

Village Board Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2025

On August 11, 2025, President Mike Brusberg called the Village Board meeting of the Village of Brooklyn to order at 6:30 p.m. Trustees present were Mike Gehrman, David Berland, Dan Olson, Todd Klahn, and Christian Allen. Trustee Jake Bachim was absent. Also present were Jason Marshall, Deputy Merrick Grumke, Clerk-Treasurer Linda Kuhlman. Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments - Jason Marshall – Ronek couldn't get out last week to inspect. He will be out there this week. He's also here on Stacey's behalf. She isn't happy. As a board member, you should hold to a higher standard. They apologize for the smell while spreading manure. He said there was a certain board member who called them out by name and the bar name on Facebook, and if someone had a problem with it, go to them. He didn't think it was professional. He suggests stopping and thinking before posting. We are in a farm community. The type of manure they spread, they did in another direction last year and had people complaining about it. They tried to be clean on the roads. If someone knows what's going on, try explaining it first. (Marshall left) Klahn agreed, as a board member, we need to lift up our businesses and not put them down. Gehrman said while posting make sure it's not representative as a board member. It's one thing making comments as a person. Brusberg suggested if things get you upset, call him before posting.

President's report – There's been a lot of pieces going around about Hotel Street, and in many regards, we need to be patient. Everyone has good intentions, but in the near term, please go through the board, or ask staff for questions. When we have meeting, be actively engaged in the discussion. He had four conversations last week. We'll get our way through this. We have a good product. We have a good engineer in Strand. They've helped us design a lot of different things within the community. That project, there's been a lot of different perspectives, but if we look at the end result, it's good. They deserve kudos. We hear a lot of negatives, but they did a really good job with this, and we'll fine tune with the punchlist. Gehrman suggested we do a lessons learned with the engineers; it's an idea. Brusberg said when there's a time and place, they can do that. Klahn came in late, but there were a lot of changes midstream, even before the project started, to make things better, and to make it better, it's hard to get everything we wanted. Brusberg said with the budget, they did everything they could to keep it in budget. Klahn said the contractor did a good job of doing extras without charging.

Berland made a motion to approve minutes of July 28, 2025. Allen seconded. Motion carried. Klahn abstained.

South sidewalk on Hotel Street – Brusberg said this was on as a placeholder in case Marshall had something from the last meeting. He reaffirmed he still needs more time. **Brusberg made a motion to get thoughts, insights and suggestions from Marshall on how to approach Hotel Street, and specifically the sidewalk in front of his property, no later than Friday, August 22nd, so we can make a decision at the following board meeting.** Gehrman seconded. Klahn agreed as long as we give him notice right away. Brusberg asked to **amend motion to give notice to Marshall, whether verbal or written.** Motion carried.

Brusberg added we're all in a position of being called out on the spot. It can happen anywhere. The important thing about any type of resident contact, complaint or concern, it's good to be an ear, but you can't promise. We need to formalize that, where if they have a complaint/ concern and it's something they want the board to listen to and hear out, we need them to send an email or come into the clerk's office and fill out a form, so we have documentation of what that is, and it's not word of mouth. Then we can actually tactically execute and act on it. Otherwise, we're presuming at times what their concern might be based on our anecdotal thoughts and perspectives. So he asks going forward if something like this pops up, refer them to the clerk's email, and they can copy you also, or they can go to the clerk's office and fill out a form. Klahn agreed we need a written form. Gehrman said if someone is asking for something, he's said to come to a meeting or let them know at the office. He agreed we can't promise anything. Brusberg also added they can

approach staff and have that similar voice of concern, but that doesn't include poor behavior. Poor behavior is not tolerated, and it's entirely acceptable for staff to remove themselves from the conversation. It gets nowhere and leads to a defensive result. We can't have that. Our engineers can't be abused by the public. They're doing a service for this community. They are an extension of our employees, and as such they should be treated with respect as well. Any future behavior like that will not be tolerated, if they are put on the defensive. That can be shared with everyone in the community on a go-forward basis. This is not to happen anymore. Allen assumes we had a situation. Brusberg said we've had various situations that have been glossed over, and it's now time for a reset. It's nothing any board member or village employee did incorrectly. This is now to reset those expectations so we don't have that happen again.

