

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF JEROME BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ZOOM WEB CONFERENCE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 15, 2020
6:30 PM

Call to Order

President Lopez called the October 15, 2020 meeting of the Village of Jerome Board of Trustees to order at 6:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

President Lopez led all those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Clerk Wheeland called the roll.

Present:

President Mike Lopez

Trustees Kathy DeHart, Leigh Irons, Ralph Irons, Dale Lael, Philip Raftis, Christina Smith

Clerk Linda Wheeland

Attorney Jason Brokaw

Absent:

Treasurer Steve Roth

Approval of Minutes

October 1, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee L. Irons to approve the Minutes of the October 1, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lael.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

September 3, 2020 Executive Session Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee L. Irons to approve the Minutes of the September 3, 2020 Executive Session of the Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lael.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

Approval of Warrant List 21-12

President Lopez stated that Warrant List 21-12 dated October 15, 2020 totaled \$47,072.18. He added that of this amount \$22,001.92 was for sewer fees to the Sangamon County Water Reclamation District and \$15,215.33 would be paid to CWLP for water.

A motion was made by Trustee Smith to approve Warrant List 21-12 dated October 15, 2020 for a total of \$47,072.18. The motion was seconded by Trustee R. Irons.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

Trustee Lael asked if progress was being made to eliminate writing a check for small credits on closed water customer accounts. President Lopez said Treasurer Roth was working on this and would discuss with Trustee Lael.

President Lopez noted that because of the pandemic a number of refunds were made to people who had reserved the Civic Center. Additional refunds will probably be made over the coming months.

Visitors Acknowledgement

President Lopez opened the Visitors Acknowledgement portion of the meeting at 6:36 pm.

He noted that during the time period when remote meetings are being held public comments must be submitted in writing to the Clerk by email or by placing them in the deposit slot outside the office front door by 6:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Clerk Wheeland stated no public comments had been received.

This portion of the meeting closed at 6:37 pm.

Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 21-13 Amending Section 300.7-13 Adding a Liquor License

Attorney Brokaw explained that at the last meeting a proposal for a new liquor license was presented to the Board. Ordinance 21-13 was prepared to add an additional license. If approved, the applicant would then submit all the necessary paperwork to obtain a liquor license. The Board of Trustees sets the number of liquor licenses available and the President, as Liquor Commissioner, approves the issuance of a license.

Michael Chau stated that he would like to open a sandwich shop with the sale of alcoholic beverages and six video gaming machines in Jerome. He has not submitted any architectural plans to the Village or the County because he is waiting for approval of a liquor license.

Trustee Lael said he supports having a sandwich shop in Jerome and pointed out that the layout plan presented by Mr. Chau at the last meeting showed seven video gaming terminals while the State caps the number of terminals at six. President Lopez confirmed that only six terminals are

allowed. Trustee Raftis said he would rather have a business generating revenue than an empty space.

A motion was made by Trustee Lael to approve Ordinance 21-13 amending Section 300.7-13 adding a liquor license. The motion was seconded by Trustee R. Irons.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

President Lopez asked Mr. Chau to email the Clerk to obtain the liquor license application.

Reports from Village Departments

A. Public Health

Trustee L. Irons stated she had no report.

B. Public Works

Trustee Raftis stated he had no report.

C. Public Property

Trustee DeHart reported the following:

- She contacted the six residents on the north side of Iles Avenue regarding the brush left behind from tree trimming done by Comcast. She is not sure if the brush has been picked up yet.
- The wind is taking a toll on the Halloween blow-ups in front of the Civic Center. They need some repairs.
- She is working with Trustee R. Irons and Dave Wilken to get clothing for Joe Gragg that will identify him as working for the Village when he is performing the water operator duties.

D. Building & Zoning

Trustee Lael reported the following:

- Gold Mine Gaming has been working at their unit in West Grand Plaza but has not obtained building permits from the Village or the County. They were informed about the need to obtain permits but have ignored this requirement. He will consult with Attorney Brokaw on how to proceed with enforcing the building permit requirements.

E. Public Safety

Trustee Smith reported the following:

- Acting Sergeant Brewer has been on call and handling backup duties while Chief Estill is on vacation.
- Acting Sergeant Brewer and Officer Hull were both on duty during the power outage during the night-time hours on October 12th.

- Officer Hull and Officer Butch Tuxhorn with the Springfield Police Department worked together on a complex case. Chief Estill appreciated Officer Tuxhorn's cooperation.

F. Water Department

Trustee R. Irons reported the following:

- Calls have been coming into the office from residents who have not received their water bills this month. They were taken to the post office as usual on October 5th. The post office sent electronic confirmation that they were received on that date at 9:37 am. Diane has contacted the Cook Street Post Office where the bulk mailing center is and the Wabash Avenue Post Office where they would be delivered from and could not get an answer as to what happened to the bills. She will reprint the bills tomorrow indicating they are a duplicate and resend them. A notice will be posted on the website explaining what happened.

