

The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at the Masonic Lodge. Village President Jim Copelin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Clerk Rod Molnar called roll: Jim Copelin "Here", Craig Busch "Here", Melissa Layton "Here", Wayne Jones "Here", Gail Hedges "Here", Tyler Bramley "Here". Also in attendance were Superintendent Jeremy Rhodes and Police Chief Jason Martin. Larry Baer was absent.

A motion was made by Bramley and seconded by Busch to approve the minutes of February 10, 2021. The motion passed 5-0.

Hedges presented the Village bills with a motion to approve. Bramley seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

*Visitors:*

Chuck Apgar and Joe Bukantos were in attendance.

*Supervisor Reports:*

*Public Works:*

Superintendent Rhodes reported that so far this winter, the Village hadn't experienced any water breaks. He credited the program of replacing water lines each winter with part of the reason. Hedges commended Rhodes and his crew for the great job of cleaning streets during the latest snow storm.

*Police:*

Chief Martin reported that the entire department had qualified on the firing range. He and officer Zack Pearce recently attended a class for tactical training. He requested the Board approve the request of window clings for the neighborhood watch program. A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Layton to approve the purchase at the amount of \$340.00. The motion carried 5-0.

*Committee Reports:*

*Zoning, TIF, Building Permits:*

Busch reported Ryan McCrady of the Sangamon County Growth Council is working on putting together a county wide agreement with Nextsite to encourage new business development in the County. The Council would pay for the agreement and individual communities would be responsible for a finder's fee for any new business opened within their towns. A motion was made by Busch and seconded by Hedges to approve Ordinance 2021-002 setting the date for the public hearing for the south business district. The motion passed 5-0. A motion was made by Busch and seconded by Hedges to approve Ordinance 2021-003 setting the date for the public hearing for the north business district. The motion passed 5-0. The hearing for both districts will take place at the Masonic Lodge at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 24, 2021.

*Public Utilities, Water, Sewer and Gas:*

A motion was made by Jones to adjust utility late fees for Christy Smith and Mac's Convenience Stores. Busch seconded and the motion carried 5-0. Jones reported that he, Hedges and Molnar

recently attended the Pawnee Village Board meeting. Lindsay Enloe of United Gas Management was in attendance to explain the issue with extremely high natural gas prices. UGM is the company that purchases natural gas for Divernon, Auburn, Pawnee and some other small communities in Illinois. Enloe said the recent cold wave and ice storms in Oklahoma and Texas had caused natural gas wells to freeze which in turned caused gas prices to raise to unheard of levels. Representative Mike Murphy was also present. He has been in touch with the Governor's office. The Governor is expected to announce a low interest loan program to help small communities affected by the crisis. There is also a possibility of federal help. It is estimated Divernon's natural gas bill for February will be in the range of \$600,000.00. The Board determined every option would be looked at to reduce the impact on its residents. A motion was made by Jones and seconded by Busch to leave gas rates for the month of February the same as those charged in January. The motion carried 5-0. The Board will continue to work on the issue.

*Finance, Personnel, GIS:*

Hedges reported that she, Baer and Treasurer Amanda Kessler met this week to begin work on the annual Appropriation Ordinance. She spoke with State Steve Senator McClure at the Pawnee meeting and he still plans to appropriate \$50,000.00 to the Village for infrastructure improvements from his office. McClure and Murphy will work to improve communication to residents for the LIHEAP program. Copelin said the applicant for the treasurer's position will be at the next meeting.

*Public Safety, Health and Safety:*

Layton reported she had received a new contract from Flowers Sanitation. Republic Services had shown interest in the contract but did not submit a bid. Waste Management was also contacted but chose not to make a bid. A motion was made by Jones to approve the contract with Flowers Sanitation beginning May 1, 2021 and ending April 30, 2024. Bramley seconded and the motion was approved 5-0.

*Public Works, Streets, Alleys and Sidewalks:*

Nothing to report.

*Village Communication/Building Grounds and Lights, Parks:*

Copelin and Busch were in contact with Heart Technologies in regards to being charged for home hookups. Heart had some confusion on exactly what the Village was wanting. There will be no cost to the Village.

*Old Business:*

None.

*New Business:*

Bramley is working with a few individuals wanting to use MacMurray Park this summer for their baseball programs.

A motion was made by Hedges to go into executive session at 7:18 p.m. to review previous executive session minutes.

The Board returned to regular session at 7:24 p.m.

A motion was made by Layton to open the executive session minutes of June 11, 2014, May 11, 2016, May 25, 2016, July 13, 2016, February 12, 2020 and October 28, 2020. Bramley seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

A motion was made by Hedges to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Jim Copelin  
Village President

Rodney Molnar  
Village Clerk