

**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 16th day of September 2024 in the Municipal Building of the Village of Steger, Illinois. Trustee Lopez 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 and Trustee Perchinski were absent.

Clerk Zagone asked for a motion to appoint Chairman Pro-tem for the meeting:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to appoint Trustee Lopez Mayor Pro-tem for the meeting. Trustee Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

Also present: Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen, Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper, Fire Chief Mike Long, Police Chief Greg Smith, EMA Chief Jason Stevenson and Community Center Director Diana Rossi. Village Attorney James Vasselli was absent.

AWARDS, HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

None

MINUTES

Trustee Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 19th Village Board meeting as all members have copies. Trustee Thurmond seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Stewart and Trotier. Trustee Joyce voted no. Trustee Lopez abstained as he was absent that night. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Reginald and Ramona Jones of 493 231st St. came before the board to give thanks to the board for efforts to correct issues with a neglected property that adjoins theirs. Mrs. Jones also stated that a road sign that was in disrepair was removed also. They thanked the board and the Village again for the efforts.

Brenda Thunherst of 22720 Cottage Grove came before the board for an update on the fence at 22730 Cottage Grove that was determined to not conform to the Village Fence Ordinance. Village Administrator Seehausen responded to Mrs. Thunherst that she had been in touch with the owners of the property. She is waiting for documents from them, I am working with them, the Village is working with them to comply. It has not been over a year since it has been voted on or been in front of the zoning board. Mrs. Thunherst agreed, but it was August 15, 16, 17 and 18th when I initially called the Village and the fence was not completely put up yet. Thank you.

Angie Prokop of 150 E. 34th St came before the board and gave a brief description of her 52 years in Steger. She described 13 years of participation as a volunteer in the Steger School System. Mrs. Prokop described many circumstances with children crossing the streets near the school, always concerned with child safety. It was thought that with the remodel at the school with the new circle on the east side of the school, student drop off would be moved there for safety of the children. This did not happen, and it was explained to Mrs. Prokop that because the monitored entrance is still on the West side of the school, this is where children are still admitted. Mrs. Prokop quoted state rules for marked cross walks and stated there is no cross walk by the alley behind her house where many children cross without aid of the crossing guard. Because of the congestion on Hopkins, parents are dropping their children off on Butler, where they walk the alley to school. Village Administrator Seehausen stated that we would not consider that, it would be something the school would consider because they do that planning. With that being said, I know the chief has information on that because we have been dealing with this for quite some time. There is a new resident on Butler who can't get in his driveway, etc. So, we thought the school was going to move it there, but there is a reason why and I will ask Chief Smith to share that. Chief Smith: We had a meeting at the beginning of the year just talking about switching pick up to the east side of the school. The problem is, the building was not set up that way. The front of the school you have double doors for security, you have to be buzzed in after the bell rings. They do not have that on the east side of the building, and the office that monitors the door is not on that side of the building. If you arrive after 8 o'clock, you have to be buzzed in. Mrs. Prokop asked why they can't switch that. Chief Smith stated that these are school questions, I can only tell you what they relayed to me. It was recommended that she take further questions to the School Board. VA Seehausen added that the Village would reach out to the Superintendent and let them know of the information brought to the Village Board by Mrs. Prokop. Additionally, Mrs. Prokop thanked the Police Department for their attempts in the past to help with this situation.

Jerry Prokop of 150 E. 34th St came before the board regarding cars parking on sidewalks throughout the Village. Cars with no license plates or village stickers. Issues are created for any residents with walkers or wheelchairs that cannot navigate sidewalks because of cars parked on the sidewalks. Mayor Pro-tem Lopez thanked Mr. Prokop for bringing this to the board attention. I will have the police chief look into it in this area and other areas in the Village. Also, the Village has a new Code Enforcement Officer, and

this will be brought to his attention. Mr. Prokop went on to describe an issue he had with his walker trying to navigate the sidewalk along the Intermediate Center. Trustee Thurmond informed Mr. and Mrs. Prokop that the next School Board meeting is this Thursday at 6 pm at Columbia Central.

