

Village of Rossville
Regular Board Meeting
March 18, 2024

Mayor Queen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Rossville Municipal Building located at 120 East Attica Street in Rossville, Illinois.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call was taken. A quorum was established with Mayor Queen and Trustees Black, Jones, Richison, Daniel and Cornell physically present.

Trustees electronically present – Trustee Gammon

Guests present were Clerk White, Superintendent Lusk, Jim Crose from Crose Insurance, Bridget Ault, Sherry Decker, Jason Miles and Scott Blake.

Minutes of the regular board meeting held February 19, 2024, were presented. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Daniel to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Vote: Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, yes; Jones, yes; Gammon, yes; Richison, yes.

Treasurer Ault's report for February 2024, was presented. The treasurer's report was reviewed in the Finance & Purchasing Committee meeting held earlier. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Richison to accept the Treasurer's report for February 2024, as presented. Vote: Cornell, yes; Black, yes; Jones, yes; Gammon, yes; Richison, yes; Daniel, yes.

Current bills – Current bills were reviewed in the Finance & Purchasing Committee meeting earlier. Motion was made by Jones, seconded by Black to approve the bills for payment as presented. Vote: Black, yes; Jones, yes; Gammon, yes; Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes.

Superintendent Lusk's report – Trustee Gammon asked Superintendent Lusk if the estimate for the water tower project included the design for the water tower and if the Board would be able to approve the design ahead of time.

Superintendent Lusk said yes.

Mayor Queen asked Superintendent Lusk if the pond project was the project the bidders received the specs for?

Superintendent Lusk answered yes.

Mayor Queen reported the Board voted last month to table opening the bids for the pond project. Mayor Queen suggested returning the unopened bids received last month to the original bidders and open the updated bids. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Jones to return the original bids accepted last month to the bidders and open the updated bids tonight. Vote: Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, yes; Jones, yes; Gammon, yes.

Clerk White reported 4 bids were received for the pond project. Superintendent Lusk explained some of the specs were eliminated from the original bid. The project was reduced to make Phase 1. If those eliminated specs are desired later, the specs can be added in a second phase.

Clerk White proceeded to open the bids. They were as follows:

Blue Top Construction, Inc.	\$ 99,820
ARD Farms & Contracting	\$ 57,000
Heidrick Earthmoving	\$127,780.24
Miles Excavating	\$120,072.88

Motion was made by Daniel, seconded by Jones to accept the bid of \$57,000 from ARD Farms & Contracting. Vote: Jones, yes; Gammon, abstain; Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, abstain. Superintendent Lusk will review the bids.

Sewer Operator Price's report – There were no comments on Sewer Operator Matt Price's written report.

Police report – Trustee Black stated the Police, Health & Safety Committee met last Wednesday and reviewed Chief Greene's report. Trustee Richison asked if the Board was going to discuss the possible promotion of Officer McMilleon. Mayor Queen stated the matter will be discussed when the Board discusses the new fiscal year budget and salaries next month.

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Trustee Gammon asked when the spike strips were deployed, can we reuse them or do we have to purchase new ones. Trustee Black explained the strips can be reused but the Village has 2 sets. If we need to, the strips can be replaced at no charge.

Employee Health Insurance Renewal – Jim Crose, from Crose Insurance, announced the Village insurance premiums increased 10% with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. A comparable plan with Health Alliance is \$600 per month more expensive. Mr. Crose explained some plans from Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Health Alliance. Mr. Crose recommended renewing the current plan with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Richison to renew the current plan, P5E1BCE that is a 90/10 plan, with Blue Cross/Blue Shield to begin on May 1, 2024. Vote: Jones, yes; Black, yes; Cornell, yes; Daniel, yes; Richison, yes. Gammon, yes. Mr. Crose announced the life insurance premiums will remain the same for next year.

Accounts Receivable - Collector White reported the utility accounts receivable total as \$54,648.41. There were miscellaneous invoices totaling \$2,200.00, making the total accounts receivable \$56,848.41. There were no shutoffs this past month. Trustee Gammon asked if the reimbursement from the school was for the total amount paid or did that include the \$800 credit that was to be issued to the Village? Clerk White stated the reimbursement was for the amount the Village paid for the FLOCK cameras. Clerk White is expecting the credit to apply toward the annual fees for the cameras. Trustee Gammon stated a check is supposed to be issued to the Village for the \$800. Clerk White stated the check has not been received in the office.

New Excavator – Superintendent Lusk reported the Village owns a 2009 Bobcat excavator. A proposal to purchase a new E48 R2 Series excavator for \$37,217.70, from Bobcat of Lafayette, was presented. The expense can be reimbursed with the new equipment sinking funds that have been established for purchases. Motion was made by Jones, seconded by Black to purchase the new E48 R2 Series Bobcat Excavator for \$37,217.70, from Bobcat of Lafayette and reimburse the universal checking account with equipment sinking funds. Vote: Cornell, yes; Daniel, yes; Richison, yes; Jones, yes. Black, yes.

