

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD

Regular Board Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2021

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Heather McArty called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ROLL CALL	PRESENT	ABSENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Jason Elliott	X		Caroline Darr – Int. EMS Coordinator
Cathi Fritz	X		Lori Fields – EMS Billing
Bob Parr	X		Julie Leverenz – Office Manager
Doit Roberts	X		Janet Hambright – Treasurer
Ferrell Stroh	X		Steve Wendell – Supt. Of Public Works
Robert Wright	X		Ron Soderstrom – Police Chief

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (June 14, 2021)

Mayor McArty asked the board if anyone had any corrections to the June 14, 2021 minutes.

Robert Wright requested the following additional information be added to the June minutes for clarification:

Approval of Bills

- Approval to keep CDs at FFBT was approved by Elliott, Parr, Roberts, and Stroh. Fritz voted No, and Wright Abstained.
- Wright commented that the two CDs valued at just over 2 million dollars are from the water and sewer system sale. That money has been invested in CDs since the sale, and none has been spent.
- Wright commented that the CDs are not earning enough interest to outpace inflation. Year over Year inflation 5% and the CDs are earning 0.2%. Wright's opinion is that the value of this money will continue to be eroded by inflation. The Village should make arrangements to spend this money on long-term value-added projects that benefit the community.

Intergovernmental Agreement

- Add *"this agreement will provide compensation for those services."*
- Add that *"The agreement confirms that Oakwood officers would only operate outside the Village, Oakwood Schools, and direct roads between if dispatched to the scene and not as a pattern of Township patrol."*

Water Attorney

- Clarified that the vote last month was *"based upon a letter provided to the Village Board by former mayor Clay Woodard."*
- Wanted to be stated that 4 of 24 other municipalities or groups have hired attorneys, and Oakwood "may" also benefit if those lawyers are successful.
- Wright requested that Clay Woodard attests to the letter provided to the Village regarding his conversation with the exact attorney.

Bob Parr made a motion to approve the June 14, 2021 minutes with the requested updates from Wright with a second by Ferrell Stroh.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Janet Hambright reported there was no need for any transfers this month.

Bob Parr mention that \$25,000 for asphalt was charged to the wrong GL # on June the report. He sees this as being covered under TIFF funds and should have been assigned to TIFF 2. Hambright will make the transfer of funds to come out of TIFF funds.

GENERAL FUND	\$ 35,958.00	POLICE	\$ 2,674.60
TIF I	\$ 409.95	EMERGENCY RESCUE	\$ 3,569.80
ROADS/BRIDGES	\$ 1616.20	BUILDING FUND	\$ 485.00

Bob Parr made a motion to approve bills as presented with a second by Ferrell Stroh.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

ATTORNEY REPORT

No Report

GUESTS

No guests requested to present.

Mayor McArty read an e-mail from Clay Woodard attesting to the original letter he wrote summarizing his conversation with Attorney Eric Robertson dated March 19, 2021. The significant points of the e-mail stated that he stands behind his letter and information therein as it relates to his conversation with Attorney Robertson. A significant portion of the e-mail was directed towards his questioning over his integrity and competency, being called into question regarding his ability to interview a person and put that conversation into a factual statement. This e-mail will be entered into the public record in the same format provided by Woodard AS Exhibit 1 with the July meeting minutes.

Mayor McArty also announced that she contacted Attorney Eric Robertson via three e-mails and two phone messages left with his secretary. On July 12, 2021, attorney Robertson returned McArty's latest call and discussed the conversations he had with Clay Woodard and Cathi Fritz. Per McArty, Attorney Robertson stated he did not record either conversation and would not comment on the context of either. Robertson said that this appears to be a political issue that he prefers to avoid entirely. He had no further comment. McArty inquired about the payment to get an official statement, but he declined and will not accept any other part in the matter.

Cathi Fritz stated she respects Clay Woodard and in no way meant he was dishonest, lied to, or misinformed the board. She said anyone that was involved in the water sale didn't do anything unethical. It's about getting a clear understanding and what we can do now. What she was trying to find was clarity on this information.

Ferrell Stroh stated the board involved in the sale of the water company faced many difficult decisions and had to make the best decision with the information they had. He feels all the negativity presented on Facebook just provided extreme negativity, and people feed on that. He stated that if someone doesn't have anything positive to say, nothing should be said.

The trustees deliberated on this subject again related to the vote taken on May 10, 2021, and whether or not any changes or reversal on the vote was necessary. The differences between Woodard's letter describing his conversation with Attorney Robertson and subsequent e-mail and Fritz's verbal comments relating to her discussion

with Attorney Robertson at the June 14, 2021 meeting do not appear to be reconcilable. After further discussion amongst the board, the board unanimously agreed that no changes or amendments to the position taken by the board at the meeting of May 10, 2021, were necessary.

VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Julie Leverenz reported they are still currently going through the audit. At this point, she has been told things look good.

Leverenz reported that she is coordinating with neighboring communities to discuss a shared Animal Control Officer to address the needs of the Village. Residents about unleashed animals have increasingly contacted the Village. Further, a recent incident was reported of a dog attack that resulted in two people being bitten. The dog was not registered with the Village, the owner could not provide records of vaccinations, and the person(s) bitten are undergoing rabies treatments. She will keep the board updated on what develops with this potential partnership.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Steve Wendell reported that the cold storage building needs to be painted and some minor sheet metal repairs. Parr has written a specification along with Wendell to initiate an Invitation to Bid on this work. They expect the cost will exceed \$25,000, and by law, that requires the entire bidding process. Stroh inquired if the Village is required to take the lowest bidder. The lowest is not always the best choice based on references, and the Village has the right to refuse any bids.

Doit Roberts made a motion to approve the invitation for bids for the painting of the cold storage building to be advertised with a second by Ferrell Stroh.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

Wendell offered that any trustee who would like to see the cold storage building just let him know.

Wendell also reported that he is still having trouble with the backhoe transmission and other minor maintenance issues regarding the equipment. Wendell informed the board that the tractor was at least 14 years old. McArty instructed Wendell to get quotes for the repairs and report those costs to the board in August.

POLICE REPORT

Ron Soderstrom recognized Misty Smitley as the new School Resource Officer. Smitley was formerly promoted to the rank of Sergeant. She will be going through active shooter training and will start this new position in August at the start of the school year. When school is not in session, she will be an on-duty officer for the Village.

Statistics on police activity were provided for June.

Soderstrom introduced a new type of restraint device called a BolaWrap. The device is intended to restrain a person by non-painful or person-to-person contact means. The device will require training for proper use but is part of a new wave of police techniques used to aide police and the public more safely than the traditional methods with less-lethal force. The total cost for three units is about \$3500. It is not clear if that includes the training and certification for use. Cathi Fritz asked if the department could share one unit for the on-duty officer. Soderstrom will gather more details and report back at the August meeting.

Soderstrom provided details on the need for new tazer equipment. The current equipment is several years old, and the police department is sharing two refurbished units. He recommended to the board to approve the purchase of three refurbished tazers for Oakwood police department use. This purchase was planned for in the current budget.

Bob Parr made a motion to approve the purchase of three new refurbished tazers and ancillary items with a second by Ferrell Stroh.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

Soderstrom was asked about the recent break-ins on Seymour Street. Soderstrom stated that the investigation is ongoing with the help of the Vermilion County Sheriff's Office. No positive identification of the person(s) could be made from the available security video. Julie Leverenz pointed out that the same vehicle shown in the security video was also seen driving around the Village Hall a few minutes before the other camera footage. Others in attendance also offered to provide video from their private systems that may help.

Soderstrom stated he was thinking about entertaining a neighborhood watch program. Residents would provide private security videos to the Oakwood Police Department whenever a crime is committed. Soderstrom will look into other video sources and coordinate a *Neighborhood Watch Program* with the residents in the Village who wish to participate.

EMERGENCY RESCUE REPORT

Lori Fields reported on the monthly finances. Some back payment for the transfers to the VA has been received, but there is still an outstanding balance. Fields reported that the VA is still working on a new computer system, which may have delayed the payments. She felt that receiving a June payment was a good sign that the Village may continue to receive payments toward the outstanding balance. However, there is no guarantee. McArty stated that the Village had been more than patient, and unless the VA meets their obligations, the Village may have to send a letter discontinuing services until more of the balance has been paid.

Caroline Darr reported that one of the ambulances broke down during a call. The air conditioning system experienced a failure that released freon under the hood, and the EMTs assumed it was smoke or a more severe issue. Rather than risking a complete shutdown en route to the hospital, the other available ambulance had to be rushed to the scene, and the patient was transferred to that ambulance for the trip to the hospital. Carnaghi has not been able to fix the problem yet, but they are working on it and believe they have the solution. Wright asked about the recent oil change and maintenance work done on all the ambulances in the past few months. Darr explained that the AC system is not part of that check-up. Wright asked Darr to investigate options for a single source multi-point preventive maintenance plan with a local authorized mechanic so all items can be inspected and maintained ahead of time. Darr state she would look into this.

