

Village of Creston Minutes - Amended
Tuesday, December 7, 2021

President Byro called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Trustees Hopkins, Kerns, Katzman, Ward and Williams were present. Attorney Crull was present. Trustee Hibshman was not present.

President Byro introduced the minutes and asked for additions or corrections. Trustee Ward made a motion to approve and Trustee Kerns seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Minutes were accepted.

Visitors & Communication – President Byro asked if there were any visitors that would like to speak. Becky Somerville introduced herself and addressed a notice she received that she said gave her 10 days to tear down a barn that was on her property. She stated that it was ridiculous as she had received no previous notice to repair the structure. She didn't realize that the village had an issue. She said she would love to repair her garage but she has had COVID twice and she physically and financially cannot do it. She is not working and she didn't understand how anyone could expect her to get on a roof and fix it in December. She said that in the past, Fred Cederholm was given 6 months to fix or tear down a house, and she said she was embarrassed and humiliated to have to ask for time to figure it out because she cannot do it at this time. Casper introduced himself and explained that the notice was requesting a phone call within the 10 day time frame so that they could discuss the issue and how to take care of it. He said they send out letters so they have a written record of the attempted contact. Casper said he never got a call. Mrs Somerville said she called the previous day and Casper said he didn't get a message and apologized for that. He reiterated that he does not expect the structure to be repaired or demolished in 10 days and he asked for her number so that he could call her at a later time to discuss it with her. Mrs Somerville stated she wanted to leave as soon as possible and Casper told her he would get her number from Treasurer Payton and would call her the following day, and he apologized for any stress the communication caused.

Jack Kerns spoke about his water bill. He said that he had spoken to Treasurer Payton about it, and she gave him her word that once the village got the new meter reader that things would get adjusted. Jack wanted to know why the village went back 3 months instead of one year to average the estimates for the water bill. Treasurer Payton explained that the 3 months is how the computer program is written for estimates. She also explained that once we start taking actual readings and compare them to the estimates, if the village has overestimated, then he will get a credit to his account. Trustee Kerns stated that if we keep reading 3 months back when we have been estimating for 3 months, the bill will stay the same. President Byro told Mr Kerns that the village was trying to get it figured out. Mr Kerns said he looks at his meter every day and writes the reading into a ledger. Trustee Williams asked him if he could take a picture of it and Mr Kerns said that he doesn't know how to take a picture with his phone. President Byro said he feels for Mr Kerns but the village was doing the best they could. President Byro spoke about Clerk Payton giving residents the option of taking a photo of their meter and submitting it, so the village was trying to find ways to work around the issue.

President Byro spoke about the Christmas Festival on Friday night and Saturday. He gave the library a lot of credit for what they put together and said he was impressed with the results.

Attorney Crull said that he received the plat of survey from the library, so he was able to complete the ordinance that was previously passed. He was also working on a hotel tax as Trustee Ward brought up at the previous meeting. President Byro asked if Attorney Crull had heard from Comcast and he stated that he had and they have been in email communication. Trustee Ward asked for status on the house complaints were supposed to be filed and Attorney Crull said they would be filed that week. Trustee Ward asked if Atty Crull had talked to the county about the property that was supposed to go back to the county. He said he had not. He needed to consult with Casper first.

Casper referenced the letter that Mrs Somerville spoke about. Trustee Hopkins asked what property that was. Casper said he was going to drive by and see how the garage was coming, and he normally drives down E North St and this time he went down the alley heading south and that is when he saw the hole in the side of the structure right behind Trustee Katzman's property. Casper reiterated that the notice is to get the property owner to call so he could work with them and most people read it as they need to have the repair/demolition done within 10 days. Casper said he would give Mrs Somerville a call and work with her on what to do about the structure. There is another property on E North St that has a dishwasher sitting out and Curtis had told him about an area at the very end of W North St at the curve, where Curtis pushes snow during the winter and there was a camper and some cars parked there. The camper is gone but there are still a couple of cars. Trustee Ward asked if Casper saw the burned out garage at the corner of Transit and Cederholm. Casper said he had and Trustee Ward said that the owners were still working with the insurance company.

Kevin Bunge spoke about the DCO grant application. He stated that proposed improvement area was from the north side of the tracks to the south side of Cederholm. He said he had been talking to Curtis and that in addition to a new street, they would also be putting in a new water main and new storm sewers that are desperately lacking in that street. They would also rebuild the street from right of way to right of way, so it would be all new sidewalks, and he could fit parallel parking on one side and angled on the other side if that was

