Village of Creston Minutes - Amended
Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Trustee Hopkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Trustees Elliot, Hibshman, Katzman, Kerns, and Ward were present. Attorney Crull was also present. President Byro was not present.

Trustee Hopkins introduced the minutes and asked for additions or corrections. There were none. Trustee Hibshman made a motion to approve the minutes. Trustee Kerns seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Visitors & Communications – Trustee Hopkins asked if there were any visitors or communications. Christie Cox, who was running for Ogle County Coroner, introduced herself and spoke about her experience. She was a funeral director for over 22 years, and she has owned 2 businesses. She has past and present experience as a deputy coroner. She handled traffic fatalities, home deaths, coroner inquests, nursing home deaths, etc. She and her husband have lived in Polo for over 3 decades and had raised 3 children and also have grandchildren. She asked if there were questions and there were none.

Tim Hayden introduced himself as the new owner of Creston Commons as of late December 2023. He stated that they have been building houses for over 15 years and they look forward to building more in the subdivision. Tree-trimming and mowing had already been done. Queens was going to do an exploration of the water system in the subdivision. Mr. Hayden urged people to reach out with questions. He wants people to reach out if they see issues that need to be dealt with. A main repair was scheduled to be done on the south end of the subdivision and then testing was to be done that Friday to see if there are any more leaks that need to be addressed. Mr. Hayden said that their number one goal was to sell more lots and build more houses. He stated he wants to do it responsibly and in a reasonable way. If they were starting right now, they would start where the new house is being built on Hall St, and they plan to build the homes 3 or 4 at a time in way that is logical. He said that they still need clarity on some topics and those conversations will continue to happen. Trustee Hopkins said people are already noticing that work has been done up there. Mr. Hayden stated that for a long time it seemed like a disadvantage to have empty lots looking the way they looked, but he felt it was an advantage because it reset the cost structure and towns that don't have half-built subdivisions are wondering how much it will cost to build new lots. There will need to be flexibility on everyone's part because towns are finding that they need to compete. If you want growth, you can't be places with high-cost structures. With some long-term vision and cooperation, it can be a positive for the community and the surrounding area as the broken record topic is that there is nothing for sale. In order to sell homes, you need to build them.

Attorney Crull stated that he had a few things going on. In relation to the landfill, there in agreement on the footprint of the property that will be closed on and deeded to the Village. It is about 10 acres bigger than what was previously presented. That land is not currently airable, tillable land at this time, but could be in time. The closing on that should happen fairly soon. In relation to the dilapidated houses, Atty Gecan finished a complaint for the last house, formerly known as the Wicke house. The land has been surveyed and Atty Crull did not want to file the complaint if work was being done on it. Trustee Hopkins said that some trees had been trimmed and that was about all the work that had been done so far. Atty Crull said it might be a good idea to get the complaint filed and let the owners know the Village is serious and if the new owners are planning to make repairs, they will get started. Atty Crull stated that he and Casper Manheim met regarding the 2024 ICC Code Books.

Casper Manheim was not present. Trustee Hopkins presented a letter from Casper requesting that his fee be raised $50 a month from $850 to $900. Trustee Hopkins said he didn't know if the Board needed to act on that at the current meeting. Atty Crull said that the Board can act on it if so desired. The increase would begin the next fiscal year. Trustee Kerns stated that he felt that the Board should wait to see what happens with the new work at the subdivision. Atty Crull said he doesn't think Casper has raised his rates since he began as Building Inspector for the Village and Trustee Kerns said he had not. Trustee Kerns said that if the Board wanted to give Casper a raise, they should give it to him now and don't wait. Trustee Ward suggested giving it to him at the start of the new fiscal year, which begins May 1, 2024, and suggested putting it on the agenda for the next meeting. Trustee Elliot made a motion to table the discussion of Casper's rate increase until the April meeting. Trustee Katzman seconded the motion. Trustee Hopkins called for a vote, and all voted in favor of the motion.

Kevin Bunge said the main topic he had would be discussed later in the meeting.

Committee Reports

Finance - Trustee Hopkins had nothing.

Streets & Alleys – Trustee Ward stated he had nothing.

Water & Sewer – Trustee Kerns said he had nothing.