Darr reported that the Village did not receive the grant that was applied for through the state. The grant was going to be utilized to purchase a new power cot. The Village has been waiting on a response to the grant application for many months. The existing cot can be repaired for \$6549, but it is 15 years old, and she did not recommend spending the money to fix it. Instead, Darr recommended trading it in for \$2500 and getting a new Stryker power lift cot to bring all three ambulances to full service for a net cost of \$18,048.14. Options for competitive cot systems are not a reasonable option because the cot systems are related to the ambulance itself to allow the cot to be inserted through the back door. Other systems do not work without modification to the ambulance(s). The cost of a new cot is planned in the current budget in case we did not get a grant.

Robert Wright made a motion to approve the purchase of a new Stryker 6506 model cot and with the trade-in of the unusable cot with a second by Doit Roberts.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

Darr reported that "911" calls have increased from last June 2020 and May 2021. Transports have also picked up with the hiring of additional drivers.

Darr had the department responders in attendance and introduced them.

FALL FESTIVAL

Bob Parr recommended that the fall festival/fireworks plans require more discussion to conclude what event to have. The suggested days for fireworks are Labor Day weekend or Oakwood Homecoming. The Village only plans to launch fireworks at this time. There are no plans for additional events sponsored by the Village. Input from local businesses and the community at large is required. Parr announced that Jamaica Pyrotechnics had changed owners, and he is going to discuss with the new owner what options the Village has with the existing deposit. The new owner may roll the deposit for fireworks to the 2022 4th of July. The board took no action but supported the proposal of a committee to meet separately.

OLD VILLAGE HALL BUILDING

Ferrell Stroh introduced a discussion around the plans for the old village hall and fire station. Stroh recommended the Village maintain the old village hall for use by the American Legion Post 610, a Senior Center, and the Historical Society. Citizens in attendance shared their views. During the discussion, ADA and safety concerns were brought up as the old village hall does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act nor the current fire code requirements. Remodeling would be required to provide a wheelchair ramp, new egress in front and back of the building, and new bathrooms. Mayor McArty suggested the new Village Hall as a better place for all three groups as it is up to code. Stroh stated the Oakwood Historical Society artifacts needed a home, and there was discussed as them being potential additions to the new Village Hall. Cathi Fritz suggested a committee be formed to come up with a plan. The board took no action but supported the proposal of a committee to meet separately.

SOCIAL MEDIA/MEDIA

Mayor McArty announced that she has met with the Village attorney to discuss concerns brought to her attention by citizens in the community regarding social media related to elected officials and village employees. She pointed out that there is no written policy, but she will be working with the attorney to draft up a policy. McArty stated the need for this policy is required because of two separate issues that were brought to her attention involving negative Facebook comments made by a Trustee and Employee. Concerns were shared that these individuals' attitudes reflect poorly on the Village board collectively and could lead to punitive damages to the Village. The Trustee was told that her comments on Facebook calling a resident "ignorant and belligerent" were unacceptable, entirely her individual opinion, and in no way reflects the sentiments of the Board of Trustees as a whole. The employee was told that her comments on Facebook were unacceptable and do not represent the views of the Village. McArty stated that Oakwood Residential Facebook page is not affiliated in any way with the Village of Oakwood. OPD Oakwood Illinois is the only Facebook site currently authorized to directly communicate Village information. Other means of communicating with Oakwood residents are being explored, and the current website is being revamped to help in this process. The goal is to allow for better communication more positively.

Mayor McArty reminded the village employees and trustees to be mindful of the protocol surrounding speaking in public or to a media outlets until she has consented where official business is concerned.

OYF/ELECTRIC UPDATE

Robert Wright informed the board that he met with Bart Huchel on June 25, 2021, to discuss the needs of Oakwood Youth Football as it relates to better ventilation inside the shed at the south end of the park. In addition to some powered ventilation to move fresh air into the shed and keep equipment from potentially getting mold, Mr. Huchel asked to install lights in each bay. Mr. Huchel explained that when youth football practice is underway during the fall months, it gets dark earlier, and there are no lights in which to see at the end of the night. He explained that they had been using headlights, lights from phones, or flashlights. He asked if simple LED shop lights and light switches could be installed in each bay. OYF offered and had been planning to provide the labor to install the electrical for free if the Village provide the materials. Wright was to bring this offer to the board for consideration. Wright conferred with Mr. Huchel that after several attempts to coordinate the volunteer labor, Mr. Huchel stated that vacations and schedules of the people involved were not working out for completing the work in July. Due to all the rain and heat this season, Mr. Huchel asked Wright to inform the board that he did not want to hold up progress and asked Wright to recommend that they accept the quote from Glesco Electric to get the board work completed as soon as possible. On behalf of OYF, Mr. Huchel wanted to express his gratitude to the Village for any help they could provide in this matter.

