

Williamsfield Village Board Meeting Monday, February 5, 2024

The Williamsfield Village Board met on Monday February 5, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at the KP Village Hall. Present were Trustees Nancy Everett, Stuart Hickerson, Andrew Scott, Julie Van Dran and Trudy Self. Trustee Lucas Leckrone was absent. Also present were Rick Smith, Michael Gray (Mid Century), Bridgette Northern (Mid Century) Tracy Parrish (Mid Century), Pam Courson, Susan Ott, Mike Musso (BOW Renewables), President Robert Johnson, Linda Baker (Treasurer), Nick Vlahos (Weekly Post), and Tori Courson (Village Clerk).

Motion by Trustee Everett and seconded by Trustee Van Dran to approve the minutes from the January 2024 meeting as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: The following bills were presented for approval. Motion by Trustee Self and seconded by Trustee Hickerson to approve the bills as presented. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

GENERAL		
Ameren	114 E Gale St 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$146.02
Ameren	203 W Gale St 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$166.54
Ameren	114 E Gale St City Hall 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$247.44
Ameren	108 Gale Street Optional lighting charge 12/12/23 - 01/15/24	\$14.75
Ameren	Optional lighting charge 12/14/23 - 01/17/2024	\$911.85
Ameren	117 W Gale St 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$304.07
Apsan	Bullet billing at \$50 per month for 6 months	\$300.00
Bouchez	Trash pick-up for December 2023	\$2,583.00
Card Services Center	November 25, 2023 - December 26, 2023	\$457.76
Card Services Center	December 27,2023	\$153.27
Cavanaugh, Davies, Blackman	2022 Audit Report	\$7,500.00
Complete Integration and Services	Programming Labor 01/15/2024	\$1,472.50
Julie	Annual print/Email Trans/Annual Voice Trans	\$160.79
Lights by H&H	Bucket or sign work	\$200.00
Linda Baker	Reimbursement for Notary App fee \$15, Bond \$30	\$45.00
Menards	Cable Cover, power strips, power strip cord	\$43.78
Menards	Toolbox 200 ct Blue Box and 4 shelf Light Duty	\$36.48
Menards	10 Pk toe warmers and garage heater	\$117.96
MidCentury	309 639-2067 01/01/24 - 01/31/24	\$41.64
MidCentury	309 639-4068 01/01/24 - 01/31/24	\$42.72
MidCentury	309 639-2303 01/01/24 - 01/31/24	\$159.90
MidCentury	309 639-2167 01/01/24 - 01/31/24	\$119.62
Miller, Hall & Triggs	Tax Levy, Resignation of Treasurer	\$1,100.50
Robert Johnson	Printer, Laptop and keys	\$1,437.41
Verizon	114 E Gale St 01/05/24 - 02/04/24	\$36.03
West Central FS	Fuel	\$58.59
West Central FS	Fuel	\$42.95
	TOTAL	\$17,900.57

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE		
Ameren	113 N Chicago Ave 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$3,088.58
Brimfield Hardware	Parts	\$404.44
Ladd's Food Mart	Batteries	\$15.03
Ladd's Food Mart	Water	\$5.04
Susan Ott	Mileage 01/01/24 - 01/03/24 Meter Reading (23@.67)	\$15.41
Test	Charge for February 2024	\$500.00
	Total	\$4,028.50
BENJAMIN - DOUBET		
Ameren	Scheeler Dr 12/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$210.97
Ameren	N Pine St 12/07/07/23 - 01/10/24	\$75.91
	Total	\$286.88
ARP		
Core & Main	Meter and parts	\$2,493.51
Core & Main	6 Meters and 8 Lids	\$4,860.00
Core & Main	Parts	\$1,718.08
Core & Main	Parts	\$489.20
		\$9,560.79
MFT		
Persifer Township	Salt Delivery Milo Gibbs	\$570.00
		\$32,346.74

Adam Hansberger from Cavanaugh, Davies, Blackman joined via teleconference to discuss the audit for 2022, the Village had significant deficiencies including; reconciling the utility billing for the water compared to the usage of water, no cross training, no accounts receivable or accounts payable set up to reconcile, fixed assets were not recorded on the financial statements to view the depreciation over time, some loans proceeds were booked as income, lack of data security and lack of data back up on the cloud. Adam advised updating the Village QuickBooks program on the cloud, because the current program was not supported. The auditor and Trustees will have access to our program and be able to advice in real time; multiple bins of paper were delivered to the auditors for the Village's audit which made it very difficult to complete the audit in a timely manner. Adam advised upgrading as many programs to electronic as possible.