Health & Safety - Trustee Hibshman stated he had nothing.

Zoning & Planning – Trustee Katzman said he had nothing and deferred to Trustee Elliot. Trustee Elliot said in relation to planning there was talk about the industrial park that is being planned west of the Village on Route 38.

Subdivision - Trustee Elliot stated that flushing of the mains would take place the following week. The water operator spoke with Curtis Loyd about what he wanted the Village to do in relation to any contamination. There was a meeting scheduled on 3/11 regarding the testing for water leaks in the subdivision.

Trustee Ward circled back to Zoning and Planning and stated that they are amending the Enterprise Zone to include the 2 parcels on the northeast corner of Route 38 and Mulford Rd where the old ~~wind~~ Wing farm was. Trustee Ward asked Jason Anderson about it and Mr. Anderson said that they just denoted it is in the Enterprise Zone and suggested that Andy Shaw from Lee County come and speak at the April meeting. Trustee Elliot said he spoke with Mr. Shaw that day and he was talking about the new Ogle County Economic Development Corporation, and he had a contact for ~~Claudine~~ Charlene, who was in charge of that. Trustee Elliot spoke to her briefly and she said that she would get back in touch with him. Trustee Ward said there are advantages and disadvantages to being part of an Enterprise Zone. For example, if you are in an Enterprise Zone, you cannot be in a TIF district at the same time, so having Mr. Shaw come and speak to the Board about all that is involved may be helpful. Trustee Elliot asked Atty Crull where that property was in relation to our Boundary Agreement and Atty Crull said he believed it was that side of Mulford. Trustee Ward said that was why he reached out to Jason Anderson and told him there was a Boundary Agreement. Mr. Anderson said he couldn't remember why that was added and apparently the landowner's permission is not needed to include it in the Enterprise Zone. Trustee Ward the Village would be interested in talking about the next parcel. Because of the agreement, anything that happens on that property would have to come through the Village Board.

New Business – Adam Lanning from City Water and Sewer in Rochelle presented on the proposed sewer rate increases. Rochelle is about to begin the 2nd phase of their water treatment improvements. The first phase was completed in 2020-21 and the design for the second phase was put out for bids last summer. The bids came back at 50% over budget, so they did a redesign and put it out for bids in December and a bid come back within an acceptable range, so the next step was to borrow the money from the IEPA. They did a rate study, and the findings were included in the information Mr. Lanning provided. The first rate increase would be in 2024, which was already scheduled from the last rate study they did. The year-by-year impact to Creston is from 2.3 and 3.4% per year. The proposal had already been presented to the City Council in Rochelle and it had been adopted. It had to be adopted in March, so Mr. Lanning apologized for not presenting it to the Village prior to it being adopted by Rochelle. Mr. Lanning went through his presentation and spoke about the specs of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant treats 1 billion gallons of wastewater per year and is staffed by 6 operators, 2 lab techs, and 2 administrative staff. The plant is primarily regulated by the EPA and the IEPA and the Illinois EPA meets or exceeds standards set by the EPA. Testing requirements range from daily to every 3 years. Discharge permits are reissued every 5 years. All wastewater in Rochelle is treated biologically and activated sludge is the highest level of treatment technology. Naturally occurring microbes are used to break down waste and some solids are currently land applied as fertilizer. Mr. Lanning spoke about how the wastewater is conveyed and how their capacity management operation and maintenance plan is regulated by the US EPA. He spoke about water quality issues, with nutrients being at the top of the list, particularly phosphorus. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that is typically associated with detergents and cleaners. Nutrients are related to algal blooms in surface water that lead to oxygen depletion for aquatic life. Mr. Lanning also spoke about the Rock River Watershed Group that was formed to come up with a Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan. He spoke about the two types of technologies used for the treatment of nutrients, which are chemical and biological. RMU elected to incorporate biological treatment in 2019 and their voluntary treatment qualified them for an environmental grant. Half of the treatment plant was modified during the first phase, and the changes that need to be implemented will be made in the second phase. Day-to-day expenses are paid by usage rates. Large capital expenses are funded by the IEPA State Revolving Fund program, which is a 20-year loan at 1-2% interest that typically includes principal forgiveness of 30-50%, and they are always pursuing state and Federal grants. RMU performs a rate analysis every 3-5 years. The goal is to keep rates at a sustainable level to ensure water treatment is reliable and they aim to stay competitive and avoid artificially low rates that will burden future generations. He presented a table that showed rates from lowest to highest. The average is about $65 and Rochelle's rates are about $71. Mr. Lanning also went through the photos contained in his presentation. Mr. Lanning apologized again for not presenting this information to the Village prior to it being adopted by Rochelle. Trustee Hopkins asked if the Board needed to adopt a resolution and Mr. Lanning said not from their perspective. The Village will need to adjust their rates due to RMU adjusting their rates. Mr. Lanning also offered to help with any advice that may be needed in relation to drinking water and lead reports. Trustee Ward suggest putting Sewer Rates on the agenda for April.

