

6:30 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. Leo Simburger, Chief of Police and Chris Remick, Superintendent of Public Works were also present. Sandy Stolte, Treasurer was absent.

VISITORS

Lieutenant Tim Buehler, Rachel Buehler, and Kenadie Buehler were in attendance for the presentation of a twenty-year service award. Chief Leo Simburger spoke highly of Lieutenant Buehler and his dedication to the community. Lieutenant Buehler was presented with an engraved frame thanking him for his twenty years of service to the New Athens Police Department.

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 Wilson to approve the October 03, 2022, board minutes. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

MAYOR

Mayor Behnken presented the September and Year to Date Financial Report. The report was furnished to the board prior to the meeting. The village has an operating surplus of \$236,000.00 year to date. The majority of the surplus is in the General Fund. The ambulance fund is performing well, despite challenges. Revenue for the ambulance fund was down and expenses were up. Performing with 60-70% staffing coverage, 90% of calls are answered.

The mayor reported that the budget year to date was for a \$49,000.00 loss but resulted in a \$236,000.00 surplus. There was a positive variance of \$285,000.00. Part of the positive variance is \$100,000.00 in planned improvements in infrastructure that have not yet been made. The mayor noted that it has been difficult to budget due to inflation and unbudgeted increases in state revenue sharing. Tax revenue has increased because prices are higher.

Mayor Behnken presented a budget analysis to the board. The Ambulance Fund had \$53,000.00 less than what was budgeted in sales and \$33,000.00 less in expenses. This resulted in a \$19,000.00 unfavorable variance. The General Fund was over budget on sales of \$181,000.00 and under budget on expenses by \$23,000.00. The Water and Sewer Fund generated an additional \$17,000.00 in income but had expenses that were \$66,000.00 over budget. The unfavorable variance was due to the water purchases exceeding water sales, excessive deferred maintenance, and excessive labor.

A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Politsch to approve the September and Year to Date Financial Report. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

VILLAGE CLERK

Village Clerk Benwell reported the Community Development Block Grant Income Surveys

had been prepared and mailed to residents. She and Superintendent Remick worked together to create twenty separate pods surveying on average four to six block segments of the portion of town from Hanft Street to Benton Street West of Spotsylvania. The surveys were sent to five hundred fifty-one residents. An eighty percent response rate, with fifty-one percent falling in the low to moderate income category is needed to be considered for low to moderate income designation. The designation would last for eight years and open the opportunity for HUD grant funding to update the aging sewer infrastructure. Surveys were sent along with a letter explaining the project and a pre-addressed stamped envelope for confidential responses to St. Clair County. Clerk Benwell will periodically update the board with the response rate communicated to her on a bi-weekly basis from St. Clair County.

Clerk Benwell reported that she would be attending the Ameren Business Symposium in Springfield, Illinois on October 19, 2022. The symposium is being offered at no charge to municipal government attendees. While at the symposium, she will attend several lectures on custom incentive application writing, renewable energy options, and innovative technology in efficient energy. Clerk Benwell will report back to the board after the symposium.

TREASURER'S TIME

Nothing to report.

POLICE CHIEF

Chief Simburger reported the remaining boat had been removed by the owner from the Marina.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS

Superintendent Remick reported he had spoken to candidates for the full time Department of Public Works position. Interviews are scheduled for October 24, 2022. Seven more blocks of sewer lines have been jetted. Trustee Newbold reported that the lawn and fall decorations at the entrance to town looked nice. Superintendent Remick stated that leaf pickup is tentatively scheduled for November 01, 2022. Trustee Geppert reported that the lights were not in working order by the fall decoration at the entrance to town. Superintendent Remick reported that he was aware, and it had already been repaired.

AMBULANCE SERVICE DIRECTOR

Director Green was not present. Trustee Geppert asked Trustee Newbold if another clinic would be scheduled for the next COVID booster shot. Trustee Newbold reported that the grant program for the booster clinics had expired, therefore, as of now there will not be another clinic.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

STREETS AND ALLEYS

Trustee Kearns reported a resident had expressed concern over rocks being in the gutters of Linda Lane and Mari Lane after the road was oiled and chipped. Superintendent Remick will follow up. There was discussion concerning the sidewalk project and grant

requirements. Trustee Politsch will follow up with her point of contact for clarification on reimbursement requirements.

FINANCE AND AUDIT

The Transfer Request Report was provided to the board prior to the board meeting for review. A motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Kearns to approve the transfers. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Trustee Newbold reported that he had a casual conversation with an investment banker from Edward Jones concerning U.S. Treasury Bill performance. Treasury Bills have an average yield of 3.85% currently. More municipalities are exploring the option and the investment banker stated that the decision to invest in Treasury Bills was an excellent choice.

WATER AND SEWER

Trustee Newbold, along with other members of the board, wanted to discuss the possibility of having a Committee of the Whole meeting once monthly to consolidate several separate committee meetings throughout the month. Mayor Behnken pointed out that during a Committee of the Whole meeting, all members are permitted to speak. An ordinance will need to be drafted. The standing Committee of the Whole meeting will be on the fourth Monday of every month. The first Committee of the Whole meeting will be November 28, 2022. Clerk Benwell will prepare the agenda and Trustee Newbold will prepare the minutes.

PERSONNEL

The board was furnished the plan sheet for the proposed health insurance plan beginning December 01, 2022 for full-time employees prior to the meeting. Trustee Politsch made a motion, seconded by Trustee Newbold to approve the Blue Cross Blue Shield High Deductible Health Plan: Blue Choice Preferred Network, with a \$400.00 lump sum contribution to employee's Health Savings Accounts on December 01, 2022. A vote was answered aye by all members present. Voluntary (employee paid) dental and voluntary (employee paid) vision insurance will be made available as well.

Chief Simburger reported that he has two candidates for part-time positions, Cory Krause and Aaron Storie.

PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PARKS

Nothing to report.

CEMETERY

Trustee Newbold reported the cemetery continues to look nice.

ORDINANCES

A committee meeting is needed to discuss a solar panel ordinance as well as other ordinances.

IMPROVEMENTS AND GRANTS

Trustee Politsch reported that she and Mayor Behnken had another phone conversation concerning a grant opportunity, but they did not qualify. They will continue exploring grant

options.

PUBLIC SAFETY, AMBULANCE & ADA

Trustee Politsch stated that she will be working on the contracts for the Fire District and Lenzburg. She also reported that St. Clair County will be increasing the number of outdoor warning sirens throughout the county. St. Clair County plans to cover 100% of the cost of the materials and installation as well as maintenance for three years.

MARINA

Ameren has started the process of connecting the electricity at the Marina but the work is not yet complete. After completion, approximately eighteen campsites will be live.

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Nothing to report.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, RESOLUTIONS, ORDERS AND ORDINANCES

Nothing to report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Property & Parks

Trustee Politsch updated the board on the status of the drainage system installation project at Okaw Valley Park. Matt Heet and Gary Idecker are planning to check water levels as the next step. Trustee Politsch reported that the measuring will take place over an extended period of time.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Trustee Newbold, seconded by Trustee Geppert, to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. A vote was answered aye by all members present.

Amy Benwell, Village Clerk
Joe Behnken, Village President