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The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held at the Village Hall on Wednesday October 25, 2023. Mayor Jim Copelin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Clerk Gail Hedges called roll: Craig Busch “Here”, Joe Bukantos “Here”, Chuck Apgar “Here”, Randy Olson “Here”, and Dianne Brenning “Here”. Larry Baer was absent. Also present were Superintendent Jeremy Rhodes and Police Chief Paul Carpenter.

A motion was made by Bukantos, seconded by Olson, to approve the amended minutes of October 11, 2023. The motion passed 5-0.

Brenning made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to approve the bills. The motion passed 5-0.

*Visitors*

Ben Spreen, from Benton and Associates, was present to share that the north 1st water main project specifications are completed and ready for bidding. Spreen indicated the specifications would be posted in the next few weeks and applications would be due the first of the year.

*Public Works:*

Superintendent Rhodes had nothing to report. Olson asked if Comanche Village residents could use the Village dump and was told that because they do not use Village services, they could not.

*Police:*

Chief Carpenter again shared with the Board the estimate to replace the 2013 Chevrolet Tahoe. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve the purchase of a new Dodge Durango in the amount of $39,691.00. The motion passed 5-0.

Chief Carpenter presented to the Board the benefits of adding a canine unit to the Divernon Police Department. Safety to the public, especially this community, is the primary purpose for wanting a canine unit. The canine being considered would be used for drug enforcement and search and rescue. Having a canine unit will deter the flow of drug traffic into Divernon protecting our kids from exposure. Drug searches, using the canine, which result in seizure will result in a monetary gain of 30% of the take which will be used to support the care and keeping of the canine as well as police department expenses. Discussion followed. Brenning made a motion, seconded by Olson to purchase the canine for $1500.00. The motion passed 5-0.

Chief Carpenter and Apgar continue to look into grants to purchase body cameras which are required for all police departments by 2025. Cameras are required for each officer as well as each police vehicle. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Busch, to approve the purchase at the bid amount as to comply with state stature. The motion passed 5-0.

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Busch, to cancel the $3500.00 annual agreement with the VPShare reporting system due to the annual cost. The department will use the Computerized Based Reporting system, at no cost, to record all police actions. The CBR will capture the same information as the VPShare system.

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*Committee Reports:*

*Economic Dev., Zoning, TIF, Building Permits:*

Busch reported that he had contacted Ryan McCrady, of Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance, asking if there was any interest in either of the old gas station properties. McCrady indicated he had no leads at this time. Busch also reported that Nextsite is promoting the properties at meetings and trade shows. Commercial realtor Todd Smith contacted Mayor Copelin indicating he is interested in marketing the properties. Busch brought up that zoning ordinances need to be reviewed for clarity. Mayor Copelin asked that discussion be tabled until further information could be gathered. Mayor Copelin reported that he had received paperwork from the EPA requiring a corrective action plan and budget be submitted since the Village is seeking reimbursement for the cost of the remediation at the north gas station property.

*Public Utilities Water, Gas and Sewer*

Bukantos presented a request from Kenya Cisco for adjustment of her water bill due to a leaky toilet. Bukantos made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to make the adjustment once a receipt for repair was presented. The motion passed 4-1 with Olson voting present. Bukantos also mentioned that he had been told that Auburn received notice they would be receiving almost $1.0 million in reimbursement for gas line transportation fees charged since 2021 as a result of a class action lawsuit against the gas company. Divernon was also part of the lawsuit but hasn’t received any notice of the amount of reimbursement.

*Finance, Personnel, GIS:*

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Busch, to enter into an agreement with Good Energy for a commercial rate of $0.08277 per kWh for 36 months starting March 2024. The motion passed 5-0.

*Public Safety, Health and Safety:*

Olson reported that certified letters will be going out for ordinance violations. The letter will cite the ordinance violation and the timeframe for abatement. A copy of the ordinance will also be included. Failure to abate within the given timeframe will result in a fine. It was suggested that request for bids should go out soon for garbage pick-up since the current agreement expires April 2024.

*Public Works, Streets, Alleys, and Sidewalks:*

Brenning shared a draft ordinance for parking around the Village square which will be discussed and voted on next meeting.

*Village Communication/Building, Grounds & Lights, Parks, Recreation*

Busch made a motion, seconded by Apgar, to approve $2000.00 for Com Microfilm to digitize old ordinances and minutes for easy storage and the ability to search. The motion passed 5-0. Mayor Copelin indicated that based on attorney recommendation, the Village will not stream board meetings.

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Copelin stated that residents are invited to attend all meeting in person. Meeting dates are posted on the website and on the Village sign. Apgar reported the newsletter should be ready for mailing next week. Apgar provided for review a draft yard waste disposal ordinance which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Brenning shared that she had the original 100 Year Celebration history book which was prepared David Brady. The 125 Year Celebration book will build from the 100 year book.

New Business

None

Olson made a motion to go into executive session at 8:25 p.m. Apgar made a motion to return to regular session at 9:05 p.m. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to hire Jared Leak as a FT police officer and canine handler at $25.00 per hour, promote Mike Lavin to Sergeant at $27.00 per hour and increase the salary of Officer Christian Porter to $25.00 per hour all of which are in alignment with salaries of surrounding departments. The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion from Busch at 9:13 p.m.

Jim Copelin Gail Hedges

Mayor Clerk