

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 18<sup>th</sup> day of November 2024 in the Municipal Building of the Village of Steger, Illinois. Village Clerk Zagone 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, Joyce and Perchinski.

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

Clerk Zagone: In the absence of a chair, is there any objection to me, as clerk, proceeding with this process as I have done in the past when the mayor was not present?

With no objection:

We will begin as we have, I will ask for nominations beginning with Trustee Stewart. Is there someone you would like to nominate?  
Trustee Stewart nominated himself, Gerald Stewart.

Trustee Perchinski asked Trustee Stewart if he would be willing to step down as trustee if he takes the role as Mayor? Trustee Stewart: this is not your time to have this discussion. Trustee Perchinski: I will bring it up after all these are done.

Trustee Thurmond, do you wish to make a nomination to make?  
Trustee Thurmond: I have no nomination at this time.

Trustee Trotier, do you have a nomination to make?  
Trustee Trotier: I do, I nominate Trustee Lopez.

Trustee Joyce, would you like to make a nomination this evening?  
Trustee Joyce: Steve Thurmond

Trustee Perchinski, would you like to make a nomination?  
Trustee Perchinski, No nomination please.

Trustee Lopez?  
Trustee Lopez: None

Clerk Zagone: Okay, we have three nominations. Do all three agree to accept the position if voted in?

Trustee Lopez: I do Trustee Stewart: I do Trustee Thurmond: yes

Discussion: Trustee Perchinski: Trustee Stewart, would you be willing to step down from your trustee position to fulfill duties as a trustee?

Trustee Stewart: No, not at this time.

Trustee Perchinski: We all swore an oath to uphold the Constitution of the State of Illinois, the constitution clearly states that we have a mayor, a clerk and six trustees. I think you should think about that before accepting the nomination.

Trustee Joyce: it does not apply in the acting mayor position.

Trustee Perchinski: But, the constitution states that we have a mayor, a clerk and six trustees. That is upholding the law.

Trustee Joyce: The acting mayor does not vote as a mayor, he votes as a trustee.

Trustee Perchinski: So if we get the democratic process, we should have six trustees and a mayor. That's the right way to do it.

Clerk Zagone: I know I was assigned a lot of legal things to do here, when a trustee is appointed pro-tem for the evening, he still votes as a trustee. Mr. Vasselli concurred. When he becomes mayor, he loses his vote as a trustee, is that correct?

Attorney Vasselli: To fill the position of mayor, you forfeit the office of trustee to move up to office of mayor. That is set up in state law. Temporary Chair for that evening to keep business operating in the Village.

Clerk Zagone: If I swear someone in as mayor, does that person voluntarily give up their trustee seat? Attorney Vasselli: If that person forfeits the office of trustee, then they would give up their trustee seat.

Trustee Joyce: But that does not apply to an acting mayor. The provision in the acting mayor is that you are still a trustee, but you are the acting mayor.

Attorney Vasselli: You are a trustee who is acting as the mayor for the time of the meeting.

Clerk Zagone: Are we choosing an acting mayor?

Attorney Vasselli: We have always said that we were starting out to choose a person to matriculate up to the office of Village President. That was in the memorandum that I distributed originally and I will distribute again.

Trustee Perchinski reconfirmed that we should have a Mayor, a clerk and 6 trustees. If you can't do that, you should not accept the nomination.

Clerk Zagone: How to we get the 6<sup>th</sup> trustee?

Attorney Vasselli: In the event of a vacancy in the office of trustee, unlike mayor, a person can be selected by the then mayor to sit in that seat. There is a two part selection process, where the mayor appoints someone to sit in that seat. Just like any other appointment, they would be voted on by advice and consent of the board. An acting mayor has voting rights, but no veto power. You are not an executive, in the way that an elected mayor would be an executive.

Clerk Zagone: Again, I will ask if all three accept the nominations?

All three gave affirmative responses.  
Okay, we will take the vote:

|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Trustee Stewart:    | Gerald Stewart |
| Trustee Thurmond:   | Steve Thurmond |
| Trustee Trotier:    | Ernie Lopez    |
| Trustee Joyce:      | Steve Thurmond |
| Trustee Perchinski: | Ernie Lopez    |
| Trustee Lopez:      | Ernie Lopez    |

We have 1 vote for Trustee Stewart, 2 votes for Steve Thurmond and 3 votes for Ernie Lopez.

Clerk Zagone: We remain in the same position that we were two weeks ago.

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to appoint Trustee Lopez Chairman Pro-tem for the meeting. Trustee Trotier seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Perchinski. Trustees Thurmond and Joyce voted no. Motion carried.

