Village of New Berlin

Minutes of October 10, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting for the Village of New Berlin was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor, Peter Lennon.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Peter Lennon, Mayor

Dave Smith, Trustee/Deputy Mayor

Maryellen Canuel, Trustee

Jim Crawford, Trustee

Members Absent: Josh Burchill, Trustee

Others Present: Jared Kline, Brian Skidmore, Scott Church, Kelly Anderson, Don Anderson.

**ROLL CALL**:

Burchill– absent

Canuel – here

Crawford –here

Lennon – here

Smith – here

**PRIOR MINUTES**

Minutes of the September 12th and September 21st meetings were approved by a motion by Dave Smith. The motion was seconded by Pete Lennon. VOTE: Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

**PUBLIC CONCERNS AND VISITORS**

There were no public concerns brought to the attention of the board.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Don Anderson was in attendance and submitted the Fire Department report to the Village Board. The Fire Department went on 8 calls in September, bringing them to 71 calls year to date. The Fire Department will be participating in Halloween at the Firehouse located at 75 South Main Street in the Village. They will also have a truck with lights in front of the station assisting with crossing the street. The Harvest Dinner will be held on Saturday, November 4th. Supporters can eat at the station this year, in addition to pick up and delivery. Maryellen Canuel has asked for a master key to the department so that she can arrange for annual service on the furnace and other building maintenance needs. Don referred her to Larissa who oversees keys to the station. Mayor Lennon has advised that the kids sign that was erected in front of the community center that was completed during the summer youth program will be moved closer to the DPW building as the fire department has requested that it be moved to an area that does not block the view of the memorial in front of the Community Center.

**EMS Report**

The EMS Report was submitted by Mayor Lennon. The EMS department went on 42 calls in September, only 19 calls resulted in billable transport. Mayor Lennon anticipates a shift in call volume as Sherburne ambulance covers more calls to the west of their municipality, they may require additional mutual aid assistance within their coverage area. Kelly has requested that the call volume report be returned to an excel spreadsheet, as it has been done in the past. Maryellen Canuel agreed that excel offers more options to reduce manual calculations. Mayor Lennon reported to the board that he will be seeking approval for the hiring of a new BLS part time medic. A new system was rolled out at the county that allows a municipality to hire part time ALS and BLS medics under a non-competitive basis, which will greatly speed up the hiring process, eliminating the need to wait for the county to score an application for placement and hiring from a competitive list, so long as they only work 20 hours per week or less. To exceed the 20-hour maximum, the candidate must be scored and hired from a competitive civil service list.

**DPW**

The DPW has begun leaf pick up. They recently ordered a new hose for the leaf sucker and have a new hydraulic lift that is ready for installation. Fuel tanks are up and running for bulk fuel at the DPW, this will be shared, and gas usage will be tracked between the DPW, Fire Department, and EMS departments. Auto delivery has been stopped with Norton Gas for propane. The department is working closely with the Enforcement officer on mowing and trimming lawns that are not in compliance with village zoning regulations. Bills will be sent out at the end of the season, and added to the properties tax bills if they are not paid. The DPW has also assisted the Town of New Berlin with multiple water main breaks in recent weeks. The Town is billed for the assistance as a “shared service” for each occurrence, with the exception of one assist at Milbrook as Jared did not feel that it warranted enough time to bill for, it was expressed that it should be submitted for billing for future occurrences.

**ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

Scott Church provided a status update on several properties within the Village that he is working with to restore compliance with property maintenance violations. He is currently working with 12 properties, 5 of which have complied with the requests. He is sending out one certified letter to a property which is resistant to compliance with the zoning ordinances. Mayor Lennon has advised that he will be walking around to view the properties with Scott and Dave Kaminski of the New Berlin police department.

**GRANT STATUS**

Brian Skidmore was in attendance and provided the board with an update on the funding status for the water project. He anticipates funding announcements within the next several weeks through the end of the calendar year with funding offers for the village. The Village has qualified for hardship status, which will qualify the Village for 0% interest loans. Funding applications could take through next summer for the funding to be processed, he has advised that the board did approve a bond anticipation note for the project, this could be applied for by the end of the year, which would allow the project to continue with the design phase while the hardship package is approved, and then the interest-bearing bond anticipation note can be rolled into the zero interest hardship loan for the duration of the repayment. Kelly Anderson asked if that timing would allow for a public information session to discuss the financial package and loan repayment with village residents and allow for a vote of the public on the funding package, as was promised by the Mayor in October of 2021. Brian Skidmore was not aware that the board intended to move forward with a vote, as that would push back the timing of the survey, mapping, and design phase of the project. Mayor Lennon advised that yes in fact Kelly was correct and that he had made the promise to the community. Brian Skidmore stressed the importance of ensuring that individuals in favor of the project were in attendance for the vote. Additional information will be provided once it is available, as the Village cannot schedule the meeting or vote until all financial information is available from the grant and loan providers.

