

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 3rd day of April, 2023 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, Joyce and Perchinski. Mayor Peterson was present. Trustee Perchinski made a motion to invite Trustee Trotier to participate via ZOOM. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Joyce and Perchinski. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried. Trustee Trotier joined the meeting via ZOOM.

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

AWARDS, HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

None

MINUTES

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 20th meeting as all members have copies. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mark Gerrity of 314 Royal Oak Drive approached the board to make sure they knew of a new junk yard across from the old Clark Gas station at Sauk Trail and Cottage Grove. It says scrap metal and I am concerned for our wells. Dave Toepper stated that he is aware and is working with the EPA regarding the location. Mayor Peterson said he would also follow up with Dave Toepper on the situation.

Connie Lundin of 22735 Cottage Grove asked if there has been any progress on repairs on the work out room at the Community Center. Mayor Peterson said it should not take much longer, he will work with Village Administrator Seehausen and Dave Toepper to try and get a timeline.

Jason Stevenson who works for the Will County Forest Preserve gave a short presentation on recreational activities as well as educational programs that are offered at

several Will County Forest Preserve sites. Close to Steger there is Plum Creek Nature Center which is at Goodnow Grove in Beecher, Monee Reservoir in Monee and Racoon Grove. Both are within 15 minutes of Steger and offer many opportunities to the residents of Steger. The nature center does programs that our local schools take part in, Monee Reservoir offers fishing (and fishing lessons), hiking, kayaking and musical entertainment on scheduled days. One of the big programs is a bicycle recycling program that happens in the Spring and again in the Fall. Mr. Stevenson left literature with Mayor Peterson that will be made available at Village Hall and at the Community Center. You can also visit reconnectwithnature.org for more information on Will County Forest Preserve locations. Trustee Trotier suggested that we include bicycles with the Village Recycle Program that is planned for June. Those bikes could go to the Will County Forest Preserve Bicycle Recycle program in the fall.

REPORTS

Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen No report.

Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper We met with ComEd a week ago Friday out at the water tower and they believe they have a solution to the problem. They need to confirm a few things on their end. We expect to hear back from them any day, but if they can confirm what they thought was true, we can move forward. In regards to the roads, Davis Concrete is due to start next week. We have been out marking curbs to get them started.

Fire Chief Michael Long For the month of March we had 165 calls for service: 143 were medical and 22 fire. I also want to thank everyone for coming out and for the support for our Easter Egg Hunt last weekend. Weather wasn't the best, but we were able to move everything inside. Seems like the kids had a good time.

Police Chief Greg Smith The weekly blotter and monthly status went out today.

Community Center Director Diana Rossi We have had about 750 people through the Community Center the past two weeks. We are all ready for everyone to come out and vote. Voting hours are 6 am to 7 pm on Tuesday April 4th.

EMA Chief Tom Johnston This weekend storms we had three trees that came down and disrupted traffic. Thank you to Dave and Roy for getting out quick to clear the areas affected. There was one car damaged by a falling tree, but that is the only damage I am aware of. There were some power outages. Yesterday I assisted the Boy Scout Troop with picking up garbage along Chicago Road. They did a really good job. The next chance for severe storms is tomorrow, but it doesn't look like the storms will stay close enough to us to stay severe.

Village Attorney No report.

Treasurer No report.

MAYORS REPORT I want to say that everyone did a good job with the storm. I know I was in touch with Tom Johnson and we knew it looked like it was going to stay north of us. It really avoided Steger and thank you Tom for keeping me posted.

VILLAGE CLERK No report.

TRUSTEES REPORTS

Trustee Joyce Just some information: The Housing Authority of Cook County put out Forest Preserve Summer Job programs opening up for 14- to 19-year-olds. Information can be found on their website. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is offering a bike path program. It is a 50/50 program and May 15th is the deadline to apply. Next week the University of Wisconsin is offering two classes on Maintaining Asphalt Pavement. They have experts there that will go over understanding materials, but also how to maintain what we have to preserve life of our roads. The second class is Improving Public Works Construction Inspections for doing onsite inspections.