Attorney Vasselli: Mr. Clerk if I may, and Mr. Acting Chair, this will allow Mr. Lopez to sign all documents as chief executive officer, that are approved tonight. We have an operational issue because we do not have a sitting mayor at this point in time. Because we have documents including 3 Resolutions that are drafted tonight. We have contracts that need to be executed by someone, and with him sitting in that stead, we will have him execute and legally there is no objection. I just want to make sure we are all clear on this. Respectfully, we have a Village to run.

No objections heard.

#### **AWARDS, HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

None

#### **MINUTES**

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 4<sup>th</sup> Village Board meeting as all members have copies. Trustee Thurmond seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

#### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Robert Pluskota of 3312 Enterprise Park Ave in South Chicago Heights introduced himself as new Commander of VFW in Steger, Illinois. The past commander had medical issues that made it necessary to bring in a new Commander. Mr. Pluskota has been installed as new Commander and is working hard to bring the VFW back, making improvements to the facility and making it a meeting place for all residents in Steger to take advantage of. The Village has been instrumental in assisting where it could to help with these improvements. Mr. Pluskota would like to continue to improve the facilities by making bathrooms ADA accessible for all including himself who because of disability is unable to use the bathrooms at the VFW. The trustees have asked for plans and drawings for what needs to be done, and when presented, the village will investigate how it can partner in the effort.

Vallorie O'Neil, President of the Lakehill Townhome Association came before the board to discuss trees that were lost because of Dutch Elm Disease and sidewalks that have cracks. Trustee Perchinski: as far as the trees go, we are working on a grant for homes in Will County, but we have to have volunteers, so if you want trees, we will need volunteers. I think we will be getting up to 50 trees. Talk to your neighbors and we can get it going in the Spring. As for the sidewalks, we are struggling to get streets done first. The Village does not currently have a sidewalk program in place at this time. One of the other residents asked if someone should fall on the sidewalk, who's responsibility is that? Attorney Vasselli: is it privately owned or publicly owned? As village owned sidewalks, we often times have lawsuits for people who do fall. We defend those and I will include in the memorandum for next meeting how the village handles these.

## **REPORTS**

**Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen** Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November will be the last yard waste pick-up. The Clerks Office and our non-essential departments will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of November. We have our Santa Parade on November 30<sup>th</sup> along with Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street. The parade starts at 9 am, starting on the west side of town. We will have our final street sweeping of the year, the first week of December. Depending on the weather, it will take place between December 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> starting on the north side of town and working south. Our Village Luncheon is scheduled for December 20<sup>th</sup> here at Village Hall from Noon til 2. On the agenda in front of you this evening we have our tentative tax levy that is going to be presented. I am asking for the tax levy to be on display in the Clerks Office. It has to be on display for 20 days, so it will not be up for your final approval until December 16<sup>th</sup>. The 33<sup>rd</sup> street sewer project was supposed to wrap up today with paving, but weather has set that back. Hopefully they will be out tomorrow to finish that up. BP is waiting on their final inspection on their elevator in order to open for business. We are working among staff to see if there is a way to give them a way to open without using the elevator. We want to make sure we don't carry any liability for that elevator. If anyone has questions on the resolutions, we can address those as they come up. I hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving.

**Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper** I have had a few inquiries about the street lights coming on at random times up and down Steger Road. I am working with ComEd, they will eventually have to replace the nodes on top of the lights and turn them officially back over to us. In the next few days we should see that taken care of. Trustee Perchinski added that there is a light out on the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> and Union. Mr. Toepper will look into it.

**Chief Michael Long** For the month of October: we answered 178 calls for service: 125 medical, 33 fire. People should have been receiving our flyers in the mail for our raffle and the Pancake Breakfast with Santa. This is our 11<sup>th</sup> year doing it, it's always a good time. Come on out and see it! Finally, we picked the winners of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Coloring Contest: Mia Denny from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Zariah Boyd from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Addisyn Johnson from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. They all won a ride to school in the Fire Engine.

**Assistant Police Chief Pete Fajman** I will refer to the report I sent you and just to add on to that, I went to the annual SWAT Team meeting. At that meeting they discussed an incident that recently happened in Tinley Park. Our local SERT operators went to lead another SWAT team, and they got high praises from not only the County, but from the State SWAT TEAM for their professionalism. They resolved the situation without anyone getting hurt. They did a great job.

**EMA Chief Jason Stevenson** For the last month we had Halloween and the Bonfire. We had 6 regular patrols, we had 3 assisting other departments. Jack Willett, our newest member is now off probation. Finally, when we switched on our new Emergency Siren, Steger Estates was kind of left out with an old siren and they were not attached to the new system. I was able to work with them and got Steger Estates a donation so their siren is now attached to our siren.