No new information was available on the pending grant for the construction of the firehouse and community center. Mayor Lennon did report that the $75,000 grant from Angelino’s office is moving forward, the state should be able to act on the funding in January when they reconvene. The Village should be receiving a request for additional information in the coming week.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Maryellen Canuel presented the board with an updated status report for the CD Loan committee. There are currently 4 active loans with an outstanding balance of $41,952.60, with no delinquent payments. There is currently $137,959.15 available for lending. One loan was paid off since last month’s report. There were no new applications since the last board meeting. They are working on ways to stimulate more interest in the loan program throughout the community. A question was raised about utilizing the funds for other purposes by a board member. The funds were received through a Community Development Grant to be used for the sole purpose of lending funds to village residents to make improvements to their property, it cannot be re-purposed or distributed for other purposes.

The Community Events committee was not in attendance at the meeting. Mayor Lennon advised that they had a meeting approximately a week and a half ago. They are currently working on the tree lighting ceremony that has been scheduled for the 2nd of December. The music will start at 5pm and the ceremony will begin at 6pm. Refreshments will be served, and the School of Dance will perform on the basketball court. Kelly Banks will be reaching out to the Fire Department to discuss the involvement of the department and use of a fire truck to deliver Santa on.

The Safer, Slower, New Berlin Committee was not represented at the meeting. Mayor Lennon reported that Josh Farley is continuing to push on the involvement of the committee in supporting Halloween activities. They will be out with vests and flashlights on Halloween to assist with slowing traffic for the safety of the youth. Pete is working with the Town to have the electronic speed sign set up and available prior to Halloween.

Mayor Lennon reported that the planning board is currently working on several revisions to the zoning regulations to remove regulations that are no longer relevant in the Village or likely to be needed within the next ten years. The committee is looking to the Spring of 2024 to begin data collection for the Comprehensive Plan they are discussing for the Village.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Maryellen has spoken to Dave Kaminski regarding the cameras for the Village, she will reach out and discuss her questions directly with the vendor so that she can move forward with the project.

Maryellen had a conversation with the attorney for the Pellegrino building and the results of the survey. The Village owns the parking spaces that were marked as private parking for the building. She anticipates that the item is resolved but will leave it as an open item until next month if the owner’s attorney reaches back out to her.

Dave Smith is continuing to work on the Audit of the Office, he has had multiple work conflicts that have prevented him from completing the review for the 2022/2023 Fiscal Year. He will work on scheduling a time to complete the review soon. Kelly has suggested that Maryellen finish the audit as she was assigned as a backup. Jim has not had an opportunity to start the audit of the Fire Department for the 2022/2023 Fiscal Year. Mayor Lennon has requested the audits be completed before the next board meeting.

Dave also updated the board on the status of the new website. The website has gone live. Kelly reached out to the designer of the website after last month's meeting, he has not responded to her emails, nor has she had an opportunity to check to see if the items were resolved and the designer just failed to respond to the emails. Dave has requested that he be copied in on the emails going forward, and to be made aware if the revisions were not completed.

Maryellen updated the board that she is awaiting a written quote from a contractor who would make repairs to the facia and spindles on the gazebo at the park, repair the front porch of the village office and install a new door for the apartments above the village offices. The current door is rotting through. She has not ordered a door yet, as she wants to lock in a contractor for the installation of the door prior to ordering the door.

Maryellen Canuel made a motion to accept the estimate from Kascon to encapsulate the lead paid at the Village office and library building and prime the building. The estimate is for $44,000 and will be scheduled for the Spring. Dave Smith seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Kelly has been asked to draft a bid request for bulk fuel and propane rates for the 2024 calendar year, so that the board can lock in on rates as soon as possible.

Maryellen Canuel advised that the questions regarding the survey for the sale of the old firehouse have been resolved and the deed can now be drafted to continue forward with the sale. The purchasers have requested that the agreement for the leaseback of the back portion of the firehouse be changed from 5 years to 4 years as the original offer was agreed upon a year ago. Maryellen Canuel made the motion to modify the contract to a 4-year leaseback that is renewable annually. Pete Lennon seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Mayor Lennon presented a proposed re-draft of the Pay Procedure for BLS Medics/Drivers that was originally voted into village policy in August 2015. The original policy outlines that an EMS employee that is acting as a medic is paid as a medic when they are performing medical duties but will be paid at the volunteer rate if they sign up for a shift to drive the ambulance. Mayor Lennon’s proposal would allow for newly hired medics to be paid at the BLS or ALS rate of pay for up to 6 months so that they can be trained by an experienced BLS or ALS medic. His revised policy would also allow for ALS or BLS medics to pick up shifts driving at their ALS or BLS rate of pay outside of the 6-month training period if there is a driver shift that becomes open due to unprogrammed sickness or family emergency within 36 hours of the start of the previously scheduled shift. Kelly Anderson expressed her concern of the affordability of such a policy change, as the Village does not budget to pay drivers at a rate of $18.25 to $25 per hour. She is concerned as the service is already operating at a loss this fiscal year, and she is concerned that the Village will not be able to sustain such a policy given the current revenue patterns of the service. Kelly has been asked to compile financial figures of the potential impact of this proposed policy for review by the board at the next meeting.

