

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2022

The Saranac Village Council Regular Meeting was called to order by President Darby at 7:00 p.m. at the Saranac Village Office, 27 N Bridge Street.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Darby, Straubel, DPW Koster; Trustees – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley

Absent: Mulnix

Guests: Deputy Jacob Sommer, Mary Lamphere

Motion was made by Day, supported by Whorley, to approve the Regular Agenda. All yeas.

Public Comments

Mary Lamphere was in attendance on behalf of St. Anthony's Church of 3927 Jackson Road, Saranac.

Council reviewed Jeanne Vandersloot's memo regarding Lamphere's request to place directional signage on the southeast corner of Mill Street and Bridge Street, pointing down Mill Street to indicate that St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Galilee Baptist Church and the Boston Township Hall are all located in that direction.

According to Lamphere, there was a directional sign on that corner many years ago, pointing down Mill Street to indicate that St. Anthony's Catholic Church and Galilee Baptist Church were located in that direction. Lamphere believes it was removed when Bridge Street was reconstructed and new ADA sidewalks were put in at the intersection. Vandersloot advised Lamphere to approach the village council regarding her request, as the sign would be in village right-of-way and therefore not permitted per the Village Zoning Ordinance.

Straubel stated that the previous sign was likely put up prior to the village being zoned and therefore grandfathered in at the time. If it was removed after zoning was adopted, the grandfather clause no longer applies and new signage would have to comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

Darby reported that Galilee Baptist Church approached council several years ago, requesting to replace their sign on the southwest corner of Mill Street and Pleasant Street. Council did not approve their request due to limited visibility where the current sign is located.

DPW Koster stated that he believes the southeast corner is too tight to accommodate another sign, according to ADA regulations.

Darby inquired about attaching a directional sign to the existing street sign. DPW Koster will look into whether this is a viable option, and report back to council for discussion at their next meeting. Lamphere was encouraged to come to the next council meeting with any additional ideas she may have.

Law Enforcement Report

Council members reviewed Ionia County Sheriff Office stats for Village of Saranac patrol for the month of September 2022.

Deputy Jacob Sommer was in attendance to provide council with an update on village law enforcement items of interest, and to answer any questions council might have.

Darby inquired whether the night patrol officer has been making an appearance at Friday night football games. According to Doll, he has not. Sommer will talk to the night crew and request presence at the last home football game on Friday, October 14th.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Klutman, to accept the minutes of the September 12, 2022 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to accept the Treasurer's Report of September 30, 2022. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to approve the Accounts Payable of October 10, 2022, in the amount of \$157,866.89.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Mulnix.

The Zoning Administrator's Report of Services for September 2022 was reviewed.

Doll requested to further discuss the directional sign topic from earlier tonight. He is concerned that if we approve Lamphere's request, others may come forward requesting the same. Day suggested putting the directional sign on the same post as the street sign, but above the street names. Per Darby, it may become a moot point if DPW Koster determines that additional signage is not feasible at that location due to ADA and/or other regulations.

Whorley reported that he was informed about a property on Church Street where someone is living in a camper in the back yard. Straubel will pass the information on to Vandersloot.

Planning Commission Report – The PC did not meet, as there was no new business to discuss.

Angela Stephens, Executive Director of the Saranac Housing Commission, requested that council re-appoint Dean Gage Sr.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Whorley, to re-appoint Dean Gage Sr., as Tenant Commissioner on the Saranac Housing Board and as Director on the Saranac Non-Profit Housing Corporation Board, retroactive to 5/1/2022 and expiring 5/1/2027.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Mulnix.

Committee Reports

Budget

Committees were encouraged to meet soon to discuss items for the 2023/2024 budget. Straubel requested that committee chairs submit their budget to her by the December 12th council meeting.

Personnel

Darby reported that Tim Simmons resigned October 5th from his position as DPW Director and Fire Chief, following the Personnel Committee's decision to put him on paid administrative leave on September 29th. Per Darby, a help wanted add will be placed for the position of DPW Director, and the members of the Fire Department will vote on who to recommend as their next Fire Chief. That individual will be "Acting" Fire Chief until the Fire Board holds their annual meeting in early 2023.

