

Regular Board Meeting

November 20, 2007

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Manthei. Trustees present: Engel, Hanson, Harold, Leicht, and Wehrs. Excused: Hoffman. Also present: Ray Ebert, Don Brenengen, Eric Bauer, Matt Perenchio, Wade Peterson, Charles Ashbeck, and Teresa Schnitzler.

Minutes

Motion by Trustee Harold, seconded by Trustee Leicht to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2007, Regular Board meeting as written. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Claims

Claims from the following funds were presented for payment:

<u>General Fund:</u>	\$72,758.78
<u>Water Utility:</u>	\$6,852.50
<u>Sewer Utility:</u>	\$7,715.36

Motion by Trustee Engel, seconded by Trustee Leicht to approve the payment of all claims as listed. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Discontinuance of Village Warning Siren Daily Tests

Don Brenengen and Eric Bauer appeared before the Board to request the discontinuance of the Village warning siren testing at 6:00 p.m. every day. Mr. Brenengen stated the daily testing of the sirens is not only a nuisance and noise pollution, but also raises hearing damage concerns. The fire sirens are not utilized by the fire department, 1st Responders, or the police department. Mr. Brenengen asked if there is no real need for the sirens then why test them daily? He felt government should not be adding to noise pollution, and the first Monday of the month testing by County Dispatch would be sufficient. Decibel levels tested from Mr. Brenengen's home at least three blocks from the Kwik Trip warning siren measure 107 to 110.

Eric Bauer has observed Village park users covering their ears, children crying, and a general confusion by non-residents on what the siren is for. Mr. Bauer also feels the warning siren is a nuisance and unnecessary.

Trustee Hanson informed the Board the siren on the fire department building was funded by and for civil defense purposes. Trustee Hanson acknowledged that the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska only utilize the once-a-month testing by County Dispatch, but the Village wishes to be safer than once-a-month testing. Trustee Hanson felt the Village should not sacrifice public safety for a little inconvenience.

Trustees Leicht and Wehrs inquired whether the testing schedule could be at a testing point that is more than the once per month but less than daily and whether the sirens can be tested without actually setting the sirens off.

Motion by Trustee Wehrs, seconded by Trustee Harold to discontinue the 6:00 p.m. daily warning siren tests as of January 1, 2008. Roll call vote: Hanson – nay; remainder of Board – aye. Motion approved.

Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Trustee Leicht reported on the November 13, 2007, Finance and Personnel Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed the 2008 Operating Plan incorporating all information available and decisions made by the Committee to date. With the passage of the State's bi-annual budget, the final allowable municipal levy increases were calculated. The Village reassessment is now complete, and the State will render their manufacturing assessment adjustment within the next couple of weeks. Until that information is received, a mill rate cannot be calculated at this time. Mr. Leicht addressed the Committee with his concerns regarding the proposed employee health insurance contribution increase. Mr. Leicht felt the increase was unnecessary at this time due to: The 2008 health insurance renewal rate decreasing; the undue hardship placed on Village employees; and the Village would be granting wage/salary increases and then taking them away with contribution increases. After Committee discussion, it was recommended the Village leave the health insurance status quo with contributions by employees at \$20 and \$50 and the 3 percent wage and salary increases. The Committee discussed recognition of employees not enrolling in the Village health insurance program and instructed Ms. Schnitzler to inquire what other municipalities provide in this regard. The Committee also recommended the Village Board schedule a public hearing on the 2008 proposed operating plan for Tuesday, December 4, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Harold to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2007, Finance and Personnel Committee meeting. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Joint Meeting Minutes of Village Board, Town of Hamilton, and Town of Barre

President Manthei reported on the November 14, 2007, Joint meeting of the Village and Towns of Hamilton and Barre. The purpose of the Joint Meeting was to consider amending, altering, or rescinding provisions of the West Salem Fire Protection Agreement. In February of 1972, an agreement was entered into between the Village, and the Towns of Barre and Hamilton for the purpose of providing adequate fire and rescue protection to the three municipalities. Page Five of the Agreement under the subheading Fiscal Matters sets forth the fire protection district's budget requirements and procedures. One of the provisions regarding adoption of the fire district budget states: "Provided, however, that at no time without the unanimous consent of the governing bodies of the signatory municipalities may the Board of Trustees adopt a budget which would impose a tax rate or a payment out of the general fund exceeding one mill."

The 2006 Fire Protection District levy was \$169,939.16 on all three municipalities. The 2007 levy submitted by the Fire District in September was \$237,811.39, amounting to a

40% levy increase. According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, fire departments and fire districts do not have the legal authority to levy a tax. Therefore, the amount levied for fire protection must be included in the town and village levies. This also means the fire protection levy is included with the rest of the municipal levy when calculating levy limits. The Department of Revenue also states levies for fire protection are not excluded from levy limits. The first requirement is the total fire cost allocated among participating municipalities cannot increase more than the CPI plus 2%. For 2007, this is a total of 4.3%. The Fire District Board met on November 5, 2007, and amended its proposed budget levy to \$177,246.53, the 4.3% allowed by State Statutes.