President Johnson stated a water study was completed to help the Village recognize the Village's water utility faults; the R/O plant has purchased a computer system to help reconcile the water usage compared to the funds received, Test Inc will assist in monitoring, new water meters have been purchased with funds from ARPA and the water billing system has been upgraded so reports will be easily ran and emailed to the auditor at year end.

The payroll system has been updated to Onpay; employees punch in and out on computers or phones to eliminate paper timecards, multiple reports can be quickly complied, monthly, quarterly, and yearly taxes will be submitted to the state directly from Onpay, direct deposit has been set up to eliminate the cost and time of paper checks.

The auditors have started the audit for 2023; the Village will not get fined at this time from the State's Comptroller's Office for the reported delinquency.

The Village received \$232,000 from the IPEA loan for the water plant upgrades from the Phase II water project.

A new safety deposit box was opened requiring 2 people to access it; there were 4 CD's discovered that had sat for years resulting in interest not being collected. The Village's 8 CDs are now earning 4.75% interest and are now in the bank's lock box; they will assist in monitoring.

The Village received the PTAX forms listing all the Village tax exempt properties. While posting accounting transactions, dual monitors for the Treasurer would increase productivity, the Village also needs a tax-exempt Amazon account to purchase supplies; Motion by Trustee Self and seconded by Everett to approve purchasing a monitor for the new Treasurer and setting up a tax-exempt Amazon account. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence – The Village's new water testing company discovered the IEPA has contacted the R/O Plant multiple times over the last 2 years stating a lead line inventory needs to be completed for the entire village; a grant was available 2 years ago but is no longer available so the village will be responsible for the cost. Test Inc requested an extension that was granted until 9-1-24.

Public Comment – Michael Gray, Bridgette Northern and Tracy Parrish from Mid Century Communications presented a plaque to the Village of Williamsfield for officially being designated a NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, Smart Rural Community. To highlight a portion of the speech; Michael stated they "would like to acknowledge the power of connectivity and the impact it has on the lives of members of our community, from fostering strong relationships to advancing education, health care and local businesses. In the realm of education, accessing digital platforms, online resources, and interactive learning experiences. This transformation ensures that students have access to the best resources and opportunities, no matter where they live in Williamsfield. Healthcare has become more accessible than ever. Through telemedicine, remote monitoring and readily available medical information ensuring the well-being of every resident."

Rick Smith has volunteered multiple hours at Doubet-Benjiman Park and presented the idea of having an apple orchid where the farmland currently is, he stated it could be profitable in the future by allowing "self-pick" and would tie into ag day well. Rick is going to do more research and will attend the March meeting.

Police Report – Trustee Van Dran and Chief Robertson are looking into grants for police body and vehicle cameras. Trustee Van Dran is speaking with Bradford Police on consolidated police coverage. The following calls for service were handled by the police department for the month of January:

CITATIONS ISSUED IN JANUARY

Violations	Citations	Warnings
Seatbelt	0	0
Speeding	0	0
Disobeyed Stop Sign	0	0
Ordinance Violations	0	0
Other	0	

Street Maintenance Report – The maintenance department needed salt during the bad weather; the Trustees approved the purchase of salt via email. Motion by Trustee Scott and seconded by Trustee Van Dran to formally approve the salt purchase from Pursifer Township. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried. After the salt was approved for purchase, 6 tons of salt that was ordered last April was delivered on the 25th.

Infrastructure and Maintenance Committee Report – Trustee Everett stated Bruner, Cooper and Zuck are conversing with the IEPA on the storm water study. A quote of \$400 was received from H & H Industries to upgrade the old street light fixture in front of maintenance shed to LED lighting. Motion by Trustee Self and seconded by Trustee Van Dran to approve LED lighting installed at the old maintenance shed. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Water Report – The new water billing system is almost complete and ready to switch over, customers will have the option to set their water bills up for autopay, pay online with credit card or ACH. The Village will cover the \$1 E-Check fee for customers, but customers will be responsible for the fee when paying with credit card online. The link for the portal will be on social media, the water bill and the Village website.

There was a change order to the Phase II Water Project at the water plant; the ground had to be compacted where the water tank is going to be installed which will cost an additional \$2,900 that will still be covered under the loan.

Test Inc stated the corrosive waste water at the water plant drains into the floor drain in the plant causing corrosion. With the Phase II redesign the waste water would drain outside of the building into the sewer and not inside of the plant. A former employee wanted to keep the system the way it was and drain into the floor drain, and changed the design. The wastewater drainage will be put back to the original design/plan and corroded bolts will be replaced.

Test Inc wants to set up the water testing lab in the water plant to eliminate 30 minutes of the water tests that are done twice a day that currently take around 1 hour each test.