DPW Tony Koster has assumed the role of Street Administrator and "Acting" DPW Director. Forms have been filed with EGLE, designating him as Operator in Charge of the water supply for the Village of Saranac. The Personnel Committee is recommending a \$2.00 an hour wage increase for Koster, retroactive to 9/29/22 when he began assuming the roles.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to appoint Anthony J Koster as Street Administrator and "Acting" DPW Director for the Village of Saranac, and to increase his wage by \$2.00 an hour during the period of time he holds these positions.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Mulnix.

Darby reported that the Personnel Committee met regarding employee insurance benefits. The new dental rates have not been provided yet, but the vision premium will remain the same. The current health insurance premium with Blue Care Network is increasing by approximately 10%, or \$500 per month. The Personnel Committee is recommending that the village stay with the current carries for dental, vision and health insurance.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Doll, to renew the current employee insurance plans with Delta Dental, Ameritas and Blue Care Network.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Mulnix.

Darby explained the predicament the village is in with Maurer's Textile Rental. DPW Simmons signed a 5-year contract with them for DPW uniform service in December of 2020. In January of 2022, DPW Simmons proposed that the village purchase uniforms for DPW employees and they would launder their own uniforms. According to Simmons, this would provide a cost savings of approximately \$637 in year one and \$1,397 in subsequent years. Council approved the proposal and the clothing was purchased. When Straubel wrote a cancellation letter to Maurer's she was informed by them that the village was under contract until December of 2025. Straubel was unaware of this, as a copy of the contract had not been provided to her at time of signing. The village can terminate their contract with Maurer's but the fee to do so is 50% of the revenue that Maurer's would collect if the contract remained in place until December 2025. This equates to approximately \$6,000.00. Doll suggested that we include the contract "buy-out" in our 2023/2024 budget. Council members agreed with this rationale.

Per Darby, the Personnel Committee is recommending that the village pay Simmons for two weeks of consulting services.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to authorize payment of a lump sum consulting fee to Tim Simmons, equal to two weeks of gross pay at the rate he was at when he resigned. Taxes will not be withheld, as he is no longer an employee of the village.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Mulnix.

Public Safety – No report.

Parks & Recreation

Darby informed council that the Village Recreation Plan expires in 2022. Straubel will contact Fleis & VandenBrink.

Darby reported that 4 of the 6 picnic tables that were recently purchased, were broken during the Bridge Festival. DPW Koster stated that he only knows of 2 that were broken, but he will look into it and also research better quality replacement options.

Streets

Straubel reported that she received notice that the village was not chosen as a grant recipient of the MDOT Category B grant for reconstruction of Church Street, from Bridge Street to Vosper Street. The Streets Committee will discuss alternate options for Church Street with Todd Richter of Fleis & VandenBrink, when they meet to discuss 2023/2024 budget items.

Buildings & Grounds – No report.

Water & Sewer

DPW Koster reported that contractors for the DWAM project initially thought they discovered a lead water line on Liberty Street, but fortunately it was not lead. However, they did discover during the project, that what they thought was a 4-inch watermain on Liberty Street, is actually an 8-inch watermain.

Straubel informed council members that Apex Excavating & Underground, the contractor for the DWAM project, did some extra work at the village's request (checked 4 additional water services), which resulted in a \$3,200 charge that will be billed outside of the grant project.

Public Comments – None.

Additional Business

The Saranac Community Association is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Village Harvest Festival on Saturday, October 29th from 3 to 6 p.m. at the trailhead pavilion on N Bridge Street. There will be free hotdogs, donuts and cider, vendors, trunk or treat, a chili and soup cook-off and fun activities for children. From 7 to 11 p.m., there will be a live band and a beer tent. Costumes are encouraged for this fun-filled day!

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Treasurer/Deputy Clerk