Trustee Trotier I have reached out to a few businesses in regards to Earth Day on April 22nd including Austin Community Tavern, The American Legion, County Line Animal Hospital, Christine Marie's Sweet Vine and they have confirmed they will be with us that day. They have committed to help us and to beautify the area in front of their businesses. I will continue to reach out to other businesses. We look forward to more volunteers. Tom Johnson stated that the Boy Scouts will be there also. Thank you, Jason Stevenson, for sharing your information with us. The Steger Wrestling event was great to bring community together. I know Dave Mendez is doing a fantastic job. When I spoke to him briefly, he spoke about Girls Wrestling and a few other things so I applaud him and his family. Thank you also to all the volunteers who helped make the event a success.

Trustee Lopez Just a few reminders: Yard waste pickup will begin this Wednesday April 5th and continue weekly until November 30th. Street sweeping, the first one will be the week of April 22nd on Monday and Tuesday. Monday will be the north side of town and Tuesday will be the south side of town. Any further cleaning will be done Thursday and Friday. Also, Dave Toepper, can we adjust the timers on the lights at Harold Hecht Park? Lights are coming on much earlier than needed.

Trustee Thurmond I want to thank the Police Chief and his continued efforts to communicate with Board members and Administration. He does a wonderful job returning calls and emails. One other remark about the police spread sheet, is there any way to change the color of the box at the top? It is very hard to read as it is. Chief Smith said he would look into it. Thank you for those reports. Second, I am going to pass out a proposal that I would like the board to look at. With the support of the board, I would like to have this proposal placed on the April 17th agenda for consideration. The owner of the

company would like to come to the meeting and give a presentation and I would like the board to entertain that idea. Mayor Peterson stated that proposals like this have to go through staff. First of all, we have someone who handles our website and it is an appointed position. Village Administrator Seehausen I believe has a copy of this proposal. She is working on it and I think we need to go through staff to make sure that it goes through all of our IT support. Everything needs to integrate together. We need to let it go through staff before it comes to this board. Next, residents have had some concerns with the TTS Granite construction stuff that is going on. Can we find out what the progress is and expectation of completion? It has been going on for a long time. Also, while Iroquois is coming in for road repair, can you please have them go back and look at the project that they completed in the alley at Austin, after a year and half and the trucks have already started pushing that asphalt up, check and see if there might be a warranty issue. Mayor, I have couple questions about the Senior Luncheon. Was that a political event or a community event? Mayor Peterson stated that was my event. My wife rented the hall. Trustee Thurmond said so it's a private event? Mayor Peterson stated that it is a private event, I do invite any Seniors in Steger. Trustee Thurmond repeated, so it's a private event. Mayor Peterson said I guess it's private, but we open it to the public. Trustee Thurmond: If it was open to the public, why was half of the board excluded from it? Mayor Peterson: No one was turned away. Trustee Thurmond: half the board did not know it was going on. Mayor Peterson: It was by invite, Trustee Thurmond: so, it was a private event. Mayor Peterson: I invited the residents, but what does it matter, what are you trying to get at? Trustee Thurmond: I think it would have been appropriate to invite the entire board. Mayor Peterson: but I don't want to make it a political event. Trustee Thurmond: but it kind of was. Mayor Peterson: I invite the people, you know Steve, if it was political, Cindy Trotier called, I welcomed her. I don't want to put Cindy on the spot, she ran against me and opposed me. Trustee Thurmond: to my knowledge she didn't find out until the Friday before in passing. Mayor Peterson: she didn't say when she found out, but she did call and talked to me, I welcomed her, she was there. So, if it truly was political, I honestly would have you talk to Cindy, I don't think it is appropriate for this forum, but you can certainly talk to her offline and ask her if it was political, if we did something inappropriate. Trustee Thurmond: Well, the acknowledging of volunteers for the event was on the official website. Mayor Peterson: I did notice that and I took it down and it is no longer on the website. I did not post it. Trustee Thurmond: It's not on there now, but it was on long enough for people to see it. Mayor Peterson: when I noticed it, I took it down right away. Trustee Thurmond: OK, thank you.

