

December 14, 2023 – EMPIRE VILLAGE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Regular meeting was called to order at the Empire Township Hall and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Palmer at 7:00 p.m. Upon a roll call, Council members Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Palmer, Walton, and Webb were present. Clerk Smith, Treasurer Acton and DPW Superintendent Friend were also present.

CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Webb added Appointment of Village Attorney under Old Business.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA - Motion by Bacon, support by Rademacher to approve the agenda as amended. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA – None.

CONSENT AGENDA – Motion by Dye, support by Walton to approve the Consent Agenda including minutes of the 11/09/2023 Regular Meeting and bills totaling \$48,443.14. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.

FINANCIAL REPORTS – Financial reports were received from the Treasurer and Clerk. Totals from each indicate that the general ledger and the bank statements agree.

COMMUNICATIONS – Letters from Lawrence Epple, Empire Lions Club, and Mary Sharry were read aloud and included in packet.

PRESENTATION

ASSET MAPPING TASK FORCE – Bacon introduced and thanked the Task Force for their community participation. Rodney Barnes provided an overview of the work completed by members and included in the packet. Steve Lewis described the categories they created. Carla Weinheimer described the asset matrix; Trish Baker described the neighborhoods; Bob Chase reviewed the undeveloped land map. Linda Lewis spoke about the people who live here and questions the Task Force would like to discuss with them. They have enjoyed their work and plan to continue.

RENOVARE DEVELOPMENT – Palmer introduced members of Renovare that have been contracted to assist in identifying up to three possible locations and complete site plans for a new Village office and Community space. Bios of team members Shannon Morgan, Jill Ferrari, Jenifer Acosta and Brad Lonberger of Place Strategies and were presented. Plans completed for other municipalities were viewed and the development of surveys and input from the Empire community were introduced. Specifics of the contract regarding price and deliverables were reviewed in response to questions from the public. The emphasis will be on providing resources for the Empire community, both private and public, to develop according to their core values in the future.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS – A written report from Zoning Administrator Hall was received. Friend reported he is working on SOPs and recent snowplowing with Harriger Construction. He reported that the required lead reporting has been moved up 10 weeks.

COUNCIL MEMBER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

WASTEWATER TASK FORCE – Paul Skinner provided an overview of the work completed thus far including the service areas and collection areas that they are considering and provided an economic impact study proposal from Beckett and Raeder.

Minutes from the Wastewater Task Force of 11/16, 11/20 & 11/29; 11/8 minutes from Parks Committee, 11/27 minutes from Asset Mapping Task Force, and 8/2/23 minutes from the Empire Airport Authority were received.

OLD BUSINESS

APPOINT 2 PC MEMBERS TO THE STR REGISTRATION/ORDINANCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – **Motion by Dye, support by Walton to approve Palmer’s appointment of Carey Ford and Bob Chase to the Special Committee created to draft a registration, an ordinance and any other forms that may be necessary to implement a Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

Motion by Dye, support by Walton to move the deadline date for this committee to March 7, 2024. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Webb, support by Dye to hire Mika Meyers as the Village Attorney. Discussion included whether this decision could wait until the outcome of the current FOIA lawsuit, whether legal advice is currently needed or may be needed in the next several months, whether good legal advice has been received, and could other law firms be solicited for interest. Walton called the question. **ROLL CALL: Ayes: Dye, Palmer, Walton, Webb. Nays: Bacon, Chase, Rademacher. MOTION PASSED.**

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TREE REMOVAL – The two proposals received were reviewed. **Motion by Dye, support by Bacon to approve the proposal from Parshall Tree Service for an amount of \$2,610.00. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Chase, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

PUBLIC COMMENT – Gerry Shiffman, Denise Wunderlich, Karen Baja offered comments on DPW staffing and encouraging public comment.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT – Bacon commented on the backup plans for water and snowplowing requirements in the absence of DPW Superintendent Friend. Palmer noted that County Drain Commissioner Christensen has scheduled a meeting regarding the South Bar Lake Drainage District on Jan. 4, 2024, and wondered when the Village would be paying its assessment.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:26 p.m.

Derith Smith Empire Village Clerk

These minutes were approved at the January 11, 2023, Council meeting.