Robert Wright made a motion to approve the bid of \$4,690 for Glesco Electric with the addition of 2 led lights for \$900 to complete the electrical work in the storage shed bays at the park with a second by Doit Roberts.

	ELLIOTT	FRITZ	PARR	ROBERTS	STROH	WRIGHT
YES	X	X	X	X	X	X
NAYS						
ABSTAINED						

Motion Carried

VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES

McArty announced that the board had a study session on July 8, 2021, to discuss how using the Land Bank and the benefits to the community of partnering with the Land Bank was very helpful. The review of current ordinances and building maintenance codes accepted across the country are underway. Attorney Steve Miller, Ron Soderstrom, and McArty will be continuing to review these details to draft a comprehensive ordinance using the Land Bank as the foundation. Further information will be shared at the August meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:43 pm, Robert Wright made a motion to adjourn with a second from Ferrell Stroh.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie M. Young

Connie M. Young, Clerk

Approved on 8/9/21

EXHIBIT 1

-----Original Message-----

From: Clayton Woodard <woodardclayton76@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 12, 2021 3:04 PM

To: Village Oakwood <oakwood-village@comcast.net>; Heather McArty <hmcarty@inb.com>

Subject: Credibility in Question

WARNING: This email is from an external source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Good Evening,

I appreciate the opportunity to address the Oakwood Village Board of Trustees. I regret I am not able to present this in person as I have been obligated to another event this evening.

As each of you know, it is truly a calling to serve the community, more so your local community. You will find holding local office is stressful but can be rewarding if the basic concept of "public service" is adhered to and not "self service".

I understand my credibility has recently been in question. The question came about through a subsequent conversation with an attorney, whom I earlier inquired with in reference to the proposed water rate increase, and a sitting Oakwood Village Trustee. I have reviewed the letter and cross referenced with my notes of the conversation. Simply, if Information was wrongfully conveyed I absolutely would correct and own the mistake. Upon review, I stand with the letter I drafted for the Village Board regarding the telephone conversation as truthful. I did not mistaken the information conveyed. I am appalled at the fact my integrity has been questioned.

I began my law enforcement career with Oakwood Police Department under Mayor Parr. I have served the State of Illinois for over two decades as a police officer and am respected throughout the law enforcement community. I have testified in countless court proceedings under oath. I feel my credibility has positively been established long before now. I have served two communities as Mayor and Trustees for a total of ten years.

I have served with many good people through the years on the many boards which I have been a member of. Each person had different ideas and opinions on matters before us, but with a mutual respect we moved forward, and got the job done. We made the best decisions we could with the information presented us. That is what each of you will do also. I am confident in that belief.

Not one person whom I served with engaged in any criminal activity...NONE! It has been stated recently Former Mayor Jennings and the Board of Trustees he served with at the time of the sale of the water system to Utilities, Inc. received some sort of kick back. That is absolutely ludicrous and is an ignorant statement. The individuals on that particular board at that time made the best decision with the information they had for the residents of Oakwood. Mayor Jennings is a good man and each person serving on the board at that time are good honest people, some of which I have had the pleasure of serving with.

If I could offer a word of advice.....each of you need to work together as one body. Not one of you hold ill intentions....I am sure of that. You must understand you will differ on many things. But don't lose the perishable skill of compromise. Government has a role in each individual's life. It should be the desire for government to improve lives. But remember government can be the

problem and can not fix all problems.

Words do matter and when not true, they hurt. I am not a liar and will not be accused of such. I feel I served with many good and honest people on the Board, some of whom you get to serve with. I am sure you will find the same during your tenure. I would recommend the vicious circle of finger pointing stop.

In closing, I served my community well and with distinction. The leadership I exercised with the support and trust of the board is something for me to be proud of. I hold this community dear and would not shy away from supporting any battle with any utility company if I thought the fight needed to be fought. You must develop a relationship with the utility companies and foster those relationships....like it or not the water system is not ours and we have got to work together.

The previous board chose not to implement a Utility Franchise fee upon Utilities Inc. Maybe, it is time to implement that fee. If the rates are going to increase then maybe we should get our share. Inquire with legal counsel if it is legal to disburse the fee to the residents to offset an imminent increase. Instead of fighting the water company....look for other solutions, think outside the box.

Thank you for your time.

God Bless each of you and thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

Clayton R. Woodard

Sent from my iPhone

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