

February 28, 2024 – EMPIRE VILLAGE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Budget Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Palmer.

PUBLIC COMMENT – A letter from Teresa Howes was read aloud and included as a handout. Karen Baja voiced opposition to an across-the-board wage increase and opposition to hiring current contracted professionals to work on the Master Plan update.

Hearing closed at 7:06 p.m.

The Regular meeting was called to order at the Empire Township Hall and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Palmer at 7:06 p.m. Upon a roll call, Council members Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Clerk Smith, Treasurer Acton and DPW Superintendent Friend were absent and excused.

CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Dye requested at least a 2-month extension of the Short-Term Rental Committee be added to the agenda under Old Business. Rademacher pointed out that she knew 2 weeks ago an extension was needed and for transparency this should have been on the agenda and posted for public notice. Dye confirmed that was true.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA - Motion by Dye, support by Walton to approve the agenda as amended. Upon a voice vote with Bacon, Chase and Rademacher opposed, MOTION PASSED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS – Karen Baja commented on both Short-Term Rental committees, their work and the issues. Carey Ford also commented on the Short-Term Rental committees, their charge, the issues, and property rights.

FINANCIAL REPORTS – Financial reports were received and indicated that the cash bank balances and the general ledger match by fund.

COMMUNICATIONS – Emails regarding Short Term Rentals from Dave Taghon, Mark and Tina Dunphey; Stephen and Sharon McNutt; Thomas Islieb and Trish Baker were read aloud and available in the packet. An email from Audrey Menninga regarding a dumpster for garlic mustard was read aloud and available in packet. An email from Steve Lewis regarding the scientific recommendations from the South Bar Lake Study was read aloud and available in the packet.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS – DPW report was summarized by Palmer and available in the packet.

COUNCIL MEMBER/COMMITTEE REPORTS – Palmer commented on the special meeting this afternoon where a decision was made to put in an offer on the Field Trip Building. Bacon reported on the walk around with Engineer Graf and Consultant Grobbel on the Wilco/Lake St. Drainage issue and some of the options to address the risk management recommendations regarding the fuel tank. Bacon reported on the Planning Commission progress of the Master Plan update and the Redevelopment Ready process. Dye reported on the Short-Term Rental Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROVE MINUTES OF 2-8-24 – **Motion by Webb, support by Bacon to approve the minutes of 2-8-24. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

RESOLUTION NO. 2 OF 2024 – FY 2023-24 BUDGET AMENDMENT - **Motion by Dye, support by Rademacher to approve the Resolution.** Discussion included descriptions of account numbers and why expended amounts were over or under the budgeted amounts. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

APPROVE PREPAYMENT OPTION FOR THE SOUTH BAR LAKE DRAINAGE DISTRICT- **Motion by Rademacher, support by Webb to approve prepayment of \$47,725 in full for the South Bar Lake Drainage District.** Discussion included how assessments were computed and the amounts for the Township and County. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

RESOLUTION NO. 3 OF 2024- FY 2024-25 BUDGET APPROVAL – **Motion by Dye, support by Rademacher to approve the resolution.** Chase commented that wage increases will be included in the budget once the Personnel Committee completes their review. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

EXTENSION OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL COMMITTEE - **Motion by Dye, support by Walton to extend the Short-Term Rental Committee for 2 months.** Discussion included the status of current litigation, this issue has emerged as a hot topic so perhaps more public input is needed, whether a police power or zoning ordinance is needed, whether a STR is a business, and if a 2-month extension would allow time for input from summer residents. **Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

NEW BUSINESS

2024 FEE SCHEDULE - **Motion by Bacon, supported by Chase to approve the 2024 Schedule of Fees. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

SCHEDULE OF FY 2024-25 VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETINGS - **Motion by Rademacher, support by Dye to approve the schedule of meetings as presented. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

RESOLUTION NO. 4 OF 2024 – ACT 51 FUNDS TRANSFER FROM MAJOR TO LOCAL STREETS - **Motion by Bacon, support by Dye to approve the Resolution.** Current Major Streets were described. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

RESOLUTION NO. 5 OF 2024 – ACT 152 HEALTH CARE ANNUAL EXEMPTION - **Motion by Dye, support by Walton to approve the Resolution.** It was noted that this Resolution is required when a municipality cover 100% of health insurance costs. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING COMMISSIONERS – Palmer reappointed Bob Chase and Peter Schous to 3-year terms. **Motion by Bacon, supported by Chase to approve the president’s reappointments. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

RESOLUTION NO. 6 OF 2024 - LEELANAUUA COUNTY NATURAL HAZZARD MITIGATION PLAN – **Motion by Dye, supported by Rademacher to approve. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

Motion by Bacon, supported by Dye to approve bills totaling \$141,060.95. These include the 5K payment approved at the special meeting and large payments on the new tractor, contracted snowplowing, and third payment on generator. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT – Palmer thanked Walton for chairing the last meeting while she dealt with a family emergency. She expressed her thanks for all the well wishes and noted that her husband continues to recover. She noted that the Rules of Procedure will be on the next agenda so questions/comments should be prepared. Rademacher noted the Water Committee will be meeting with Kyle Bond of the Michigan Rural Water Association to do a free rate study.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:13 p.m.

Derith Smith Empire Village Clerk

These minutes were approved at the March 14 , 2024, Council meeting.