

## Village of Creston Minutes Tuesday, November 2, 2021

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

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

**Visitors & Communication** – President Byro said he didn't have any communications, but he did have visitors he wished to introduce later in the meeting, so he moved to the next item of business.

Attorney Crull said that he did not have much. The library got him the map he needed to complete the ordinance that was passed on May 4, 2021. Once it is signed, he will file it at the courthouse and then the property will be officially annexed. He said he also worked on the farm lease, which President Byro said was signed and finalized.

Casper was not present, but submitted a written report regarding some properties he has been working on. There has been no response from 123 W North St to the certified letter sent 6/10/21. Atty Crull said they also sent a certified letter that included a copy of the complaint that will be filed in court if a response is not received, and a response has not been received. Per Casper's report, the owner of 224 E Depot St was also sent a certified letter and did not respond. The owners of 308 E North St did respond to their certified letter and stated that they let the house go back to Ogle County for back taxes. President Byro asked the board how they wanted to proceed. Trustee Kerns asked what the next step would be. Atty Crull said the next step is to file the complaint. Trustee Ward asked if it would be an ordinance violation complaint or a condemnation complaint. Atty Crull replied it would most likely be both. Trustee Kerns stated that Atty Crull should move forward with filing the complaints, and Trustee Ward agreed. The owners have been given ample opportunity to take action and have not done so. President Byro talked about a situation in which an owner gave the property to the village so that the village could sell the lot once the structures are demolished and recoup some of the demolition cost. Atty Crull said he would check the title on the property at 308 E North St to see if Ogle County actually owns it. If the county does own it, then the village should be able to work out a beneficial deal with the county. When the village owns a property, they are eligible for a lot more money from the state for demolition and other grants. President Byro stated that Atty Crull should move forward with the complaint process on 123 W North St and 224 E Depot St. President Byro brought up the property at the corner of Main and South Streets. He said that Casper talks to the resident periodically about cleaning up her property and she does some cleanup each time Casper talks to her, so she is making an effort.

Kevin Bunge asked for clarification as to whether or not the Village would apply for the DCO grant opportunity that is due in early January. Minimum amount one can request is \$250,000 and the maximum is \$3 million. It is specifically for downtowns and has to be improvements on a street with commercial presence currently on it. President Byro said he really didn't know where to start. He said the board would need to get their priorities in order and decide what they wanted to start with. Trustee Ward stated that the best way to start is from the bottom up as it makes no sense to do a lot of improvements over an 80-year old water main and storm sewer issues. Trustee Kerns suggested starting at the tracks and going north. Kevin said that if the village could get work done from Cederholm St to the tracks that would be huge. Kevin also stated that a match is not required, but the village wouldn't get enough points without some match, so the board will have to decide what to offer up. Trustee Ward asked if Kevin had an estimate of what it would cost to do the project. Kevin said his firm is already doing three of them that are all bigger than the village's would be, but he needs some assistance from the board or the business owners regarding the narratives that have to be written regarding how COVID negatively impacted the businesses. Kevin said he has read through the grant information multiple times and he feels that this grant was created for communities like Creston. He said that they have been pretty successful with their grant applications. Trustee Ward suggested that Kevin come back to the next meeting with an estimate, and Trustee Kerns said that next month the board may have better ideas about what projects to do. Kevin said the village might not be able to get everything done, but they could get a big portion of it done. President Byro stated that Kevin should go ahead and get the estimate put together and get the grant application underway.

President Byro introduced Mike Megurdichian and asked him to speak about the water situation, as the village has been getting some complaints about the smell of chlorine in the water. Mr. Megurdichian stated he has been working with Curtis Loyd, who has been doing a great job, and it goes back to the tightening of EPA regulations coming from the regular inspection last December. He spoke about the additional monitoring and due to more stringent requirements for disinfection, they needed to change to free chlorination as part of the treatment. The EPA is expecting them to make sure all the water complies with the minimum chlorination standards at its oldest and/or farthest points, such as Creston Commons or Holcomb Back and Casey's. Mike and Curtis have been working on getting more consistent and stable chlorination as it leaves the tower and the plants going out to the ends of the system. Mike thinks they are

just about there. The state has mandated a lot of additional monitoring, which Mike and Curt have been working on. People are noticing the chlorination now because they switched treatments, but at the end of the day what drives it are the state and federal requirements. Mike said that what they are seeing now is much better than what they were seeing in August. He said that if anyone has any questions, he would be happy to address them. Trustee Hopkins stated that he has had residents mention to him about the smell and taste of chlorine in the water and he asked if that was just going to be a fact of life from now on due to the new requirements. Mike stated that the closer someone lives to the well head, the higher the chlorine levels will be and he discussed goal amounts at both the well heads and the farthest points as time and distance degrades chlorine. The chlorine residuals protect the public from any pathogens being introduced into the system. The most recent readings were satisfactory, which he expected it to be. Mike said if anyone has any questions, he would be happy to stop by their residence and speak with them and take samples if they want him to. Trustee Hopkins asked what drove the increases and Mike stated that there is natural ammonia in the source water, and that drove both the regulation and the doubling of the amount of chlorine needed. President Byro brought up a couple of dead end places and Mike said that they are aware of them and that they have been doing good flushing in regards to those places. Kevin brought up cross connections that were done to the interim mains when the 10" was installed all the way to the tower, and he felt that a goal should be to undo those interim connections, as they were a mistake.