Some of the new water meters that are reading errors may need to have the wire changed out.

The Board has discussed upgrading the water system/equipment/sensors so reports will constantly be sent to Test Inc and the moment something is wrong or off, the maintenance department will get an automated phone call relaying the issue. Test Inc will have access to our water/chemical/usage etc. levels in real time and would deliver a better service to customers; the upgrade will cost \$14,000 but is highly recommended.

There is a water leak on the south side of the train tracks, possibly where 2 houses used to be, Backhoe Joe will be there to assist the maintenance department in finding and fixing the leak.

President Johnson and Brayden Boyer have attended training hosted by the American Water Works Association in the past and the Village can become a member for \$358 annually.

Need to set up an account for Grainger to have the ability to purchase water pumps, heaters, and other items for maintenance, and other water plant related repairs.

Motion by Trustee Scott and seconded by Trustee Self to re-route the wastewater at the water plant back to the original plan, the Village covering the \$1 fee per ACH payment for customer's water payments, becoming a member of the American Water Works Association for \$358 annually and to set up an account with Granger. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Parks Report – Meetings are not held in January.

Old Business - BOW Renewables gave a presentation at the January meeting regarding installing solar panels where the farm ground currently is at Doubet-Benjamin Park; the Village will receive \$40,000 in income per year, \$25,000 donation to the Park District at the start of construction, the Village will save potentially 10%-15% on energy bills, and \$5,000 a year in scholarships for the school district with a 2% escalator.

Dave Dyer the Galva City Administrator, congratulated the village for receiving the award from Mid Century and stated he heard the Board mention H & H Industries which brings him to his point of valuing relationships which is why they picked BOW Renewables to install their solar panels; they are committed to small communities, they have weekly service calls, did all the leg work with the IEPA when they were doing the research on install panels at the landfill. Galva has 3 solar projects right now and are possibly working on another.

Mike Musso from BOW Renewables stated he will answer any questions or address any concerns anyone might have. Rick Smith stated he has done a lot of research and feels solar is a good idea, just not a fan of it on the park land. Mike stated they are very aware of the park's environment and another project they are doing at a school has an endangered bees in the parcel next to it and they are doing everything on the solar parcel to keep the bees by planting a pollinator habitat and they can do projects similar to that in Williamsfield to help the environmental surroundings.

Rick asked the lease term, Mike stated it is a 30 year lease with 2 – 5 year extensions. Rick stated they are an LLC which means they have limited liability. BOW Renewables would research the land for possibly 2 years so the farmland will continue to be farmed for possibly 2 more years by the current farmer.

President Johnson stated the Village could invest the \$1M profit over the years and only spend the interest and the village would have a huge investment for the future. Also, to have organic farming, the land would have to sit untouched for years to allow the chemicals to dissipate out of the ground; once the solar lease is up, the ground would be suitable for organic farming.

Rick Smith stated that he believes the solar panels would contradict what land is supposed to be used for according to the will.

The .gov domain name is now available for the Village's new website that will be set up through Revize; Trustee Van Dran is interested in editing the new website. The Village is waiting for the insurance quote from RMA. The maintenance truck will be taken back to Big E's for the seal replacement.

New Business – President Johnson spoke with the Village's auditors about the budget for 2024-2025 budget. Bouchez Trash Hauling's contract expires April 2024, the new charges will be as of May 1, 2024 the rate will be \$11.50 per individual pick up expiring April 30, 2025, May 1, 2025 the rate will be \$12.00, May 1, 2026 the rate will be \$12.50, May 1, 2027 the rate will be \$13.00 expiring April 30, 2028. There was a list of stipulations on the quote including no big cleanup day, but 1 big item can be set out per week.

Eagle Enterprises recycle current rate is \$5.82 per household and will expire April 30, 2024, May 1, 2024 the rate will be \$5.99, May 1, 2025 the rate will be \$6.17, May 1, 2026 the rate will be \$6.36 per household expiring April 30, 2027.

President Johnson asked the board permission to send the BOW Renewable contract to the Village's attorney for review. Motion by Trustee Van Dran and seconded by Trustee Everett to approve the new garbage and recycle rates (the current ordinance will be amended and approved at the March meeting) and allowing the Village's attorney to review the solar panel project lease agreement. Roll call vote – Everett-yes; Hickerson-yes; Scott-yes; Van Dran-yes and Self-yes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ladd's Food Mart is working on having the gambling machines installed; they have paid the \$100 fee per gambling machine.

Public Comment on Non-agenda items – NA

Motion by Trustee Van Dran and seconded by Trustee Self to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next meeting will be held Monday, March 4, 2024.

Minutes approved as presented: *Tom Courson*