

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
VILLAGE OF STEGER, WILL & COOK  
COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

The Board of Trustees convened in regular session at 7:00 P.M. on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2022 in the Municipal Building of the Village of Steger and via Teleconference that was made available to all residents. Mayor Peterson led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

The roll was called. The following Trustees were present; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Mayor Peterson was present. Trustee Perchinski was present via ZOOM.

Also present: Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper, Police Chief Greg Smith, Fire Chief Michael Long, EMA Chief Tom Johnston and Community Center Director Diana Rossi. Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen was absent.

**AWARDS, HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Mayor Peterson stated that there were no Awards, Honors or Recognitions on the agenda, but I do want to give my condolences to the Thurmond family, including Steve, on the passing away of Luanne Thurmond. Luanne was instrumental in our community all my life and I look at her as one of our Matriarchs. It is a huge loss as a current member of the Library Board, former school board member and she was on our Police Pension Board. She will be deeply missed. Trustee Thurmond added that services will take place this Saturday at Steger Memorial Chapel from 2-6pm. With that Mayor Peterson asked for a moment of silence in honor of Luanne Thurmond.

**MINUTES**

Trustee Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19th meeting as all members have copies. Trustee Thurmond seconded the motion with an amendment to his report. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Sue Martin of 239 Durham Dr. came before the board questioning an abandoned house a couple doors south of hers. She has noticed Steger Public Works has been doing work at the residence. It was explained that the property has been acquired by the Village. The property will be evaluated to know if it can be saved or need to be demolished. It will be placed with the Village Community Development Corporation whose job it is to get homes like this back into homeowner's hands and get them back on the tax rolls. This is one of several sights being worked on by the commission.

Additionally, Ms. Martin reported on the condition of the water in her home. She explained the issues she experiences when hydrants are flushed, and says she has not seen any of this yet this year. Dave Toepper explained that the hydrants were flushed there in the Spring, and that area is on tap to be flushed again in the next couple weeks. Also, the neighborhood has an automatic flush set-up on Hereford. The issue is affected by the numerous water main breaks in the area. Dave Toepper also invited her to call and Public Works will come out and see what they can do. Trustee Thurmond further explained that whenever there is a main break, the iron trapped in pipes can be dislodged and ends up in homes.

## **REPORTS**

**Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen** No report.

**Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper** No report.

**Fire Chief Michael Long** Our 2022 Breast Cancer Shirts are for sale. They are \$20 and you can get them downstairs or call the firehouse.

**Police Chief Greg Smith** No report.

**EMA Chief Tom Johnston** Since last meeting we have had four calls for service. This week we have been asked to do traffic control for a wake at Steger Memorial Chapel on Wednesday from 3-7pm. Friday we will be helping with Movie Night at Columbia Central and the Bonfire at Veteran's Park.

**Community Center Director Diana Rossi** From September 19<sup>th</sup> though October 1<sup>st</sup> we have had about 640 people through the building. Still waiting for the kids to start coming again, hoping the upcoming Halloween Party which is still a go, will entice the kids to come back. The Halloween Party is October 21<sup>st</sup> from 6-8 pm for kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Village Attorney** No report.

**Treasurer** Trustee Lopez pointed out the challenge of waiting for Cook County Real Estate Tax delay. We have asked all department heads to keep an eye on their budgets. Administrator Seehausen has done a great job monitoring this, but these funds will be late in coming so it is going to be a big challenge.

**MAYORS REPORT** I want to bring you up to date on the K-Mart project. The development that was presented to this board is not currently moving forward. I don't think it is done, but it is not moving forward at this time. The developer reached out to Administrator Seehausen and myself, and are talking to us directly. When Administrator

Seehausen returns, we will be having a conversation with them. I met with Donna Miller who is proposing a new ordinance in Cook County to help small grocery stores. It is to help give a new classification that aids in real estate taxes. The hope is to draw more small community grocery stores to the community. This not only apply to new stores, it will be available to existing stores like Boyos in our town. Administrator Seehausen, my wife Alice and myself were invited to join a steering committee for a new bike path that is going to connect Northwest Indiana and the South Suburbs. It is a pretty significant undertaking. Several communities and organizations will be involved in this endeavor. We are hoping to get Steger connected to this new path. There is a proposal to put in a bike trail that follows Sauk Trail. I have talked to Anthony DeLuca about the new bill, he is excited that it got adopted, like Trustee Trotier stated, he is out there trying to educate everyone. This is a bill that allows land bank authorities that have acquired commercial property to also get a tax break on that property when it goes to the new owner. Hopefully this helps communities get rid of acquired commercial properties. I know Trustee Perchinski has looked into it, I don't think the law pertains to our Economic Development Corporation, but our conversations continue with Mr. DeLuca. Trustee Trotier questioned the program Donna Miller is working on and how it would affect Steger. Mayor Peterson stated that details of the program are still being ironed out. This program does not apply to big box grocery stores.