what the board would like to do. That configuration would result in more parking in the same amount of space. He said that sidewalks about be about 7 feet wide on both sides. The estimate includes ornamental street lights, planters, trees if desired, a couple of benches, bike racks, and trash bins. He said if the grant is received they will look at bump outs at the corners. He did reiterate that a match is not required, but it is encouraged. He recommended at least 20% but more if the village can afford it. He said that we would not be spending any money until late 2023 at the earliest and more likely 2024. The grant application is due the first week of January. President Byro said he wanted to make sure the board doesn't forget anything. He asked if the grant has to be specific and Kevin said yes and no. He said that they have to turn in a plan and a cost estimate as well as a lot of narrative as to why the village deserves the grant. He said that as long as the cost estimate is well thought out and considers everything, then the details can be tweaked at a later time if necessary. The grant just needed to show that the village has considered everything and that the estimates are as accurate as possible. All the details do not need to be worked out at this time. Kevin did say that he needs the village's proposal for their match. Trustee Katzman asked if the village has a better shot at getting the grant if we offer a higher match. Kevin explained it is a points-based application so the higher the match, the more points awarded. Trustee Ward said he attended at training and it was explained that if there are two applications that are identical in all regards except one has a match and one does not, the state will choose the application with the match. Every dollar that is matched frees up more grant money for other communities. Trustee Kerns said that without the grant, the village would be covering 100% of the costs. If the village matched 25%, they would getting 75% of the project covered. Kevin stated that this will be full, complete reconstruction of the road. Trustee Hopkins asked if it covers all of the infrastructure under the road as well and Kevin said that sanitary is the only thing they will not be touching. They will dig out the old road, put down new water mains and storm sewers, and rebuild the road. Trustee Ward also said that we could also let utility companies know that we will be tearing up the road, so if there is anything they would need to do that would be the time to do it. Trustee Hopkins spoke about the light fixtures and he is more interested in longevity as opposed to ornamentation. He wants to make sure we don't invest in something that will become obsolete quickly. Trustee Ward said that the good news is this grant is geared toward small communities, so we won't be competing with the larger suburbs like Naperville or Aurora. Kevin said he just needs to know what % to give as the match. Trustee Kerns suggested 25%. Kevin said that would be about \$160,000 and Trustee Kerns said that \$160,000 to redo the entire downtown area is a bargain. Trustee Ward also mentioned that if anything changed by the time the village was awarded the grant and it turned out we did not wish to go forward, we could always choose not to sign the agreement and not take the grant. Kevin also asked people to think about stories or information about what the downturn associated with COVID did to downtown. Trustee Ward asked if Kevin had spoken to Trustee Hibshman, and Kevin said not yet, but Trustee Hibshman was going to talk to him. President Byro also said that Kris from the library might have some pertinent information to add as well. Trustee Ward also suggested talking to Lyle Headon, who owned Headon's when the pandemic started.

Committee Reports

Finance - Trustee Hopkins had nothing to report.

Streets & Sidewalks - Trustee Ward said he has nothing other than that blockage that was addressed at the last meeting. President Byro said that they have not worked on it. .

Water & Sewer - Trustee Kerns had nothing to report. President Byro said he had something related to water to bring up later.

Health & Safety - Trustee Hibshman was not present.

Zoning & Planning - Trustee Katzman said he was not made aware of anything.

Subdivision - Trustee Williams said it looks pretty good. He asked Attorney Crull if there was a new owner. Attorney Crull said that as far as he is concerned there is no new owner. Trustee Williams brought up that winter is coming and that the plowing of the subdivision is the responsibility of the owner, but the village does it and the owner should be billed for it. Trustee Williams wanted to know what the owner intended to do. Attorney Crull stated that he will probably do what he's always done.

Old Business - President Byro spoke about the letters that were sent out regarding meter readings and the new equipment. Clerk Payton stated that she and Treasurer Payton had spoken about complaints they had been receiving about the estimates. They decided to write a letter and give residents the option of taking a screenshot of their water meter and emailing it to a dedicated email address so that actual readings can be entered instead of estimated readings. Screenshots are easier because she can just look at the photo and enter the number. Clerk Payton did say that she would take the number in writing if that is how it is easiest for the resident to supply the information. If residents are willing to submit readings, then the village can get people back on track with actual readings instead of estimates. If a resident has overpaid based on actual readings, then adjustments can be made to that resident's bill, and if a resident has been underpaying, then that resident can get caught up based on actual readings instead of continuing to underpay. Clerk Payton and Treasurer Payton felt that the village needed to give people an option to submit actual readings because the situation is frustrating. It is frustrating for the residents and it is frustrating for the village. The village would like to be able to read the meters, but

we don't have equipment or a reader. People were interested in the reader position but we couldn't hire anyone until we got the equipment. There had also been concerns voiced about the chlorine levels in the water, and Mike M. had spoken about that at the previous meeting, so Clerk Payton asked him to write a letter explaining what he presented at the meeting and that letter went out to all residents with the letter regarding the water meter reading situation. Trustee Ward said that the only concern he had was for people who are severely behind. He would like to see the village work with those residents. Clerk Payton agreed, stating that the village would not punish anyone for something that is beyond their control. President Byro stated that he appreciated the efforts made regarding this situation. Trustee Kerns asked what the status of the new equipment was and President Byro said he had not heard a word. He did say that the village received the FCC paperwork and that had all been filled out and turned in. Trustee Kerns asked if the loaner would work and President Byro stated that it would not work at all.

