VILLAGE OF WESTFIELD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

September 20, 2021 7:00 PM

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Mike VandeVelde, Deputy Mayor Denny Lutes, Trustee Mike Catalano, Trustee Judy Einach, Trustee Josh Freifeld

**STAFF:** Marybelle Beigh, Bonnie Rae Strickland, Chris Reese, Nick Schaaf, Ed LeBarron, Rob Genthner, Andrew Thompson, Andrew Webster, Vince Luce,

**GUESTS:** Premo de Graaf and Marcello Tormenti (Marc) of Monitorsky (Sp?) Inc., Don McCord, Executive Director WDC

**ATTENDEES:** Braiden McElhaney

**MAYOR/BOARD:**

**MINUTES APPROVAL**: The August 16, 2021, Minutes were approved as submitted J. Einach motioning for approval, seconded by Josh Freifeld and carried unanimously.

**SRO CONTRACT:** The School Resource Officer (SRO) Contract between the Village and the School was approved as submitted on a motion by Josh Freifeld and seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously

**Municipal Solutions 2 Year Contract:** The two-year contract renewal for the Village’s financial counsel for long term and BAN borrowing and related requirements was approved unanimously on a motion by Mike Catalano, seconded by Josh Freifeld and carried unanimously.

**DISCUSSION WITH CRYPTO CURRENCY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY:** Don McCord introduced Premo de Graaf and Marcello Tormenti representing the Icelandic Crypto Currency Company Monitorsky to the virtual public board meeting. The two developers outlined their plans for a potential crypto currency mining company to be developed in Westfield. Don noted that both he and DPW Director Andrew Thompson spent about 6 weeks with the developers outlining potential areas for their development, the impact on electric rates and safeguards in place to prevent a high usage organization like this from causing the Village’s incremental power to go up. There is a potential for 3-5 jobs initially and more as the company grows. The company is interested in purchasing or leasing property in the Village close to a substation with a plan for eventual expansion. The business is heavily reliant on electricity for its servers and to cooling systems to keep them operating efficiently. Westfield’s economical electric rates are a deciding factor in their interest here.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED SALE/LEASE OF VILLAGE OWNED REAL PROPERTY:** Mayor VandeVelde requested an Executive Session after the regular open public meeting business has been completed.

**HISTORIAN:** Marybelle noted that she is looking for a file cabinet to store the historian records in her office in Eason Hall. She also submitted her report of activities since August 16, 2021.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT:** Chief Genthner reported that Officer Dylan Pratt has resigned from the Westfield Police Department effective September 15, 2021. The Board approved the resignation on a motion by Josh Freifeld and seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously.

The Chief requested an Executive Session after the regular public meeting session to discuss the employment history of a particular employee in the Village of Westfield Police Department.

The Chief’s monthly report was approved on a motion by Judy Einach and seconded by Denny Lutes and carried unanimously.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** Chief Chris Reese discussed aspects of a recent call and the facts regarding the condition of the victim at the time of the call. The Chief noted that they were on scene time stamped by his phone in seven minutes and that the condition of the person was unfortunately beyond the abilities of any rescue/EMT service.

The Chief would like to revisit the design of the Fire Hall bathrooms noting that they needed to be more handicapped accessible. He expressed that he thought they could revisit the three scenarios developed by In-scale Architects a couple of years ago and could potentially save some money in the process. The Board felt that he should move forward with getting revised cost estimates for this. Vince mentioned that architectural services are considered a professional service so even though it’s a good idea to get comparisons from different firms, it is not required as per the Village’s procurement policy. Code Officer Bonnie Rae Strickland said because this is a public building you want to be sure that all Code and ADA requirements are met in any plan that is developed, noting that a professional design, engineering and/or stamped architectural drawings are required. The mayor noted that Recovery Act Funds may be used for this purpose and the Village’s first allocation is around $154,000.

The Chief gave an update on the status of the new ambulance development process. The Chief also noted that it is probably a great time to begin considering once again billing third party health insurance companies for ambulance services here in the Village and Town of Westfield. The cost of a new ambulance will be in the $160,000 range. The mayor noted that the Fire Department Equipment Fund has money in it and the Town of Westfield also assists with making payments for new Apparatus purchases. The mayor also noted he and Fire Department Liaison Mike Catalano coordinated a couple of meetings in the past with subject matter expert Brad Pinsky Esq. of Pinsky Law Group and information from Ambulance Billing Company Manager Dawn Zachary who also gave presentation to the Fire Department in the past.

The Chief presented his monthly report to the Board, and it was approved on a motion by Mike Catalano, seconded by Josh Freifeld and unanimously approved.

