

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE VILLAGE BOARD**

**STATE OF ILLINOIS)  
COUNTY OF HENRY)  
VILLAGE OF ORION)**

The regular meeting of the President and Board of Trustees was held on March 21, 2022, at Village Hall, 1202 4<sup>th</sup> St., in the Village of Orion, County of Henry, State of Illinois. President Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendance at the meeting was as follows:

Present: Jim Cooper, Mel Drucker, Mike Dunlap, Bob Mitton, Neal Nelson,  
and Steve Newman

Absent: Jim Hickerson.

City Attorney John Ames was also present.

**I. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY EXPENDITURES**

Mr. Drucker moved to approve the following expenditures for the month: General-\$25,497.39; General Depreciation-\$8,002.98; Recycle-\$3,100.16; Water Operation & Maintenance-\$2,535.86; Sewer Operation & Maintenance-\$4,904.09. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion, and Mr. Cooper invited discussion. Mr. Newman stated that gasoline purchased for squad cars should be charged to the police department, not general administration. The board voted without further discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Dunlap, Mitton, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: None

Absent: Hickerson.

The motion passed.

**II. DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR**

None.

**III. COMMITTEES**

**A. Streets**

Trustee Nelson reported that Neil Dahl is currently inspecting the condition of sidewalks around town. He and Jason West of West Concrete are preparing a list of priority repair projects. Mr. West

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hopes to start the repair work in April; construction will likely continue intermittently throughout the warm weather months.

Mr. Dahl's new dump truck was delivered this week; he has solicited estimates from Bonnell and Tri-State for the total cost of upfitting.

1. 5<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction Project engineering status update

The village hired Hutchison Engineering to perform the surveying and engineering work for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street reconstruction project. Mr. Nelson confirmed that the engineering services agreement includes engineering for the installation of 6-inch water mains under the long block between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Aves. The existing water mains are 4-inches. Shane Larson and J.D. Schulte plan to meet with Mr. Nelson, Mr. Dahl, and Mr. Sandberg in early April to walk through their progress and develop a rough timeline for completion of the work.

**B. Sewer**

Trustee Hickerson was absent. Nothing to report.

**C. Water**

Trustee Drucker reported that approximately 20,000 extra gallons of water is still being pumped per day. If Mr. Sandberg does not find the source of the leak within the next month, he will ask IRWMA for assistance.

1. Discuss Phase II bond pay-off

This agenda item should not have been included in the water report.

2. Discuss possible water and sewer rate increase

Mr. Drucker recommends that the board revisit the issue of raising the water rates. Before the COVID lockdown began in 2020, the board seriously started researching rates and solicited a study from IRWMA. There has been little to no further progress. Mr. Drucker noted that the last time the rates were raised was at least ten years ago; IRWMA, Bi-State, etc., advise municipalities to raise their rates at least 1% per year.

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**D. Recreation**

Trustee Dunlap reported that the touch faucets in the park restrooms are broken. Mr. Sandberg had to order parts, but the faucets should be repaired and the restrooms open on March 22.

Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Cooper met with Thomas Smith, the high school's baseball coach, and Ashlee Amador, the high school's athletic director, to discuss a maintenance plan for the new baseball diamond at Love Park. They agreed that the village will mow the outfield 1-2 times per week, and Mr. Smith will continue to mow the infield with a push mower.

Mr. Dunlap also reported that Bush Landscaping plans to turn on the baseball diamond's irrigation system this week. He and Mr. Sandberg are waiting on a price estimate from Kymbyl Komplete Kare for fertilizer services. Mr. Sandberg arranged for an electrician to help troubleshoot electrical issues with the scoreboard. In the meantime, power to the scoreboards is shut off.

Mr. Mitton asked if Ashlee Amador planned to mow for the village again this summer. Everyone agreed that she did a wonderful job last year.

**E. Finance**

Trustee Newman announced that the Finance Committee meeting is moved back to March 30, 2022. The committee will be reviewing the first draft of the FY 2023 budget.

1. Discuss increasing the annual video gaming terminal fee from \$25 to \$250 per device

The Illinois General Assembly passed a bill in 2021 increasing the maximum amount municipalities could charge annually for this fee from \$25 to \$250. The Finance Committee recommends that the board increase the amount charged by the village accordingly. Many local communities have already done so. Mr. Mitton expressed shock at the proposed increase. Mr. Newman clarified that, by law, the gaming company that owns the terminal must pay half, so the impact on local businesses is minimized. Mr. Cooper agreed that while on paper this looks like a significant tax on local businesses. However, the revenue received by local businesses from these machines is substantial; throughout the state, these gaming terminals are taking a big cut out of

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the casinos' profits. In sum, the current \$25 fee is just not proportional. Mr. Cooper also stated that he discussed the proposed fee increase with local business owners, and they did not seem concerned.

