Village of Creston Minutes
Tuesday, April 2, 2024 - Amended

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

President Byro introduced the minutes and asked for additions or corrections. Trustee Elliot stated that under Planning and Zoning where it stated "old wind farm", that should read "old Wing farm". He corrected the name of the director of the Ogle County Economic Development Corporation from Claudine to Charlene. Clerk Payton stated she would make the corrections. (Corrections were made prior to publishing the minutes.) Trustee Elliot made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Trustee Ward seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved as presented with corrections.

Visitors & Communications – President Byro asked if there were any visitors or communications. There were none.

Attorney Crull stated that he had a few things going on. He referenced the agreement with the new owners of 123 W North St and he stated that the new owners of 224 E Depot St were doing work on the property and had plans to continue that work. They have asked for the same kind of time frame that the owners of 123 W North St got to continue their work. Attorney Crull stated that he would not agree to anything without talking to the Board, and he told them that their first course of action should be to contact Casper Manheim, the Village's Building Inspector. Attorney Crull said that if they had not yet reached out to Casper that he would contact the owners again. Casper clarified which property Atty Crull was referencing, and Casper said he had not heard from them yet. Atty Crull stated that in doing a title search, he discovered that they had purchased some other properties in Ogle County from the scavenger sale. Attorney Crull asked the Board if they were okay with giving them the same type of agreement and the Board stated that they were. Attorney Crull also stated that he and Atty Tess had been in contact with the attorney for Tim Haydn, the new owner of the subdivision. He said that she had contacted them and that things seemed to be moving along well. President Byro stated that there were still a few things that needed to be settled before any new construction started.

Casper Manheim spoke about the 2 new houses being built in Creston. The house on Prairie Street is finished and the owners have moved in. He said that they did a great job within the time frame and that as the weather gets warmer, the yard will get done. The house on Hall Street did a rough-in a couple of weeks prior, which means they were installing insulation and doing the dry-walling. President Byro said that they had poured the concrete for the front sidewalk. Casper said a letter was sent out to a resident on W Depot St that had a garage with a tarp covering the back of it. The residents had already responded and gotten a building permit to get it fixed. The owners of the home on 123 W North St. got a permit and he did a walk-through with them to go over everything that needed to be done. They were already putting in new wiring and they needed to jack it up a bit. He said they are doing a nice job so far and they had cleaned it out within a week. They were doing everything they said they would do up to that point. He didn't see why they wouldn't meet the 6 month deadline that the agreement called for. The construction company got the fencing up around the library and got some gravel laid down, but the weather had been hindering the work to that point. President Byro asked Casper and Kevin Bunge if they needed to keep an eye on the library construction. Kevin said that they should keep half an eye on it, as it was mostly about erosion control and drainage for the Village. Trustee Katzman asked if a building permit had been issued and Casper said yes. He said they had to re-do it because they downsized the plans. The permit had been paid for and picked up. Casper said that they'd been good about reaching out with questions or concerns, so he didn't anticipate any issues. President Byro said that they got the permit for the construction company to move in the heavy equipment. Casper said that was all he had.

Kevin Bunge said he had someone come down and do a punch list on the ARPA water project, but he didn't have it yet. He has someone keeping tabs on Creston Commons and he stated that he thought everyone was aware that they found some leaks that were being repaired. Kevin said that good progress was being made. The storm sewer project is still being worked on and that it should be out for bids by summer.

Committee Reports

Finance - Trustee Hopkins had nothing.

Streets & Alleys – Trustee Ward stated he had nothing. President Byro asked if the Village would be sealcoating this year and Trustee Ward said no.

Water & Sewer – Trustee Kerns said the only thing he wanted to talk about was flushing the hydrants. He felt that the hydrant-flushing needed to continue as it made a difference. President Byro said that a lot of water had been flushed out of the subdivision so far.

Trustee Ward spoke about replacing broken valves and adding valves on the water mains. He said he would like to see that project continue so that we can isolate shut offs should work need to be done. President Byro suggested getting a list from Curtis Loyd and Trustee Ward stated that he had asked Mr. Loyd several times to mark up a map of the valves he knows are broken and that would be a start. Trustee Hopkins said there was a section that has at least 4 broken valves. Trustee Ward said that the Village needed to be able to shut off part of the town instead of the whole town.

Health & Safety - Trustee Hibshman was not present.

Zoning & Planning – Trustee Katzman said he had nothing. Trustee Elliot stated that they still needed to get through the whole list of fees in relation to the subdivision.

