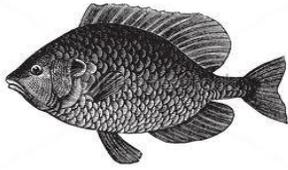


# REGULAR MEETING BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday – September 13, 2023

@ Immediately following 5:45 P.M. Public Hearing Meeting.

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**VILLAGE OF WEBSTER**

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – In Village President, Bill Summer absence, Trustee, Maloney called the meeting to order at 5:53 p.m.
  
- II. **ROLL CALL** –Trustees, Ed Dedman; Kelsey Gustafson; Aaron Sears; Matt Stuart; Tim Maloney and Charlie Weis. Others: Director of Public Works, Jay Heyer; Clerk/Treasurer, Deb Doriott-Kuhnly; Police Chief, Stephenie Wedin; Greg Marsten - Burnett County Sentinel; Mary Smoliak; Russ Burford; Bruce Gibbs; Joshua Hetfeld and Erin Hall. Jeff Fimreite arrived at approximately 6:10 P.M. Absent: Village President, Bill Summer.
  
- III. **PUBLIC NOTICE OF AGENDA, DELETIONS/CORRECTIONS/APPROVAL** – Motion made by Trustee, Dedman to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by Trustee, Stuart. **Motion carried 6-0.**
  
- IV. **VISITOR RECOGNITION** – Trustee, Maloney gave the floor to Chamber President, Mary Smoliak. Mary provided an update on the Augtoberfest. She reported it was very successful with over 370 people in attendance. She presented a \$350 donation to the Village. Mary asked the Village to share the cost for a full-page ad in next year’s Burnett County Visitor Guide. (Versus Village doing a ½ page and Chamber doing ¼ page ad.) Maloney said this would need to be on the agenda next month. Mary said to get the early bird discount, the payment and ad needs to be submitted by October 13<sup>th</sup> – Maloney said the next board meeting is October 11<sup>th</sup> so it could be on that agenda.

Bruce Gibbs is requesting a 16’ streetlight in front of his new building. Bruce is willing to pay for the pole and installation if the Village maintains it/pays for the electricity. Maloney asked how far off the street- Bruce said 20-30 feet. Gustafson asked what direction of his building; Bruce said it would face West-onto Minnow. Maloney clarified that there is already a pole and transformer there and is in the village street right away. Dedman confirmed that this would be an extension not a new street light pole. Motion made by Trustee, Weis to approve Bruce’s request for a 16’ street light pole, paid for by Bruce Gibb and Village paying for electricity; seconded by Trustee, Stuart. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Russ Burford spoke of the sign going up on Oak St and Highway 35/Lakeland Av N. He wanted to draw the Trustee’s attention to Village Ordinance 298-54 item T: “Billboards. Billboards, outdoor advertising signs and any business or industrial signs not located on the same property as the business or industry advertised shall not be permitted in any district.” He stated, “So, it shouldn’t be there.” Weis said there are signs up and down the highway that are that big or bigger and not on the premises of their business. Russ said according to the ordinance they are not permitted. Weis further explained that the owner asked for a variance from the board, and it was granted. Russ asked if a public hearing was held – yes, there was. Russ acknowledged that he missed that meeting. Weis continued by stating the board made sure it was far enough back and there is no safety issue. Russ spoke of setting a precedence. Discussion ensued on the Public Hearing that was held on this zoning variance request for this sign. Gustafson brought up

the sign, south of Lucky Seven, that has been there for many years. Kuhnly will check with the League on verbiage changes to the ordinance.

Next, Russ brought up agenda item G. b) WSB Proposal for Development of Smith Pines and asked when MSA will present the plan that was discussed back in April. Weis said WSB will be put on hold until the MSA proposal/contract, that was dated April 17<sup>th</sup>, is cleared up. He will meet with MSA to map out the next steps. Weis further explained that Burnett County Development has worked with WSB, and they are looking to help the Village of Webster in development; like they have with the other Villages in the County. The WSB cost is \$13,000. Burnett County Development and the Village would split the cost and partner on the development process of Smith Pines. Weis will talk to Dick Hartmann, Nate Ehalt and MSA.