PSC rate case – Kuhlman reviews water rates every year after the PSC audit, to see if we qualify for a simplified rate case. For the last few years we have qualified, and we did a rate increase last year. We do qualify again this year, and it's a 3% increase this year. Next year we will have some higher water issues including maintenance on well 2, which is about \$100,000. Brusberg asked if it's grounds for doing a full rate case. Kuhlman said water and sewer expenses are paid by rates we charge. If you do a long rate case, you're subject to the PSC telling you what rate you need to charge. Klahn said we've had a tight budget on sewer. With the new sewer plant coming in, should we increase rates or look at it for this fall. If we have to do this \$3 million upgrade, our rates will have to go way up. If we do a little bit this fall, it won't look so bad in a few years. Gehrmann said like putting money in the bank. Klahn added or to eat up some of that increase now. Olson said instead of having a big increase at once, to ramp it up slowly. Brusberg asked if we have loans expiring. Kuhlman said water we had one expire recently. As we get closer to the project, we will have to do a rate study. We do have a loan that will be paid off when we start the new one. But we are consistently in the negative or close. Klahn said look at it this fall to do a rate increase next year. Kuhlman said sewer is not set by PSC, so the board can make that change. Last sewer increase was about 10 years ago. Klahn said we can do a 2-3% this fall. Brusberg there's the PSC rate case, and we want to stay ahead of it so we don't have to do a more complex rate case. With sewer it behooves us to look at it. Maybe next meeting we can look at the water PSC rates, and then in the future look at sewer. Klahn said Income versus expense, when he was on last time, if we broke even, that was a good year. Kuhlman can pull the study that was done when we did South Kerch Street. Klahn said 2-3 percent is easier than a 7 percent increase. He thinks we should look into it, so we're ready for budget time this fall. Gehrmann agrees. Brusberg if are loans expiring, we have some flex because of the expiration. We don't have to take it as high, and there's a way to grade into that increase. Allen said people will complain. They already do. Klahn we get hit harder on our sewer regulations from DNR than some other local communities. Gehrmann said it's probably a good time to start those discussions, get it into the newsletter that we're not choosing to do this but it's coming and needs to be done. Allen said try to be transparent on costs and what they are, so people can see that. Brusberg if we're going to do something on the sewer side, we should have a public forum. Olson one thing to do is like we do with our taxes, do a pie chart, so this is how much we spend in chemicals, and testing, etc. People don't understand how much it costs to take care of everything at the plant. Berland added we need to make sure they see what we're spending is less than what we're taking in, and here's what's coming up, so we either pay for it all at once or a little at a time. Allen one now, one if we did it all at once when we need the money, and one for what it will be if tapered up. Brusberg for PSC, bring back to next meeting or first meeting in September; and as it pertains to sewer, shoot for first meeting in September to have initial look at it, and discuss at second meeting.

Renting parking lot – Kuhlman had a request from someone asking if the board would consider renting out the parking lot. They didn't go into details of what they wanted, but asking if it would be a consideration. Berland said he would be hesitant to rent out a lot we don't charge for in the first place, and we just built it to support businesses. He feels blowback will be more significant than any benefit we might derive. Brusberg is aware they're looking to do special events. Berland would be more comfortable utilizing the lot at the community building, because of this lot's proximity to all the businesses we want to support. Gehrmann said if someone wanted to do a street fair, it would have to come to the board. He would be nervous setting a rate for a parking lot. If we have a special event, bring a proposal, and maybe there's not a fee because it's for the community good. Brusberg suggested having them fill out a special event application and bring it to

the board. Klahn it's too vague to make a decision, but he's leaning against it. Berland doesn't disagree. He doesn't want to be in the business of renting out parking lots and the blowback from people who want to park there. Kuhlman will let them know if they want to do something, to fill out the application. Berland loves the idea of doing something, but we can discuss where to accommodate.

Allen made a motion to approve public works to post no parking signs on N. Kerch Street for the Luke Bryan concert on September 18. Berland seconded. Motion carried.

Olson had a question about the US Cellular bill. Kuhlman said it is consistently one month behind based on the due date and when we receive the invoice and can send out the check. **Olson made a motion to approve bills as presented.** Klahn seconded. Motion carried.

Clerk's Report – We have financials. For the month of July we had \$326,505.13 in deposits. \$50,382.23 was from July shared revenue payments. We had \$142,380 in loan proceeds from the NAN at the business park. We had a payment go out, so the bank reimburses us for that payment. We are under what we thought that NAN loan was going to be. Hopefully we'll have it done by the end of the month. Withdrawals totaled \$673,992.98, with a loan payment of \$35,172. Total ending balance in all accounts was \$2,406,821.39. She broke out the One Community Bank accounts on the spreadsheet. We had some phone issues with Charter at the plant, but are getting them worked out. Field person from Representative Pocan's office came last Thursday and met with Brusberg and Kuhlman. They're available if we need help. We had a lightning strike at the plant on Sunday which took out a piece of equipment. We will contact the insurance company, but we do have a \$1,000 deductible. Autumn Festival is on September 20 at Legion Park. Berland asked who can contribute to the newsletter. Kuhlman said pretty much anybody, as long as it's not an advertisement. We get information from different sources, and sometimes the information we get comes as a whole page of events and some of those events might be over by the time the newsletter goes out. We have some temporary operator licenses for Labor Day weekend. We had an increase in net new construction, in part due to O&A's new building, of 5.27% this year. We received new census information. We have an increase from 2020 of a total of 51 people. It was an increase of 60 in Dane County and decrease of 9 in Green County. Clerk's office will be closed Tuesday through Friday next week for annual clerk's conference. Brusberg asked about Planning Zoning meeting next week. Kuhlman said it was cancelled. She will let Marshall know we're gone next week, but he can drop his information in the drop box. Brusberg added a thanks to all the work everyone put into Brooklyn Night Out. Thanks to the fire/EMS for doing food. Special thanks to Deputy Grumke for all his work. The Optimist Club gave Deputy Grumke an award.

Klahn made a motion at 7:19 p.m. to adjourn. Olson seconded. Motion carried.

Linda Kuhlman, WCPC, CMTW; Clerk-Treasurer