

Village of Benton

February 16, 2022

Board Meeting Minutes

Members present: Gary McCrea, Chuck Wartner, Katey Neis, Jill Knight, Kenneth Farrey

Absent members: Cal Robbins, Terry Sheffer

Village employees present: Sonya Silvers, Jim Goffinet, Brian Hammill

Others Present: Rita Buchholz, Chuck Voight, David Ralph

Present Via Zoom: Joy McQuaid

The regular board meeting of the Benton Village Board was called to order by Village President, Gary McCrea, at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Benton Business Incubator Building at 244 Ridge Avenue on Wednesday, February 16, 2022.

In compliance with the open meeting law, proper notice of the meeting had been posted in four public places; the Zephyr Depot, Benton State Bank, Benton Post Office, and the Benton Business Incubator Building.

Motion (Farrey, Wartner) to approve the minutes from the regular village board meeting held on December 8, 2021. Voice-all ayes. Carried

Chuck Voight addressed the board concerning the tree located at 341 East Main Street. The tree is dead and it is over 100' tall. There is concern of the tree coming down on the road or surrounding properties. Jim has reached out to a contact at the state and Gary will also make some calls to see about getting the tree cut down.

Chuck also presented a letter he had from Hazel Green that they send out to all of their residents regarding property maintenance and keeping up the appearance of their village. He liked the idea and would like the Village of Benton to have something similar sent to all of our residents. The board liked the idea and the office will work on a letter to add with the March newsletter.

Rita Buchholz and Joy McQuaid gave details on a housing project they would like see developed in Benton. The idea is to have 8 standalone housing units that would consists of 1-2 bedroom, single story units with a garage for low to moderate income elderly residents. This provides a way for residents to stay in Benton while moving out of their large homes but not having to move to an apartment or a facility. They would be looking at purchasing the land at 150 Whaley Court. The village board agrees this would be a great addition to Benton. Joy will need pertinent information about the land before an offer can be made on the land. Sonya will get her the parcel number, acres, and current zoning. The board will meet and determine how much property they can sell for the project. The village would need to parcel off the portion where the well house currently sits and determine if there are any state regulations to consider with the well before selling. The board will be in contact with the housing authority to determine the next steps.

Jim would like to see no parking on Main Street from North Van Buren to Bean Street from 3-6 a.m. to help with the ease of cleaning the street and snow removal. Discussion was held and signs will be installed for no parking from 3-6 a.m. on Main Street from North Van Buren to Bean Street. This will be enforced year round and violators could be ticketed and/or towed.

Sonya reported there are two trees in Village Park that need to come down. They have holes and the one is hollow. Felderman is able to remove the trees and it will be an estimated cost of \$2000 dollars for both. There are also trees on Main Street that have splits that will need to be taken down. The question arose of where the responsibility falls because they are in the road right away. As stated in Village Ordinance, it will be the responsibility of the homeowners to remove the tree. Eric will prepare a list and the village office will send letters to the homeowners.

Brian reported that Scott has resigned as the Chief of Police. Speeding issues are currently being addressed and we will start seeing more citations issued. Brian was notified of a skunk at the school. He will recommend that they call in pest control to properly handle the skunk.

Committee Reports:

- ≈ Jill gave a brief update on the Benton Community Fund.
- ≈ Chuck likes the idea of sending out property maintenance letters to village residents before the public nuisance meetings are held.

Sonya to virtually attend The Municipal Clerk and Treasurer Institute, July 11-15, 2022

Motion (Wartner, Knight) to approve Sonya to virtually attend The Municipal Clerk and Treasurer Institute, July 11-15, 2022. Voice-all ayes. Carried

Ryan to attend The WRWA Annual Conference, March 16-18, 2022 in La Crosse, WI

Motion (Knight, Farrey) to approve Ryan to attend The WRWA Annual Conference, March 16-18 in La Crosse, WI. Voice-all ayes. Carried

Sonya requested approval for the renewal of the Principal Life insurance policy that will expire in May. Sonya also requested an increase to the short term disability max benefit amount. Currently the max weekly benefit amount is set to \$750.00; the requested increase would be to \$1000.00. The increase would allow for all employees to receive their normal wages if they would be off on short term disability for any period of time. This would slightly increase the monthly premium cost to the village.

Motion (Knight, Wartner) to approve the renewal of the Principal Life insurance policy expiring in May and to increase the short term disability max benefit from \$750.00 to \$1000. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Sonya and Eric have been keeping up-to-date in regard to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and will present information as it is available. Galena Street may be a good focus and we can reach out to Keith Dalsing to see if he has plans from previous inquiries for funding.

The claims against the village were presented for payment.

Motion (Wartner, Neis) to pay the claims against the village. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Motion (Neis, Wartner) to adjourn. Voice-all ayes. Carried