**VILLAGE CLERK** No Report.

### **TRUSTEES REPORTS**

**Trustee Trotier** I attended the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation meeting. Speakers were Illinois State Rep Willie Davis who discussed new legislation requiring the State of Illinois to begin negotiations with the construction of Southland Suburban Airport. The proposed purpose would be for a Cargo Airport versus what it was before. State Representative Anthony DeLuca was there along with Patrick Joyce spearheading the new law regarding Southland Reactivation Act. There was another speaker Trisha Kearns, she discussed proposing a new approach using the Six Sigma Improvement plan that would take into consideration risk management. I missed the EV readiness programs whose goal is to prepare communities for electric vehicle readiness. Mark Kraemer spoke about training, partnering with CFEDC and OIA. I am not sure what OIA is, to provide a conduit between manufacturing companies and regional high school programs to allow students options if they do not go to college. There is a building, 4343 called a Sending House, they have a building in Matteson and perhaps we can talk about the possibility of approaching them to bring this concept to our town. It is almost like taking a big building and having a hub of different businesses in there. I wanted to talk to Trustee Stewart, about what to do when there are swings missing in village parks. Dave Toepper explained that they have the swings. Someone, too big for the swing, got stuck in it and it had to be taken down for repairs. It will be replaced. Further, the Steger Little League signs are in disrepair at Harold Hecht Park. Is there a way to find a volunteer to make repairs to make this more attractive to visitors in Steger?

Normally, Steger Little League does maintenance on the playing fields. Maybe there can be a volunteer cleanup day? It was explained that Little League sponsors a cleanup day at the beginning of each season. Trustee Trotier suggested there might also be a cleanup day in the fall. It was explained that Little League handles that. Trustee Stewart, who is also head of the Steger Recreation Program explained that Steger Little League is run separate from the Village programs. Mayor Peterson stated that he has attended the cleanup day and they do work to make the park look good, planting, etc.

There is something called the Small Business Source, the Source Grow Grant, it starts October 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>. There is \$10,000.00 that Cook County is accepting applications for that I am looking into. My condolences to Steve and his family on the loss of Luanne.

**Trustee Lopez** I want to extend my condolences to the Thurmond Family.

**Trustee Thurmond** With gas bill pricing going up, one degree on your thermostat can cost you 3%. Is it possible to get status report on Citgo and for K-Mart project? Mayor Peterson suggested he make an appointment with Administrator Seehausen as she is current on those issues.

**Trustee Joyce** Public Works is getting trucks ready for Winter service needs. With hydrant flushing and winter weather approaching, warm days and cold nights can cause water main breaks.

**Trustee Perchinski** My condolences to the Thurmond family. It is a huge loss to our village.

**Trustee Stewart** I want to touch base on some of our sports programs through Steger Rec. Softball finished up their Summer season and are now starting their Fall Ball which will continue to the end of this month. They were down in Indianapolis the weekend before last, 12-U took second place, this fall they will have 12-U, 14-U, 16-U and 18-U. Once they complete that, they will move into winter training that they do at Columbia Central and the Community Center. Anthony is doing a great job with our softball programs here in town. Basketball and Volleyball sign-ups will begin this week. Mr. Baker will stay with us to finish up basketball this year. The forms should be out by Wednesday. The new fee for basketball: first and second grader residents fee will be \$40, nonresident \$50. Third through eighth grade: Residents \$80 and nonresidents \$100. These rates are below what they have been in the past. Volleyball sign up sheets should be available by the end of the week. I want to make note of our football program, they are having their bonfire Friday night. This Friday is their Homecoming. Sadly, there will not be a game this week. The opposing team has been removed from the league for unsportsmanlike behavior that we do not welcome on our fields. I would like to recognize Ardola Goodwin. She has been the heart and soul of the football program, if it wasn't for her and her husband Tory, he handles all the books, equipment, he cooks and works the fields. They are very dedicated to our football program.

## **BILLS**

Trustee Thurmond made a motion to pay the bills with one exception. BK entered a bill for \$29,027.50. Is this part of the MFT project that we approved?