**Community Center Director Diana Rossi** For the last 3 weeks we have had approximately 800 people come through the building. It is a little bit lower because of voting. December 13<sup>th</sup> we are going to have our annual Senior Luncheon. We would like to see all of you come if you can. We also are trying to get some new classes into the Community Center that will maybe get some of our teens involved.

**Village Attorney** Happy Thanksgiving, and I will prepare a memorandum for the next meeting.

**Treasurer** No report.

**MAYORS REPORT** No Report.

**VILLAGE CLERK** I just want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. I would also like to express my personal condolences to family of John Cashman, past village trustee.

## **TRUSTEES REPORTS**

### **Trustee Thurmond:**

Water committee,

To refresh the board and residents, for the past 9 months the water committee has met to discuss Steger's water quality, water system and potential remedies to connect dead ends. Through those meetings the committee has come together to prioritize these challenging issues. We recognize that we first need to make infrastructure changes to allow our water flow consistent throughout the Village. Once these changes have been completed, we can monitor the impact these changes have had on our water systems' quality. With the help from our Village Engineer Clay Shipley, we have identified 8 projects connecting approximately 6000 feet of water mains to loop our water system. These changes will allow water to consistently flow throughout the system. We are committed to finding low cost solutions for the Village of Steger water challenges. Remedies for these will be presented to the board soon.

I just wanted to add to Clerk Zagone's comment about the passing of John Cashman. For those interested, his services are November 24<sup>th</sup> from 1-5 pm at Steger Memorial Chapel.

## **BILLS**

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

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to place the tentative tax levy on display in the clerks office. Trustee Thurmond seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

Discussion regarding a blood drive in honor of the late Mayor Peterson:

Trustee Perchinski: I have two things, first of all this should not even be on our agenda. This should be taken up with our staff in the Village Hall. Secondly, Trustee Thurmond, did you talk to the family about this?

Trustee Thurmond: Talk to the family about about the blood drive? No.

Trustee Perchinski: Political pandering is embarrassing.

Trustee Thurmond: What was the comment?

Trustee Perchinski repeated his statement.

Trustee Thurmond: Donating blood is political pandering? Shame on you.

Trustee Trotier: I want to make a comment, I believe consulting with the family first to put something in honor of a husband and a parent is respectful. In not doing that, I think that is not respectful to the family. You should respect the family first and to let them help make the decision to do something in someone's name.

Trustee Perchinski: and this should not even come here. It should go straight to the Village Administrator. If you need to use the Community Center, that is one thing, but that is how that is dealt with. As a trustee, you should know that.

Chairman Pro-tem Lopez: again, it is on the agenda. We have motion to strike.

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to strike the request to hold a blood drive in honor of the late Mayor Peterson. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion.

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

Trustee Joyce made a motion to award the bid of the Proposed Improvement Stormwater Infrastructure contract to Sunset Sewer. Trustee Perchinski seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to adopt RESOLUTION 1189: A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROVING A PROPOSAL FROM ROBINSON ENGINEERING TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR LEAD LINE SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENTS IN THE VILLAGE OF STEGER, COOK AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS. Trustee Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to adopt RESOLUTION NO. 1190: A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROVING A PROPOSAL FROM ROBINSON ENGINEERING TO PREPARE A LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PLAN FOR THE VILLAGE OF STEGER, COOK AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS. Trustee Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

Trustee Perchinski made a motion to adopt RESOLUTION NO. 1191: A RESOLUTION AMENDING AN AGREEMENT WITH ROBINSON ENGINEERING, LTD TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO LEAD SERVICE LINE MATERIAL INVENTORY FOR THE VILLAGE OF STEGER, COOK AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS. Trustee Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier, Joyce and Perchinski. Motion carried.

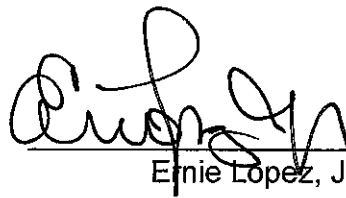
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Trustee Joyce confirmed with Attorney Vasselli that these three resolutions are the ones Trustee Lopez will be signing as Chairman Pro-tem.

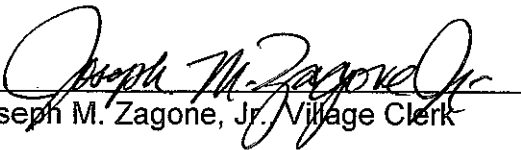
Being no further business:

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.



Ernie Lopez, Jr. Chairman Pro-tem



Joseph M. Zagone, Jr. Village Clerk