

## **October 22, 2024 – EMPIRE VILLAGE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

The 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, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Clerk Smith, Treasurer Acton, and DPW Superintendent Friend were also present.

**CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA** – Walton added Personnel Policy Bereavement under New Business. Bacon added Campaign Signs under New Business.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** – Teresa Howes commented on several campaign signs being removed repeatedly and the process for notifying Appointed Officers of the end of their terms. Bob Scott also commented on the several signs being repeatedly removed.

**CONSENT AGENDA – Motion by Dye, support by Walton to approve the Consent Agenda including the 10/10/24 Work Session minutes; bills totaling \$27,060.77 and the Clerk, Treasurer, and DPW Working Superintendent job descriptions. ROLL CALL: Ayes: Bacon, Dye, Palmer, Rademacher, Walton, Webb. Nays: None. MOTION PASSED.**

**FINANCIAL REPORTS** – The Revenue and Expenditure report thru September was received.

**COMMUNICATIONS** – Sleeping Bear Marathon organizer solicited input on this year's event.

- **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS** – DPW and ZA reports were received and included in the packet. It was noted that Fall Cleanup is scheduled for 11/5 & 6 and paper bags are encouraged. The quarterly water usage report was reviewed. Palmer reported it appears the bear is back in town and several potential projects were suggested by Renovare for future grant applications; prep for the 2025-26 Budget should begin by the Nov. meeting; and Attorney Fowler expects to complete his review of the Short-term Rental Ordinances for the Dec. or Jan. Council meeting; and the Non-Renewal of the Clerk and Treasurer appointments per Ordinances 133 and 134. Bacon asked several questions regarding the terms of Clerk and Treasurer and the letter received by both. Palmer replied that it was her decision and she had conferred with Attorney Figura, who had approved the letter sent to both Officers.

**COUNCIL MEMBER/COMMITTEE REPORTS** – Rademacher reported on the Water Committee. Walton reported on Personnel Committee meeting. Chase reported on the new office file cabinets and counter top that will be picked up by Village staff when they are ready.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT** – Palmer reviewed the discussions the Council prioritized for this position. She appointed Karen Baja and asked for a motion of approval. **Motion by Walton, support by Dye to approve the appointment of Karen Baja to the Planning Commission for the remainder of a term ending 2/28/26. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

**EXTENSION OF WASTEWATER UPDATE- Motion by Rademacher, support by Webb to extend the Wastewater Task Force thru January 2025. Upon a voice vote, MOTION PASSED.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**MDARD GRANT OPPORTUNITIES** – Palmer recommended several possibilities Renovare has suggested there may be time to complete for application. Bacon thought there may be some items that have emerged from the Master Plan. There was discussion of setting up a DDA for economic development. The costs, required dollar match, and timing for completed plans for several options were discussed. It was noted that while time consuming, the work with Renovare and the Master Plan process has better informed the council on identifying priorities. There was consensus that the Council could put together plans for submittal in the next round of these grants.

**PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATE TO BEREAVEMENT** – Walton reviewed the wording recommendation. Questions remain on the interpretation for administration of the policy. Smith will ask the HR group of the Village's risk management insurance for possible wording.

**CAMPAIGN SIGNS** – Bacon noted that removing signs is a serious offense that may include a \$500 fine and up to 90 days in jail.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Teresa Howes asked when the positions of Clerk and Treasurer will be advertised and that the public should be allowed to attend any interviews. She does not want to be blindsided by nominations of individuals that are not highly qualified  
Martha Acton asked why the Clerk and Treasurer would be fired when they are doing so well at their jobs and why Palmer had conversations with the attorney before discussions with the Council.

**COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENT** – Chase asked about the Mika/Meyer invoice regarding STRs and if any information was available. Dye feels there is a misinterpretation of the letter regarding the Clerk and Treasurer jobs and doesn't feel anyone was fired. There was discussion of why the Council had not received or reviewed the letter. Bacon understands why the letter may be interpreted as a firing and that Palmer had made it clear that it was completely her decision. Smith noted, and Palmer confirmed, that there was no discussion or decision to post or advertise the positions of Clerk and Treasurer. Palmer stated that most issues she has taken to the attorney have been previously discussed with the Council. She stated that she had heard from the Personnel Committee that the Clerk was not interested in continuing in the position. Bacon asked if anyone had asked the Clerk. There were no replies. Palmer stated she was pleased with the performance of the Clerk and Treasurer and felt it was her duty to notify them of the Ordinance requirements.

**ADJOURNMENT** at 8:12 p.m.

Derith Smith Empire Village Clerk

*These are draft minutes for approval at the November 14, 2024, Council meeting.*