Discussion: Trustee Joyce pointed out that there are multiple bills in there that pertain to MFT and come from different payment sources. The one in question is \$29,027.50. I believe this is directly related to the MFT, I believe it is the project for the roads, with that being delayed. Mayor Peterson pointed out that we had put it out to bid. We hope to still get it done. The contractors are backed up, and they are running out of time. Trustee Thurmond asked if we bid the projects out now and they are delayed to Spring, does that change the bid? Mayor Peterson stated that if we accept the bid, the bids are binding, but Dave Toepper interjected that if the project is delayed, we can go out to bid again. Trustee Thurmond again asked that this is in regard to the project we already approved. Trustee Thurmond again stated he would like to approve the bills minus the BK bill for \$29,027.50. Mayor Peterson stated that all members get their agenda on Friday. If anyone has questions on bills, you have to bring them up ahead of time. If you have questions, call Administrator Seehausen. Trustee Joyce asked Trustee Thurmond to modify his motion that we will pay the bills, but if the bills come through with little or no description of what the money is for, we will table it until they can come up with a description. They can come here and explain it or include it in the bill. This would go for engineering, lawyers. The mayor repeated previous statements regarding legal issues with acquiring properties where the village thinks the issue is settled and the judge will continue it. This extends the process. Trustee Joyce pointed out that some of the bills are so vague, we don't know what we are paying for. Trustee Perchinski asked who made the motion and if there was a second. Clerk Zagone stated we are unclear on the motion and we do not have a second.

Trustee Thurmond made a motion to pay the bills and hold the BK bill for \$29,027.50 for further review of what the explanations are. Trustee Joyce seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Trotier and Joyce. The following Trustees voted no; Lopez, Stewart and Perchinski. Mayor Peterson voted no. Motion was denied.

Mayor Peterson asked for a new motion:

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to pay all bills as listed when funds become available. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion.

Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Lopez, Stewart, Joyce and Perchinski. The following Trustees voted no; Thurmond and Trotier. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Peterson stated that we will talk to vendors about including more details. Trustee Trotier asked if we have to make a motion or write it down somewhere to have more details on the bills? Trustee Joyce stated that the Village Administrator would distribute the request to vendors for the detail. If the vendors do not provide the detail, they risk

their payment being tabled until they provide the information requested. Trustee Joyce reminded Trustee Trotier that when the bills come out, Trustees can email the department heads that submitted the bill or the Village Administrator for details. If no details are provided, action to hold payment can be taken at the meeting. It was explained that in most instances, department heads get invoices with the details and present the statement for payment which may not include all details. Mayor Peterson stated that we also have to trust our department heads. Why do we have department heads if you are not going to trust them? Department heads are responsible for making sure our vendors are doing their jobs and billing correctly for the work done. If the bill makes it before this board, that department head has already approved it. The department head has already checked the bill for accuracy before it comes before the board. Trustee Joyce countered that the Village Board is tasked with overseeing the Village fund. If I am not comfortable with something because I don't understand it, I should ask, and the mayor agreed. Trustee Joyce continued: if they can't approve that or can't give me an answer regardless which department head, the Administrator or the vendor, then I have a duty as a trustee to say no, we are not paying it until you can explain what it is. It was agreed by Mayor Peterson and Trustee Joyce, that this is action that should take place before the meeting. Trustee Lopez, liaison to the Village Treasurer pointed out that we have a financial team that oversees all Village financial activity before it ever gets to the board for approval. The Village does regular audits to protect and monitor against misappropriation of funds by department heads. Trustee Stewart reminded the board that keeping our bills paid on time is the most important thing.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Peterson stated that due to inclement weather, the fireworks display was cancelled at our Day of Music Event in August. It was discussed that the fireworks display be moved to our Octoberfest Event. Donations are sought to fund our community events. There was just enough money collected to pay for the fireworks display. If we do the fireworks, it will deplete funds that would otherwise carry over to next year's events.

Trustee Joyce made a motion to not have Fireworks at Octoberfest. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Trustee Thurmond asked if we had a contract with the fireworks provider. Mayor Peterson stated that there is \$1,000.00 reshelving fee. Trustee Joyce suggested having the fireworks on Halloween at the bonfire since the park is usually full of people that night. I would rather see it that night than at Octoberfest.

Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Peterson said they would look into the possibility of having the fireworks on a different night.

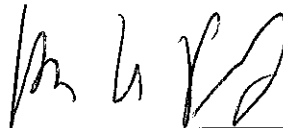
Trustee Joyce made a motion to approve a request for a Special Event Liquor License for Oktoberfest on 10/16/22 from 12pm until 8pm to be held at Veterans Park. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion.

Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried.

Being no further business:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.



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Kenneth A. Peterson, Jr., Village President



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Joseph M. Zagone, Jr., Village Clerk