

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

Mayor Wright called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Fegett, Cathi Fritz, Lindsey Light, Bob Parr, Matt Trimmell

OTHERS PRESENT Ron Soderstrom, Dustin Henderson, Julie Leverenz, Caroline Darr

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Matt Trimmell motioned to approve August 21, 2023, regular meeting minutes as presented.

Scott Fegett seconded.

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X		X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN				X		
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

Cathi Fritz motioned to approve the August 21, 2023, executive meeting minutes as presented.

Bob Parr seconded.

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X		X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN				X		
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Bob Parr motioned to accept the bills as presented.

Matt Trimmell seconded.

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

VILLAGE HALL

Mayor Wright updated the board on the website. The plan is to launch the new site within the next week. Basic forms have been created, and online payment options will be available in the future.

PUBLIC WORKS

Review of Projects:

- Southern Tire Mart - Everything is going as planned. Framing for the bathrooms is starting, and they are waiting for the electrical to be installed.
- The Box - Outside work is done except for the sign. They are working on final plans for inside renovations with the remaining money.
- Tullies - Bob Parr reported they have converted the heating systems in the house from propane to natural gas. The electrical in the restaurant is in bad shape, so they have to get an electrician in to fix it. The project may not make it by the November deadline for using TIF funds. Parr feels they are moving in the right direction, but the board will need to decide if they will extend the deadline or let it expire. They are getting a new refrigerator and cooler.
- Sidewalk to Park – Project is scheduled to start September 20 and be complete by October 13. The project will start in the park and then proceed from there.
- Village sidewalks – Sidewalks for this time have been poured and finished. They will be seeding the areas. Mayor Wright asked D. Henderson to get in writing that they would be taking care of the seeding for grass. C. Fritz stated she thought they were doing the seeding with the mat, and D. Henderson said this was not in the RFP.
- Village Growth Plan – Cathi Fritz reported there has been a big response to the RSVP for the first meeting that has been published.
- Scott Street Bridge – A proposal from Fehr Graham has been received, and D. Henderson still needs to review the details of what has been provided. The fee for Fehr Graham was \$8,500, and Mayor Wright felt this was high for what the project entails. D. Henderson will look at this and let Mayor Wright know his thoughts.
- Fuel Storage – Caroline Darr will continue looking into the village's options. FEMA will not help with the cost but will cover the cost of a portable generator that could be used if the power is out as it was in the July 2023 storm.

POLICE

Chief Soderstrom provided the department's monthly report. The SRO position has been very beneficial to the school district, and Officer Hogren has been a huge asset to the district and students. Ron stated he is hoping to have the new car for the homecoming parade.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

C. Darr provided details of the fundraiser that will be available after the homecoming parade. The new ambulance is working out great, and Mayor Wright stated he would like C. Darr to start getting a bid for a second unit since it may take several years to get one delivered. The department has been able to cover more calls since hiring two full-time employees. The second full time person has been working part time, but now working full-time in past couple weeks has further extended EMS coverage. Caroline stated that she has one person wishing to start EMR training and she would be interviewing that person in the coming weeks.

LEGAL

Mayor Wright introduced Marc Miller as potentially the lead legal representative moving forward. Marc would attend monthly meetings. He has extensive experience in municipality law and works closely with development work in the 14 other municipalities he represents. He knows what the developer needs and is able to resolve problems. He also explained that every community has a different personality, and he has ordinances written up that fit the needs of a community.

SUBJECTS REQUIRING ACTION/DECISION BY THE BOARD

RENTAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE

The rental property ordinance was tabled at the August meeting until October. Mayor Wright stated he was asked to put this vote onto the agenda to reconsider the delay until October. If the board would like to reconsider further review and discuss the ordinance since he made changes based on the study session, he would need a motion from the board to discuss the ordinance a month early and potentially motion to approve it as written based on those changes.

Cathi Fritz motioned to re-open up discussions on the proposed ordinance with the changes suggested at the last study session.

Scott Fegett seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X			X
NAYS				X	X	
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

Mayor Wright updated the board with the requested changes that were presented at the last study session. A few of the changes were that if a landlord were compliant, there would be no charge, and there is only a charge when they are non-compliant. The landlord would have to register each property and provide a name if a property agent take care of the duties of the property. This would at least give the village a contact if there were issues with a unit. Dustin Henderson would be the inspector. This ordinance works with, shares information with the zoning ordinance, such the space zoned as a rental, and ensuring each unit meets all codes.