I have a couple questions about the newsletter: I want you and everyone here to know that I have advocated for bringing back the newsletter so that the community can get communication with events and what is going on in the community. It is a great publication; it reaches people that would not necessarily look on social media. But, with that, is there a reason why the publication process wasn't run through the board? Mayor Peterson: we don't run the publication process through the board, we never have. Trustee Thurmond: Ok, I don't recall seeing it on the budget report. Is that in the

Administration's budget? Mayor Peterson: it is part of the budget, I confirmed with our Village Administrator to make sure we are covered, so I can talk to her and find out what line item it is in. Trustee Thurmond: and again, with all due respect I appreciate the newsletter coming and getting in the hands of the residents for communication purposes, but it would have been nice for the board to know that the project was going. Mayor Peterson: this is our second newsletter Steve, we are committed because we told the public we are going to bring back the newsletter and give information to our residents, so we do that. Trustee Thurmond: it was not conveyed to the board. Mayor Peterson: because it is not a board decision. Trustee Thurmond: It's not a board decision? Mayor Peterson confirmed that. Trustee Perchinski questioned Trustee Thurmond: Are you saying you want to stop the newsletter Steve? Trustee Thurmond: I am not saying that, I would like the board to have some input in the newsletter. Trustee Perchinski stated he thought it was the staff's responsibility. Trustee Stewart added: It's the Mayor's newsletter, so the mayor is the one that's directing the citizens in his newsletter. In past years, none of the Trustees had columns they were writing as journalists. Trustee Thurmond: there are other communities that do. Trustee Stewart: we are talking about this community. We are talking about what has been in the past and what is happening here today. Trustee Thurmond: I understand, but no one collectively got together and offered ideas. It was one sided. Mayor Peterson: I don't know how the newsletter is one sided. We state what is upcoming, we told people about the Easter Egg Hunt, the Wrestling event at the Community Center, we talked about Earth Day. We updated people with the K-Mart building because it is going back up for auction. We talked about current events that are happening in our community to try and inform our residents. Especially information like K-Mart, they won't know unless we get it out there. Trustee Thurmond: and I do applaud that, can we also get it in the hands of the residents sooner than the events we are promoting? Mayor Peterson: we try to get it out in a timely manner for whatever events we have, but that is the one reason why we can't sit down and have this group setting to talk about the newsletter because you have to react quickly in order to get the information out there. By the time I go through and talk to every one of you, if there is something in particular, like Earth Day, I went to Cindy and I asked her questions about it, we communicated so I had the right information that went into the newsletter. If we went through each person and waited for every single person to give input, that information is going to be stale by the time we put the newsletter together and then get it out. We don't have a professional staff member who is just doing the newsletter. Trustee Thurmond: OK

Moving on, back in February I identified some safety concerns at Well House No. 3, Dave, would you please put a chain and lock on that gate? Thank you.

Also, moving on, I want to address Trustee Joyce's letter that he received, I just wanted to say that if there is no additional findings that implicate Trustee Joyce in any wrong doing, I would like the board to motion for a full retraction of the letter and give him a public apology. I am kind of disappointed that the matter did not come to the board before valuable resources were used. Mayor Peterson: our investigation shows that the account was charged and shouldn't have been in year one. We also know that Trustee Joyce was asked to reimburse the bill and it was not reimbursed. It was over a year. We