Maloney gave the floor to Jeff Fimreite, Joshua Hetfeld and Erin Hall with the Webster School District. Earlier in the meeting Joshua said they were in attendance to discuss the possibility of partnering with the village on a batting cage for girls' softball. Erin shared that the net would be taken down after the season. Jeff provided a handout and asked Erin to explain the need. Erin said that Webster and Siren partner together for the girls' softball program. Youth (starting at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) and high school use the field, at the Fairgrounds, for all their practices and games. The batting cage would make the team more competitive and practices more efficient. Maloney stated that the agreement was for the school to maintain and mow the field and the village maintains everything around the field yet, Maloney heard comments that the field maintenance was not done after the Storm season ended. Jeff agreed that maintenance is important. He also reminded everyone that the village and school split the cost for the new scoreboard. Maloney met with Scott Hoefs and Ruben to determine where the batting cage could possibly go. Need to keep room for the fairboard and their activities. Maloney asked Jeff if Siren will be sharing the cost. Jeff reported that Siren is not sure how long the co-op will last and didn't want to get in it financially; yet no formal discussions have taken place on ending the co-op. Steve Zmuda, A-Z Contracting, will be install for free. Jeff said it would be great to partner with the village but acknowledged times are tight yet; this would benefit the youth, the girls' softball program and gives the girls the same opportunity as the boys (the school has a nice batting cage for the boys.) The boys' program will donate the platform. The cost for the batting cage would be \$7,973. Maloney asked if the pipes would stay or be removed at the end of season. Jeff said that his understanding is they would be removed. Weis clarified that the school is asking for financial help with just the batting cage and not on the pitching machine – that is correct. Jeff said they are looking at splitting the cost; \$4,134 each and it would be a shared batting cage. Weis said if Jeff can get the Siren's Lions Club to donate, he could probably get the Webster Lions Club to match. Weis asked the life expectancy for the netting. It will be taken down during the off season, so the estimate is 10 years. Jeff will talk to Siren's Lions Club and get back to Weis and the village board will revisit after. Heyer brought up the concrete structure around the perimeter and assuming it shouldn't be driven over. He knows that area, around center field, is where trucks and trailers park and a few years ago the Fair Association hauled in a bunch of gravel. Heyer asked if the batting cage could be moved closer to behind right field. Jeff clarified that the picture shows the concrete all around, but they are looking at concrete just at the ends to hold the poles in. (3 on each end.) Erin said she is willing to move it.

- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion was made by Trustee, Sears to approve the August 9, 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes; seconded by Trustee, Dedman. **Motion carried 6-0.** Motion was made by

Trustee, Dedman to approve the August 21, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes; seconded by Trustee, Stuart. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS & RECEIPTS: August 8, 2023 – September 10, 2023** vouchers in the amount of: **\$71,096.79** as follows:

- a. General Fund - \$46,314.48
- b. Water Fund - \$10,495.77
- c. Sewer Fund - \$7,340.56
- d. Capital Fund - \$550.00
- e. Library Fund - \$6,315.99
- f. Cemetery Fund- \$79.99

