

7:30 p.m. The regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees was called to order by Mayor Behnken. A roll call was answered aye by Trustees Newbold, Politsch, Kearns, Wilson, Geppert and Feder. Chris Remick, Superintendent of Public Works, Sandy Stolte, Treasurer, and Leo Simburger, Chief of Police were also present.

**VISITORS**

Mark Schreder was present for observation. Eric Cook attended on behalf of the New Athens Fire Department to request waiving the park rental and associated fees for their charity kickball tournament on September 24, 2022, at Okaw Valley Park. A motion was made by Trustee Geppert, seconded by Trustee Kearns to waive the fees. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Adrienne Hurst and Melinda Hewitt were present as representatives of the Bullpen to discuss the first annual “B.P. Days” fundraiser on October 15, 2022. They requested an increased police presence at no charge, use of village owned picnic tables, and closure of Kaskaskia Street between Van Buren and Benton from 9 a.m. October 15, 2022 to 9 a.m. October 16, 2022. A motion was made by Trustee Politsch, seconded by Trustee Wilson to approve the Bullpen’s requests. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**READING OF THE JOURNAL (MINUTES)**

The minutes from the previous board meeting had been distributed prior to the meeting for approval.

A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert, to approve the September 06, 2022, board minutes with minor correction. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION**

**MAYOR**

The board discussed changing the board meeting time to 6:30 p.m. A motion was made by Trustee Kearns, seconded by Trustee Politsch, to approve changing the board meeting time, effective October 3, 2022, to 6:30 p.m. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Mayor Behnken reminded the board of Committee of the Whole procedures. Municipal Code states that a Committee of the Whole meeting should be treated as any other committee meeting. The agenda must be posted 48 hours in advance. A Committee of the Whole meeting is the same process as a regular meeting.

The Mayor presented the July and Year to Date Financial Report to the board. Year to date there is an operating loss of \$6700.00. A main issue is the water and sewer fund loss of \$59,000.00. Historically this fund has shown positive cashflow. Almost 50% of the loss is due to our water purchase exceeding our water budget substantially. The water leak at an abandoned facility further compounded the issue. In the months of July and August the unfavorable variance continues. Water leaks are difficult to find, we will

need to try to a method to locate the leaks. Past variances were 500,000-750,000 gallons per month. A minor effect is unpaid bills. There was an unfavorable wage variance of \$28,000.00 due to there being three pay periods in the month of July. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert to approve the July and Year to Date Financial Report. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Mayor Behnken also reported on the current investment program, stating that \$164,000.00 has been invested in laddered eight rung Treasury Bills and one brokered certificate of deposit. The average return is 3.11% opposed to 0.33% that we were receiving from Citizens Community Bank.

**VILLAGE CLERK**

Resident Terry Hamon requested a sewer credit as one of his children left a garden hose on, resulting in additional usage of 19,000 gallons. The water did not enter the village sewer system. A motion was made by Trustee Feder, seconded by Trustee Newbold to approve a sewer credit in the amount of \$119.70. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Vespa, the high school yearbook of New Athens High School requested sponsorship. Clerk Benwell stated that the last sponsorship amount from the village was \$50.00. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Politsch to purchase an advertisement in the yearbook for \$50.00. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Clerk Benwell informed the board that Village Bank had requested a letter authorizing her and Chief Leo Simburger to be added to the police bank account, while removing Michelle Neff and Terry Marquardt. A motion was made by Trustee Politsch, seconded by Trustee Geppert to approve the letter. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**TREASURER'S TIME**

Mayor Behnken presented the July and Year to Date Financial Report during the Mayor's time.

**POLICE CHIEF**

Chief Simburger reported that a window had been broken at Okaw Valley Park. Two minors were responsible for the damage and their parents have agreed to pay for the replacement window. Last month the Police Department had 122 calls. Chief Simburger spoke with Illinois Department of Natural Resources concerning removal of the boat at the Marina. They are unable to facilitate a removal as there is only one company available to move the boat due to the large size. The boat owner has already booked the company to move the boat.

There will be extra overtime in September and possibly October due to continuing education classes after the passing of the Police Reform Bill last year. Chief Simburger

submitted the cost of Lydia Simburger's Police Academy training for reimbursement. St. Clair County is working on a bulk radio purchase from Motorola, with an anticipated discount of 47%. Chief Simburger would like to purchase four car radios and two extra batteries. The additional radios could be used by the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency. The purchase must be made by November 02, 2022.

**SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS**

Superintendent Remick reported Volkert Engineering will begin staking for the Spotsylvania sidewalk project Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The South Lift Station pump continues to lock up. Vandevanter picked up the pump. It could be 7-9 weeks until it is returned. A new pump will take 14 weeks to arrive. The current pump is 20 horsepower. Vandevanter recommends 15 horsepower, which would result in energy savings. Superintendent Remick also reported that in Sequencing Batch Reactor II one of the tanks is down.

Moore Asphalt quoted the Village \$5300.00 to clean, hot fill large cracks, and seal the parking lot at Village Hall. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Feder to approve the contract with Moore Asphalt to complete the work on the Village Hall parking lot. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**AMBULANCE SERVICE DIRECTOR**

Director Green was not present.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**STREETS AND ALLEYS**

Mayor Behnken proposed a program to build and maintain sidewalks in town. The Mayor reported that there is currently \$207,000.00 in the Motor Fuel Tax account. The money in that account cannot be transferred to another fund. A portion of the money can be used to repair and replace sidewalks. Trustee Feder asked if we can use the money to buy a new truck. The Mayor and Village Clerk replied that a truck may not be purchased with Motor Fuel Tax funds. Mayor Behnken would like \$60,000.00 of the Motor Fuel Tax Fund to be allocated to the sidewalk program. Trustee Newbold expressed concern over using any of the Motor Fuel Tax money for any project other than the resurfacing of Spotsylvania Street, as that is the most pressing concern. Mayor Behnken stated that he has had three meetings establishing an agreement that IDOT and DCEO grants would be combined to fund the Spotsylvania project. A committee meeting will be scheduled to further discuss.

