Village of New Berlin

Minutes of October 26, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting for the Village of New Berlin was called to order at 7:00PM by Mayor, Peter Lennon.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Peter Lennon, Mayor

Maryellen Canuel, Trustee

Josh Burchill, Trustee

Dave Smith, Trustee/Deputy Mayor

Jim Crawford, Trustee

Members Absent: none.

Others Present: Joe Phelps, Bob Starr, Rev. Joe Gaston

Mayor Lennon recapped the two rigs that were available for procurement for the New Berlin Ambulance Service. Both rigs are 2016 models. The more expensive of the two rigs was sold on Tuesday, despite being told they were in the final two ambulances being reviewed at the meeting. Joe Phelps and Bob Starr presented to the board the 2016 ambulance being offered for sale by Northeastern. The ambulance is a Canadian rig, so it does have some features that the ambulances manufactured in the US do not have. Joe feels that for the price, it is a very good option for the Village. It is also a compatible size for storage space and as it is gas and not diesel, it is eligible for mechanical repairs being done at Ted’s in the Village and does not have to be sent elsewhere if it was a larger rig. Bob Starr says it looks brand new because it went back to the manufacturer, the mileage being the only thing that says otherwise. Pristine inside and out, although one wheel had some rust on it, which is fixable. Joe and Bob were both very impressed with the outfit and we have done business with them in the past with the old 259 rig. Bob would like to see the radio moved forward within the rig so it is easier to change the channel as it is often necessary to do so in travel, and this rig would accommodate that change. He would also recommend a new radio system that is compatible with other rigs within the county. He feels that this is a top-notch option for what we need.

Mayor Lennon spoke of Gilbertsville potential procuring a new ambulance, and the possibility of their old rig being available for procurement, however the timing of their sale would not be until at least March of 2024. The crew also put Mayor Lennon in touch with St. Johnsville Ambulance Service, as they are selling their rig, but it was determined that their rig was not compatible with the Village’s procurement needs, however they highly recommended Northeastern for our procurement needs as they have purchased several rigs from them in the past and have also had necessary repairs done there as well. Sherburne can not support the Village with a loner rig as Sidney has as they have two vehicles and only staff for one, however the point of contact with Northeastern does have a rig that they can loan us on a rental agreement until the one that we are going to procure is available. The daily rate is $250 per day for the rental from Northeastern.

Josh Burchill made the motion to move forward with the purchase of the 2016 Demirs ambulance for $48,000 with the modifications to accept the stretcher and graphics at the state minimum requirements, for an expenditure not to exceed $60,000 with the trade in. Jim Crawford seconded the motion. VOTE: Canuel – yes, Burchill – yes, Smith – yes, Crawford – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

Josh expressed concern over whether the call volume was sufficient to support a leased rig for up to 6 weeks at $250 a day, Mayor Lennon expressed his though that the rental rig would only be needed for a couple of weeks while the other ambulanced was prepped for the purchase. Josh suggested leasing the rig for two weeks and starting there for a rental agreement, and if we need to go out of service for a few days, we may need to consider it. According to Bob Starr, the letter of the ambulance we are procuring will take approximately 3 days. Joe Phelps will take care of notifications to the Department of Health. Jim is working on repairs to the Sidney Ambulance so it can be returned in good working order, he is having some difficulty finding parts for the repairs. Mayor Lennon feels that we will have a good rig that will last us at least 6 or 7 years.

Maryellen spoke to Dave Kaminski regarding the solar lights in the park, Dave does not think it will do anything to assist in the park. Dave is looking to see if the solar lights would interfere with the security cameras, the same situation could cause an issue at rotary park, the purchase of solar lights has been put on hold until more detail can be made available as to if they would interfere with the functionality of the security cameras that will be purchased.

The Village board decided not to hold the Christmas in the Village children’s event at the Community Center this year. They did not feel that the event was well received in past years and that attendance was only 5-10 children in the two hours. Kelly was not in attendance of the meeting and therefore unable to provide accurate information on the attendance and activities at prior events or as to how well received the event is annually. Maryellen expressed her concern as the other events in December throughout the Village are not all geared toward the children in the Community but was over-ruled by the remainder of the board.

The transition of the maintenance of the Little League field has been tabled until the November board meeting as Maryellen has not had an opportunity to talk to Jeanine Potter about the field. She anticipates being able to discuss it at the next meeting. The maintenance in question is the inside of the fence line for the Little League field. According to Jared’s understanding, the crew maintaining inside the fence, must be a licensed landscaping crew with $1.5 million in insurance to maintain inside the fence. Maryellen will come with a map when the board discusses it again.

