

**VILLAGE OF NEW AUBURN**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

The regular board meeting of the Village Board, Village of New Auburn, was held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall, 130 E Elm St., New Auburn following a Question/Answer Session for Rate and Tax Increases Open to the Public from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

Question & Answer Session Open to the Public:

A question and answer session that was posted and mailed to citizens in the water-sewer utility bills to answer any questions on the rate and tax increases was provided to the community at the request of the Clerk and approval by the board. Board present was Brad Lotts, President; Allan Anderson, Trustee; Gary Pitts, Trustee; Dalton Hinke, Trustee. Absent: Shannon Berg, Trustee. Staff Present: Clerk Ardith Story, Public Works Jon Bohl. Guests: Jeff LaBelle, WI Rural Water, and Ginny Hinz, Accountant-CPA Consultant via phone. Jeff LaBelle presented his data on the water utility and discussion of the tariffs. Jeff provided information where Village of Winter [Pop. 327] utility rates increased 70%, Green Lake [Pop. 985] increased 51.62%, and others. Costs are considerably higher than ever. Jeff recommended putting away upwards \$180,000 for painting of the water tower in the future. He emphasized the costs have climbed significantly for supplies, materials, and labor. Ginny Hinz reviewed how the tax rates for the 2023 budget came to be. The local levy at \$6.22/100,000 assessed value is average as she has seen them in other municipalities as high as \$8 to \$10/100,000 in the State of Wisconsin. She briefly reviewed the tax process to the board members and public. No other person or board member had any questions.

**I. CALL TO ORDER, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**

Answering roll call were: Village President Brad Lotts; Trustees Allan Anderson, Gary Pitts, and Dalton Hinke. Absent: Shannon Berg [later arrived at 8:21 p.m.] Staff present were: PW Jon Bohl, Clerk Ardith Story. Guests: Randy Scholz, Chippewa County Administrator.

**II. BUDGET HEARING**

1. Open Public Hearing: Budget;  
Budget Hearing was opened at 7:01 p.m. Board members were presented with the budget in their packets with the local tax levy at 173,028, revenues and expenditures for 2023 at 622,469, a 26% increase; Water utility revenues and expenditures at 227,475 and Sewer utility revenues and expenditures at 196,008.
2. Discussion with Public Comment on 2023 Budget;  
President Lotts requested if anyone had public comments.
3. Close Public Hearing;  
After calling out for comments once again, Brad Lotts closed the public hearing. No person commented.
4. Consider/Act on Resolution 2022-24: Adoption of the 2023 Budget;  
Motion by Allan Anderson/Gary Pitts to adopt Resolution 2022-24: Adoption and approve the 2023 Budget.  
Roll call: Trustee Anderson – aye; Trustee Pitts – aye; Trustee Hinke – aye; President Lotts – aye. 4-0. Motion carried.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

President Lotts requested if anyone had public comments. No one answered. President moved onto next item.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Correspondence;
2. Meeting Minutes: 10/12/22 Budget Workshop; 10/27/22 Special Board;
3. General Licenses & Permits;
4. Treasurer's Report;  
Motion by Trustee Pitts/Anderson to approve the consent agenda items. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS OF EMPLOYEES/OFFICERS/COMMITTEES**

1. Public Safety Report;  
Sgt. Clark presented the Chippewa County Sheriff's Report for the month of October. There were 15 service calls consisting of: 1 assist law, 1 building check, 4 person checks, 1 misc complaint, 1 crash, 1 public relations, 1 theft, 1 traffic complaint, 1 OWI, and 3 vehicle assists. Deputy Alman handed out candy and

other items to 84 children over Halloween. So far the court process at the Chippewa County Courthouse is going well and he will continue to work with Clerk Story in finalizing the details.

2. Building Inspector Report;  
Inspector Atwood was not available to report; however, he did provide a report for the board members packets.
3. Public Works Report;  
Jon reported on the final meters, awaiting supply to catch up with four commercial meters left. The dump will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup> [Consensus of the board to approve the closure of the dump – requests of the board to put signs up], PW staff have been working on winterizing equipment and village items; the sander is put on the Ford truck and is working; the deer hunting schedule for staff was reviewed – no comments from board.
4. Clerk-Treasurer Report;  
Clerk reported that the Wastewater Treatment Plant loan closed on November 9<sup>th</sup> and Brad and she signed final closing documents; the attorney is reviewing drafted ordinance to address ham radio antennas; the Wisconsin Election Commission randomly selected municipalities for an election audit of the equipment and the audit was completed and documents submitted to the WEC.

