**VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**NOVEMBER, 15, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Harry Walder called the regular council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Walder were James Bracewell, Edward Brandes Peter Doerr, and Blake O’Halloran.

Before adopting the agenda, Walder requested to add an item Z to the agenda under New Business which was titled “Hiring a new Deputy-Clerk.” Brandes moved, O’Halloran seconded, motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

O’Halloran moved, seconded by Brandes to adopt the regular agenda as presented, motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approve Village Council Minutes from October 23, 2023
2. Hall Rental Requests-Turkey Trot, NBHS Student Senate, Ron Ziolkowski (approved by Social Club)
3. Pay Bills with written additions

Brandes moved, seconded by Doerr, to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The council heard comments from the following Village property owners regarding agenda items:

Meg Piper-made several suggestions for changes to the proposed Tree Ordinance.

John Larkin-Clarification of Pine Lake viewing platform on and off agendas- possible monetary donations from neighbors to change the scope of the project to prevent obstructing lake views of those homeowners.

**PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**COMMISSION REPORTS**

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Walder reported that the person hired last month for Deputy-Clerk has already resigned which is why he needed to add item z to the agenda. He informed the council the repairs to the Village Hall are almost complete with staining to be done this year as well as in a year when the wood cures.

**REPORT ON NEW BUFFAOL TOWNSHIP MEETING**

No meeting to report.

**BUILDING & ZONING**

Walder had nothing to report on building and zoning.

**PARKS & BEACHES:** Doerr reported that in reference to conversation during the public comment earlier, the committee has already chosen the area for beach access platforms in order of need and which beaches will come back sooner than others. They need to focus on these bigger areas that will have room for parking and that’s why they were chosen. Lake Park really doesn’t have parking.

**STREETS & WATER**

Bracewell reported he has been working with Water Superintendent Bob Dabbs on locating water lines on vacant property that the village owns and requested copies of plat maps from the clerk so he can review them. All of the council members would like to copies as well. Bracewell stated the leaf removal process the village uses needs to be looked into as the cost of transporting the leaves for removal and time involved in expensive and lengthy as well as looking into the replacement or replication of leaf removal equipment is needed. O’Halloran stated he has directed Serviscape to mulch the leaves from the golf course to reduce the amount that needs to be picked up but piling leaves in the woods isn’t good for the base of the trees as it can kill them as they pile up.

**POLICE**

Brandes reported short term rentals are going well and he and the Police Chief are gathering comments, questions and suggestions from property owners to submit to the Planning Commission to tweak the current ordinance. There was a joint meeting with Michiana to discuss the police contract between the two communities that comes up for renewal in November in 2024.

**PRO SHOP & COURSE**

O’Halloran reported it was a good year for the golf course overall and touched on how the 2020 lockdown really increased the rounds of golf and it has held steady for the most part since then. There will need to be an increase of fees sometimes as well. He listed several items for improvements in 2024 that include the repair of the pump intake line, implementing a new website separate from the village, review green fees for residents/non-residents based on market research and development, develop and implement a comprehensive social media and marketing strategy, review the irrigation plan and quote.

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**SERVISCAPE REPORT**

Clay Putnam reported the 2023 was completed under budget by almost $9,000. Routine maintenance on the golf course is coming to an end as well as winterization procedures. Snowmobile stakes will be placed on the golf course in late November/early December.

**PERSONNEL REPORTS**

**SUPERINTENDENT:** In addition to his written report, Superintendent Bob Dabbs said the biggest problem with leaf removal for his crew is not necessarily the cost of a new unit, or the leaves on the golf course, it’s the fact that the amount of leaves have actually doubled over the years which makes it so hard to find where they can go to dispose them. Rules and regulations from state-to-state change constantly. This is now and will continue to be a big problem in the future. The council discovered different options that neighboring communities do as well as which member wants to head this issue for possibly finding a solution to this matter. Without getting a volunteer, President Harry Walder said he would take it on.

**POLICE CHIEF:** In addition to his written report, Police Chief Ryan Layman wanted residents to know the link was on the website for anyone interested in house checks while they are away for the winter. Address signs will be addressed later in the meeting.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR:** In addition to his written report, Building Inspector Chad Butler stated he just received a piece of certified mail that was returned to him by the USPS which he mailed out in March of this year for a property in need of repair. The mailing address is correct as tax bills and water bills are being paid on time so the homeowner is not acknowledging his attempts to contact them. Walder stated that the two of them will meet to discuss this matter further.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**PINE AVE BEACH VIEWING PLATFORM**

The council discussed the monetary donation mentioned in public comments from John Larkin and thought of different ways to utilize the money to make the platform on Pine Avenue less obtrusive for him and his neighbors. O’Halloran suggested they look into clear panels instead of wood planks for the safety railing that will be installed. This issue needs additional research and discussion so a motion to table was made by Doerr and seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously 5-0.