Subdivision - Trustee Elliot stated that the subdivision was looking better and that was about all he had to discuss at that moment. Trustee Ward asked if the Planning Commission had looked at the Comprehensive Plan. Trustee Elliot asked Casper if he had looked over the Comprehensive Plan and he said he had and he felt it was well-written and detailed and he didn't see anything that needed to be change. Trustee Ward asked if it needed to be re-adopted and Trustee Elliot said he talked about that at another Planning Commission meeting and he thought that they should get input from the Planning Commission members to see what their thoughts were. Trustee Ward asked if the issue was that the Comprehensive Plan was adopted so long ago so it should be re-adopted, even if no changes are made. President Byro agreed and said that the Subdivision Ordinance was almost 20 years old as well.

New Business – President Byro asked Trustee Elliot to speak about the Ogle County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC). The OCECD was formed by a group in Ogle County. Polo, Mount Morris, Oregon, Rochelle are members. President Byro and Trustee Elliot went to a meeting about two weeks prior. The OCEDC has funding, and they have hired a director to administrate the program. Charlene is the director, and she has extensive experience in that type of business. She did a lot of work in the Romeoville/Lockport area as well as Plainfield, Montgomery, and Roscoe. Part of the meeting went over some by-laws and the different membership levels. Trustee Elliot said that the Village would need to join to get their insight regarding what we will be dealing with the Route 38 project or any other project developments that might take place in our area. The Enterprise Zone would fall directly into the 240 acres if the Village wanted to move on that. President Byro stated that there are people interested in the 240 acres and the Village needed to have people to count on to steer us in the right direction. Different areas have different needs, and he felt that the ODEDC could help us with those decisions. President Byro said that the Village would have to hire someone, or we could join this group. Charlene came over the week before and met with President Byro and Trustee Elliot and Trustee Katzman, and Trustee Katzman said for being here only two months, she had really done her homework. President Byro echoed that sentiment and said she knew what was for sale where and who to talk to. Trustee Ward asked if she would help market to developers and President Byro said she would get us moving in the right direction. Trustee Elliot stated that the property on east IL Route 38 is owned by Hillwood, and they have a marketing group called Avison Young out of Oakbrook. Hillwood is based in Texas and is a Ross Perot company. President Byro said that people were asking if there was water or utilities out to that area. There are not and we need to know what to do to get them out there. Trustee Ward said that was obligated in the annexation agreement and President Byro agreed but it still needed to be discussed. Trustee Katzman said that a Zoom call was held while President Byro was on vacation, and it lasted about an hour, and it all came down to what ~~we~~ they needed from ~~them~~ us and the response we got back was ~~nothing like what was asked for~~ not what we thought it would be. Trustee Elliot said that Avison Young knows the Village has 150 acres and they know that the Village is getting property from the landfill, and they know that they have XYZ Company that might be interested. Avison Young gave them a packet outlining their expertise in marketing properties rather than a specific plan as to what would help the Village. Trustee Elliot said that he spoke to Charlene that afternoon and what Avison Young provided is them trying to help the Village if we want to sell property. It is their expertise regarding demographics, labor force, what's the spending trends, and other things like that. Trustee Kerns asked if Charlene was employed by the government and Trustee Elliot said no, she is employed by the Ogle County Economic Development Corporation. Trustee Kerns asked if it was her business. Trustee Elliot stated it was a corporation developed by local government bodies and it is a consulting firm. Trustee Katzman added that it is a 501c3 non-profit. Trustee Ward asked if it was like Greco and President Byro said it was. Trustee Elliot said a lot of areas have these types of firms that help them. President Byro said the objective is to join this group. He said that there are different membership levels at different prices. They want to have 15 voting members and they had 4 at that time. Trustee Ward asked what it would cost to join. President Byro said it depended on what you wanted to pay, and he said that Creston cannot pay what Rochelle pays. Trustee Elliot said a voting membership is $5000 a year. He said some villages funded that with their ARPA money. Trustee Elliot said he didn't know what the Village would get out of being able to vote, but we should find out. He said that the Village needed to join so we could have our ear in there and receive their expertise and guidance on how to move forward. The Board does not know all the questions to ask, so they should surround themselves with people who do know. Trustee Katzman asked if the fees could be based on population and the answer was no. Trustee Elliot said that he thinks Creston is unique among small villages in relation to the property we own. President Byro said Charlene is not looking for money. She said that the Village can pay whatever they want to pay. Trustee Ward asked if she provided a "foot in the door" price and Trustee Elliot quoted the membership levels: Strategic

