

VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Harry Walder called the regular council meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Walder were Peter Doerr, and Blake O'Halloran. James Bracewell arrived late, at 5:45 pm. and Ed Brandes was absent.

ADOPT AGENDA

O'Halloran moved, seconded by Doerr to adopt the regular agenda as presented, motion carried unanimously 3-0.

ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve Village Council Minutes from December 13, 2023
- b. Pay Bills with written additions

O'Halloran moved, seconded by Doerr, to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

COMMISSION REPORTS

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Walder reported that with regard to the Village lawsuit against the New Buffalo Township there will be oral arguments on February 6th at the Court in Grand Rapids. Our Village Attorney, Sara Seneca, will be there in person to represent us. MML's attorney will support her.

The Master Plan timeline will be on the website soon to keep residents informed as to how that is moving along.

Walder will ask the Village Hall Committee to come up with some recommendations as to how and where to store and/or display the Village Historical Documents safely and most beneficial to the residents.

Walder advised the council that he has decided not to pursue a Village Charter Commission because the process is way complicated and costly for the Village to address currently. Instead, the council will periodically make amendments to correct antiquated items.

Walder added that several residents have expressed interest in saving and refurbishing the Merry-go-Round from the park and possibly turning it into a bench. He welcomes any interest in donations that would make it possible for the Council to do this. This funding could also be used for a plaque if appropriate.

Walder stated that FEMA has changed their flood plains maps since last month when the council approved what they had presented then, so the council will have to approve a new Ordinance at the February Council Meeting that complies with the new map from FEMA.

Walder informed the council that he is looking into out-sourcing payroll from the Clerk's Office and gathering information and quotes to see if it is something that would be affordable and beneficial.

REPORT ON NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP MEETING

None

BUILDING & ZONING

Walder had nothing to report on building and zoning.

PARK & RECREATION:

Doerr reported that the quarterly meeting was last week and they approved an outline from the Beach Task Force for long term plans restoring and protecting the beach in Grand Beach. The Park and Recreational Committee looked at the beaches that would be able to open this summer with adequate golf cart parking for residents and which ones might need new stairs. O'Halloran added there are developmental grants which the Village could pursue for these projects and Chikaming Open Lands could assist us with this effort.

STREETS & WATER

No report

POLICE

No report.

PRO SHOP & COURSE

O'Halloran reiterated the number one task ahead for the golf course was the repair of the intake water line. He is working with Bob Dabbs and Clay Putnam on that project and he would like to have a separate website for the Golf Course. Walder said that the village is currently looking into revamping the IT in the village office and would address the website issue as well.

Doer asked what is the criteria for allowing snowmobiles on the golf course? O'Halloran said there has to be a minimum of 6 inches of snow on the ground and that he has not heard of any complaints yet, Police Chief Ryan Layman concurred.

SERVISCAPE REPORT

Clay Putnam reported that winter maintenance on the course is ongoing. ServiScape is also in the process of collecting bids from various vendors for materials and supplies for the 2024 season.

PERSONNEL REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT: In addition to his written report, Superintendent Bob Dabbs said in reference to the snowmobile conversation earlier, it was his recollection they were banned in 2001 completely then reversed the following year, but no ban since 2001 at all. The cold snap is here and it has affected only 2 homes so far, but is expecting a lot more because newer home owners may not be aware of draining their outdoor showers, sprinklers, etc. The worst is yet to come when the temperature warms up.

POLICE CHIEF: Along with his written report, Police Chief Ryan Layman reported that they have warrants for the check fraud case he mentioned last week, but the suspect is currently in rehab so he is unable to serve them at this time. Rental inspections have begun along with the renewal process. If anyone is going to rent their house this year, please get with him before the busy season. Chief Layman introduced Heather our new candidate for the Police Academy, starting next Monday and graduating in May.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: In addition to his written report, Building Inspector Chad Butler stated things were pretty quiet lately due to the holiday but in comparing the last two years, 2022 saw 11 new homes and 5 new homes in 2023. He pointed out in 2022 the new home permits were valued at \$9.2 million and in 2023 the new home permits were valued at \$4.8 million. Walder stated they had discussed this previously and were expecting this slow-down to occur. The new home construction was generally a result of COVID.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