Mr. Newman moved to approve Ordinance No. 2022-02, amending Municipal Code Chapter XIV, §1.5, to increase the gaming terminal fee to \$250 per device per year, effective May 1, 2022. Mr. Drucker seconded the motion and the board voted without further discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Nelson, Newman

Noes: Mitton

Abstain: Dunlap

Absent: Hickerson.

The motion passed.

2. Discuss use of FY 2022 and 2023 TIF proceeds

The TIF district is set to expire in the next few years, and its extension is a large pending issue. Mr. Newman had another conversation with Paul Ostrosky recently. Mr. Ostrosky is an attorney with Jacob & Klein, Ltd., a law firm the village contracted with to assist with TIF-related matters. Mr. Ostrosky recommended that the board develop a TIF-funded project that would improve the community as a whole. He could then help sell this project and the TIF extension to the taxing bodies and developer. Mr. Newman and Mr. Ostrosky discussed whether fixing the drainage issue at 109 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. would qualify. Mr. Ostrosky said he thought it would, but with some limitations. He suggested cost-sharing with Jason West.

Mr. Ostrosky again confirmed that the village does not need to spend TIF proceeds in the same fiscal year as they were received. Rather, the village may choose to save the funds for a large project.

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The village may also use TIF proceeds to pay down a loan acquired to fund a TIF-qualifying project. Annawan is currently doing this. Mr. Drucker noted that the village is not in a position to do this, because the TIF is set to expire soon and it is unclear whether it will be extended. Mr. Drucker asked Mr. Newman to confirm that the village needs to come up with a project to sell the TIF extension to the taxing bodies. Mr. Newman said that was a fair summary of Mr. Ostrosky's advice, but there are a lot of other factors to consider.

Mr. Cooper stated that the village needs to come up with a plan soon. The TIF will expire soon, and any proposed extension is going to be a hard sell with the taxing bodies.

There is also a pending issue with the 2021 TIF calculation's total value of the increment and individual impacts. Further discussion of this issue with Mr. Ames was reserved for executive session.

**F. Police**

Deputy Chad Baze put in a budget request of \$45,000 for the purchase of a new squad car. Mr. Newman explained that Deputy Baze's squad car is a 2013 and has 125,000 miles on it. Mr. Newman stated that it is reasonable for the board to plan on replacing the village's squad cars every ten years. While Deputy Baze said he could "squeeze another year" out of his squad, Mr. Newman approved the request.

Mr. Mitton requested more police presence during the wrestling tournament next weekend.

**G. Buildings & Grounds**

Trustee Mitton reported that he is still waiting on Tri-City Electric to install the security cameras.

Last week high school football players helped board members take the Christmas tree down in the bandshell.

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**H. Human Resources**

1. Take action on draft Ordinance No. 2022-01, amending Municipal Code Chapter VI, §9.0, and Chapter VII, §§1.1, 1.5

The proposed ordinances would clarify municipal code language controlling the process by which the board appoints and set wages for employees. Mr. Drucker would like Mr. Ames to provide a more detailed explanation of the proposed changes before the board votes to approve them.

2. Set employee wages for FY 2023

Mr. Drucker moved to enter executive session to discuss employee wages for FY 2023. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion and the board voted without discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Dunlap, Mitton, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: None

Absent: Hickerson.

The motion passed.

**~BOARD ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION~**

**~BOARD RESUMED REGULAR SESSION~**

Mr. Nelson moved to raise the pay rate for all permanent, salaried and hourly village employees by 6%, and to set the part-time police rate at \$20/hour, effective May 1, 2022. Mr. Drucker seconded the motion, and the board voted as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Dunlap, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: Mitton

Absent: Hickerson.

The motion passed.

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The board agreed to develop a new employee evaluation process with the help of the village clerk in FY 2023.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, Mr. Drucker moved to adjourn. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion, and the board voted without discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Dunlap, Mitton, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: None

Absent: Hickerson.

The motion passed and the meeting was duly adjourned.

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Erin Lange  
Village Clerk