

Village of Benton
November 13, 2024
Board Meeting Minutes

Members present: Scott Cruse, John Perkins, Jill Knight, Joe Slater, Kenneth Farrey, Cal Robbins, Chuck Wartner

Absent members:

Village employees present: Sonya Silvers, Jared Roling, Eric Mowry, Brian Hammill

Others Present: Michelle Savatski, Laura Walker

The regular board meeting of the Benton Village Board was called to order by village president Scott Cruse at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Benton Business Incubator Building at 244 Ridge Avenue on Wednesday, November 13, 2024. 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.

The minutes from the previous village board meeting were presented.

Motion (Farrey, Robbins) to approve the minutes from the regular village board meeting held on October 9, 2024, as presented. Voice-all ayes. Carried

Eric Mowry and Jim Goffinet installed an electric service for the fiber cabinet at 60 Water Street. Leaf pick-up is complete, and preparation for winter has begun.

Brian Hammill has finished the first portion of the EMT training and will start the second session in January. Brian attended the Lynne Montgomery trial from November 4th to the 8th. Alternate side parking has started, and the parking fine fee will be updated.

Committee Reports:

- ≈ The Finance Committee met for a budget working session.
- ≈ The Public Nuisance Committee will meet November 21 at 8:30 a.m.

Sonya informed the board that the USDA is requiring all staff and board members to complete civil rights and language training. A link for the training will be provided by the end of the week. Election packets for the April 1, 2025, Spring Election were passed out to Village President Scott Cruse and Trustees Jill Knight, Joe Slater, and Ken Farrey. Signatures can start on December 1st, 2024, and nomination papers must be turned in by January 7th, 2025.

Michelle Savatski gave an update on the Community Center. The village did not secure the Flexible Facilitates Program (FFP) grant, and the community center will move to Plan B and downsize the building by removing the village office, police department, family bathroom, and a reduction in the size of the meeting room. A map of the new layout was presented to the board. The pre-application for the \$250,000 WEDC grant has been submitted, and work on the final application has begun. Michelle is working on letters of support. Resolution #2024-04 was presented to the board; it is needed for submitting the final application. All funding for the Community Center was presented. The building will not exceed \$2.4 million, and of that cost, \$244,155 has already been expended for the project. The engineers will have the final figures in January 2025, and are estimating the bidding process to start in March 2025. The Community Center Committee is continuing with fundraising efforts to close the funding gap.

Motion (Perkins, Slater) to approve resolution #2024-04 authorizing the submission of an application for a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Community Investment Grant. Roll-all ayes.

The 2025 preliminary budget was presented. The Finance Committee spent several working sessions on the budget. Shared revenue increased approximately \$5,000 for 2025. Jill Knight mentioned that labor and benefits make up about 40% of the annual budget, and hydrant rent is at about 9%. Hydrant rent is a component of the utilities, and the village will look at adding it to the monthly utility bills instead of the levy. The village will need to look at doing a full water rate case to make the change. The short-term borrowing will stay the same at \$120,000.

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The water/sewer department is purchasing a new truck and was offered \$2,000 trade-in value for the current truck. Sonya will check with the attorney at the League of WI Municipalities to check the legality of posting the truck for sale or trading in. The board would like to accept the trade-in value pending confirmation from the attorney.

Motion (Wartner, Slater) to approve trading in the current water/sewer truck at a value of \$2,000 to reduce the new truck purchase price pending approval from the attorney. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Sonya presented the 2025 Johnson Block Engagement letter for services. There was a \$6,000 increase in cost for 2025. Discussion was held.

Motion (Knight, Farrey) to approve the 2025 Johnson Block engagement letter for services. Roll-all ayes. Carried

The gas station was sold, and the new owners have applied for a Class A liquor license.

Motion (Perkins, Robbins) to approve the Class "A" & "Class A" liquor license for the Driftless Stores, INC., dba Jeff's Mini Mart. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Motion (Robbins, Slater) to approve the cigarette, tobacco, and electronic vaping devices license for 2024-2025 Driftless Stores, INC., dba Jeff's Mini Mart.

Roll: Cal Robbins - Yes, Joe Slater - Yes, Scott Cruse - Yes, Ken Farrey - No, John Perkins - Yes, Jill Knight - Yes, Chuck Wartner- Yes. Motion Carried

Pay the claims against the village.

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

Joe Slater was approached by a village resident question whether a connex box (storage container) would be allowed on a residential lot to be used as a garage or an assessor building. Sonya Silvers and Brian Hammill had previously looked into the ordinances and did not find an ordinance that would prohibit a connex box on the parcel. Sonya will call surrounding municipalities to see if they have an established ordinance. The ordinance committee will meet to discuss further.

Jill Knight questioned the status of Well #2. Well #2 is still offline and waiting on the new pump. Jared does have a contingency plan in place if needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 730 p.m.

Motion (Slater, Robbins) to adjourn. Voice-all ayes.