Approval of receipts were also presented for: **August 8, 2023 – September 10, 2023** in the amount of **\$163,016.58**. Stuart asked about the Settlement under receipts – Kuhnly explained that this is tax settlement money from the County. Maloney asked about the number of Brightspeed accounts. Kuhnly explained that 2 accounts are needed for special lines for the SCADA system, 1 is the main account and 1 for the police department. She also shared that she was able to cut our main account bill in half by eliminating old services from when the PD was in the same building as Public Works and Village Office years ago at the old office. Going forward the bill will be approximately \$270.00 a month. Maloney asked about Burnett County Dairy – Heyer explained this voucher is for chemicals for spraying weeds at the sewer ponds. Motion was made by Trustee, Gustafson; seconded by Trustee, Maloney to approve vouchers in the amount of: **\$71,096.79** and receipts in the amount of **\$163,016.58**. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**VII. COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**VIII. PERSONNEL – Chairman, Ed Dedman:** Dedman reported that the Personnel Committee met and recommends rehiring Leif Thompson as Part-Time Public Works Employee. The hours and rate of pay are noted in the August 21<sup>st</sup> Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes. Motion made by Trustee, Maloney to rehire Leif Thompson; seconded by Trustee, Dedman. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Dedman informed the board that the Personnel Committee interviewed Dylan Lippert for Full Time Public Works Operator. The committee recommends hiring Dylan to begin employment on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Dylan would take over Dean Phernetton’s position when Dean takes over Jay Heyer’s position as Director upon Jay’s retirement. Motion by Trustee, Weis; seconded by Trustee, Stuart to table to October Board Meeting as this item is not on the agenda. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**X. PUBLIC UTILITY – Chairman, Aaron Sears:** Sears reported that the Village received a financial outreach letter from the PSC regarding the Water Fund financial health and the need to increase water rates. A copy of the letter was included in the board member’s packet, along with an email recapping Kuhnly and Heyer’s call with the Auditor. Sears noted that the board, in recent years, discussed annual increases. Sears informed the board that there was an error in the 2021 PSC Annual Report, that will be corrected by the Auditors, as well as 2021 had the \$103,500 expense for painting the water tower but the revenue/loan was recognized on the 2020 PSC Annual Report. PSC recommends the village to first increase the water rates by the minimum of 8% through a Simplified Rate Case (SRC) and then apply for the full Conventional Rate Case (CRC). Weis questioned the part of the letter where it states the utility continues to face financial difficulties and operated at loss of \$261,208 over the last two years ---where does this deficit come from? Also, the need to have funds available to cover unexpected repairs and

maintenance. Gustafson pointed out the letter states 90 days cash on hand. Weis and other members questioned why the auditors did not inform the board of the financial difficulties. Sears also shared the village's water rates are behind other municipalities. Kuhnly further explained the 2020, 2021 and 2022 PSC Annual Reports and the village has not done a full conventional rate case (CRC) since 2012. Weis spoke of the past several years of incremental rate increases that the village has done. Kuhnly also informed the board that the CRC will cost between \$3500-\$5000 and recommends CLA complete the application. She has submitted the initial steps in the SRC process, will send the acknowledgement letter to the PSC, and submit the application for CRC. Weis would like further explanation of the deficit amount. Kuhnly will follow up with the PSC and report back to the board. Kuhnly reported there could be two rate increases in 2024: one effective 1/1/24 at 8% by submitting the SRC and another % dependent upon outcome of CRC. She then spoke of the spreadsheet she provided of sample residents quarterly consumptions showing the impact of the 8% increase. Chairman, Sears then read the Resolution #2023-02. Motion by Trustee, Weis; seconded by Trustee, Gustafson to approve Resolution #2023-02: Adopt Water Service Utility Rate Increase. Dedman questioned the effective date /allowable billing statement. Kuhnly reported that yes, 1/1/24 is the date. Dedman also questioned the water meter charge – this is the fixed base rate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Trustee, Maloney reported that after reading the Utility, Sanitary Sewer & Water Main Easements and Partial Release of Public Alley & Sewer Utility documents that were provided in the meeting packet, he met with Heyer and Village Engineer, Mark Krause about the verbiage and maps that Dollar General is proposing. Maloney provided examples of their questions, concerns and needed corrections. Time is needed for follow up with Dollar General and changes to the easements to be made. Motion made by Trustee, Maloney to table until the next time the village board can convene; seconded by Trustee, Dedman. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- IX. FINANCE – Chairman, Matt Stuart:** Stuart stated he read the letter, requesting a financial donation, from the Humane Society of Burnett County and has tried to contact them on questions he has. The Board agreed they provide a valuable resource. Stuart is suggesting this request be tabled until he gets answers. Stuart provided an update on his conversation with Restorative Justice when he dropped off the Village's donation. He also reported that he found out the Huber program has been shut down; initially because of COVID and afterwards, the Huber Cell was shut down as the County doesn't have enough cells. This could open back up when the County's new facility opens.
- XI. PUBLIC PROPERTY – Chairman, Tim Maloney:** Nothing New to Report.
- XII. STREETS – Chairman, Kelsey Gustafson:** Nothing New to Report.
- XIII. JUDICIAL – Chairman, Bill Summer:** In Chairman, Summer's absence, Trustee Maloney led Judicial Reports. Police Department schedule was provided. Chief Wedin read the total monthly calls for service – total of calls was 71. Out of respect to Chief, Wedin's time, Trustee, Dedman is suggesting moving Judiciary up in the agenda order going forward. Kuhnly will discuss with President, Summer. Maloney also suggests Kuhnly talk to President, Summer about reciting The Pledge of Allegiance during the Village Board Meetings.