**RECREATON DEPARTMENT:** Recreation Director Andrew Webster presented his Recreation Department report which was accepted on a motion by Denny Lutes and seconded by Josh Freifeld and carried unanimously.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT:** Code Officer Bonnie Rae Strickland presented her monthly permit report noting one building permit and 15 “Other Permits” issued for the month of August 2021. Total fees came to $795.60 for the month-long period. The report was approved unanimously on a motion by Denny Lutes and seconded by Judy Einach.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:** Public Works Superintendent Ed LeBarron gave an update on various projects his department has been finishing up on. Everyone mentioned that the Parking Lot at the rear of the Main Street businesses looks great and the crews did an excellent job. Ed’s report was approved on a motion by Mike Catalano and seconded by Denny Lutes and carried unanimously.

Ed requested to transfer $15,000 from the Street Department Parking Lot Expense account to the Parking Lot Capital Reserve Fund. This was approved unanimously on a motion by Trustee Catalano and seconded by Trustee Einach.

Ed also requested that permission to make an expenditure, subject to permissive referendum of an amount not to exceed $10,000 from the Street Department Parking Lot Capital Reserve Fund. The Board authorized, subject to permissive referendum, an expenditure not to exceed $10,000 from the Street Department Parking Lot Capital Reserve fund for any finale parking lot related work that may be required on a motion by Josh Freifeld, seconded by Mike Catalano and approved unanimously.

Ed recommended that probationary employee Nick Vacanti (Utility Worker) be made permanent effective September 21, 2021, as Nick has secured his required CDL license. Mike Catalano motioned to approve this recommendation and it c was seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously.

**WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT:** DPW Director Andrew Thompson noted there were no updates for the Water & Sewer Department.

**ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT:** DPW Director Andrew Thompson requested that the tree trimming bid for sections of S. Portage and Rte. 394 submitted by Bentley Tree service in the amount of $19,800 be tabled at this time. He noted that it was last trimmed about 6 years ago.

Andrew reported that a company called First Light Fiber (a fiber optic company) is asking to attach to

200 of the Village’s electric utility poles. A “make ready” survey was completed, and the Electric Department is going to have to replace 57 poles to have taller poles in locations for the First Light Fiber attachments. The Electric Department has begun work on that pole replacement project. The problem is due to Covid, there is a back log in getting the necessary poles.

Andrew requested an Executive Session after the regular public meeting section of the board meeting to discuss the employment history of a particular person in the Westfield Electric Department.

**TREASURER:** The Mayor noted that Treasurer Becki Paternosh was away at NYCOM Fall Training but that the revenue and expense reports for August were submitted for review and approval. The reports were approved unanimously on a motion by Mike Catalano and seconded by Denny Lutes.

**CLERK:** The following warrants were approved as submitted on a motion by Denny Lutes and seconded by Josh Freifeld and carried unanimously.

Capital Reserve (McClurg) Warrant # $38,022.92

Parking Lot W#13 $30,320.06

Electric W#21 $167,001.03

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| Electric  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#22 $27,193.40  |
| General Fund  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#19 $153,787.75  |
| Sewer  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W# 20 $45,150.19  |
| Water  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#21 $12,754.85  |
| Capital Project Parking Lot  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#11 $62,411.57  |
| Water Project  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#19 $5,098.50  |
| Sewer  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#17 $11,198.51  |
| General Fund  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#17 $117,990.12  |
| Electric  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#19 $200,981.26  |
| Water  |   |   |   |   |   |   | W#18 $29,619.76  |

 Vince asked the board if it was ok to do an informal unscientific survey via a Facebook post to determine if we should hold trick or treating this year on Saturday October 30th or Sunday October 31st because Halloween falls on Sunday this year. The Board had no problems with that.

Researchers from the University of Rochester ICE & Chemistry called to get permission to do some testing of the natural methane gas leaking from Ottaway Park. Vince said there may be deed restrictions that we need to look up. Otherwise, it appears that they do nothing intrusive to the land or property whatsoever. The information packet will be emailed to the Board Members for their review.

There were two residents who didn’t realize the Board meeting was a zoom meeting. The Board had no issue with setting up a computer in the North Room for those that may want to virtually attend a zoom village board meeting in the future.

**QUESTIONS FROM VISITORS:** Marybelle Beigh asked what could be done for the paper street that she lives on known as Washington St. Extension? A discussion ensued about the requirements of the Village for maintaining a paper street only. The Mayor will get legal advice to determine the responsibilities of the Village relative to a paper only street which the Village has never maintained in the past.

**ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The board entered executive session on a motion by Josh Freifeld and seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously.

The Board unanimously agreed to exit Executive Session on a motion by Mike Catalano, seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** As a result of the Executive Session, the Board approved the hiring of Scott Balon as a fulltime Patrolman in the Westfield Police Department contingent upon passing two other civil service requirements for the position. The motion was made by Mike Catalano and seconded by Judy Einach and carried unanimously.

There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Judy Einach, seconded by Josh Freifeld and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Vincent E. Luce

Administrator & Village Clerk