

**VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 17, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Council president Deborah Lindley called the regular council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Lindley were Paul Leonard Jr. and Steve Slater. James Bracewell and Blake O'Halloran were not in attendance as they were out of town.

ADOPT AGENDA

Slater moved, seconded by Leonard to adopt the April 17, 2019 agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve Village Council Minutes:
 - i. Regular Council Meeting, March 20, 2019
 - ii. Budget Work Session, March 23, 2019
- b. Adopt Resolution to Collect Delinquent Property Taxes
- c. Hall Rental Request – Kristen Patterson, September 21, 2019
- d. Hall Rental Request – Mary Kenny, November 28, 2019
- e. Pay Bills with Written Additions

Lindley moved, seconded by Slater to adopt the consent agenda. Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITION

Audit Presentation 2017-2018 – Kruggel, Lawton & Company LLC

Brian Hake of Kruggel, Lawton & Company LLC presented the Village's fiscal year 2017-2018 audit and issued an unmodified opinion, which is the highest rating they can give. He said there was a net change in the General Fund of a decrease of \$3,830. Revenues were up slightly with the biggest revenue increase in contribution income for beach improvements and expenditures were up as well with expenses increased for the beach improvements. There was an increase of \$83,000 for all funds combined. The General Fund has 10.6 months of expenditures which is a fairly healthy balance, but the balance has gone down over the years for many reasons. The Water Fund had a net increase of \$65,000 and the Golf Fund was pretty close to a break even with a loss of \$5,700. He said the rest of the statement is fairly consistent with other years.

Lindley said that the months of operating expenses went down from 13.1 months to 10.6 months with most of the change coming from expenditures for beach improvements.

COMMISSION REPORTS

BUILDING & ZONING: Bracewell was not in attendance.

PARKS & BEACHES: Slater said the Parks and Recreation Committee held a meeting last week and weren't able to get all of their documentation in for this meeting, so they will have a pretty robust report in May.

STREETS & WATER: Leonard reported that he submitted a grant request to the State of Michigan for a \$25,000 matching fund grant. He said the Village is competing with many other Villages in the state for the available funds.

POLICE: Lindley said that she took all of the comments to heart from all of the letters and emails received. She discussed the changes and budget cuts to non-essentials that have been made to the police department in the past few years and the direction that the Council has been working toward. She said she wanted to show how the council

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has given “a fulsome review of how we do our policing including the exploration of all reasonable alternatives”.

She said that Section 2 of the Village Charter states that one of the Council’s duties is “to protect the public peace and health and provide for the safety of persons and property”. She said that in moving forward, the Council needs to decide the level of public safety needed to provide a safe environment.

She said that from 2017 to 2018 the Village saved \$70,538 in police expenses and over the next two years the Village will save over \$161,000. Lindley stated that the Village has valued and loyal employees that look out for the residents’ interest and safety and she thanked them for that.

She talked about the many things that the officers do including enforcing building site complaints, patrolling the beaches when there are beaches, wellness checks, enforce golf cart rules and have even found squatters in homes in Grand Beach. Grand Beach officers have been first responders in emergency situations and have administered CPR and used a defibrillator when needed.

She said she meets frequently with Michiana’s Police Commissioner and their Police Chief and our Interim Police Chief and recently had a telephone conference call regarding a Police Authority in order to look at the possibility of a Police Authority Board with Grand Beach and Michiana. There will be more information about the Police Authority Board at the May meeting. In regards to the Village’s revenue which basically comes from property taxes, she said that in 1979 the Village taxed 17 mills and is down to 6 mills today. Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson explained that the decline in the millage rate is due to the Headlee Rollback which causes the millage rate to roll back each year. Lindley said as the millage rate goes down and home construction declines, our income will flatten.

Berrien County Undersheriff Chuck Heit told those in attendance that the County has had a contract with New Buffalo Township since 2007 when the Local Revenue Sharing Board was paying for the services through actual specific costs. He explained how the changes were made with the Local Revenue Sharing Board over the years which have caused New Buffalo Township to take over the cost of their police coverage. He explained that New Buffalo Township has a car on duty and if Grand Beach and Michiana aren’t available for a call, New Buffalo Township would be the next police department to be called. The township car is the first car sent if local officers aren’t available. He said he applauds Grand Beach and Michiana for what they are doing with shared services. Township Supervisor Michelle Heit said that the township’s operating millage rate is .39. Because of the low operating millage, a second public safety millage was passed to help cover the cost of their police protection, fire department and ambulance service.