President Byro brought up the final payout for the Safe Routes to School Project from IDOT. The final amount due is about \$15,000. President Byro said that there were things that the railroad was supposed to do some things and they didn't. The railroad took the position that if the village didn't do those things at that time, then the railroad would not allow us to cross the tracks. It was a perceived no way around it situation, so those items were a portion of the bill. There was also extra stonework, an additional drain that was installed, and gravel was also added. Trustee Ward confirmed that IDOT pays all the bills and they then invoice the village for the amount due. Kevin said yes, and that what we received was an agreement to pay the stated amount, not an invoice. President Byro just wanted to let the board know when the invoice comes.

President Byro went back to the chlorine levels in the water, and he said that he thinks the levels are right where they need to be and he acknowledged how hard Mike and Curtis have worked to get the levels where they need to be and maintain them.

New Business - President Byro brought up the 2022 Tax Levy. Treasurer Payton asked if Mr Newkirk could speak about the audit before the tax levy was discussed, so he could leave. Mr Newkirk went through his report and discussed the information contained. Paragraph at the bottom of page 1 is a clean/unmodified opinion and that they did the audit procedures and they are fairly presented or good financial statements. At the top of page 2, it states that the village does not follow generally accepted accounting practices. It is cash-basis accounting, which is common for small municipalities. Page 3 is a high level balance sheet. Governmental activities are the general fund and motor fuel tax, and business type activities is water/sewer fund. Pages 4 and 5 are an income statement, which combines everything for the government and you don't really budget that way. Page 6 is where general and MFT are split out. It is generally cash and fund balance for the most part. There were some things that were paid out of the wrong fund. Page 8 is an income statement by fund. MFT showed a loss, which is common. Starting at page 10 is the utility fund which is essentially a balance sheet. Page 11 is an income statement and page 12 is a cash flow statement. The biggest difference between pages 11 and 12 is depreciation amount, which is a non-cash expenditure. Through the notes, on page 18, is the depreciation schedule. Governmental activity is everything that isn't water and sewer. The bottom table is business type activity, which is equipment and vehicles, and water and sewer. It shows how the depreciation is broken down. Depreciation is about halfway through the life of the assets. Page 20 is where the most detail is found. It is a budget versus actual schedule of the general fund. Page 22 has the same information for the MFT fund, and for the utility fund on page 24. Mr Newkirk said that if there was anything out of the ordinary, he would point it out. He said that everything that is bound in the report had been submitted. He also provided required communication to the board, which are certain things that auditing standards state have to be put in writing. Mr Newkirk asked if anyone had any questions, and President Byro asked if the tipping fee monies were included. Treasurer Payton said that it was in the utility fund. Mr Newkirk stated that on page 24, about the 5th or 6th line down, it showed landfill host fees of \$47,658. Treasurer Payton said that was not the grand total. That was just the income. Mr Newkirk said if any further questions came up, anyone was welcome to call him at any time during the year. President Byro moved on to the 2022 Tax Levy and asked Treasurer Payton to speak about it. Treasurer Payton said the board had to pass it to collect our tax money. She said that she didn't know if it was because of COVID or not, but we were using the same EAB that was used last year. Our tax levy is \$21,206. The funds were put into legal fees and mosquito control. Trustee Hopkins moved to pass the ordinance. Trustee Katzman seconded. President Byro asked for questions. There were none. Roll call vote was taken. Trustees Hopkins, Kerns, Katzman, Ward and Williams all voted yes. Trustee Hibshman was not present. Ordinance passed with 5 yeas and one absent.

President Byro brought up well maintenance. He passed out a letter from our water operator. One of the issues in addition to chlorine levels, was that the wells needed to be pulled and super-chlorinated and repaired. President Byro stated that one of the wells has never been pulled to the best of his knowledge. The maintenance will not be cheap and the village has to get it on an agenda next year to discuss moving forward with maintenance. Mike was concerned as the maintenance can't be done in the winter, and it really shouldn't be done in the summer because the village doesn't want a well down during the summer. Mike had spoken to the people at Lang, who had done the well maintenance before, and if parts are needed, it could take 6-8 weeks to get them. President Byro said it is important to get it on the agenda and budget for it because we need to make sure our wells are working properly.

President Byro then moved onto the Village Hall update. A crew came and trimmed some bushes and trees. The building was built in 1989 and it has never been painted on the inside to his knowledge, and the carpet has never been cleaned. He thinks it is time to

spend some money to get the building back in shape. He has talked to some painters. It won't be cheap, but it needs to be done. If anyone has any ideas or input, let President Byro know. President Byro would like to get it done over the winter.

Treasurer's Report – President Byro introduced the Treasurer's Report to approve the bills and asked for discussion. There was none. Trustee Ward made a motion to approve the bills. Trustee Katzman seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken. Trustees Ward, Kerns, Katzman, Williams, and Hopkins all voted yes. Trustees Hibshman was not present. Bills were approved with 5 yeas and one absent.

President Byro said he had nothing else. Trustee Hopkins made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Ward seconded the motion. All voted in favor. President Byro adjourned the meeting at 8:03:22 pm.