#### **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. None;

#### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Guest Speaker: Randy Scholz, Chippewa County Administrator on County Hours for Employee Retention and Chippewa County Updates;  
Randy Scholz presented to discuss updates at Chippewa County and employee retention as well as hours of operations. To retain employees Chippewa County surveyed employees including hours of operations, longevity pay, recruitment pay, retaining employees in general, generational studies (younger generations do not communicate the same as the older generation), and telecommuting. COVID fast tracked the telecommunications. New hours at Chippewa County are 7:30 – 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with Fridays being 7:30 – 11:30 a.m. In giving employees a little more home time / personal time, their hopes are to retain employees longer. More management training has been given as customer service is there #1 goal. Chippewa County is a mid-size county with no middle management so they are in good shape. If the village is ever in need of discussing employee retention, he is available to answer questions or assist where he can.
2. Discussion and Possible Consider/Act with Request by Tom and Donna Bischel to Write Off 328 N Old 53 St Property's Delinquent Utilities;  
After President Lotts read agenda item, Clerk Story presented the board with the WI Statute and findings from legal with regards to 'writing off' delinquent utilities. Both Tom and Donna Bischel argued for the clerk to write off or for the utility to pursue the former owner of Old 53 via collections; however, the utility already follows the statutes which clearly defines as putting it on the tax roll. Proper notice was given with respect to the delinquent utilities. Trustee Anderson asked Mr. Bischel why he didn't come to the village to review delinquent utilities prior to engaging in the purchase of the building. The Clerk indicated that she did not receive the title search documents that are done prior to a closing as typically received. [Clerk's Note in follow-up after mtg: Legal has advised that by reducing the amounts due to some but not others would be a violation of the equal protection clause of the Wisconsin and United States Constitutions. The Village's rate design is in place and changing the amounts to be paid to some but not others is a clear violation]. Tom also had a discrepancy with Old 53's utility bill; however, a regular board meeting is not the proper forum and should the Bischel's have a question with the utility bill should contact the Clerk outside of the meeting. Tom Bischel eventually stated he would pay the utility bill.  
The board took no action.
3. Discussion and Updates on Wastewater Treatment Plant by Morgan & Parmley; Larry updated the board regarding cold weather slowing the project down. The board had authorized picking rocks from the new seepage cell. Might be doing fencing but afterwards completing inside work but most work not picking back up again until March.

4. Consider/Act on WWTP Pay Request #3 Project No.: 19-220 Dated 11/4/2022 in the Amount of \$488,852.10; Larry advised of the new amount 571,510.41 and informed the board that change order #2 which was 39,262 is now 36,026.55.  
Motion by Trustees Anderson/Pitts to approve pay request #3 for the WWTP project no. 19-220 in the amount of \$571,510.41, as advised by Larry with the updated pay request 3 numbers. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
5. Consider/Act on WWTP Change Order #2 Reflecting a Reduction from Change Order #1 (\$2,508.29) for a Total of \$36,753.71;  
Motion by Trustees Anderson/Pitts of Change Order #2 to be 36,753.71. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
6. Consider/Act on CDBG Income Survey Study of \$4,000 by Morgan & Parmley; Larry discussed the cost of the income survey study for North Street. If the income survey study is completed it could potentially provide additional funding for the North Street Project. The cost of the survey is \$4,000.  
Motion by Trustees Pitts/President Lotts to approve the CDBG Income Survey Study for \$4,000 by Morgan & Parmely. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
7. Consider/Act on the Appointment of Members to the Micro-Loan Fund Program and Downtown Façade Loan Program Committee;  
Motion by Trustees Pitts/Berg to approve Dennis Bachman, Karen Smith, Dan North, Peggy Stanford, and Ardith Story as Members of the Micro-Loan Fund Program and Downtown Façade Loan Program Committee. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
8. Consider/Act on the Appointment of a Member to the Tourism Committee;  
Motion by Trustees Berg/Pitts to appoint members of the Tourism Committee to be Dalton Hinke, Dan Moos, Ardith Story, Jill Petska, and Dan North. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
9. Consider/Act on the Repair in Right of Way on Central Street for \$2,253.20;  
Motion by Trustees Berg/Anderson for the repair of Central Street alleyway for ditch and right of way drainage by Triad in the amount of \$2,253.20. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
10. Consider/Act on Ordinance 2022-14 Consent Agenda;  
Motion by Trustee Pitts/President Lotts to approve Ordinance 2022-14: Consent Agenda. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
11. Consider/Act on Resolution 2022-25: New Auburn Utilities to Direct Charge Public Fire Protection;  
Motion by Trustees Pitts/Anderson to approve Resolution 2022-25 for Public Fire Protection to go to Direct Charge. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
12. Review/Consider/Act on Long-Term Investments;  
Motion by President Lotts/Trustee Berg to approve the long-term investments and re-investments for the CD's at Security Bank as presented. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

#### **VIII. BILLS & CLAIMS**

1. Claims: Payment Approval Report 10/14/22-11/17/22;
2. Morgan & Parmley October 1-31, 2022 Invoice \$8,102.50;
3. Ehlers Invoice 92256, \$8,500.00;
4. Quarles & Brady, LLP, Statement #6542211, \$10,500;
5. Chippewa County Sheriff's Dept Oct 2022 Inv \$4,110.75;  
Motion by Trustees Berg/Pitts to approve the Bills and Claims payments 1-5 as presented. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

#### **VIII. Future Meetings**

1. November 21 – Election Audit 10 AM
2. December 8 – Regular Board Meeting 7 PM

#### **IX. Adjourn at 8:51 p.m.**

Motion by Trustees Pitts/Hinke to adjourn. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Prepared By: Ardith  
Story, Municipal Clerk-  
Treasurer