Trustee Hopkins introduced the 2024 ICC Code books. The Village will have to purchase these books because the office needs to have hard copies on hand once the new codes are adopted. Atty Crull reminded the Board that the building code could only be so many years old, and the Village had delayed updating the code because books were coming out for 2024 and the Village wanted to have the most recent books. Casper gave Atty Crull a list of the books that are available and Casper said that the Village would only need hard copies of 2 of the books: 2024 International Building Code and the International Residential Code for 1 and 2-Story Family Dwellings. The other books can be digital versions. The cost is $1512 and that is for 15 books. The Village only needs 10 and only 2 need to be hard cover. Trustee Ward made a motion to allocate $1500 to purchase the 2024 ICC Code books and Trustee Katzman seconded the motion. Trustee Hopkins asked if there was any further discussion and Atty Crull requested that Clerk Payton confirm with Casper that the books he named are the books the Village need and that $1500 will cover what we need. The actual cost could be less. Roll Call Vote take. Trustees Ward, Hopkins, Katzman, Kerns, Elliot and Hibshman all voted yes. Motion was approved.

Trustee Hopkins introduced the proposal for a new web site. Clerk Payton spoke about conversations she had had with President Byro about updating the Village website to something more functional and modern. She envisions it being a "one stop shop" for everything Village related and that each entity in the Village would have a space on the website. Examples would be the Booster Club, Booster Days, Woodlawn Cemetery, local businesses, Creston school, Creston-Dement Library, and a community page. Each entity can have as much or as little information as they want included on the website. The website could also be used to send out community alerts for things like water main breaks and road repairs. Clerk Payton also stated that the web designers can provide custom email addresses that would use @villageofcreston.org so that they would be recognized as official municipal emails. Clerk Payton cited the issues she has had working with Civic Plus because they do not recognize emails that end in @gmail.com as official municipal emails, so she cannot sign up for webinars or resources, and she can't work on updating the municipal code because they don't consider the current email to be valid. Clerk Payton explained that she had spoken to 3 different companies: The Web Novas, Revize, and Town Web. The Web Novas does primarily corporate work and they sent a bid but never followed up, so Clerk Payton narrowed it down to Revize and Town Web. Clerk Payton explained that she had looked at Squarespace and Go Daddy and she just couldn't find any templates that fit what she envisioned for the website. Revize and Town Web do municipal websites and she felt it was important to work with a firm that knows how to build municipal websites. She provided the Board members with copies of both proposals. She addressed both bids and she also informed the Board that Clerk Payton and Treasurer Payton had discussed including Dement Township on the Village Website, as Dement Township had discussed building a website with Clerk Payton but then decided against moving forward. If Dement Township has space on the website, they would be willing to pay for part of its construction and yearly maintenance. She explained that Revize would be providing a template that can be updated, and they would initially customize the template to fit what we want on it. She explained some of the different features that Tom from Revize had shown her during the demo they had on Microsoft Teams. Clerk Payton asked if the trustees wanted an email for Trustees and Trustee Ward suggested sending issues to the President and he can disseminate the issues accordingly. Trustee Ward asked about online utility payments and Clerk Payton stated that after discussions with Treasurer Payton, the new website would include the E-Pay button like it does now. Both Revize and Town Web offer online payment interfaces, but since E-Pay goes through the Comptroller's Office, Treasurer Payton felt that is more protection with that and she wanted to leave that as is. Revize quoted $1500 for building the template and the integration of current content is included with that. Yearly hosting and maintenance is $1400 per year and each custom email is $84. Town Web will build a website and they offer social media integration so that if alerts need to be sent, it can all be done through the website. They offer the 3 custom email addresses as well, and she has not done a demo with Town Web. They also include content migration and the first year fee is the setup fee plus the yearly maintenance and the email addresses, for a total of $3363. Then it would be $2163 per year for hosting, maintenance and the custom email addresses. Clerk Payton urged the Board members to give her input and if they hear anything from residents about what they might want to see, to let her know. Trustee Hopkins said he has fielded questions over the year about zoning and building code and while it is on the current website, the functionality can be a problem. Trustee Elliot clarified that the content would include the township, the park district, the library, the school and see about getting them all under one umbrella. Clerk Payton said she would approach all the entities in the Village to let them know that she wants to include them, and their level of participation is up to them. If they want us to post content, we will. If they just want us to link to their website, we will do that. They will have control over that. Atty Crull brought up having an intergovernmental agreement and Clerk Payton said that she and Treasurer Payton had discussed that. Trustee Ward brought up concerns about other entities having access to the website and Clerk Payton clarified that she would be the only one updating the website. Trustee Hibshman asked if Town Web would train us on how to update it. Clerk Payton said that both firms would train her on how to update everything on the website. She also stated that one of the things Town Web includes is a website redesign every 3 years, if desired. Trustee Hibshman also suggested that local businesses might be willing to pay to be included on the website. Clerk Payton did state that local businesses get frustrated with marketing because they try to promote their businesses on You Know You're From Creston If…and they get shut down and the posts are removed. The new website will be a place for local businesses to be visible and have some level of marketing. Trustee Elliot asked where Town Web was based. Clerk Payton stated that Town Web is in Wisconsin and Revize is Troy, MI. Clerk Payton stated that the Board didn't need to vote on anything as President Byro said that if the cost stays below $5000 then Board approval isn't needed, but President Byro and Clerk Payton wanted to bring the subject to the Board's attention to let them know what they had discussed. She also stated that any