The Board of Trustees adopted an ordinance at last month's meeting to allow a license for a brewery. The Board did not establish a fee for the license nor establish if they want a limit to the number of licenses that can be issued. Trustee Black did not think there would be a large demand for licenses for a brewery so that should not have a limit on licenses. Once of the lowest fees for liquor licenses is \$600 annually. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Richison to establish a fee of \$600 for a brewery license and place no cap on the number of licenses available. Vote: Daniel, yes; Richison, yes; Jones, yes; Black, yes; Cornell, yes. Ordinance 2024-02A passed.

A reminder was announced for elected officials to complete the economic Statement that was mailed to them and file it with the County Clerk. Officials may also complete the form and turn it into the village office to mail to the County Clerk. Officials may also email the forms if they wish.

Request for Assistance for Possible Building Repair/Remodel of 106 E. Attica – Mayor Queen has had no further contact or received any further information from the requestor regarding the property at 106 E. Attica. Mayor Queen had learned that the requestor opened an office in Hoopston.

206 Thompson – Mayor Queen spoke to Village attorney, Andy Mudd, regarding 206 Thompson. According to Mayor Queen, Mr. Mudd stated the Village can proceed to request bids to demolish the buildings on 206 Thompson. If the Village proceeds with demolition, the owner may attempt to sue the Village. Mr. Mudd told Mayor Queen that he attempted to mail a registered letter to the owner but the letter was returned twice to Mr. Mudd. Trustee Black suggested proceeding to obtain bids to demolish the buildings at 206 Thompson.

Superintendent Lusk suggested, if the Village is interested in demolishing all 3 properties, 206 Thompson, 308 Maple and 404 E. Attica, to solicit bids and demolish all 3 properties at the same time. Superintendent Lusk stated the building at 308 Maple does not have much of a building to demolish, the Village could demolish the building, place a demolition lien on the property, foreclose on the lien then force the sale of the property, then the Village could declare the property as surplus property and put the lot for sale.

Clerk White asked for clarification on which property on Maple that is being considered for demolition-308 Maple is the trailer and 306 Maple is the partial building that remained after the rest of the structure was burned years ago.

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Superintendent Lusk stated 306 Maple is the property in question. The property at 404 E. Attica has been sold for taxes. The Village has attempted to contact the owner of the property at 404 E. Attica but no response has been received. The person who purchased the taxes can file for a "Purchased in Error" and get his money back then the Village could proceed with the demolition process. Superintendent Lusk recommended the Village attorney make sure the 3 properties are clear and the paperwork is ready to proceed with demolition then get bids for demolition of all 3 properties.

Trustee Gammon asked if the Village can go after these properties to own after the demolition. Mayor Queen stated the properties can be pursued to own.

Superintendent Lusk proposed a pilot program that may help with the abandoned/demo houses. There are 2 types of demo properties: 1) Properties the Village condemned, tore down, filed liens against, the Village does not own them but the Vermilion County Trustee has filed tax liens against them. The first thing that is done when the tax lien is settled, the demolition liens the Village has filed are dissolved and the Village loses the cost of the demolition and control of what happens to those properties. In many towns, neighbors to these types of property purchase the vacant lots and they go undeveloped. 2) Owners relinquish/sign over the title to the property to the Village in lieu of tearing the buildings down. The Village then pays to have the buildings demolished on the properties. The Village owns those properties.

The Pilot Program is designed to take demolition properties and redevelop them by working with a contractor. Basically, to avoid fluctuating interest rates, the Village would finance the cost of building materials with TIF Funds. The contractor would pay for the labor to build. The contractor would own the spec home until the property is sold. Once the property is sold, the contractor would repay the cost of building materials to the Village, the Village would gain tax revenue on the sold property plus the sale of utilities.

The Village is attempting to entice someone to build in Rossville. The proposal would include having the attorney prepare a contract between the contractor and the Village of Rossville, pick the lot to be developed, produce a set of building plans and get accurate material costs and subcontractor expenses to build the home. Superintendent Lusk has a contractor in mind. There are approximately 30 properties the Village mows or owns that could be used in the pilot program.

Trustee Black encouraged building affordable housing in this project. Suggested sizes of homes are either 3 bedroom, 2 bath or 2 bedroom, 1 ½ bath homes. Trustee Black suggested in some of the smaller lots to build tiny homes, which would require updating our building regulations for possible building for retirees or single individuals. Superintendent Lusk suggested if a house is built, people will buy them in our little community.

Motion was made by Daniel, seconded by Richison to move forward with the housing pilot program. Superintendent Lusk emphasized this is a pilot program. Nobody has done one of these projects before. We are going to pick a contractor to walk through this first project, who will get the house plans, which will be approved by Board, and not open to the general public to bid on. Vote: Jones, yes; Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, yes. The plan would need to be verified that TIF Funds can be used to pay for this project.