The Village of West Salem attorney reviewed the 1972 Agreement, and it is his opinion the present agreement should be amended to include provisions for municipal review of the Fire Protection District's budget. He does not recommend holding the Fire Protection District to a specific amount or percentage increase because it would limit the municipality's ability to approve a larger increase for good cause in better fiscal times. With levy limits now in place by the State of Wisconsin, each municipality is limited on the percentage levy increases allowed. Individual municipal review and approval of the Fire Protection District's budget levy will ensure each municipality is able to comply with the mandated levy limits and continue services to each of their own municipalities.

Merlin Wehrs, Secretary-Treasurer of the Fire Protection District Board and West Salem Village Trustee, recommended the Village President, Barre Chairman, Hamilton Chairman, and Fire Protection District Chair Reuben Oldenberg meet to review the entire Fire Protection Agreement for any updates or changes required.

Fire Chief Dave Munson detailed the remodeling project at the fire station and the ADA-mandated reasons for the project. In order to keep equipment safe and current and to continue payment on the loan, he felt the municipalities should consider granting the requested increases.

Village President Dennis Manthei felt the Fire Protection District should consider charging property owners for fire calls in order to supplement the District's budget. In addition, the West Salem Volunteer Fire Department Benevolent Association will provide a copy of their end-of-the-year audit to the three municipalities in order to present a complete picture of the fire department and district financial status. Fire Chief Munson agreed to supply the audit.

The three Boards agreed to refer the West Salem Fire Protection Agreement to the Village President, Barre Chairman, Hamilton Chairman, and Fire District Chairman to review and bring recommendations back to the three Boards.

Motion by President Manthei, seconded by Trustee Engel to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of November 14, 2007. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Resolution 16.07 to Exceed Levy Limit

In order for the Village to utilize an allowable adjustment to its municipal levy, the Village Board is required to approve a Resolution to exceed its levy limit. Motion by Trustee

budget for 2008. The West Franklin Street sewer portion of the reconstruction is included in 2008 expenditures along with funds to upsize the utilities for the La Crosse County Veterans Park sewer extension project. The Committee recommended approval of the 2008 Sewer Utility budget as presented. Mr. Peterson presented a proposed Storm Water Utility budget for 2008. Revenues are based on a charge of \$4.00 per meter. Expenses include a portion of the street sweeper purchase, storm drain repairs, and grant matching funds. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed 2008 Storm Water Utility budget.

Motion by Trustee Engel, seconded by Trustee Harold to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2007, Utilities Committee meeting. Roll call vote: Hanson – nay; remainder of Board – aye. Motion approved.

Approval of Class “B” Beer License

The Board considered an application for a Class “B” Beer License for Lloyd’s Speedstop on Buol Road. According to Chief Ashbeck, Lloyd’s Speedstop owner, Shane Wehrs, wishes to give the option to his customers of ordering beer to consume with their purchased food products. Chief Ashbeck informed the Board he would recommend approval of the application if Lloyd’s Speedstop were restricted to serving beer to dining customers only, and not to grant free samples of beer to customers as Mr. Wehrs had indicated he was considering. The Board felt it needed more information from Mr. Wehrs before making a decision on the license application.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Engel to delay action on the license application until the next meeting and request the applicant to appear in person. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Police Department Update

Chief Ashbeck updated the Board on police department activities and calls. The vehicle registration system is going well, and he expects more participation once people become more aware of the service. The Police Department and Administration office are now able to accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards in payment of fees, fines, and taxes. There is a 3.5% convenience fee added to the amount due in order to pay the credit card company for lease of the equipment and administration fees. Chief Ashbeck also informed the Board that one of the police squad video cameras no longer functions. Repair costs are estimated to be a minimum of \$500. The lease on the video camera expires in April of 2008 at which time a new system would be leased or purchased. The total cost to replace the camera is approximately \$4,200. Chief Ashbeck felt the financing terms for a lease were higher than if the Village opted for a small loan from a bank.

Motion by Trustee Engel, seconded by Trustee Leicht that the matter be referred to the Finance and Personnel Committee for a meeting prior to the operating plan public hearing scheduled for December 4, 2007. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Change of First Meeting in January 2008 Meeting Date

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Wehrs to change the first meeting date in January 2008 to Thursday, January 3, 2008. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Engel to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. Approved by voice vote.

Teresa L. Schnitzler, Village Administrator