President Lopez stated that with the lateness of the bills being received by residents, late fees will not be assessed on the current month balance. Attorney Brokaw said the Board should take formal action on the waiver of penalty fees at the next meeting.

- An inspection of fire hydrants in Jerome was conducted quite some time ago and two hydrants that need to be replaced were identified. CWLP is still behind in repairing fire hydrants in the City of Springfield and has not gotten to these yet. Six fire hydrants need to be repaired and Dave is looking into getting repair kits to do these in-house.

G. Village Treasurer

There was no Treasurer's report.

H. Village Clerk

Clerk Wheeland reported the following:

- The fall bulletin was mailed yesterday.
- Liquor license renewal applications were sent out on October 1st. The cover letter indicated that the Board had approved a 50% reduction in the cost of renewing a liquor license for 2021 and an opportunity to have the \$50 application fee waived if the renewal application submission was complete and did not require any follow up. The application fee waiver was provided through a rule issued by President Lopez as Liquor Commissioner and will be at the sole discretion of the Liquor Control Commission. The deadline for submittal is October 30th and we anticipate Commission members will review the applications in November.
- Today is the last day to respond to the 2020 U.S. Census. According to the U.S. Census Bureau website, Jerome has a response rate of 83.5%. President Lopez stated that this was a good response rate compared to some other communities. Clerk Wheeland noted that some homes in Jerome are vacant so the response rate is higher than reported.

I. Village Attorney

Attorney Brokaw stated he had no report.

J. Village President

President Lopez reported the following:

- He thanked everyone for their work.
- Due to the ongoing threat from COVID-19 the Board will continue to meet via Zoom until the State goes into Phase 5. President Lopez or another Board member will continue to participate in the Board meetings from the Board Room.
- He is working with businesses in Jerome to get candy donations for the Halloween event in front of the Civic Center. Candy will be available in bags purchased by Trustee DeHart and Debbie on a table for kids to take, while social distancing, from 4:00 – 8:00 on October 31st. There will be no access to the Civic Center or restrooms. President Lopez will be at the event and invited trustees to use their own discretion as to whether or not to attend.
- Any Village purchases over \$50 must be approved by a trustee or the president before being made. With the colder weather a dip in revenues is expected. The Village is still doing okay at this point but must be cautious.
- The top of a tree at 1524 W. Glenn fell over taking down three electrical poles on Monday about noon. Many residents were without power which was not restored until about midnight. Two Jerome police officers were on duty while the power was out.

Old Business

A. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 21-13 Amending Section 300.7-13 Adding a Liquor License

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

New Business

A. Discussion and Approval of Contractor for Reed Avenue Road Project

President Lopez noted that the trustees were given an opportunity to submit questions about this project to Trustee Raftis prior to the meeting. He requested that discussion on this item be limited to 15 minutes.

Terry Fountain reported that the low bid on the project was from Truman Flatt and they could start work in the middle of next week. The work is expected to take 15 working days, weather permitting. The deadline for completion is November 30th. Residents along Reed Avenue will be notified about the time frame of the project.

Trustee Raftis said that there was a big difference between the original estimate provided by the engineer and the updated estimate and the bid.

Mr. Fountain explained that after core samples of the roadway were taken it was determined that the original design was not adequate. Rather than milling out two inches and replacing two inches, three inches would be need to be replaced. A couple of options were considered and it was decided that the best course of action would be to do two inches of overlay and no milling. This approach would necessitate addressing driveway connections and drop-offs to lawns, 5-10% patching, and other items as well.

Trustee Raftis noted that the Board had also requested that the project include the intersection of Reed and Leonard which was not included in the original estimate.

Mr. Fountain confirmed that the estimate for engineering costs would not change. If these costs come in lower than estimated the Village would be charged the lower cost. If higher, the Village would only pay the original estimated amount.

Trustee Raftis explained that the scope of the project could not be changed at this point because the bids have already been submitted.

President Lopez noted that the original estimate provided by the engineer for the Reed Avenue project was \$106,000. The low bid was \$197,000. As of October 1st, there was \$367,285 in the 1% account. He is not happy with the change in cost of this project. Notice of the project was included in the bulletin mailed yesterday. The Board needs to be conscious of the amount of funds in the 1% account. We are hoping to reconstruct Vernon Avenue next year. The Village has the right to reject all bids.

Trustee Raftis noted that the estimate for the Vernon Avenue project is \$131,525, not including engineering fees, and that the 1% Fund is a replenishing account. The higher cost for the Reed Avenue project resulted from a combination of additions requested by the Board and code requirements for road design.

Trustee Lael said that if the project is not done this year the cost will rise in the future. Reed Avenue needs to be done. If there are not enough funds in the 1% account then the Vernon Avenue project may need to wait.