Discuss obtaining properties located at 213 Stewart and 406 Holmes from Vermilion County Tax Agent – Discussion was held on whether to purchase 406 Holmes and 213 Stewart from the Vermilion County Tax Agent. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Richison to purchase the properties located at 213 Stewart and 406 Holmes from the Vermilion County Tax Agent for \$800 per lot. Vote: Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, yes; Jones, yes.

Bridget Ault asked when the antique street lights on the west side of North Chicago, from Attica Street to the grade school drive, will be repaired. Superintendent Lusk stated Cross Construction cut the wire in 4 places when they were redoing Route 1 last summer. The maintenance staff repaired what they could with the supplies on hand but they are waiting on wire.

Trustee Cornell asked permission to purchase \$475 worth of fish for the pond this spring. The fish can be picked up April 19th. Board approval is not required.

BHRA Post Prom Donation Request – A donation request was received regarding the BHRA Post Prom. There is no money in the budget remaining. Mayor Queen will take the request to the RCO and ask for a donation to the Post Prom for BHRA. Trustee Black suggested adding the Post Prom donation to the list of donations for the FY2025 budget.

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Aquatic Control Contract for Maintenance on the Pond – Aquatic Control provided a contract for pond maintenance for 2024 in the amount of \$4051.50 for treatment between April through September 2024. Bridget Ault asked if the Board would consider purchasing a solar fountain to help circulate the water to prevent algae. Trustee Black stated a fountain would not provide the proper amount of water circulation required. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Cornell to enter into a contract with Aquatic Control for pond maintenance for 2024 for \$4051.50 for treatment April – September. Vote: Black, yes; Jones, yes; Richison, yes; Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes.

Discuss Adding a New Committee-Economic Development Committee - Trustee Black stated the Board needs to review the current ordinances regarding the names and description of the committees then prepare an ordinance amendment to update the committee titles and descriptions and add the economic development committee. Trustee Black will prepare an ordinance amendment to present to the Board at the April regular board meeting.

Donation to the Vermilion County Fair – Mayor Queen suggested tabling the donation to the Vermilion County Fair until the May meeting.

Finance & Purchasing – Trustee Gammon suggested to start working on the fiscal year 2025 budget and schedule a meeting to review the budget and discuss salaries. Clerk White stated the proposed budget should be posted by April 4th.

2 Gas CDs (1 for approximately \$269,000 and the other approximately \$352,000) matured on March 16, 2024 – Clerk White provided CD renewal rates from Iroquois Federal and Bank of Rossville/Rantoul. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Jones to purchase 2 gas 12-month CDs from Iroquois Federal at a rate of 4.18% and APY of 4.25%. Vote: Richison, yes; Jones, yes; Black, yes; Cornell, yes; Daniel, yes.

Trustee Gammon wants to keep on top of the water tower project, know what the colors are and that everyone is happy with the design.

Trustee Gammon is waiting on an updated bid sheet from Superintendent Lusk for the pond project so she can submit the application for the grant.

Trustee Gammon is waiting on the grant to open so she can submit an application for the police cameras grant.

Streets & Alleys - Trustee Cornell had nothing further to report.

Police, Health & Safety – Trustee Black reported some amendments to the police policies and procedures manual were submitted at the committee meeting last Wednesday. Trustee Black has not reviewed the document and suggested the matter be tabled until next month's committee meeting.

Evidence Vault – Chief Greene is going to try a smell-proof container.

The camera grant was previously discussed.

WIFI Grant – Trustee Black stated the project has to be “shovel ready”, which basically means to have a pole to mount the WIFI on, prior to submitting the grant application. We have that so Trustee Black will submit the application.

Weekend Solicitor Solution- It was suggested to purchase at least 2 “No Solicitation” signs for each end of town. Motion was made by Black, seconded by Daniel to purchase 4 “No Solicitation” signs for each end of town. Vote: Cornell, yes; Daniel, yes; Jones, yes; Black, yes; Richison, yes.

Water & Sewer – There was nothing to report from the Water & Sewer Committee.

Gas Committee- Trustee Richison had nothing to report at this time.

Public Improvements – Trustee Daniel asked if anyone has spoken with downtown business owners to see if they would allow someone to paint murals on the side of their buildings. The matter was discussed previously but some owners did not want a mural on their building so the matter was dropped. Trustee Daniel suggested talking to the current owners to see if they would like their buildings painted with a mural. Trustee Black has an artist recommendation if needed.

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Motion was made by Black, seconded by Richison to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Daniel, yes; Cornell, yes; Black, yes; Jones, yes; Richison, yes. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris White
Village Clerk

Board approved 4/15/2024