

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD

Study Session Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2023

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Robert Wright called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

ROLL CALL	PRESENT	ABSENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Cathi Fritz	X		
Lindsey Light	X		
Bob Parr	X		
Doit Roberts	X		
Robert Wright	X		

BOARD ROOM

Mayor Wright mentioned that there will soon be two tables in the front row of the board room. The tables will allow for future small meetings to be easier by gathering around the tables.

GOOD ENERGY POWER AGGREGATION RENEWAL

Jared McMorris from Good Energy was present and stated the current contract for energy savings for village residents expires in December 2023. This program began with Good Energy in June 2013. Good Energy expects electrical energy rates will continue to increase over the coming years. As more government initiatives push towards electricity over natural gas, liquid fuel, and coal fired power plants are closed they expect electricity costs to soar because there is not enough electricity generation expected to come online. Ameren has gone from 6 ½ cents to 12.4 cents therefore doubling their costs for consumers since 2013. They expect this cost to be sustained and go higher. Currently, the village charges an administration fee (tax) of \$0.002 per kilowatt hour on the program. This rate was \$0.001 when the program began and increased to \$0.002 3 years ago at the start of the current contract. Good Energy currently charges \$0.00075 per kilowatt hour and is requesting \$0.001 per kilowatt hour in the new contract to cover their administration of the program. McMorris explained that at one time the village had considerable time invested in launching the program with Good Energy, but maintaining requires much less time. In real dollars, Oakwood consumers on average pay \$1.86 a month towards the program to the Village and \$0.70 a month to Good Energy. In the future contract, Oakwood consumers would pay \$0.93 per month to Good Energy. Over the past 10 years of the program the average Oakwood consumer enrolled on the plan has saved \$1025 dollars which is \$8.54 per month. R. Wright explained that essentially these admin fees are figured into the rates consumers pay. Although very small each month, using the same math for calculating the savings, each consumer enrolled into the plan could on average save an additional \$223 over 10 years on top of the savings Good Energy can negotiate. C. Fritz said she doesn't want to take a tax on the energy program, Mayor Wright agreeing. Mayor Wright stated they will speak about approving the Good Energy increase and relinquishing the \$0.002 Oakwood Village fee.

McMorris stated Good Energy wants to renegotiate rates in April/May when the prices are low and lock in well before winter. C. Fritz felt the calculations may be confusing for residents to be able to figure out their savings themselves and she wanted something simpler. Mayor Wright suggested we could try to put something on the village website which can help residents track their bills and show which would be the cheaper option Ameren vs Good Energy/Homefield which can help go month by month. Mayor Wright also suggested having a study session in the future focused on learning about your power bill, property ordinances, etc. as educational meetings. McMorris liked the idea and said he would come to that meeting to help explain it to residents. McMorris also stated Ameren is making four adjustments per year now on pricing and the business side is more highly affected by these adjustments, but residents are seeing the effects as well just not as highly.

VILLAGE HALL-NEW COMPUTERS AND ROUTER

Mayor Wright told the trustees the new laptops have arrived for the trustees. If anyone would like him to go over how to get them all started after the meeting, he was more than willing to do so. They will need labels.

PUBLIC WORKS-PROJECTS

Mayor Wright stated the concrete project around the Village Hall began March 2nd, 2023. It is projected to be substantially complete in March and final completion no later than April 28th.

Mayor Wright said he had a good meeting with Southern Tire Mart last week and they will hopefully be breaking ground in the next few weeks. Southern Tire Mart is completing the permitting process with Prairie Path Water to complete to approvals on construction. L. Light asked who she needed to ask about Southern Tire Mart leaving trees outside of the fence line to block noise, light, and garbage. Mayor Wright stated there was a verbal agreement on keeping the trees north of the fence in the triangle shaped area, but that may change depending on what Pilot/Southern Tire Mart want to do with that piece of ground. There are no new updates on Tulie's or The Box currently.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT ORDINANCES