also know that Trustee Joyce went back and the account got charged a second time a year later. Trustee Joyce made the correction that it was three years later. But it was charged again. We also know that Trustee Joyce went to a part time employee and asked that employee to pull the bill. Trustee Joyce corrected and said I didn't ask him to pull the bill, I said if one comes, please pull it so it doesn't get processed because I was told he processes the bills when they come in. Mayor Peterson: Right, and it should have gone to the Village Administrator because he is part time and he is not always here, so it doesn't guarantee that that is going to happen. Second of all, he is not the only one and we have a full-time member who actually does do the bills all the time. You could talk to me or Administrator Seehausen and we would make sure that no matter how the bill came to the Village, that it was handled appropriately and we would move it off to the side because that bill still has the Village of Steger name on it. So, when that employee went to Administrator Seehausen and talked to her about it, she felt she needed to talk to the lawyer because the account was charged twice and the employee, who doesn't have the authorization, was asked to pull the bill. That employee does not have the power to do that. Trustee Joyce: all he had to say is I can't do that. Mayor Peterson: he doesn't know. He didn't even know; he had never gotten that request before. He wasn't trained for someone coming up and saying pull the bill. That is why he went to Village Administrator Seehausen. It was turned over to the attorney because you guys are all worried about the next Dixmoor. I haven't heard enough about the fraud, things going wrong, so we went to the attorney to make sure we handled it the right way. I refuse, as I sit in this seat, not to handle things the right way. Trustee Joyce: has the Steger Chamber of Commerce taken care of their bill with the Village? Mayor Peterson: yes the Chamber did: so, they did: Trustee Joyce: I am just asking because I don't know. Mayor Peterson: I was basing my knowledge on the conversation you (Trustee Joyce) and I had. Trustee Joyce: I assumed once they got the invoice they would, but I did not know if they actually had. Mayor Peterson: I also know that Trustee Joyce said that the Chamber needed a copy of the invoice to pay it, but he had a copy because the attorney sent it to him. Trustee Joyce: No, that was the whole problem with the letter. The letter I received here did not have the invoices on it. I actually went to Helsel-Jepperson to ask them for a copy, because when I asked, there wasn't one here. That is how I found out the first one was paid and the second one wasn't, because I asked. And, just for clarification, I know that the Chamber has an account with Helsel-Jepperson, because they have purchased other things that were not billed to the Village. But, when I went the second time, the reason I talked to Mr. Scott was because I remembered the incident before when I went to pick it up for them, I wanted to make sure they didn't do the same thing again. This was long before any letters or anything else because I wanted to make sure they did it the right way. Now, when the bill came in, all Village Administrator Seehausen or somebody, when the bill came in, had to do was say hey, we got the other bill. I would have went up and complained to them (Helsel-Jepperson) right then and there. Not wait three months to tell me. Mayor Peterson: if a vendor is messing up, it's not your responsibility to make it right. It's our responsibility, so, Village Administrator Seehausen needed to call the vendor and if the vendor is wrong, then she needs to talk to the vendor to make sure that it gets corrected. Village Administrator Seehausen needs to be

