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The regular meeting of the Village of Divernon Board of Trustees was held at the Village Hall on Wednesday January 24, 2024. President Pro Tem Larry Baer 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”, Dianne Brenning “Here”, and Larry Baer “Here”. Also present was Police Chief Paul Carpenter and Superintendent Jeremy Rhodes. Mayor Jim Copelin was absent.

A motion was made by Olson, seconded by Busch, to approve the amended minutes of January 24, 2024. The motion passed 5-0.

Olson made a motion, seconded by Brenning, to approve the bills which included reissuing a check to BLH for the Village Clean-up Day. The motion passed 5-0.

*Visitors:*

There were no visitors.

*Public Works:*

Superintendent Rhodes reported that a preconstruction meeting will take place on February 21, 2024 at Village Hall to discuss the water main project from N. 1st St. to the sewer plant. The persons dumping non-yard waste items illegally at the Village dump site were identified and have or will pick up the illegal items. The dump is for yard waste disposal only.

*Police:*

Chief Carpenter introduced Dustin Tucker as the new part-time officer. Tucker currently works at the Springfield Air Port as an officer, and has fire and EMS certification as well as police officer training. Karma, the Village police dog, will continue training into March 2024. She is doing well in her training. Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve the purchase of winter shirts for police officers in the amount of $875.00. The motion passed 5-0.

*Committee Reports:*

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

Nothing to report.

*Public Utilities Water, Gas and Sewer*

The gas rate for January was slightly down from December 2023. Because of the severe cold spell, bills were higher although not as high as was expected. Discussion followed on how the $80,000.00 from the gas transportation settlement could be spent. No decision was made.

*Finance, Personnel, GIS:*

Brenning shared that normally the Village would be seeking a new auditor to audit the Village records, but it has become very difficult to find a firm willing to take on more work, or the cost is very expensive. There was discussion about contacting the Village’s current firm to see if they would extend the current contract for another year. Brenning will contact the firm to gather information including cost. Busch asked about a budget for the Block Party. Last year the budget was $3,000.00. It was

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decided the budget should be the same for this year. Apgar asked how many billable hours Heather Rideout had incurred to date. Discussion followed as to whether some of the activities should be contracted out, i.e. Muni Billing and grant writing. There was also discussion on the need for a substitute for Heather White, the Office Manager, or if a part-time person should be hired to assist in performing various activities, and act as substitute for the office manager when necessary.

*Public Safety, Health and Safety:*

Olson reported that people continue to park on the sidewalk at the old Mason Building. There was discussion about parking on Dodds St. between 1st St. and the railroad tracks. Sufficient room for the fire trucks must be maintained.

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

Nothing to report

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

Apgar reported that the Civic Plus contract was up for renewal. Last year the cost was $647.15 and this year the cost is $763.64. There was discussion on how Civic Plus could be used more to keep the residents informed. The consensus was to approve the renewal of $763.64.

Old Business:

Bukantos shared that he had looked into Christmas decorations for the Village Square. Bukantos shared a brochure with a picture of the decoration that is colorful and festive. Board members felt the decoration would look nice in the square.

New Business:

Busch requested that Tabitha Bock Photography and El Quetzalito Mexican Restaurant be added to the business district.

Apgar made a motion at 7:39 p.m. to enter Executive Session. Bukantos made a motion to return to regular session at 7:45 p.m.

Apgar made a motion, seconded by Olson, to approve the Executive Session minutes of December 13, 2023, December 27, 2023, January 10, 2024 and January 24, 2024. The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m. with a motion from Busch.

Jim Copelin Gail Hedges

Mayor Clerk