Mayor Wright started off by seeing if the Trustees all had a chance to go over the ordinance packet and if anyone had any questions. D. Roberts asked if a project worth \$800 requires a permit? Mayor Wright stated if it's not a building improvement, yes it applies. The main residence building construction or improvement limit will increase from \$500 to \$1000 to reflect on higher costs in construction. However, outside the main residence such as a business sign, a parking place, or a fence a permit will be required. The document largely follows what St. Joseph permits and further recognizes common code authorities that are used by engineers, architects, and contractors. C. Fritz asked who determines who approves a permit because in the past permits were approved that probably shouldn't have been. Mayor Wright stated the new ordinance will delegate the permit work to the Superintendent of Public Works as has been the case. However, these ordinances will help the Superintendent of Public Works to determine what permits are needed easier than the current ordinances because we will now depend on established codes and state statute vs. a unique set of rules to Oakwood. Much of the current property maintenance language the village is based on other codes, but outdated and not organized to be easily used for permit review. The new ordinance also states that a homeowner might need a survey to prove it's their property and have all utilities marked for the permit review. If it's beyond the superintendent's ability to determine the approval, the village will employ one of the engineering firms to help and make that cost part of the permit fee. The village will try to keep costs down, but Mayor Wright agreed with C. Fritz that permits will need to be better vetted in the future.

C. Fritz asked if her request to limit mobile homes to the trailer park was included. Mayor Wright stated that the language currently stated any lots in the trailer park and area to the east were permitted for mobile homes, but he could change it to reflect mobile homes will only be allowed in the lots owned by ILOA or whomever it transfers ownership to in the future. All other rules in existing ordinance are present. B. Parr and D. Roberts stated they would like to limit trailers to the current ILOA mobile home park and no trailers would be placed outside that area in the future. C. Fritz asked if this meant nothing can be done about existing trailers, and would these rules only go into effect if they take the existing trailers out to replace them. Mayor Wright stated yes, the ordinance will go into effect if they were to replace a mobile home similar to how a reconstruction of a house would be required to meet current code. However, all these rules have to be vetted legally before they can become an ordinance. The village attorney is currently reviewing the language and will be giving advice in the coming month.

Mayor Wright stated that an occupancy permit will be required if a residence or business is vacant for a period of time. B. Parr asked if Andrew Mudd is working on a method for utility companies to notify the village when services are shut off. Mayor Wright stated that some utility companies are currently giving that information upon request, but yes Andrew is also looking into how that can be included in the ordinance. Doing so would allow the village to require an occupancy permit if the utilities are requested for connection after a certain period and would require an inspection for

human habitation that meets safety and health standards per the ordinance officer contracted by the village under the International Property Maintenance Code and Vermilion County Health Department rules. If approved to mimic what other municipalities do, this will protect the village and any buyers who are not aware of what they may be getting into from unsafe properties.

C. Fritz questioned if there was a time limit for an active construction zone. B. Parr stated a building permit only lasts for six months before a renewal is necessary. Mayor Wright stated they should add to the ordinances that a construction permit should have a beginning and end time.

C. Fritz mentioned the ordinance about pools without fences questioning if there will be a time limit for people without a fence for existing pools. Mayor Wright said there will be a time to do so in the ordinance code when written. It will be written to comply with the Illinois Private Swimming Pool Enclosure Act.

Mayor Wright introduced the idea of certain permits having fees going forward. B. Parr wasn't sure what one's currently have fees. Mayor Wright suggested a permit fee for a pool, hot tub, etc. that requires significant review of our agreements with the utility companies. C. Fritz stated that considering the work going into the reviews, it makes sense to start charging a fee. C. Fritz questioned if someone didn't want to pay \$50 for a permit, what would the cost be for people who do the work without acquiring a permit? Mayor Wright stated that would be governed the same as it is now. There would be a review by the board and if the board denied the permit, the property owner would be required to remove the violation at their own cost or be taken to court. If the court sided with the village, the property owner would be forced to remedy the violation, pay any costs associated, and pay any legal fees as well. Chief Soderstrom is currently handling these cases now in municipal court and all cases are available for review on GoGov.

SIDEWALK REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT PLAN

Mayor Wright said requests for bids are out and the project is in the paper for advertisement. Nine companies were sent requests for bids. There is a bid review meeting with interested contractors on March 22nd.

BUDGET

Light started with employee salaries and salaries factored in with a 3% increase. Mayor Wright requested Light add the mayor's salary onto her sheet as it was forgotten. Mayor Wright suggested Light meet with Janet and verify the numbers. Since moving a few people from salaried to hourly wages at the start of the year, he'd like to see the verified numbers and include overtime expectations in the overall annual totals. He agreed to keep the figures at 3% since the last two raises have been larger. Light noted these changes. C. Fritz requested an SRO salary line. Mayor Wright suggested adding summer help under Public Works.

