

The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held at Village Hall on Wednesday April 23, 2025. Mayor Jim Copelin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Clerk Gail Hedges called roll: Craig Busch “Here,” Joe Bukantos “Here,” Chuck Apgar “Here,” Randy Olson “Here,” Dianne Brenning “Here,” and Larry Baer “Here.” Also present were Chief Mike Lavin and Attorney Lindsay Wise, and Julie Rhodes. Superintendent Jeremy Rhodes was absent.

Baer made a motion, seconded by Busch, to approve the April 9, 2025, minutes. The motion passed 6-0.

Baer made a motion, seconded by Brenning, to approve the bills for payment. The motion passed 6-0.

Visitors:

Julie Rhodes, Colton McDannald, and Kourtney Squires were present to observe. Debbie Thompson, Always On Consulting, was present to share her experience and services as a human services expert. The Village is considering using such a service. Ben Galbraith, Corner Bar, was present to report the Hurley’s are in the process of purchasing Maddy’s Tavern. Galbraith shared some of the changes planned for the garden area including adding a stage and putting up fencing.

Public Works:

Mayor Copelin shared that he had heard the old Masonic Lodge, and the old hotel were for sale. If sold, the properties should be rezoned as residential since both properties are currently zoned commercial.

Police Department:

Bukantos praised Officer Porter for his quick action in addressing a personal medical emergency. Porter was well trained and performed well under pressure. There has been recent discussion about deactivating the canine unit as it is costly to the Village both in time and money. Rachel Leake was present to ask about purchasing the canine and the terms of the purchase. Mayor Copelin stated the cost of the canine is \$6500.00, must be neutered before releasing, cannot be used to conduct police work, all equipment except leashes will stay with the Village, and a written agreement between the Leakes and the Village must be executed. The Leakes accepted the terms and want to purchase the canine. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Baer, to deactivate the canine unit. The motion passed 6-0. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to sell the canine under the terms of sale and subject to a signed agreement. The motion passed 6-0.

Economic Dev., Zoning, TIF, Building Permits:

Apgar shared that the Historical Society grant application was submitted but had not heard anything. Apgar spoke with the appraiser who indicated the appraisal of the south gas station property was two-years old and had appraised for \$175,000.00. The appraiser recommended a new appraisal be done since property values have changed. Mayor Copelin reported the 5.78 acres is now in probate and could take up to 4 – 6 weeks to complete. Attorney Schuering has the paperwork ready once the

probate is finalized. Copelin spoke with the Overland Group to discuss the sale price of a parcel of the property.

Public Utilities Water, Gas and Sewer:

Nothing to report.

Finance, Personnel, GIS:

Baer reported that \$250,000.00 will transferred from the Sweep Account to the Money Market account until such time as the 5.78 acres is purchased. The Village sewer rate has not been increased for many years. With new businesses coming into the Village, major sewer improvements will be necessary. Brenning made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to approve a 3% increase in the sewer rate beginning January 1, 2026. The motion passed 6-0.

Public Safety, Health & Safety:

Olson reported he is still waiting on bids for replacement of the drop box.

Public Works, Streets, Alleys & Sidewalks:

Nothing to report.

Village Communication/Building, Grounds & Lights, Parks, Recreation:

Bukantos commented on how nice the port-a-potty in the park looked. Public workers did a great job on the slab on which the porta-a-potty is secured. The newsletter is almost ready and will be issued after the May 14, 2025, Board meeting. The Village is waiting for reimbursement from the Village insurance before ordering the ADA picnic table replacement top. Those committing the damage will perform community service and pay \$500.00.

Old Business:

Olson made a motion, seconded by Bukantos, to ratify the action taken by the Board at the last meeting regarding the Business District application submitted by Jake Rettberg in the amount of \$7072.00. The motion passed 6-0.

New Business:

Nothing to report.

Baer made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to go into executive session at 7:39 p.m. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Olson made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to return to regular session at 9:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve a 3% COLA and \$5.00 per month salary increase for Chief Mike Lavin effective May 1, 2025. The motion passed 6-0. Baer made a motion, seconded by Bukantos, to approve a 1.75% merit increase and a 3% COLA for Superintendent Jeremy Rhodes. The motion passed 6-0. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to accept the collective bargaining agreement with minor changes in the bereavement leave, and changing the Police Committee to Police Chief and Village President. The motion passed 6-0. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve the April 9, 2025, executive session minutes. The motion passed 6-0.

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Jim Copelin
Mayor

Gail Hedges
Clerk