

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Village President Marc Baures. Roll call was taken and the following were present: Trustees Kaylee Waldvogel, Pete Filla, Dan Molstad, Harold Olson, Village President Marc Baures, Public Works Director Courtney Kotlarz, Village Clerk Jane Jensen, Town of Ettrick Chairman John Vehrenkamp, Ettrick Fire Chief Wade Noren and Andrew Dannehy of the Trempealeau Co. Times. Trustee Dana Stoner was absent;

The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance;

Jane Jensen verified that the posting and notification requirements were met;

**(10) Minute Open Forum** No one was present to speak in the 10 minute open forum;

**Report from the Public Works Department;** Courtney Kotlarz reported that garbage collection under the new contract with Hilltopper Refuse and Recycling will begin on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. He said that the village will discontinue selling garbage bags before that date. He said that a notice will be sent to village residents when the information is available. Courtney also reported that the new public works employee will begin work 1/20/25;

**New Business**

Wade Noren of Ettrick Fire Department and Town of Ettrick Chairman John Vehrenkamp were present to discuss the purchase of a new brush truck to replace the 1977 truck that is being retired. The truck will be outfitted with some water pumping capabilities and other fire-fighting equipment. It will be used mainly for transporting personnel. He said that the fire department will hold fundraisers to pay for the equipment for the truck, but is asking the Village of Ettrick and the Township of Ettrick to pay the estimated \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 cost for the vehicle. John Vehrenkamp noted that the Township currently had \$100,000.00 budgeted for expenses, but only spent \$80,000.00. He suggested keeping the budget at \$100,000.00 for 3 years, and that should cover the cost for the truck. He pointed out that the current vehicle can only transport 2 firemen, and the new truck will accommodate 4 firemen. This practice will enable response to vehicle accidents by 4 firemen and not require using the bigger fire trucks. Harold Olson pointed out that the village budget is very tight. He said that the village is considering a referendum to raise operating funds. Marc Baures suggested that the village could do some short-term borrowing, but those funds have to be budgeted for and repaid. Wade Noren said the EFD 5-year plan includes replacing at least one other truck. He also said that the cascade air compressor being used to fill bottles is maxed out and becoming obsolete. He said the estimated replacement cost is \$60,000.00 to \$80,000.00. He also noted that 3 firefighters have been added to the roster and some of the gear needs to be updated. Wade said that the current vehicles in operation pass inspection, but are 30 or more years old. He noted that repairs are unforeseen, but equipment updates are required every 10 years. He said that used vehicles will definitely be considered. Dan Molstad asked when EFD will know what the final budget will be. Vehrenkamp said the plan is to budget \$100,000.00 for EFD expenses. He said that the village portion will be about \$20,000.00 and they can pay over 3 years. Dan Molstad said that the village budget is set in November, and moving forward, the budget for fire department expenses should be increased, as only \$14,000.00 has been budgeted, not \$20,000.00. He said that the communication between the fire department, the township and the village should take place in October or September, before the village budget is set. Harold Olson thanked Noren and Vehrenkamp for coming, and asked them to keep the village board informed. Wade and John left at 6:34;

The board discussed establishing policies for recycling and dumpsters at 4 unit apartment facilities/4-plexes. Courtney Kotlarz said that the occupants of the 4-unit apartments currently use village bags and recycling bins. He said they have the ability to utilize a dumpster instead of carts and bins. Courtney said he will talk to the owners of the properties about their preference. He said larger rental units will continue to use dumpsters;

The board discussed establishment of village-wide commercial/business dumpster regulations. Under the soon-to-expire contract with Tri-City Sanitation, commercial businesses must utilize the dumpster company designated by the village, which is Tri-City. Tri-City reports the tonnage of garbage hauled to the La Crosse County Solid Waste Facility to the village. That amount has decreased over the years, requiring the village to pay more for disposal at the site. Marc Baures said the village will have to review the contract and clarify and understand how the tonnage taken to La Crosse County Solid Waste is recorded. Dan Molstad said that if the new garbage collection system is going to begin in February, the people on Fairway Avenue and Golf Road need to be informed. Jane Jensen said that she included a notice on the water bills, and the people on Fairway Ave. and Golf Road do not receive water bills. She said she will notify them. Dan Molstad said that the charge for the carts is \$19.15 and suggested rounding that up to an even \$20.00. A motion was made by Harold Olson, seconded by Pete Filla to assess \$20.00 per household for refuse and recycling collection. The motion carried 5 to 0;

### **Old Business**

No Building Permit Applications were submitted for approval;

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Dan Molstad to approve the minutes of the 2024 Budget Hearing and of the regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees held on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The motion carried 5 to 0;

A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Pete Filla to approve for payment voucher #'s 39924-39984 plus 6 EFT's and one auto pay in the amount of \$49,675.14 from the General Checking Account and voucher #'s 11262-11291 plus 1 auto pay in the amount of \$10,702.97 from the Water/ Sewer Checking Account. The motion carried 5 to 0;

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Harold Olson to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of December. The motion carried 5 to 0;

There were no complaints to report;

Dan Molstad told the board that board needs to seriously talk about whether or not to hold a referendum for operating funds or to discuss short-term financing. He said that looking forward, there will someday be more village employees retiring, and the wages are not in line with any other community. He said that replacing current employees will be difficult at the wages that are being offered. Marc said that the board has to review the budget to identify how much money needs to be generated. Harold Olson suggested that the board consider selling the landfill property in the Town of Ettrick. Baures said that the board must first establish the protocol for how much money is needed and how it can be spent. Dan Molstad said that the board needs to stop discussing the matter and take action now. He said the public should be informed and the topic should be on the agenda for every meeting. Marc Baures said he will consult the WI League of Municipalities or the Village Attorney for guidelines on holding a referendum or obtaining short-term financing;

Marc Baures presented the board with information on a Webinar about an Innovation Grant. He said he will consult Davy Engineering on the feasibility of such a grant;

Harold Olson reminded the board that the board needs to move forward with filling the vacant trustee seat;

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Harold Olson to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. The motion carried 5 to 0.

Jane Jensen  
Village Clerk