L. Light is hopeful to have the budget complete and reviewed this month. Hopefully, finalized in March and vote to put it out to the public, then finalize it in April for a May 1st start at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Revenue Numbers, L. Light stated she was being very conservative in her numbers. Mayor Wright stated we should not hedge. If we expect a certain revenue, we should state it as accurately as we can to have a clear view relative to expenses. L. Light stated she will be working with Janet on some of the wording on what items are coded as in LOCIS to clean that up. Mayor Wright asked L. Light to change the revenue from franchise fees to zero.

Mayor Wright stated that the PNT amounts will go up this year due to the agreement with Muncie, Oakwood gets the PNT charges while on duty.

Mayor Wright requested L. Light combine all six Engineering lines into one combined line. L. Light agreed with this idea, she went on to state that is what she did with some of the utilities such as Comcast, Verizon, etc.

L. Light stated attorney fees are tracking higher due to the projects that are ongoing.

Maintenance of Buildings was brought to attention by C. Fritz questioning what all this entailed. L. Light stated this was Bott's, Menards, DI Fire, Terminix, BitComet Systems. C. Fritz asked if L. Light could itemize these so it shows more in detail, L. Light agreed.

L. Light stated she combined current village hall expenses, there is still a maintenance line for the old police building. Chief Soderstrom requested that line stay on the budget as a separate line.

B. Parr suggested at the next meeting all the department heads come to the budgeting meeting so everyone can be present to talk about these items. C. Fritz requested time to take this budget home to go over it in more detail and come back with any questions at the next meeting, Light agreed.

C. Fritz requested a projects line be added to the budget for future projects.

SRO

C. Fritz would like to see the school pay for the SRO’s full salary. Mayor Wright stated he and Ron are meeting with Superintendent Larry Maynard and school board president Randy Smith on March 9th. C. Fritz stated there are approximately three schools in the area that have an SRO. C. Fritz asked if they only want them for the school year or 9 months of the year, would that open a larger pool of people to want the position? Mayor Wright stated the meeting will be to understand all these options. Currently he is reviewing the Bismark-Rossville agreement and Unity agreement with Champaign County to get a better understanding of their terms. He stated that Oakwood’s prior contract is fairly brief compared to others. He stated that one new requirement he wants is formal quarterly reports from the school on how the SRO is doing in meeting the school’s needs. C. Fritz agrees with this and believes the school needs accountability for the SRO, so it doesn’t just fall on the village. The village is small compared to the overall school district and we only have two full-time officers. Adding a third full-time employee is a large cost to the village and the costs go far beyond the salary alone. Mayor Wright stated all of that will be discussed on the 9th.

REVIEW OF 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Mayor Wright and C. Fritz had a meeting with the 4th of July citizen group on February 28th. Brett and Maria Harrison, Bart Huchel, Bruce Harrison, and Dawn Pricer attended. They agreed to organize a citizen group to help with activities, clean-up, and lead the program. More people are needed yet, and much is to be determined, but there are a lot of good ideas by the group. B. Parr stated he has someone that could do the fireworks. They estimated around \$13,500 for an 18–21-minute show. C. Fritz stated she would check into the fireworks that Turtle Run uses and that she could get a quote from them too. Mayor Wright asked B. Parr if he thought this would be a good show, Parr stated yes as this is the same group who did Oakwood’s last fireworks show. Mayor Wright said the village would handle the fireworks and for Parr and Fritz to get firm quotes from both firework companies. B. Parr questioned where the fireworks would be set off. Mayor Wright said this hasn’t been decided yet. The group would like to launch from the east side of town behind the cold storage building, but the fireworks company and the fire chief would have to be consulted. The next meeting is March 7th at 6:30 at the village hall.

Cathi Fritz motioned to adjourn at 12:12pm.

Seconded by Lindsey Light.

	Cathi Fritz	Lindsey Light	Bob Parr	Doit Roberts	Robert Wright
	X	X	X	X	X

Motion Carried

Submitted by,

Marlee McCormick
 Office Administrative Assistant
 Back-up Clerk

Marlee McCormick