feedback, or input would be welcomed. Trustee Elliot stated he felt an update was needed and Trustee Hibshman also stated he thought it was a good idea.

Old Business – Kevin presented where they are with the Storm Sewer Project. They got all the field work done. The existing conditions map is almost done, and they are about to work on the layout of it. Every time they open a manhole or find a pipe, they find 6 more in the same structure, so they are trying to figure all of that out. The original discussion was about closing the gap between north of Cederholm, and the Board decided to go all the way to the tracks. The work will pick up from the culvert that comes under the track on the north side, and everything heads east at North St. There is already some buried pipes there and drain tiles that collect, and manhole covers that contain 6 pipes. They are hoping to take care of all of that with one project as well as cover the unknowns. Kevin stated that when they worked on the sewer project back in 1995, they averaged over 2 drain tile crossings for every lot. Trustee Elliot asked if that was mostly for old septic and Kevin said yes, but there was also a habit back in those days of putting drain tile everywhere there was a low spot and water collected. He said at every block there were 12 drain tile crossings. They are trying to locate everything, but they know there are some that they will miss. Trustee Elliot asked what percentage of those were still functional. Kevin said that you can tell if there has been recent wetness or if it is completely plugged, but the other ones are more difficult to detect. Trustee Ward asked Kevin if he had made any contact with property owners yet. He said he had not because they are still mapping exactly where the easement should go. Kevin said they wanted to make sure they have a good handle on it before approaching the property owners. Trustee Hopkins expressed that if things develop out in the subdivision, there will be more roofs and some of that water will be coming through there. Kevin said that the ponds will handle the peaks, but it is still a higher volume of water.

Trustee Hopkins asked if anyone else had any old business they wished to discuss. There was none.

Treasurer's Report – Trustee Hopkins introduced the bills. Trustee Hibshman moved to pay the bills. Trustee Elliot seconded. Roll call vote taken. Trustees Hibshman, Hopkins, Kerns, Katzman, Elliot and Ward votes yes.

President Byro said he had nothing else. Trustee Ward made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Hibshman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:55:30 pm