Partner is $15,000-$30,000; Visionary is $10,000-15,000; Executive is $5,000-10,000; Builder is $2,500-$5,000; Supporter is $1,000-$2,500 and an associate is $300-$1,000. Trustee Elliot said that he would hate to miss out on expertise by being cheap on the membership fees. Trustee Kerns said that if someone wants the property, they are going to come to you and want the property. Trustee Hopkins added that the Board members know a little here or there and any good business is going to want to do it as cheaply as possible. Trustee Kerns stated that he doesn't believe that OCEDC will put an entire package together on a property for $5000. Kevin interjected that he contributed to 3 of these in different counties and each of them also sell to consultants like him. He recommended finding the lowest level and joining at that because it gets you in and gets you the information. You are on mailing lists and you hear what they are doing. Kevin said that if you can, join for $100 just so you can get the information. Trustee Katzman asked if that would entitle someone to go to the meetings. Trustee Elliot said he didn't think there would be any problem attending meetings. The difference would come when it was time to vote. Trustee Elliot said he felt that it was important for the Village to join. Trustee Ward agreed that Avison Young does development for a living, and they know the regulations of what can and cannot be done. Without help, the Village is at the mercy of whoever wants to buy the property. Avison Young has a fee structure for different consultations. They have all the data collected and it is just a matter of them coming out to meet with the Village. President Byro said that joining OCEDC gives the Village access to knowledge. Other firms are also in the group, and they were looking for builders or engineering firms. OCEDC wants to gather a whole business group together. Trustee Ward said that they want to make it so that the different entities aren't in silos fighting with each other. Trustee Elliot said that is exactly what their goal is. It is for the good of Ogle County, not just individual communities. President Byro said he thinks the Village needs to continue with this and that a decision did not need to be made at the meeting. President Byro stated that Charlene is not concerned about money. She wants to help people. Trustee Elliot said he felt it was on the front burner because of everything that wanted to push out this way. Jacob Anderson came in off a Zoom call and said that 8 or 9 different companies were looking at Rochelle for development. Trustee Elliot said that not everything would stick to the ground, but that was 8 or 9 companies interested in the area and if they were interested in Rochelle, they may be interested in the Village farm. Trustee Elliot said that another thing that was discussed was lack of housing and that would be good for Mr. Haydn with the homes he wants to build in the subdivision. President Byro wanted to keep going forward with the OCEDC. He said that no money decisions need to be made immediately. Trustee Hopkins added that the Village can plan to join and figure out what level to join at. Trustee Ward asked if there was something that showed what benefits are included in each membership level. Trustee Kerns asked what decisions were being made that needed to be voted on. President Byro said they weren't voting on anything at that time. They were trying to get established and set up regular meetings. Trustee Ward said that voting members would vote on the budget, among other things. Attorney Crull said that OCEDC did quite an extensive search to find Charlene. Casper said that this area has a lot going for it with the two interstates nearby and Trustee Katzman added that they don't have to go through town. Trustee Ward added that the area is not too far from Rockford Airport and Rochelle is getting the TransMode center going. President Byro concurred that it was going to be a busy area. President Byro said that he and Trustee Elliot feel that the Village should continue with the OCEDC. Trustee Elliot added that they would be someone to advise us when things come up, and there was no way that the Board could keep track of all of that. Charlene will hear about it, no matter who it is. Trustee Elliot said that the Board could have Charlene come in and speak at a future meeting. President Byro said that one of Charlene's thoughts was that the Village has no revenue coming in. Trustee Ward asked how much income the warehouses really bring in. They generate property taxes, but what other income do they generate. Trustee Elliot said that when he worked at Hintzsche's in the fuel department and they were doing the Commercial Fuel N Save on Peace Rd, the DeKalb County EDC were closely involved with that and it was amazing how much stuff was going on and the average person didn't know anything about it until ground was being broken. He said that DCEDC was big on networking and making connections with each other. President Byro said this will be an ongoing process and no decision has yet been made regarding joining.

President Byro brought up Casper's requested fee increase. He asked if it was discussed last month. Trustee Ward said it was discussed, but it was not on the agenda last month so it wasn't voted on. Trustee Hopkins said it was on this month's agenda so it could be voted on. President Byro said Casper has worked for the Village for quite a few years, so he needed a raise. Trustee Katzman said that the Board agreed. Trustee Kerns said that he felt the raise should be $100 as Casper spendt $50 a day in gas to drive back and forth. Trustee Elliot asked if it was going from $850 to $900 and Casper confirmed that he requested it go up $50. Trustee Kerns made a motion to increase Casper's fee to $950. Trustee Katzman seconded the motion. President Byro asked if there was any discussion. Trustee Ward said there was not as it had been talked about the previous month. Roll call vote was taken. Trustees Kerns, Hopkins, Katzman, Ward and Elliot voted yes. Trustee Hibshman was not present. Casper's fee increase was passed.