Trustee R. Irons thought that with prices rising on materials this year due to shortages related to the COVID-19 pandemic the cost of the project may actually come down next year. He was concerned that the engineering firm was so far off in the original estimate and wondered why the core sampling wasn't done first.

Trustee DeHart stated that prices might not come down as quickly as next year and pointed out that the other two bids received were higher. She would like to follow the plan. When prices come down the Village can move to the next priority.

Trustee Smith and Trustee L. Irons agreed that roads are the biggest issue in the Village but were also concerned about depleting the 1% Fund.

Trustee Raftis said this was a difficult decision but the costs won't come down significantly if we wait. This project needs to get done.

A motion was made by Trustee Raftis to approve contracting with Truman Flatt for the Reed Avenue Road project at a cost not to exceed \$197,277.04. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lael.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee Smith, Trustee Raftis

No: Trustee R. Irons

Present: Trustee L. Irons

The motion carried.

B. Discussion and Approval of Resolution 21-10 Approving the Release of Certain Closed Session Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Jerome

Attorney Brokaw explained that Resolution 21-10 is part of the normal process required by State statute for a semi-annual review of closed session minutes to determine which sets will be released for public access and which will be held. The resolution also addresses verbatim recordings.

Clerk Wheeland stated that all Board members reviewed each set of minutes and indicated whether they should be held or released with the majority making the final decision. Attorney Brokaw then reviewed the minutes approved for release.

A motion was made by Trustee Lael to approve Resolution 21-10 approving the release of certain closed session minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Jerome. The motion was seconded by Trustee R. Irons.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

C. Discussion and Approval of Magnetic Signs on Police Vehicles

President Lopez explained that on the warrant list approved at the last meeting there was a \$16 bill for magnetic signs to identify Jerome police vehicles. He had made the decision to purchase the signs specifically for visibility when officers are conducting speed patrols on Iles Avenue. They were used for this purpose on Monday. He has heard from residents that they want to see police vehicles identified in the Village.

(At this point President Lopez had to leave the meeting and Trustee Lael took over his responsibilities.)

Trustee Lael expressed two concerns with the signs 1) they could do damage to the paint on the leased vehicles and 2) he would rather the criminals not be able to identify the police vehicles.

Trustee DeHart said there are pros and cons to marking the vehicles and she is interested in Chief Estill's opinion. She feels that our vehicles should be marked whenever the police are working outside of Jerome and at times in the Village. They are low-profile vehicles and there are times when they should be identified for community recognition. There is a negative connotation connected to unmarked law enforcement vehicles. The City of Springfield police cars and police cars in other communities in the area are marked. If the signs are maintained correctly and not used continually, damage to the vehicles can be averted.

Trustee Smith said that Chief Estill would like to use the signs at times but not continually. An example of when they are helpful is when the Village experienced the recent power outage.

(President Lopez returned to the meeting at this point.)

A motion was made by Trustee Smith to approve the use of magnetic signs on police vehicles at the discretion of Chief Estill. The motion was seconded by Trustee L. Irons.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

No: Trustee Lael

The motion carried.

D. Proclamation Declaring and Continuing State of Local Disaster

Attorney Brokaw explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic the CEO of local government can declare a state of local disaster to allow the creation of an emergency operations plan to be eligible to request aid. A disaster declaration was approved three months ago and expires at midnight tonight. In the body of the disaster declaration before the Board tonight is a reference to the current positivity rate and cases per 100,000. The President can declare a disaster for a short amount of time but the Board must consent to a longer time period.

A motion was made by Trustee Lael to approve a proclamation declaring and continuing a state of local disaster through 11:59 pm on December 17, 2020. The motion was seconded by Trustee Smith.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried.

Executive Session

The Board did not go into executive session.

Trustee Lael informed everyone that his grandson was born on Saturday.

Trustee DeHart said that she would start putting together the Halloween candy bags on Thursday, October 29th and asked for volunteers to assist with this effort. President Lopez reported that Chief Estill put out a request for candy donations through social media asking residents to leave a message on the police answering machine. An officer will then go to the residence to pick up the candy.

President Lopez said that the Public Works staff would work split shifts on Election Day. They were looking into whether Village staff should clean the Civic Center after the election or if the work should be hired out. Attorney Brokaw suggested checking with Treasurer Roth to see if one way may be easier to apply for expense reimbursement.

Trustee DeHart said the kitchen will be open for the election staff to use for plugging in small appliances. The water fountain will not be available however.

President Lopez said that the stove will be off limits as well.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Trustee L. Irons to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lael.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Trustee Lael, Trustee DeHart, Trustee R. Irons, Trustee Smith, Trustee L. Irons, Trustee Raftis

The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Linda Wheeland
Linda Wheeland, Village Clerk

November 5, 2020
Dated