The Klopmeier drainage issue was also discussed. It was reported that there is positive drainage to the south and to the north. The issue is debris in ditches. Lt. Buehler notified residents around the property that the debris would need to be cleaned out to prevent flooding issues. They have complied.

**FINANCE AND AUDIT**

The Finance and Audit Committee was presented with a list of fund-to-fund transfers to approve, provided by Mayor Behnken. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Politsch to approve the transfers. A vote was answered aye by all members present. Moving forward, the Cemetery Fund will require quarterly subsidies from the General Fund. The Ambulance Fund may soon require the same.

Mayor Behnken requested the remaining Certificates of Deposit be cashed out from Citizens Community Bank and reinvested into the Village's Fidelity Investment Account. Mayor Behnken supplied the board with a feasibility study, summarizing that \$16,000.00 more annually can be made through purchasing US Treasury Bills instead of Certificates of Deposit from Citizens Community Bank. Trustee Feder stated that Village Bank has a forty-seven month Certificate of Deposit option available with a 3.35% yield. Mayor Behnken reported that he would never tie up the Village's money for a forty-seven month term. Trustee Wilson expressed concern over not doing business locally. Mayor Behnken replied that keeping the money in a local Certificate of Deposit was not as financially beneficial as investing in US Treasury Bills. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Politsch to approve cashing out the remaining Certificates of Deposit at Citizens Community Bank and reinvesting the proceeds into US Treasury Bills through Fidelity. A vote was answered aye by all members present, except Trustee Wilson, who replied nay.

The monthly bills were reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee prior to the board meeting. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Feder to approve payment of the monthly bills as presented. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**WATER AND SEWER**

Nothing to report.

**PERSONNEL**

Trustee Politsch made a motion, seconded by Trustee Feder to table the discussion of adding one full-time Department of Public Works employee to January 01, 2023. Trustee Politsch wanted to allow time for Superintendent Remick to develop an Action Plan. She also wanted time to research into how the additional employee would affect the budget and how the village would benefit from adding an additional employee. A roll call vote was answered aye by Trustees Feder and Politsch, while Trustees Geppert, Newbold, Kearns, and Wilson replied nay. The motion failed to carry.

A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Kearns to approve the hiring of one additional full-time Department of Public Works employee, with Superintendent Remick providing an Action Plan. A roll call vote was answered aye by Trustees Geppert, Newbold, Kearns and Wilson. Trustee Feder replied nay, while Trustee Politsch abstained. The motion carried.

**PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PARKS**

Nothing to report.

**CEMETERY**

Nothing to report.

**ORDINANCES**

Nothing to report.

**IMPROVEMENTS AND GRANTS**

Trustee Politsch reported that she submitted the St. Clair County Parks grant on August 22, 2022. The Tree City USA application was started on September 2, 2022 and will be completed in the coming weeks.

**PUBLIC SAFETY, AMBULANCE & ADA**

Trustee Politsch reported that the Ambulance Service would like permission to offer EMT classes through Kaskaskia College in town. The classes would be covered for EMTs who agree to work for the Village of New Athens for a set period to be determined in a contract drafted soon. A motion was made by Trustee Politsch, seconded by Trustee Newbold approving the Kaskaskia College EMT course program for \$849.26 per class in the Village of New Athens. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Trustee Geppert reported that the air conditioning went out in the ambulance shed. The capacitor stopped working and subsequently the breaker did as well. The air conditioning has been repaired.

**MARINA**

Nothing to report.

**REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Nothing to report.

**COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDERS AND ORDINANCES**

Ordinance No. 2022-05: An Ordinance Amending Chapter I, Article II, Division I, Section 2: Regular Meetings was presented to the board. The ordinance would change the time of regular and special board meetings, effective October 3, 2022, from 7:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Kearns to approve Ordinance No. 2002-05. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Marina**

Chief Simburger updated the board on the status of the remaining boat during the Police Chief's time. Ameren advised Superintendent Remick that it will be an additional six weeks until the power is connected at the Marina Campgrounds.

**Streets & Alleys**

Superintendent Remick will be retrenching the ditch for Dan Stevens on North East Street to address drainage concerns.

**Water & Sewer**

Sewer Cleanout Project- Mayor Behnken stressed the need to start cleaning sewer lines again soon. Eight blocks completed as of 10/04/21. Eighteen blocks completed as of 11/01/2021. Twenty-three blocks completed as of 01/03/2022. Twenty-four blocks completed as of 02/07/2022. Twenty-six blocks completed as of 03/21/2022. Thirty-one blocks completed as of 05/16/22. Mayor Behnken is researching United States Department of Agriculture loan information in conjunction with grant information to consider opportunities to move forward with projects as the village faces a workforce shortage.

The storm sewer collapse at 108 North Market will need to be repaired by the village. Trustee Feder is no longer planning to complete the repair.

**Public Property and Parks**

Trustee Politsch continues work with Matt Heet on the ball diamond drainage project. Gary Idecker will work with Matt Heet after the Fall Festival to construct wells to monitor the drainage.

**Other**

Trustee Kearns reported that Mr. Klopmeier called and thanked him for establishing the grade of his property.

Chief Simburger informed the board that Officer Brad Penet resigned, effective September 4, 2022.

**Motion to Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert, to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Amy Benwell, Village Clerk  
Joe Behnken, Village President