Maloney gave the floor to Kuhnly to discuss appointing the Zoning Board of Appeals Members. Kuhnly reported that a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is mandatory, per State Statute 62.23 (7) (e), for

any municipality that has enacted zoning regulations. She also reported that the village ordinances state that the village does have a ZBA and confirmed with the Villages of Siren and Grantsburg that they have a ZBA. This board consists of 5 citizen members, appointed by the Village President, and confirmed by the Village Board. Discussion ensued on the role of ZBA per the Village Ordinance and State Statute. Kuhnly will research further and discuss with President, Summer.

Heyer stated that there are more and more removable accessory structures and questions remain if removable accessory structures should require a permit. Kuhnly will talk to Chairman, Summer about scheduling a quarterly Judicial Committee Meeting.

**XIV. DEVELOPMENT & ANNEXATION – Chairman, Charlie Weis:** Weis reported that Mr. Rob Machel has not gotten back to him regarding the condition and the future of the Mobile Home Park. Weis has already communicated to him the items that are needed to follow Village Ordinances, whether he keeps or sells. He is contemplating contacting the Village Attorney on how to proceed. Discussed contacting Village Inspector.

Weis reiterated that he would follow up with Teresa Anderson/MSA regarding contract #63033, dated 4/17/23, for Smith Pines. After that discussion, he will get back to Dick Hartmann about WSB for Smith Pines. Dedman mentioned that maybe Town of Meenon could also go in on cost; so, splitting 3 ways not 2.

**XV. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE –** Covered earlier in the meeting.

**XVI. WEBSTER RURAL FIRE ASSOCIATION MEETING UPDATE – Trustee, Tim Maloney:** Maloney reported the next meeting is scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup> and will be holding their annual budget meeting.

**XVII. BURNETT COUNTY TOURISM COALITION - Trustee, Dedman:** Dedman reported BCTC is working on the remaining municipalities for short-term rental tax, resolutions, etc.

**XVIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS & FUTURE MEETINGS:**

- **September 18, 2023 \*Personnel Committee Meeting**
- **October 11, 2023 \*Regular Board Meeting**
- **TBD \*Judicial Committee Meeting**
- **November 2, 2023 \* Budget Workshop Meeting**
- **November 27, 2023 \*Budget Public Hearing**

**XIX. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion was made by Trustee, Weis; seconded by Trustee, Sears to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Debra Doriott-Kuhnly*

Clerk-Treasurer

September 13, 2023

\*\*\*These minutes are subject to approval at next month's Regular Meeting.

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Village President, Bill Summer

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Trustee, Ed Dedman

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Trustee, Kelsey Gustafson

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Trustee, Tim Maloney

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Trustee, Aaron Sears

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Trustee, Matt Stuart

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Trustee, Charlie Weis

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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk-Treasurer