## **Committee Reports**

Finance - Trustee Hopkins had nothing to report.

Streets & Sidewalks - Trustee Ward asked if any progress was made on the drainage issue. President Byro said that Curt and Kevin need to talk. President Byro said he has a printout he needs them to look at to determine where it goes. Trustee Ward said Kevin sent him something and he remembered them putting a new line from the corner down Cederholm to the main drainage way. A printout from the person who did the work shows that they came up to the next inlet and tied into it coming south and abandoned the one they were trying to get through. The problem used to be on the west side and a system was built to drain it and now the east side isn't draining. RMU tried to flush it and was not successful. Trustee Ward and Kevin both stated that digging needs to be done and Kevin suggested starting on the west side of the road. Trustee Ward said that it needs to be addressed soon, or we won't be able to get asphalt to patch it. Kevin said that if water is building up, you want to address that before winter. Kevin suggested starting right in front of the inlet on the west side. Curt asked if he should call RMU and have them try one more time. President Byro said that Curt could try it and if it doesn't solve the problem, then call Queens and schedule them to dig it up.

Water & Sewer - Trustee Kerns had nothing to report.

Health & Safety - Trustee Hibshman had nothing to report

Zoning & Planning - Trustee Katzman was not present, and President Byro said he hadn't heard anything about zoning or planning.

Subdivision - Trustee Williams was not present and President Byro said he had not heard anything about the subdivision.

**Old Business** - President Byro stated that the farm lease had been signed.

**New Business** - President Byro discussed the ARPA funds. Based on information he has been receiving, he said the village has 3 years to use the money. He said that discussion was had about getting hydrants, and he wanted to know if that still needed to be discussed or if the hydrants need to be ordered. President Byro said if anyone has other ideas other than the hydrants to let him know. Trustee Ward asked if the village received \$89,000 and President Byro responded that the village has received half already and the other half would come next year. Trustee Ward brought up the 2" mains that need to be replaced. He stated that that project would most likely take all that money and it would solve some water issues that people have been having. President Byro suggested that the board make a list of projects. Kevin reminded the board that for ARPA projects have to be bondable. Replacing mains and hydrants qualifies as bondable projects: repaving roads does not.

President Byro brought up a claim the village received from Comcast regarding a cut cable. Comcast asserts that someone doing work for the village cut the cable and they billed the village for \$1744. President Byro and Curt looked at it and couldn't figure out how the village was responsible. President Byro wanted to bring it to everyone's attention and his opinion was to add it to the bills and pay it. Trustee Ward asked if the cable was buried to the proper depth. President Byro said it was his understanding that the cable was attached to a telephone pole and that the assertion is that someone swung around with a mowing deck or similar equipment and cut it off. Curt said that he saw a box by the pole on the southwest side of the townhouses on the east side of Beck Rd that was destroyed. Curt said that Lockhart would not have destroyed that box as he doesn't mow that. The owner of the townhouses has that taken care of. Comcast claims it was cut on the west side near the water tower. President Byro asked the board what they wanted to do, and his opinion was to pay it. Trustee Ward asked if Lockhart had called in the cut. President Byro said no one called in anything. The Comcast repairman called it in. The bill was received 8/30/21. Trustee Ward said that Lockhart is a contractor for the village, and if one

of their people supposedly did the damage, Lockhart's insurance should cover it. The area in which the damage happened is not an area Lockhart is contracted to mow. Trustee Kerns suggested handing it off to Atty Crull. Trustee Ward suggested letting Comcast know that none of the Village employees or contractors mows that ditch. Atty Crull said he would send something to Comcast regarding this issue. Trustee Hopkins and Trustee Ward both said not to pay it.

President Byro brought up the Census. Creston's population has decreased by 35 people and is now 627. The village doesn't know where they will be with tax revenue. Treasurer Payton referenced the November publication IML sent out, pages 14-19, for an explanation. The village is paid per capita, so for each kind of tax collected, they receive a certain amount per resident. Treasurer Payton said she expects revenues to go down. The economists in the article felt that everything would even out, but Treasurer Payton couldn't see how that would happen. Treasurer Payton said the village can contest it, but the question is do they want to. President Byro brought up the 2022 Tax Levy that the trustees were given information on, and he said that will be discussed and voted on in December.

Trustee Ward had a question for Atty Crull regarding the Boundary Agreement and the tax rates the village has to pass that are the same as Rochelle's in order to share in those revenues. He wanted to know if that was being worked on, as he knows that certain things can only be done during certain times of the year. Atty Crull said that can be worked on and he said that he had discussed that with Atty Tess.

**Treasurer's Report** – President Byro asked if the Christmas lights were all good and ready to go and Curt said that they are. Curt said he was going to contact Jerome from Abe's to put them up, but President Byro said that Jerome was in Louisiana until mid-November. The consensus was that as long as the decorations were up before Christmas in Creston in early December, there should not be a problem.

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

President Byro said he had nothing else. Trustee Ward made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Hopkins seconded the motion. All voted in favor. President Byro adjourned the meeting at 7:51:08 pm.