Maryellen asked for the Community Center opening and closing to be discussed as she is currently taking the lion’s share of opening and closing the center. Pete contributed that he took the lion’s share before she took over. Maryellen wants to address the rest of the board to determine if any of the rest of the board going to be able to open and close, as of right now, if Maryellen is not available it is falling to Kelly or Jared, if the rest of the board is not available, then she would like it to be discussed at next year's budget meetings to add in paying a Village employee to open and close the center as of right now, the ring thermostat is not installed, someone needs to open the center and make sure that the heat is set accordingly, and someone needs to check the renter out to ensure that the thermostat is turned down, garbage removed, floor swept and mopped and other requirements are fulfilled. Mayor Lennon thinks that we should add a wedge into the budget next year to accommodate the openings and closings of the Community Center that cannot be completed by a board member.

The Village board discussed winter and summer hours for the DPW. The DPW would like to stay with the current summer hours 6:00 to 2:30 pm, with flexibility if needed, as their regular schedule. This timing allows them an extra hour in the summer to mow before the temperature gets high and allows for an extra hour of plowing in the winter when roads tend to need the most attention.

The board discussed revising the BLS/ALS Driver policy, which would allow the Village to utilize the new policy to replace the existing policy and give newly certified medics to obtain on the job experience and act as a driver but receive BLS/ALS pay rate for up to 6 months. Previously the county had a 6-month training requirement for candidates after finishing their classwork, however the county dropped that last year. New medics just out of training are not always ready to be the solo medic on the ambulance, they could benefit from the training. Kelly has run some numbers, if this policy is instituted and would cost $14,016 at the BLS Rate or $19,200 at the ALS rate for 2- 16-hour shifts per week for 6 months’ time. Maryellen is concerned that this could negatively impact the moral of the non BLS Drivers, and concerns over where the money will come from. Mayor Lennon feels that money needs to be spent to make money and that without a driver on shift then calls cannot be made, and no revenue will be generated. Mayor Lennon expressed that he thinks that the revenue from the 4-5 calls that are missed a month for not having a driver would cover the increased cost. Kelly was not in attendance to contribute her financial guidance or opinion. Maryellen feels that the rig being down for months plays into the thought process as to whether they want to work for or volunteer for the village ambulance. Joe Phelps expanded on how other ambulance services cover shifts. Joe works for Sherburne and Oxford in addition to the Village of New Berlin. A lot of the Villages are working towards having an ALS and BLS on shift, they do not use a designated “driver” position. Dave Smith did express concerns that Kelly had at previous meetings regarding the cost of having two medics paid at medic rates as it is outside of what the village budgets for and surpasses the revenue stream necessary to maintain such an expense. Joe Phelps acknowledged that it is a “huge” expense, but it is also a huge service to the community. Mayor Lennon feels that the 4 additional calls do to not having a medic on duty would more than make up for the additional cost. The board would also like to explore the financial possibility of increases to the volunteer rate for drivers and the financial limitations it possesses and ultimately what the Village can afford.

Josh Burchill made a motion to extend the waiver of the policy for the one individual BLS Medic to get them through their training and on an emergency with less than 36 hours’ notice of cancellation by the driver we can have 2 BLS/ALS or any combination of that to keep the rig in service. Dave smith seconded the motion. VOTE: Canuel – yes, Burchill – yes, Smith – yes, Crawford – yes, Lennon – yes. APPROVED.

The board discussed the compensation of ambulance medics and drivers while the ambulance rig is out of service. Pete put together a draft policy that would allow for them to be paid as if they were in service for up to 7 days, as it is not fair to not pay them when the rig goes out of service with short notice. On the same note, we can not pay them indefinitely if the rig is out of service for an extended period. Mayor Lennon is confident that most of the medics work for multiple ambulance services and given a week’s notice that they have ample time to pick up a shift from another ambulance service but is more difficult with less than 7 days’ notice. Mayor Lennon would like to formalize the process, as it has not been consistent in the past under previous commissioners and administrators of the ambulance service. It has been treated on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the out of service. Mayor Lennon acknowledges that these are tough issues but would like the board to be thinking about it so that we can move forward with establishing a clear concrete policy. Josh would like to be able to have the Village have the figures together for the village to go through to the town’s contracting with the village and provide them with the transparency of what the Village is trying to do with the ambulance service and why and where possible increases in contract rates will be utilized.

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

Adjourned at 8:37 PM - Kelly Anderson, Village Clerk and Treasurer, minutes composed from tape recording of meeting.