the face of the Village when it comes to our vendors. So, if they did make a mistake, she can go ahead and correct it. It seemed inappropriate at best because the account got charged and the bill was asked to be pulled. That's a red flag. I am not trying to accuse you of anything Bill, but it is enough for me to be concerned to say I am not going to make this political, I am moving back from it and letting a professional handle it. We didn't bring it up. The letter was sent to you, we didn't bring it up, we didn't make it political, we just kept it between us to try and work it out and give you the benefit of the doubt that it was a mistake. We never mentioned it. You never heard the Village, you never saw it in any political literature, you never heard it come out of my mouth. None of the other members knew because we thought we could just take care of it. Trustee Stewart raised a question: so, when you go into the supply house, because I go into them all the time. You pay for something, they give you a copy, on that copy it should say who's account it is charged to. Trustee Joyce: it was written down on the piece of paper that said Steger Area Chamber of Commerce on it. Trustee Stewart: immediately when you walked out you noticed it? Trustee Joyce: that's what was written on the piece of paper. They turned it in to the office. I wasn't there when they did that, it was the front counter staff. Trustee Stewart: you went in and picked up the merchandise. Trustee Joyce: yes Trustee Stewart: and they gave you a copy? Trustee Joyce: no they did not. Trustee Stewart: so, they didn't give you a copy. Trustee Joyce: no sir. Trustee Stewart: either time? Trustee Joyce: no sir. Trustee Stewart: so they just wrote it down, it was on the weekend, Trustee Joyce: They wrote it down and they were supposed to give it to Joe (Helsel) who was going to give it to the Chamber. Trustee Stewart: got it. Trustee Joyce: because the first one I didn't order, I just went and picked it up. Trustee Thurmond: mind you this is for a festival event; it could have been just as easy to donate it. Mayor Peterson: the Village? The Taxpayer dollars? You know there is a process to donating. I understand that he was doing something for the benefit of the Chamber for a community event that is wonderful for the Village. But that doesn't mean that you can have unauthorized charges to the Village. Or, that you don't follow procedures. Trustee Perchinski: and as a Trustee you have to hold yourself to a higher standard. I understand that you did donate your time which is great, it is a beautiful event, but at the same time to say that you don't need a license to do that work, what if somebody gets hurt? Trustee Joyce: I never said I didn't need a license; you don't need a license for volunteer work. Trustee Perchinski: you said you didn't need it because you didn't get paid. As a trustee I think you should hold yourself to a higher standard. Mayor Peterson: The license is not whether you get paid or not, it's the type work you do. It's irrelevant, you can do everything for free, but it's the type of work that you do. Trustee Joyce: you are absolutely correct; I do need to pull a license when I do work in Steger. Trustee Perchinski: and thanks for doing it. I want to see it done and I want it to be nice. Mayor Peterson: I am for it too and I appreciate the work you did. When things happen, so Steve, I don't think it is warranted because we didn't make it public. Trustee Perchinski: we're not the one that made a political issue about it. Village Clerk Zagone questioned: Maybe Helsel-Jepperson might have donated it for all the other stuff the Village buys from them, but that's another story. Mayor Peterson: that is up to them. Trustee Thurmond: I don't recall anyone making it political. Mayor Peterson: we did not disclose

it. Trustee Perchinski: did you bring it up? Trustee Thurmond: No, I didn't. Trustee Perchinski: Trustee Joyce brought it up. Mayor Peterson: it was in a newspaper article. Trustee Perchinski: Made him sound like a victim. Trustee Joyce: I am not a victim. I never said I was. Trustee Perchinski: that's the way you portrayed it in the newspaper. Mayor Peterson: anything else Steve? Trustee Thurmond: yes
On the positive side, sorry for all the, I want to reiterate the thanking of the Boy Scouts Troop 100 for their recent clean-up event. Its always great to see the youth involved in our community. Finally, tomorrow is election. The weathers projected to be nasty, please be careful and I wish all the candidates the best of luck.

Trustee Perchinski I've been contacted by Muse Community Design. They've got some focus groups and they are looking for people to join these. There is a youth focus group that is looking for places to put electronic vehicle chargers. They are also looking for a commercial property owners' group, they are looking for a ride share drivers' group and a multi-unit building focus group. These are paid. There is a \$100 stipend for this if anyone is interested. The youth one is set for high school age kids. I think it would be nice to put this on the website. We might even have some opportunities like the K-Mart parking lot (for vehicle charger stations). Cook County is putting these in for free.

Trustee Stewart Once again, I would like to thank Dave Mendez for his hard work with his crew this past weekend. It was a success Saturday night, the Wrestling Program. The volley ball program is still continuing through the second week of May due to setbacks with the holidays and school schedules. Softball is underway and we will start seeing the kids on the fields practicing relatively soon. And once again, thanks Diane Rossi for having the Community Center clean and ready for the event this past weekend.

BILLS

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

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

CORRESPONDENCE

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to adopt ORDINANCE NO. 1292: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE PURCHASE AND FINANCING OF CERTAIN PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR THE VILLAGE OF STEGER, COUNTIES OF COOK AND WILL, STATE OF ILLINOIS. Trustee Stewart 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:

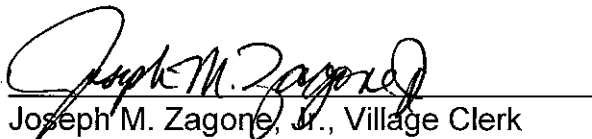
Trustee Perchinski made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.



Kenneth A. Peterson, Jr., Village President



Joseph M. Zagone, Jr., Village Clerk