint submission from the U.S. Department of Justice, which showed a search of the fingerprints revealed no prior arrest data at the FBI. This does not preclude further criminal history at the state or local level.

He also presented a report from the Illinois State Police Bureau of Identification search showing he has no criminal background.

President Dowdy stated that at last months meeting, Mr. Nolen never mentioned a person's name and his inquiry was if a person that had been arrested could hold a public office. President Dowdy stated that a person convicted of a felony cannot hold a public office.

Trustee Graham stated to Mr. Bouvet that at the time he took out a candidate packet, there was information that stated a person with a felony cannot hold a public office.

President Dowdy stated he did check with the Village Attorney and an arrest has no relevance as far as holding a public office, but no one can hold an office in the State of Illinois if they have a felony conviction.

President Dowdy welcomed Earl Good to the table. Mr. Good feels like he got thrown under the bus at the last meeting and wanted to clarify that a motorhome he used to own had all six of the following items and a trailer only needs four of the items: a regular license, a cooking facility, gas or electric refrigerator, toilet, heating or air conditioning, drinkable water supply, and 110-volt electric power. He feels that motorhomes have nothing to do with how much weight or classified as not parking on your property.

Trustee Graham told Mr. Good the motorhome was mentioned by someone else and not the Board.

President Dowdy welcomed Carol White to the table. Ms. White discussed that she is still having her water issues and that she is at the meeting tonight on behalf of herself and her neighbor, Mark Cisco.

She stated that Mark Cisco told her that he had found her leak and for some reason she is getting his water in her sump pump. He showed her his water bill which was \$433.08. She has also noticed that her sidewalk is crumbling and questioned if that was a sign of water coming from underneath the ground. She has also spoken to all her surrounding neighbors, and no one else has any water problems.

She questioned if there was a protocol for when a resident reports a water issue to the Village office, or any kind of issue, and when there are reports does the Village check other meters in the surrounding neighborhood and see what they are reading.

President Dowdy stated that the Village's meters are an auto read, meaning the meters can be read by driving around with a laptop and antenna system and this is how the meters are read every month. He stated the system we have now does not allow day-to-day comparisons without reloading software, reading it today and tomorrow reload software and read it tomorrow. Unfortunately, there is not a good way to check those other than monthly.

He also stated there is one master meter at the water plant and that meter varies day to day depending on everybody's usage. The water tower does have warnings that if the water tower starts dropping so fast because there is a problem somewhere, it kicks off

an alarm. He stated the Village does not contact residents if their water usage gets high until the monthly report comes out and it shows that there is a high usage or a high reading, then the Village Works will reread the meter and make sure that it was accurate. And at that time is when the homeowner is contacted to let them know that their water bill has jumped by a percentage.

President Dowdy stated the cellular reads would help with these types of issues and after a couple of grants are finished and paid off they are going to look into them and upgrade.

Ms. White asked the Board if they could guarantee that when they start digging ditches her street would be the first one they would work on.

President Dowdy stated there are already projects approved, and funding has been set aside for those projects. One of the first projects is Mr. Bouvet's water issue. He stated the Village has contacted a representative from the drainage districts to try to get information on the field tiles and where they run because the Village does not control the field tiles.

President Dowdy welcomed Leslie DeVore to the table. Ms. DeVore voiced her concern regarding the notice that was received in January regarding the high gas rates and asked if the Village still hedged gas with Missouri Gas Commission.

President Dowdy stated that the Village of Stonington does not buy into the futures market. He stated the Village of Stonington is a part of the Missouri Gas Commission, and have been for years, and they hedge gas at a 40% rate based off of our usage. They are buying in the futures market already towards next year to sock it away, 40% of the average gas, so that when gas prices go up, the gas can be blended. And if the gas goes down, they draw a little out of there, because they don't need much. But as it goes up, they draw more when gas gets so high. The Missouri Gas Commission takes an average of what the Village's usage was the year prior.

Ms. DeVore stated she has researched the Missouri Gas Commission and saw that they do not have many members left and questioned their loyalty to Illinois and feels the Village should investigate partnering with another company.

Superintendent Heberling stated that you have to give Missouri Gas Commission five-year notice to end the partnership.

President Dowdy stated that when the Village experienced the huge gas bill, one of the advantages to being a part of the group with the Missouri Gas Commission is they turned around and filed suit against Sperry Gas at zero cost to the Village.

Village Engineer Report: Nothing to report.

Village Attorney Report: Nothing to report.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Heberling reported they had started on the well project today and hopefully by the next board meeting they will be installed and everything up and running. He reported they installed 530 feet of water main at the new Sloan's building and a new Midwest Meter building.

He reported that Sharpsburg is hooking up new customers for Phase Three.

President Dowdy stated at the Sharpsburg meeting, they said it would probably be a month by the time they pressure check it, hook up customers and take daily water tests to send to the EPA. And then wait a couple more weeks for the EPA to say that the water is good, drinkable, potable water before the customers can actually turn on a faucet.

Superintendent Heberling stated the water line to Mount Auburn has all passed and is good to go. The one south of Willie's has all passed and is good to go. They just started pressure checking today on the line east of town on Snake Road.

Superintendent reported he attended an EPA conference a couple weeks ago, and learned they are changing a lot of rules and regulations for paperwork. He will have to keep up on the paperwork and make sure the Village stays on the right side of the EPA.

President Dowdy stated the Village Works employees had to upgrade iPads because the old software was not good enough to handle the new reports that are needed and was able to negotiate them for \$150.00 each. He asked since the old iPads are Village property what should be done with them.

It was suggested to donate them to the Stonington Township Library and President Dowdy said we would check on that.

WATER – The Water Report for December 31, 2024 – January 30, 2025, billing period was presented.

GAS – The Gas Report for December 31, 2024 – January 30, 2025, billing period was presented.

SEWER – The Sewer Report for December 31, 2024 – January 30, 2025, billing period was presented.

Committee Reports: STREETS & ALLEYS – Trustee Ramsey said the garages sales are set for the first weekend in May and dumpsters will be delivered the following week. She is also going to contact the Salvation Army and see if they want to bring out a truck for donations.

HEALTH & SAFETY – Trustee Graham had a complaint about several stop signs in

town but mainly the stop sign at First Street and West Street because it is three foot off the ground and it needs to be raised.

FINANCE – Trustee Wilson asked Chief of Police Peden if the sirens were going to be set off the first Tuesday of every month?

Chief of Police Peden stated they would.

WATER – Nothing to report.

SEWER – Nothing to report.

GAS – Trustee Callan reported he was asked if the police department could get a car battery charger.

President Dowdy stated it is not a bad thing but with all the electronics in vehicles now it becomes a liability.

President Dowdy asked if the Village should take the old squad car down to the Micenheimer Spring Consignment Auction? The Trustees agreed to take the old squad car to sell at the Micenheimer Spring Consignment Auction.

President Dowdy set the date and time for the April Regular Meeting as April 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

With no further business coming before the Board, a motion was made by Callan, seconded by Graham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion passed by all “Yea” votes.

APPROVED:

Bruce Dowdy, Village President

ATTEST:

Jill Gilpin, Village Clerk