Maryellen Canuel made the motion to suspend the current BLS/driver pay policy through the month of November, where the BLS medics who drive will be paid at the BLS rate and not the driver rate. Dave Smith seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Maryellen Canuel requested that the fence around the water tower be left as part of the water project due to cost constraints. The remainder of the board in attendance agreed.

Estimates for upgrades to the basketball court and fence have been received but are much higher than anticipated. Dave is currently working with potential donors who may be able to mitigate the cost to the Village. There is currently a funding gap of $45,000-$50,000.

Pete has requested that the preparation of a letter of support for the Railroad Museum be added to his list of action items.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Lennon opened bids for the procurement of a used ambulance for the New Berlin Ambulance Service. The Village is looking for a Type 1 ambulance that is 2016-2018, with 80,000-100,000 miles ideally. The bids received were as follows...

1. VCI – submitted 8 options with the last bid, a letter was received that they have nothing new to offer at this time.
2. North Eastern Rescue Vehicles – 2016 Demers MX164 E-350, $48,000 plus an additional $1,500 to transition the current Stryker loading system and $3,500 for graphics.
3. North Eastern Rescue Vehicles – 2012 Osage Ford F-450 4x4, $44,000 plus an additional $1,500 to transition the current Stryker loading system and $3,500 for graphics.
4. Nicholas Kubic from Connecticut – 2011 International 4300 Durastar Pierce Med tech Ambulance, being sold as is, 62,000 miles, $40,000.
5. Lenape Volunteer Ambulance Service – 2014 PL Custom Type 1 Ambulance, just over 19,000 miles, $115,000.
6. Global Emergency Vehicles – 2016 F450 4x4 with 73,632 miles, $98,750.

Mayor Lennon’s preliminary assessment was that only two of the bid options offered might be viable for the Village. He would like the board to continue to explore procurement of one of the 2016 models. The board agreed to send Bob Starr and Joe Phelps to look over and test drive the 2016 model presented by Northeastern Rescue Vehicles as they have already test driven the 2016 vehicle offered by Global Emergency Vehicles. Mayor Lennon has confirmed that there is a currently anonymous donor still willing to contribute a significant amount towards the cost of a replacement ambulance. The Village has budgeted $66,500 towards the purchase, this does not include the funds needed towards the rental of the Sidney Ambulance service. The board has scheduled a special meeting for 7pm on the 26th of October to discuss the two procurement options in further detail after Bob and Joe have test driven the 2016 ambulance from Northeastern.

The board discussed the procurement of an articulating loader for the Village DPW. The loader would replace the Kubota that the department currently uses. Jim Crawford made the motion to accept the bid from Bobcat in Syracuse with forks and a bucket at state bid price. Maryellen Canuel seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Jim Crawford made the motion to declare the current Kubota and all attachments as excess and list the equipment with attachments for sale on Auctions International. Maryellen Canuel seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

The board discussed also declaring the street sweeper as excess, however an attachment will need to be researched and purchased for the Bobcat before the existing street sweeper can be taken out of service and sold.

Dave Smith made the motion to move forward with the investment in the IntraFi account with NBT bank. Jim Crawford seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford: yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Maryellen Canuel is looking to purchase a few solar lights for Hyde Park and Rotary Pavilion. The anticipated cost is between $50 and $125 per light depending on the features and options selected. She has asked Kelly to provide information regarding the lumens for the streetlights that were selected for the led streetlights that were installed in the Village in 2021 if the information is provided in the 2020 contract signed by Terry Potter when he was Mayor.

The Village board discussed the 2023 senior citizen income levels if the board wishes to increase the income level that receives a discount. The board would like additional guidance and information regarding whether the Town of New Berlin is changing their income thresholds to receive a discount on tax rates for senior citizens. Currently, neither the Town nor the Village have elected to offer a disability exemption. Kelly has been asked to get additional information for the board to review at the next meeting so that the Town’s decisions can be considered in the Village board’s discussion next month as Mayor Lennon would like to be consistent with the Town.