Carol from Barbara Lane came to discuss the park, but went on to car parking issues along John St. She stated that there are more and more cars along John St. Do they all have Village Stickers? There are two houses that seem to be causing the issue. Mayor Pro-tem Lopez said he would look into it personally. She continued: what I came for was the park on Barbara Lane. I have contacted the Village workers who cut the grass and they tell me that is not part of the park. Dave Toepper said he would address that with his staff and we are actually on the agenda tonight to go to bid to address that area.

John Koplilos of 266 E 34th St came before the board regarding a couple issues that have been going on since I moved in. First of all, the streetlight in front of 258 E. 34th St has not been working. They came out and worked on it, it worked for a while and went out again. Dave Toepper took the information to look into it. Second of all, where I live, the whole block, it smells like sewer. Mayor Peterson was informed about it two years ago. He sent out inspectors and they said they would get back to him. No one has responded. Now, I am retired and home all the time, it is bad. Mr. Koplilos stated that if nothing is done he will reach out to get media and television involved, and if I have to I will get the EPA. Something needs to be done. Dave Toepper stated that we have talked to Thorncreek Sanitary about it. There is a chemical that they are supposed to be putting in to take care of that. For some reason their system wasn't working, I don't know the reasoning behind that, but we did address this with Thorncreek who manages the sanitary drainage system in Steger. Mr. Koplilos stated that it is usually bad when the weather is about 32 degrees, but now it is quite constant. Dave Toepper said he would reach out to Thorncreek tomorrow. Mayor Pro-tem Lopez reiterated that the sewer system is in the control of Thorncreek Sanitary Basin and that Mr. Toepper will follow-up with VA Seehausen so that she is aware of what our next step is.

Eric Cainer of 258 E. 34th St came before the board regarding the same issues as Mr. Koplilos. This issue has been going on since 1996. I am retired now and with this smell everyday. I don't know who is responsible, but I live in Steger. We need to get this taken care of. Mr. Cainer stated that something needs to be done about the light and the sewer issue. Further, people are driving up and down Steger Road at high rates of speed.

John Rosen of 3516 Carpenter St came before the board regarding parking issues along Carpenter St. There is a growing issue of cars from the Apartment Complex parking along his street. Previous issues on Sally Drive and Carpenter have been handled by posting signs for resident parking only. This has moved the problem east to his neighborhood. There have been confrontations and littering caused by this. Mr. Rosen is asking that Resident Only Parking be put in place on his street as well. Mayor Pro-tem

Lopez stated that we will discuss this. VA Seehausen stated that Mr. Rosen's son who works for the Village came to see me about this. We have been working to try and find out how far we have to go down. It is the Villages plan to get this done as soon as possible.

Fay K of 3506 Ashland Ave came before the board to ask who handles Mosquito abatement. It was stated that it is generally handled by Cook County. Ms. K lives in Will County. She asked if Steger had equipment. She said there is West Nile Virus all over our area. There are people in the hospital with West Nile. I work for Crete Township and their Mosquito Abatement Officer, and we should have a truck. I see Cook County side getting their truck because it comes from Cook County. I live on Will County side, I get nothing. Trustee Stewart stated, we had a spray that took place about 6 weeks ago, there was a code red regarding this. Fay K: six weeks is not enough. You have to do it every week. Dave Toepper stated that the Village does have the equipment. There are a lot of pros and cons, and I know you're going to have a lot more facts than I am going to have, the effectiveness of that spray. We used to treat, but we haven't treated for 5 years. We treat catch basins. We can discuss the Mosquito Abatement internally and see if we want to pick that back up again. At this time we are relying on Cook County. Fay K concluded that we are failing.

Isaak of 3413 Butler came before the board with further issues regarding student drop off and pick up at the Steger Intermediate School. I understand that they have a new system where they park at the Community Center, not entirely sure, but, a lot of parents did not want to wait there, so they have started parking on Butler Ave. It creates an issue with all the kids coming, cars coming in. You can't park in front of your own home. Can we put up signs that state no student drop off/pick up? Mayor Pro-tem Lopez thanked Isaak for bringing these concerns. His comments along with those of the Prokop's will be brought to the School Board.