L. Light asked if other communities like the size of Oakwood have been looked at. She agrees it would make others accountable but is not sure this is how it should be done. She was worried about putting a lot more on Dustin. C. Fritz stated she does not feel the benefit to the community is very clear. Mayor Wright stated, as has been discussed several times, this would help in situations where the village cannot get resolution from landlords on the existing ordinances because in some cases they are not easily contacted if the contact information is listed as an LLC or property management group. Ron Soderstrom confirmed that we have properties in violation, some being rentals, that he cannot get the landlord to respond, answer the phone, receive a certified letter, etc. The second benefit is to allow the village to inspect the property on a periodic basis and prior to renting for fire code and safety issues. This is a benefit to local homeowners and landlords by having the village approve of conditions. Mayor Wright went on to state that other towns around the county are currently having trouble with the number of residents living in a unit, or there are some that renting garages as living space. Under the current zoning ordinance, a property cannot be rented unless approved or zoned as a rental, but there is no oversight or requirements to notify the village ahead of time to avoid a situation where a property is rented and now the people living there have nowhere to go and possibly money paid well in advance that they cannot get back. This ordinance provides a proactive approach to avoid larger problems that come by only having a reactive approach, which is what he village, has done for years. The list of properties Ron has and the list that Cathi is creating highlights the issue. Most of the existing landlords and those in attendance are not the issue, but there are some the village has trouble with and the trend is growing. B. Parr feels this proposed ordinance is too complicated and wants to see what others are doing. Mayor Wright stated that's fine, but the trustees need to take up the lead on this since after months of property ordinance work he feels he's done what the board has asked for and at this point doesn't know what they expect. The ordinance before the board is a simple as it gets and is nine pages long. Five pages are the standard whereas and then definitions copied from other approved ordinances.

Cathi Fritz motioned to table until next month until further research and discussion take place.

Scott Fegett seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES			X	X	X	X
NAYS		X				
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

IMRF PENSION

A representative from IMRF was on a conference call to provide the board with further explanation and to answer questions from the board. C. Fritz asked if this is voted in and if there is a way for the village to pull out of IMRF. It was explained that once voted in, the village is not removed. It was stated that one must work at least 1,000 hours to be part of IMRF. When it comes to rate increases, there is an 8-month notice given to the board to be able to put in the budget. C. Fritz read an email that was sent to her from a village resident with concerns regarding IMRF. The letter stated their experience working with retirement funds (Attachment A). After reading the email, C. Fritz stated her concerns regarding voting to be part of IMRF and its impact on the village.

Lindsey Light motioned to enter into IMRF as the village's retirement plan for village employees.

Scott Fegett seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X		X	X	X
NAYS			X			
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

FUNDS REINVESTMENT

Mayor Wright updated the board that there are CDs that are currently expiring, and there needs to be a decision on what to do with them. Currently, the rate is 5.12% at First Farms Bank. He asked the board if they wanted to keep the money out to help fund projects next year or reinvest. The money is from the sale of the water company back in 2013. C. Fritz asked if anyone had looked at other rates that are currently being offered. L. Light stated this has been discussed in the past and the board decided to keep the money invested in the local bank.

Matt Trimmell made a motion to reinvent the CDs at 5.12%.

Lindsey Light seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

PUBLIC WORKS FULL-TIME POSITION REQUEST

At the last study session, the board reviewed the request for a second full-time position. This was not included in the budget but would take the place of at least 1 of the part-time summer help.

Scott Fegett made a motion to approve the request for another full-time public works position.

Lindsey Light seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE

At the last study session, the proposed ordinance was reviewed. The village is not considered within a flood plain. C. Darr stated that this ordinance is also required in order to qualify for grant dollars and assistance from the federal government.

Lindsey Light made a motion to approve the proposed flood damage prevention ordinance as presented.

Bob Parr seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

TIF PAYMENT FROM GENERAL FUND

Mayor Wright informed the board that the village should have been paying a tax on TIF funds or a penalty. He found out the penalty is paid into the TIF fund but comes out of the general fund and is not paid to a state or government agency, and the village does not have to raise taxes.

Bob Parr made a motion to approve the transfer of funds from the general fund to TIF for the paying of the taxes for TIF funds.

Scott Fegett seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

AGENDA REQUEST FROM BOARD MEMBERS AND RECOGNITION OF VILLAGE RESIDENTS.

There were no agenda requests from board members.

Brenda Ludwig addressed the board with her concerns about the rental property ordinance. She stated she was glad it was tabled so more input could be sought out. She called Catlin to see what they had, and there was nothing in place. She asked when the inspections would be completed, and if it is while a renter is currently living there, she feels it is an invasion of their privacy. She also feels there are resources renters can go to if they find they are living in a space that is not habitable. She feels this ordinance is too much for the village of Oakwood’s size. She feels it can be condensed smaller and would still cover all three parties. Mayor Wright tried to explain that this is being written to help with situations the village could face that other communities are currently dealing with, as the village has nothing in place. Mayor Wright stated he was sorry she had a copy of the ordinance that was not being discussed tonight, as it is the version prior to the changes made after the last study session. Wayne B. stated that this matter is very important to him, and he would like to see more input into the ordinance from village residents. As he sees it, village residents are not being held to this high standard. Mayor Wright agreed and stated the new ordinances already passed by the board would help accomplish that standard.

Becky Low came to the board requesting permission to have a dumpster in her driveway for the next 12 months. The current location she has is being used by other residents, and her contract is up. B. Low has asked to work with the village hall on this issue, as they do not see an issue with this. Ms. Low was advised to apply for a permit and the dumpster would be a part of the kitchen remodel project she is working on. Ms. Low stated that she would only be using the dumpster for kitchen remodeling and clean-up of her property and for no other garbage or reasons.

With no more action from the board, Mayor Wright asked for a motion to adjourn.

L. Light motioned to adjourn at 8:41 p.m.

Scott Fegett seconded

	ELLIOTT	FEGETT	FRITZ	LIGHT	PARR	TRIMMELL
YES		X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAIN						
ABSENT	X					

Motion Carried

Submitted by,



Connie Young, Village Clerk
 Approved 10/16/23