Kelly brought to the board’s attention the need to review the employee’s policy manuals for the upcoming calendar year. Mayor Lennon feels that there was an extensive scrub to the general employee policy manual last year, but that the EMS employee manual could use a larger scrub this year as many of the changes made last year were a roll-over of changes made to the general employee policies. Kelly has been asked to email the policy manuals to the board so that appropriate meetings and discussions can occur prior to Jan 1 when new policies would be effective.

Maryellen Canuel made the motion at the request of Kelly Anderson to approve changing the pay period for employees from Saturday to Friday to Sunday to Saturday effective January 1, 2024. Dave Smith seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Mayor Lennon shared with the board his plan for replacing Randy Brundage, the current Full time ALS Medic with Admin duties with a new hire. Mayor Lennon stated that Randy has asked to step back, and that Randy is aware that his pay will be reduced, and he will lose medical benefits. To date, no resignation/transition letter has been filed in the Village office. Randy will continue with this position until the Village can hire a full-time replacement through the Civil Service System, at which time he will probably move back to a 32 hour a week ALS, but his exact intentions are unclear. Kelly addressed the board regarding her concerns about a discrepancy in the calculation of over $4 an hour difference in the starting pay for the position from the notice that was sent out to area agencies than what is published in the employee handbook. Kelly shared that she had sent her concerns via email regarding the discrepancy of the starting of the wage for the position to the Mayor via email on September 22nd along with several other concerns surrounding the situation and the treatment of employees to which the Mayor has not responded as of the date of meeting, Mayor Lennon conveyed that he did not respond to the email that he did not feel that it warranted a response.

Kelly asserted as Village Treasurer that she felt otherwise as in the email she addressed concerns that he was including figures that should not be included in the calculation of the new hire’s starting wage and concerns that the Village has a past practice of not reducing employees pay if duties are reduced and that neither herself of Randy should be subject to a decrease in pay if past practices of the village were followed. She also brought to the board’s attention that the Village got in trouble with the Department of Labor several years ago when it attempted to take away an employee’s health insurance benefit when their hours were cut to part time, as she does not want to see the Village have to go through similar issues again.

Kelly has been asked to share the email that she sent to the Mayor on September 22nd as well as the information that was published to area EMS agencies regarding the Full Time Medic with Admin duties. Maryellen has also requested copies of current and pending job description for the ALS Medic with administrative duties position be sent via email so that revisions to the job description can be completed and voted upon by the Village board prior to hiring anyone new into the position.

Dave Smith made the motion to approve the hiring of Richard Baker as a part time Basic Life Support (BLS) medic to work 20 hours per week or less in accordance with the new hiring system put in place this month by Civil Service for non-competitive hires. Jim Crawford seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

The board discussed holding a special meeting to discuss transitioning the maintenance of the little league field to the Village. They have opted to incorporate the discussion into the special meeting that has been scheduled for October 26th at 7pm. Kelly will provide Maryellen with a copy of the current leases in place for the baseball league.

RESOLUTION

**Resolution No. 2023-16 “Resolution approving the payment of vouchers”**

Whereas the Treasurer of the Village has presented the following bills for payment…

General Fund - $87,957.43

Water Fund - $ 1,557.97

EMS Fund - $13,938.68

Total Expenditures - $ 103,454.08

Whereas, The Board of Trustees has audited the claims presented for payment.

Now, therefore…

Be it RESOLVED that the Village of New Berlin Board of Trustees, hereby approves payment of the aforementioned bills for payments.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY: Maryellen Canuel SECONDED BY: Pete Lennon

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Burchill: Absent Canuel: Yes Crawford: YES Lennon: Yes Smith: Yes

YES: 4 NO: 0 ABSTENTION: 0 ABSENT: 1

CARRIED: YES

Maryellen Canuel made the motion to approve the Treasurer reports. Dave Smith seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED. Maryellen also raised the idea of having a consolidated financial report of have a full picture of the budget vs. individual reports. This is a future action.

Maryellen Canuel also raised the issue of a shared drive (e.g. Teams, OneNote, Google) for the Village board to eliminate the need for individuals to save documents on their personal drives or have items accumulating in personal emails. This is also a future action.

Pete Lennon made the motion to enter executive session to discuss Real Estate. Maryellen Canuel seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Recording of the meeting was terminated. Clerk Treasurer, Kelly Anderson, was asked to leave for the executive session. She expressed concern to the board that she is being asked to leave for all executive sessions as all past boards have relied on the Clerk Treasurer as the Chief Fiscal Officer and included them in executive session unless it was to discuss that person’s eligibility for raises or annual review.

Motion to come out of executive session and end the meeting was notated by Maryellen Canuel.

Maryellen Canuel made the motion to end the executive session. Pete Lennon seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Dave Smith made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Crawford seconded the motion. VOTE: Crawford – yes, Canuel – yes, Smith – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Adjourned at 9:36 PM - Kelly Anderson, Village Clerk and Treasurer