Slater said the genesis of some of the concerns and interest in this issue started because he is the new person on the Council and moving into the budget meeting he did his research. He knows that we have a close to balanced budget and he started looking at big ticket items and in his estimate, 40% of the budget is spent on police. He said an email was circulated that said that he wanted to get rid of the police force, but that is not what he said. He knew that there were things that we wanted to do in the Village and wondered how we could do those things. He thinks the council has done a good job combining police services with Michiana and he doesn’t think residents have noticed any disruption in service. He said if status quo policing is the overall desire of the residents, we will have to look at how to pay for the other things that we need. He wants to provide public safety in the most efficient and cost efficient way.

Leonard said that he told Slater privately that his analysis was spot on regarding the budget. Our revenue is coming from property taxes and we don’t have the ability to pass the costs on to the residents. There will come a

time in maybe 10 or 20 years down the road when people will have to ask where the money is going to come from to provide the services that they want. Leonard said we are barely able to cover our operating expenses and the council has been looking for ways to cut our expenses. Our revenue is derived from our real estate taxes and the revenue stays static and our expenses continue to increase for insurance, pensions and other costs. He said the police protection is very important in the Village, but it comes at a cost. We don't have places for new homes to be built so our tax revenue is not going to go up. He said nobody is talking about ending police protection in this Village and he is sorry that Slater's memo was taken as an effort to end police protection, because that is just not the case.

Slater said his goal is not to have contention, but to have a serious conversation not just involving the police department, but everything in the Village. He hopes the conversation can be continued.

PRO SHOP & GOLF COURSE: O'Halloran was not in attendance.

SERVISCAPE REPORT

Clay Putnam reported that spring cleanup is underway and routine maintenance has begun on a limited basis. An arborist has recommended that the maple tree between #4 and #5 be taken down after a part of it came down over the winter.

PERSONNEL REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT: In addition to his written report, Superintendent Bob Dabbs told the council that a trucking company dumped the wrong type of sand for the park, but will replace it with the correct sand.

INTERIM POLICE CHIEF: Interim Police Chief Jamie Flick reported that Grand Beach and Michiana handled 29 complaints between both areas. Grand Beach Police captured a suspect with a stolen car at the car wash in New Buffalo. He reported that Grand Beach and Michiana were working on a drug case and found a home in Michiana with crack cocaine and heroin. There was a discussion regarding the combined police reports, and Flick was asked if both departments could report under one number to the state, but use precinct or separate numbers to identify whether the call was in Grand Beach or Michiana.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Building Inspector Bill Lambert reported that he has issued three permits for the year. He had a discussion with the Village Attorney and she will be in court on Thursday in regards to the Stiteler home under construction on Oak Avenue. He has cleaned up his site, but hasn't lived up to his progress schedule. If he doesn't show up in court, she will work with the judge to give him a time limit to complete the work. Lambert said he has been working with Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson on a list of violations on the Ruffner property on West McKean, and has been working with Hunter on Rhode Court about a trailer parked on his property. He has notified him that he sold the trailer and is moving things out of it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Review Budgets 2019-2020

Lindley said that there is a work session held each March to work on the budgets, and a public hearing on the budgets will be held on April 30, 2019 at 7:00 pm EST for public input. The Council hopes to hold a special meeting on May 13 to adopt the budgets and millage rate, although that is dependent on whether the county gets

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the figures to the Clerk-Treasurer regarding the millage rate. The budget has to be adopted by the first Monday in June of each year.

42 Acres Update

Lindley reported that we have raised \$129,750 for the 42 Acres so far. The Village's letter of intent to request a grant in the amount of \$58,000 was accepted by The Pokagon Fund, and we are now in the grant process. There will be a photo opportunity for all of the people that support and have donated towards the purchase of the 42 Acres and for those that would like to give their donation checks at that time. All are welcome for the picture. Check the website for the date and time. Sheila McGinnis said they are planning a fund raiser on July 20th in the hall to raise funds for the purchase, so anyone interested in helping with the fundraiser should contact her at fgbnp@gmail.com.

