

## Regular Meeting Minutes November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Village President Marc Baures at 6:00 p.m. and roll call was taken. The following were present: Trustees Josh Hanson, Kaylee Waldvogel, Pete Filla, Dan Molstad, Harold Olson, Dana Stoner, President Marc Baures, Village Clerk Jane Jensen, Village residents Jeff & Rachel Hanson and Eric Lynn of Donahue & Associates;

The board opened with the Pledge of Allegiance;

Jane Jensen verified that posting requirements were met;

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

**Report from the Public Works Department;** Public Works Director Courtney Kotlarz was not present;

### **New Business**

Marc Baures introduced Consultant Eric Lynn of Donahue & Associates. Mr. Lynn stated that his engineering firm has offices in La Crosse and the Twin Cities. They focus on water and waste water only. They typically do not engineer street projects. They employ 130 people and offer competitive rates that are below the state revolving fund average. He observed that Ettrick has one of the smallest treatment facilities in the state. He said Donahue & Assoc. has worked with many large communities and as well as smaller communities. He said he understands that Ettrick WWTP is functioning well. He said his firm can evaluate the current condition and rehab options if necessary, including phosphorous treatment and funding. He explained different options for replacement or rehab of the facility and offered Donahue's experience to facilitate this. He said he would not recommend any improvements at this time, but if it becomes necessary to upgrade it could be achieved with a focus on rehab. The board thanked Mr. Lynn for his presentation and he left the meeting at 6:30;

Jane Jensen reported that when the Utility Billing software update is complete and online payment of water and sewer bills is in place, there will be fees for using the online bill payment option. The fees will be as follows: \$1.00 for all Echecks done through the portal, There is a \$2.40 flat fee for all absorbed utility payments that qualify for the IRF Utility Program and a 2.9% + .30 transaction fee for use of credit and debit cards. Jane asked the board if these fees will be charged to the customers using the portal. It was the consensus of the board that the fees should be paid by the customers. Marc said he will research the fees and table it until December;

### **Old Business**

Marc Baures said he received an email from Greg Stellflue concerning the sewer at the Stellflue property located at 22811 US Hwy. 53. Stellflue said the quotes they have received for a private sewer are much higher than originally thought and it will cost the same as connecting to the village system, so there is no need to ask for permission for the private sewer;

Jeff and Rachel Hanson were present to discuss a pole shed they want to erect instead of building a garage. Jeff stated that estimates to build a garage came in too high, so he wants to switch to a pole shed. He said that Courtney told him on Dumpster Day that he should come to the village for a variance to the building permit application submitted in May. He said the pole shed will have a door on each end and an overhang on the west side. Harold Olson said he is against pole sheds in the village. He said you do not see pole sheds in the city limits in neighboring towns. Dan Molstad said that our ordinance refers to the WI UDC Code, and that code only refers to stick built garages. Jeff said that when he originally came in to the village office to ask about the zoning rules on pole sheds, Jane Jensen and Courtney Kotlarz did not tell him they were not allowed, and the board should have been made aware that he was erecting a pole shed. Harold Olson noted that pole sheds with metal siding and unfinished interiors are not attractive and not what the board intended. Hanson said that estimates for a stick built garage came in at \$150,000.00, with no wiring or insulation. Pete Filla suggested that Hanson's get more estimates. Marc Baures said that the variance was granted for a stick-built garage in the side yard. A motion was made by Harold Olson, seconded by Dan Molstad to require stick built garages only in the village;

Jane Jensen gave the board the figures to consider a 5% increase in sewer rates in 2023. Harold Olson said that all costs continue to rise, making it necessary to continue with annual increases. Pete Filla said that it is difficult to keep gouging the senior citizens on fixed incomes and wondered if it is necessary to raise the fees every year. Marc Baures noted that the Waste Water Treatment and chemical costs have risen significantly and unfortunately the increases are needed. A motion was made by Dany Molstad, seconded by Harold Olson to increase the sewer rates 5% effective 1/1/2024. Marc Baures called for a roll call vote: Marc Baures-yes; Pete Filla-no; Kaylee Waldvogel-yes; Josh Hanson-no; Dan Molstad-yes; Harold Olson-yes; Dana Stoner-no. The motion carried with 4 voting yes and 3 voting no;

Jane Jensen presented the board with Ordinance #802, an ordinance to establish fire inspection duties for approval. Marc Baures said the ordinance is specific to commercial properties, and he has an issue with language concerning entry into private dwellings. He asked that the matter be tabled until clarification is made to the heading and sections 1 & 2 about entry specific to commercial buildings, not residential;

Marc Baures reported that the “ladies of Ettrick” will be hosting a celebration at the American Legion property, and would like the Village to pay for decorations for downtown. Dan Molstad said that the Village is spending taxpayers’ money and should not be authorizing payment for such requests. He asked what specifically is being purchased and for what price? He said there are a number of civic organizations who would be willing to donate money for such purchases, not the municipal government. He suggested submitting requests for donations to the Ettrick Lions Club, the American Legion and the Ettrick Foundation. Dan noted that since he has been on the Village Board, these requests are usually made every November and December. He said fundraising for decorations should be discussed in January and planned for all year. Kaylee Waldvogel said that could be planned in the future. Dana Stoner said that when you drive through other communities, the appearance is more welcoming. Marc said this group of ladies is just facilitating this and Kaylee said that the village should support anyone who wants to improve Ettrick;

Jane Jensen gave the board the building permit application of Taavi McMahan/John Feyen to install solar panels on the roof of their building at 15811 Bridge Street. A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Pete Filla to approve the application of Taavi McMahan/John Feyen to install solar panels on the roof of their building at 15811 Bridge Street. The motion carried 7 to 0;

A motion was made by Harold Olson, seconded by Josh Hanson to change the date of the Village Board meeting from December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to coincide with the Budget Hearing scheduled for 6 p.m. The motion carried 7 to 0;

The board reviewed the minutes of the meetings held in October. A motion was made by Kaylee Waldvogel, seconded by Dana Stoner to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees held on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 and the meeting of the Finance & Claims Committee held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The motion carried 7 to 0;

A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Kaylee Waldvogel to approve for payment voucher #'s 39309-39353 plus 3 EFT's, and 1 auto payment in the amount of \$86,320.88 from the General Checking Account and voucher #'s 10939 to 10966 plus 1 auto payment in the amount of \$33,306.06 from the Water/Sewer Checking Account. The motion carried 7 to 0;

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Dana Stoner to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of October. The motion carried 7 to 0;

Jane Jensen gave the board 1 complaint received concerning chickens owned by Kevin and Rita Guenther. Marc Baures said he will talk to Guenther's;

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Dana Stoner to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. The motion carried 7 to 0;