BIKE PATH-MDOT SURVEY: Walder reported that he distributed to the council members a short survey from MDOT and asked them to fill it out and would like to do the same with the Village residents via a link on the website. It is definitely a topic of concern for residents with the bike path being added to Grand Beach Road as it crosses over railroad tracks. O'Halloran added the new marihuana businesses right over the tracks on Hwy 12 will impact the congestion as well because of the increase in traffic. The Council agreed that we would add this to the website and send out an email to the residents requesting that they fill out the survey from MDOT.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Revise Ordinance 2008-73** -The council voted to amend Ordinance 2008-73 House Number Display Ordinance which was revised by Village Attorney Sara Seneca pursuant to last month's Council Meeting. Motion was made by O'Halloran, seconded by Doerr, and passed unanimously 3-0.
- b. **Opening Beaches that can be opened**-Doerr reported that there are 6 beaches that were prioritized by the Parks & Recreation Committee during their last meeting for the coming summer. He requested we solicit proposals for stairs to the beach, Viewing Platforms where needed and walkways where needed. Those six locations are: Whitewood, Ely, Pine, Robin Lane, Pump House, and Lake St. (Jensen Court). At Beach Access points that have space for golf cart parking, we need to identify that golf cart parking area as it is currently confusing. The committee also recommended that the beach access points get named and signage put up reflecting such so they are easily spotted for emergency vehicles to find.
- c. **Pokagon Funding** – Walder requested the Village seek a Grant from Pokagon for some of these beach needs. Doerr moved to seek Pokagon Grant funds from a discretionary fund in lieu of the Grant Fund that is already earmarked for Grand Beach, motion seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 3-0.
- d. **VanEcko Proposal-Jensen Court**- Doerr stated the Village owns property by Jensen Court that a homeowner wants to purchase. We had received a proposal to purchase this land last Fall and we tabled the matter until the Master Plan was completed. Walder shared a sketch of the property area in question. Walder said he would meet with Bob VanEcko to determine what his needs are and present it to the council next month. Bob VanEcko was in attendance via zoom and agreed to meet with Harry in the near future..
- e. **Utility Bills-April** – Due to the new software program being implemented in the Clerk's office in March, the utility bills will be sent out late in April so Clerk Kim Wolnik wanted to give everyone a heads up that they will not be charging any late fees in April.

Councilman Jim Bracewell arrived at the meeting at 5:45 P.M.

- f. **Tree Ordinance Proposal Award**- Last fall the council received a proposal from Great Lakes Forestry Management to provide a variety of services as outlined in their proposal for a fee of \$20,000. Doerr moved to accept the proposal as submitted, seconded by O'Halloran, and passed unanimously 4-0.
- g. **Golf Course Intake Study**- Merritt Engineering submitted a proposal to the council for \$6,000 to assist the Village in developing alternatives for repairing of the Lake Michigan intake that provides water for the Golf Course irrigation system. They will provide opinions

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of feasibility and cost for each alternative then assist the Village in evaluating the options and selection of a preferred solution. O'Halloran added that Clay Putnam from ServiScape wants to be involved in this along with Maintenance Superintendent Bob Dabbs. He added that he is looking into a temporary pump solution if a final solution is not in place by this Spring. O'Halloran moved to approve the Merritt Engineering proposal, seconded by Bracewell, and passed unanimously 4-0.

- h. Tree Ordinance-** Doerr moved to approve the Tree Ordinance as presented, seconded by O'Halloran, and passed unanimously 4-0.

Public Comment – There was a question about the posting of minutes on the website. Clerk Kim Wolnik explained everything was up to date on the website.

Tim Johnson asked if the Parks & Recreation committee was going to do trim the bushes at the stairs at Oak Street beach access. Doerr replied they would take care of that before the summer season.

Correspondence

None

Walder gave Bracewell an overview of what happened during the meeting that he missed because he arrived late.

Adjournment – With no other business before the council, Doerr moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM, motion seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.

Kimberly Wolnik

Clerk-Treasurer