REPORTS

Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen No Report.

Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper Introduced our new Code Enforcement Officer, Lou Del Cioro.

Chief Michael Long For the month of August the Steger Fire Department ran a total of 141 calls: 114 were medical and 27 were fire.

Police Chief Greg Smith No Report.

EMA Chief Jason Stevenson Since my last report we have had 7 town patrols, 1 assist to another Village. I just want to give a quick update: the hazard mitigation plan that I was working on with VA Seehausen has finally been approved by FEMA. The next step will set us up for the grant program for funding.

Community Center Director Diana Rossi So far since the last meeting, we have had about 950 people come through the building. Everything is going well with the sports programs. The fall baseball program is closed. We also are taking registrations for softball for girls. That's it.

Village Attorney No report.

Treasurer No report.

MAYORS REPORT Appointments of Recreation Board Members: Dusty Miller and Karjan Dambough:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to approve Mayor Peterson's appointment of Dusty Miller and Karjan Dambough to the Recreation Board. Trustee Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

Village Clerk Zagone gave the oath of office to Dusty Miller and Karjan Dambough.

Dave Mendez introduced his new Assistant Director of the Recreation Board: Monika Renaker. She has been my right hand gal for all the sports programs. It has been hard getting uniforms and she has stepped in and helped get things we need. She also handles league communications and coaching, scheduling and maintaining her children in the sports as well. I wanted everyone to have the chance to meet her.

VILLAGE CLERK Thanked the Village for their help and contribution to the St. Liborius Parish Picnic held on Sunday 8th. The use of picnic tables and closing of Halsted Blvd. provide for a great and safe event.

TRUSTEES REPORTS

Steve Thurmond: Water committee;
Update on water committee's progress. We are waiting for the white paper costs from the engineer. Once we receive them, we will bring options to the board to consider. I want to let you know that engineering has finally given us some direction and we are reviewing it right now. We are going to be having another meeting and then we are hopefully going to be bringing something to the board here in the next few meetings.

I will be attending the IML conference in Chicago.

BILLS

Trustee Stewart made a motion to ratify the bills paid on August 30, 2024. Trustee Trotier seconded the motion. Roll was called.

Discussion: Trustee Thurmond, there is a bill in there for the Chicago Heights Park District for uniforms. I don't know the financial particulars with it, seeing how the two mergers started in March, April. I may be wrong, but I assume that we would think this is an Intergovernmental agreement to know how the finances worked. What the logistics were about. How we were going to compliment each other. Trustee Stewart: in the past when I was running the Recreation Program, all of our bills were paid through our Booster Program. There is a separate fund that is held by the Village, so all that would come through Dave Mendez and would be brought to VA Seehausen. It is typically handled internally. Mayor Pro-tem Lopez asked if that is how it is being done. VA Seehausen confirmed that it is. Sometimes we pay for the uniforms and we bill the kids that went through Chicago Heights Park District. When they take revenues in for us, we bill them for the kids that they have taken in. It all goes through the Booster Fund.

The following Trustees voted aye; Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Trustee Thurmond abstained. Motion carried.

Trustee Stewart made a motion to pay all bills when funds become available. Trustee Joyce seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Thurmond made a motion to approve a request to go out for bid for the Stormwater Management Improvement. Trustee Joyce seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

At 7:51 pm:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (1).

Trustee Trotier seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

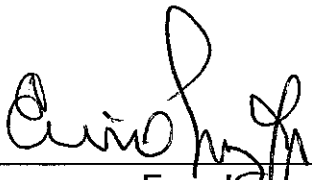
At 8:25 pm:

Trustee Joyce made a motion to reconvene in Regular Session of the Village Board Meeting. Trustee Trotier seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Motion carried.

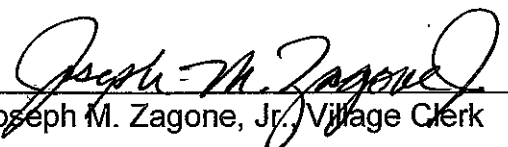
Being no further business:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.



Ernie Lopez, Jr. Mayor Pro-tem



Joseph M. Zagone, Jr. Village Clerk