President Byro introduced the Statements of Economic Interest. Clerk Payton announced to the Board that the SEIs had arrived and if anyone wanted to fill them out and give them back to her, she would send them all in at once. She said if anyone preferred to send in their own, that was fine, too. She let everyone know that if anyone that was present did not receive one from her, then they came from another source. She also said that she mailed the Planning Commission members theirs and that she gives everyone the option of either turning them in to her or sending them in themselves. Attorney Crull stated that two people in DeKalb County had just lost their positions for failing to return their SEIs.

Old Business – President Byro introduced the Storm Sewer Project. Kevin said that they lost the month of March due to having 6 IEPA/EPA grants to submit, but they are back to working on it. He said that they have the pipe worked out and they were still working on the interconnections.

President Byro introduced the new website. Clerk Payton stated that she was going through the proposals point by point to see what each firm offers. She said that she wanted to have a visual to present to the Dement Township Board to get their input since they offered to pay for part of it. She said that she reached out to Tom at Revize because Town Web had a feature in which residents could subscribe to the website and every time it is updated, they would get a notification. She wanted to know if Revize offered that, and Tom said they did for an additional fee. Brendan Gecan had asked how long each company had been in business. Revize has been in business for 24 years and Town Web has been in business for 15 years. He also asked about the length of the contract and each entity listed 3 years to start with. Clerk Payton was trying to determine which company offered the most for the money and then she wanted to present that to the Township Board to get their opinion. President Byro said that the Township had expressed interest in being part of the website. President Byro asked when the meeting was, and she said it was the following Monday. He asked if she was going, and she said yes. He said he would go, too. He asked what time it started, and Trustee Kerns said he believed it was 6:45. Trustee Elliot asked if Clerk Payton was making a presentation and she said it wouldn't be a formal presentation, but she would outline what each company offered to make the best decision possible. Trustee Elliot expressed interest in attending as well as representative of the Park District. Clerk Payton stated that there were originally 3 firms, but one dropped off. Revize and Town Web have been in constant contact with Clerk Payton and both entities are interested in doing business with the Village. President Byro said he hoped that the Board could have an answer by next month. Clerk Payton said she hoped so, too. Revize cited a timeline of 4-6 weeks and Town Web cited 8-10 weeks, and she would like to have the new website up and running by Booster Days.

President Byro brought up the Sewer Rates. Trustee Ward stated that Adam Lanning had presented at the last meeting. RMU have already set their rates. The Village just needs to raise ours. Trustee Kerns asked if the rates increase automatically. Clerk Payton explained that she has to go in and manually raise the rates and she has been doing that since the last time the increase went into effect. President Byro said that Mike's question was did it go up enough. Clerk Payton said that she has been using the table that Adam gave us the last time the rates were increased. President Byro asked Clerk Payton to check on that and see if rates need to be raised. Trustee Ward asked if garbage rates increase every year. Trustee Kerns stated that he thought it was garbage, water, and sewer. Trustee Hopkins said that it was a couple or 3 percent per year natural increase, and then the Village got hit with the increase from Rochelle. Trustee Kerns said that if the Village has been raising it 1% and Rochelle has been raising it 3%, that isn't good. Trustee Ward recommended having Treasurer Payton check to make sure we are still in the black on everything.

President Byro stated that they did meet with the landfill people. Attorney Crull stated that the Village would be closing on the property. The final surveys had been received and the Village was having the landfill pay for title work to make sure that there are no outstanding liens on the property. President Byro stated that soon the Village will take possession of the property. He said that they told him that they would get started on the berm shortly. Trustee Katzman asked about the farm rent. He asked if that income comes to the Village. President Byro stated the tenant has a contract for this coming year. Trustee Hopkins said that some rent should have been due March 1 and he asked if that income should come to the Village. Attorney Crull stated that in his opinion the rent should come to the Village. He said it would be a lesser amount because it just rolled over naturally. Trustee Hopkins said he would think so, but the property did not technically belong to the Village yet. Attorney Crull stated that if they were going to give a good title to it, he believed the rent should belong to the Village. He said he would check into it.

President Byro stated that Attorney Tess had been working with Tim Haydn on getting some paperwork done to move forward with the subdivision.

Trustee Ward asked if the Lead Line Replacement Survey was done, and President Byro stated it had not been completed. Trustee Ward stated it was due on the 14th and President Byro stated he didn't think it would get done. He stated that the Village had been having issues with the water operator and were in the process of looking for a new water operator. He said he could not say yes or no, but he did not think it looked good at that time. He said that they were hoping for a continuance. He said he got something in his email about a report that had to be turned in by the 15th.

Treasurer's Report – President Byro introduced the bills. Trustee Hopkins moved to pay the bills. Trustee Kerns seconded. Roll call vote taken. Trustees Hopkins, Kerns, Katzman, Elliot and Ward voted yes. Trustee Hibshman was not present.

President Byro said he had nothing else. Trustee Ward made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Hopkins seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:49:44 pm