Golf Cart Batteries

Lindley tabled the discussion until O'Halloran is present next month.

Add Deputy Clerk Cheryl Cook to Bank Signature Cards

Leonard moved, seconded by Slater to add Deputy Clerk Cheryl Cook to the bank signature cards. Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

AUDIENCE RECOGNITION

Dave Krogh, Knob Hill - Was on a Fire Department and they combined a city and township fire department and it worked tremendously. Was a volunteer paramedic for 30 years and thinks it is very important to have a police department. He thinks the combination of two departments will work out well.

Mike O'Halloran, Marjeanette - Values our police officers and doesn't want to see the police department diminished any more than where we are now. He would like to know what the total cost would be to keep the police department, pay for the 42 Acres and update the Water System if property owners paid for it in a tax increase.

Ed Burke, Lake Park Drive - One thing we have to pay attention to is how many crimes did not happen because we have police officers. The quickness in which they respond is important. What price tag do you put on the peace of mind the police officers give the residents?

Barb Rooney, Golfview Avenue- Home values will go down if Grand Beach does not have a police department. She has been here since 1938 and we have always had police and she hopes we always will. She depended on the police several times when her husband was ill.

John Deaner, Hicks Avenue - There are only one or two burglaries here throughout the year, and that's because there are police officers out there patrolling the Village. The email that was sent out totally misrepresented what was said tonight. It was very premature for Slater to put this out, and that's why everyone is here.

Jackie Collins, Ridge Road - She has a friend that was trying to sell her house and the people didn't show up a second time because they heard about the people in Grand Beach, and all of the fighting going on and read the minutes and decided they didn't want to live in the Village.

Jorge Alvarez, East Arnold Drive - Thanked Slater for his approach even though it is not making him very popular. He thinks running the Village at bare minimum is not healthy. The Village should raise taxes if everyone wants

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police. He is totally in favor of consolidating the police with Michiana. Playground equipment is very old and unsafe.

Vicky McHugh, Lake View Avenue- She appreciates the police department that we have, and she thinks sharing services with Michiana is working well. She thinks that having people hire a security company is a good idea. We should be concentrating on the beach and the pump house. We should keep the police that we have.

Judith Blackburn, Pine Avenue - Her and her husband misunderstood what a wellness check is when they submitted a letter that missed the deadline for the agenda. She thinks anyone who is widowed or ill should get a wellness check. She said her property taxes have only increased \$280 in 30 years and her and her husband are very much in favor of increasing the taxes. She thinks everyone should be paying to cover the cost of 42 Acres,

CORRESPONDENCE

New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance – Regarding beach erosion.

Lindley suggested that homeowners give concrete ideas to the council and thanked those who shared concrete ideas and concerns about our police staffing.

Carol Bracewell
Kate & Mark Boyle
Ed & Yvette Brandes
Brian Byrnes
Kathleen & George Connelly
Pat Costello
Laura Desmond
Katie & Tom Driscoll
Brendan Duffner
John Deaner
Anne Durkin
Patti & Jerry Dyson
Lauretta Froelich
Frank Gazzolo
Frank & Susan Giglio
Alice & Robert Grim
Catherine Kelly
Michail & Louisa Kerhoulas
Kaye Moriarty
Lisa Levinsky
Jim McWethy
Dorothy Polzin
Jack & Jean Powers
Jerry & Cynthia Purcell
Fran & Marge Quigley
Julie Rundren
Brian Schinderle
Timothy Shannon Family
Tim Sheahan
Gerry Stokes
Aimee Sullivan

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Nancy Trainor
Katie Thompson
Ed & Angela Trainor
Liz Grim-Vaughan & Alice Grim
Jim & Katie Walsh
Randy & Hilary Wilkin

ADJOURNMENT

Leonard moved, seconded by Lindley to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously 3-0. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary J. Robertson
Clerk-Treasurer