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**TREE ORDINANCE**

Council members agreed they liked the suggestions made earlier by Meg Piper and wanted those implemented into the draft as well as Chief Layman’s correction that included in Section 8, making the penalty as a municipal misdemeanor (civil infraction). Brandes moved to approve the Tree Ordinance as drafted for the Village attorney to review, along with the suggestions from Meg Piper and council members; motion seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously 5-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**EGLE SPECIAL EXCEMPTION-VERMA**

Dave Wolfe, from Oselka Construction asked the council to state if they have any objections of the EGLE permit for the Verma property so the 60-day public notice time will close and the project can move forward in a timely manner. O’Halloran moved not to object the permit, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 5-0.

**HONEYBEE GARDENS PARKLET**

Walder thanked the Keeley Family once again for their generous donation to the Village for what will be a beautiful park area. He stated the only change to the charitable agreement before them was on item 4 unfinished work, which will be completed in 2024, and the impending title work. Bracewell moved to accept the gift agreement upon the Village attorney’s review, motion seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously 5-0.

**APPOINT NEW CLERK-TREASURER EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2023**

Mary Robertson Clerk-Treasurer is retiring on November 30, 2023 so the council will need to appoint Kimberly Wolnik as her successor effective December 1, 2023. Motion was made by Doerr, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 5-0.

**ADD KIMBERLY WOLNIK TO BANK SIGNATURE CARDS**

The new Clerk-Treasurer will need to be added to the bank signature cards effective December 1, 2023. O’Halloran made that motion, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 5-0.

**HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL**

Mary Robertson recommended the Council renew the current health insurance plan with a 7.8% increase. Doerr moved to approve the renewal, motion seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously.

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**HEALTH INSURANCE-MARY ROBERTSON**

Walder asked the council to pay for the premium of Medicare coverage for Mary Robertson for the month of December, as she is off the Village plan as of December 1st. O’Halloran moved to approve the request, motion seconded by Bracewell and passed unanimously.

**ONE TIME PAY ADJUSTMENT**

Walder asked the council to approve the vacation payout for Mary Robertson upon her retirement. Walder surprised Robertson with a one time pay adjustment in the amount of $13,250 and thanked her for her years of service. Doerr moved to approve the request, motion seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously5-0.

**YEAR-END SALARY ADJUSTMENTS**

The Council had a list of employees in front of them for year-end salary adjustments and Walder added that Chad Butler was accidentally omitted from the list. Doerr moved to add Butler to the list and approve the salary adjustments, seconded by Bracewell and passed unanimously 5-0.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR PAY INCREASE**

Chad Butler was due an overall pay increase of 3% but was missed in October. Walder proposed a $1500.00 annual increase to bring him up to speed. Doerr moved to approve the increase, seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously.

**2024 MEETING SCHEDULE**

Brandes moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule as presented, seconded by Doerr and passed unanimously 5-0.

**2024 BERRIEN COUNTY TAX AGREEMENT**

O’Halloran moved to approve the 2024 Tax Agreement from Berrien County, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously.

**VERIZON WATER TOWER CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Walder reported that he has been working with Verizon for several months now on whether to extend the current agreement at the current rates. What they presented instead, was a reduction in rates that they currently pay us so it reads $1300.00 per month with only 10% escalator every five years instead of 15%. They also offered a long-term lump sum payment of $158,700.00 if the Village agreed to a 99-year lease and easement agreement. Another option offered was a short-term lump sum payment of $106,800.00 for a 45-year lease and easement agreement. Discussion was held regarding giving away Village options for that long when technology is always changing and the unknown risk of even needing antennae on water towers in ten or twenty years. Police Chief Ryan Layman cautioned the Council of removing the antennae completely as it is a risk for emergency services being able to reach residents calling in distress. Superintendent Dabbs asked what would happen if the water tank is replaced or moved. Bracewell suggested the Village take the money and apply it towards the water bond and invest towards sanitary sewers. Brandes moved to approve the current agreement with the (4) 5-year renewal terms; seconded by Doerr and passed 4-1 with Bracewell against.

**EGLE PERMIT FOR ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING-UPPER LEVEL**

Walder asked the Council to approve the EGLE application for the ADA parking by the upper level of the Hall since it is in a critical dune area. Doerr moved to approve the application process, seconded by Brandes and approved 4-1 with Bracewell against.

**ADA ACCESSIBEL RAMP TO WALNUT AVENUE BEACH DISCUSSION**

The Council discussed looking into the cost of a lift for the beach access at Walnut Avenue. Walder asked Doerr to add that to his Parks & Beaches committee tasks.

**WATER BASE RATE & METER REPLACEMENT FEES WHEN THERE IS NO LONGER A HOUSE LOCATED ON** **PARCEL**

Bracewell stated that he isn’t in favor of reducing any costs to residents who tear down a house because whether or not you choose to avail yourself to that service, it is already there for you. The base rate is $31.00 per month and $10.00 per month for the water meter replacement fee. We do not charge for trash and recycling in those instances. Council agreed to leave as is.

**HOUSE ADDRESS SIGNS**

Police Chief Ryan Layman presented the Council with the house address signs/posts that he has recommended all homeowners receive and the charge get placed on their water bills. It is a public safety issue if emergency services cannot locate the houses back here. He stated that he and his department will take it upon themselves to install these as well as each house has a different placement issue. When buying in bulk it significantly reduces the cost as they are about $80.00 when you buy them individually. The recommendation is also that new homes will be charged $100.00 for these before the Occupancy permit is issued. Homeowners are not to remove these address signs as they will be placed in the right of way. Brandes moved to approve the bulk purchase of black and white signs to recoup the fee and installation by charging $50.00 on the water bill with new construction homes paying $100.00 before issuing them an Occupancy permit; seconded by Doerr and passed 4-1 with Bracewell against. Butler asked if this is being added to the Ordinance so there is a plan of recourse if a homeowner decides to rip out their address sign. Walder stated yes it will be added to the Ordinance.

**DONATION FROM NORTH GRAND BEACH HOMEOWNER’S ASSOCIATION TO BE USED FOR ROBIN’S LANE BEACH ACCESS OR VIEWING PLATFORM**

The Council thanked the North Grand Beach HOA for their $3,900.00 donation which stipulated a sign be erected in memory of Sid Shapiro and his wife Cissy. Bracewell added he knew many of these homeowner’s who felt cut-off from the Village for many years and thanked them for their generous donation.

**DONATION OF MERRY -GO-ROUND**

The Council thanked Norm and Alicia Cherrett for their generous donation of a merry-go-round to replace the old one in the Royal Avenue Park. Walder added if anyone wanted the old one, they were welcome to it. O’Halloran moved to accept the donation, seconded Brandes and passed unanimously 5-0.

**REPLACEMENT OF TEETER-TOTTER**

Doerr reported the Parks & Beaches committee plans on purchasing a new teeter totter not to exceed 2500.00. Brandes moved to approve the purchase, seconded by Doerr and passed unanimously 5-0.

**CHARTER COMMISSION**

Walder reported that nobody has volunteered as of yet to serve on this committee.

**APPOINT PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO 2-YEAR TERMS ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2025**

Doerr reported that Doug Blauw has moved so he recommends Gary Kagan replace him and Judith Blackburn needs to be reappointed to her term as well. Brandes moved to approve, seconded by Doerr and passed unanimously 5-0.

**APPOINT A PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE TO A 3-YEAR TERM WITH TERM ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2026**

Doerr moved to appoint Jerry Dyson to a 3-year term, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 5-0.

**APPOINT VILLAGE HALL STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Walder recommended the Council approve Mike Elliot to chair the Village Hall Study Committee, with members to include Nancy Buckley, Patrick Coyne, Colleen Healy, Molly Newell, Martyn Smith and Molly Galbo. These are all open to the public and anyone can attend and offer their opinions. This committee is comprised of short- term and long-term residents and they will report directly to the council. O’Halloran moved to approve the recommendations, seconded by Brandes and passed 4-1 with Bracewell against.

**APPOINT 3 BEACH COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO 1-YEAR TERMS ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2024**

**APPOINT 2 BEACH COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO A 2-YEAR TERM ENDING NOVEMBER 30,2024**

The purpose of this committee is to figure out what to do to replenish the beaches and what can we do to protect our beaches. This was a result of the survey sent out to homeowners over the summer. The Council asked to change the name to Parks & Beaches Task Force that reports to the Parks & Recreation Committee. The members to appoint are Ed Trainor, John Jennings, Bob Barnes, Harry Walder and Kevin Keeley. Doerr moved to approve the formation of this task force, seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously.

**HIRING NEW DEPUTY-CLERK**

Walder recommended the Council hire Kelly Boersma as the Deputy-Clerk with an annual salary of $45,000. Brandes moved to approve, seconded by O’Halloran and passed unanimously 5-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Diane Cody wanted to point out there weren’t any females on the beach committee. She thanked the Council for accepting the replacement of the dangerous merry-go-round.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Brandes moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. EST, seconded by Doerr and passed unanimously

5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Wolnik

Deputy-Clerk Treasurer