

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 9, 2022

The Saranac Village Council Regular Meeting was called to order by President Darby at 7:00 p.m. at the Saranac Village Office, 27 N Bridge Street.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Darby, Straubel, DPW Simmons; Trustees – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Simmons, Whorley

Absent: None

Guests: Gina Johnsen, DeAnn Eddy, Deputy Sean Farrell

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Simmons, to approve the Regular Agenda. All yeas.

Public Comments

Gina Johnsen, State Representative candidate for District #78, introduced herself to council as a community leader, mother and business professional. Johnsen lives in Lake Odessa where she owns/operates a small health/life insurance business. Johnsen has been involved in the Michigan Capitol House of Prayer for numerous years. In this role she teaches individuals how to respectfully engage with officials. Johnsen considers herself a conservative Republican who can relate to all parties, as each one has its truths.

Law Enforcement Report

Council members reviewed Ionia County Sheriff Office stats for Village of Saranac patrol for the month of April 2022.

Deputy Sean Farrell was in attendance to provide council with an update on village law enforcement items of interest and to answer any questions council may have.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Klutman, to accept the minutes of the April 11, 2022 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Simmons, to accept the Treasurer's Report of April 30, 2022. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to approve the Accounts Payable of May 9, 2022, in the amount of \$104,019.71.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Simmons, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – none.

The Zoning Administrator's Report of Services for April 2022 was reviewed.

Planning Commission Report

Klutman reported that the Planning Commission met May 4, 2022, but did not have a quorum. Commission members in attendance reviewed with Mark Schaafsma (Harker House) and Jeanne Vandersloot (Zoning Administrator), Schaafsma's revised site plan for Harker House.

Vandersloot reviewed the original site plan in comparison to the revised site plan and provided the Planning Commission and Schaafsma with a memo outlining her findings.

Once Schaafsma provides Vandersloot with additional information as noted in her memo, a determination can be made whether the revised site plan meets the conditions of the Special Use Planned Unit Development and Site Plan that was approved February 5, 2020. If the new site plan meets the conditions of the original site plan, a public hearing will not be necessary.

Committee Reports

Budget – No report.

Public Safety

Whorley inquired whether council wanted to address a comment Fire Chief Simmons made on his weekly email report to council members.

Discussion commenced regarding the comment that a fire department member made, comparing council member wages with fire personnel wages.

Day stated that a wage comparison should be made with other fire departments, not with council member wages.

Darby stated that the previous generation of fire department members prided themselves in being a completely volunteer department. Approximately 10 years ago that mentality changed. Since that time, the Fire Board has been gradually increasing firefighter wages.

Chief Simmons stated that there are 12 fire departments in Ionia County and Saranac Fire Department is ranked number 3 in call volume. He attributes that to the fact that Boston Township is the largest growing township in Ionia County.

Council members talked about increasing community awareness, as many citizens don't know the size of Saranac Fire Department's coverage area. Facebook can be a good tool for this.

Straubel informed council members that the Ionia County Sheriff Department will be training Thursday, May 12th from 8 a.m. until noon at Saranac Fire Department's training tower, located at the Boatlaunch/Trailhead Park. Straubel will post a notice on Facebook regarding the training.

Parks & Recreation

Straubel informed council that Vandersloot reviewed and approved SYBL's request to hang sponsor banner signs along the outfield fences at Scheid Park during the baseball/softball season.

Straubel provided council members with a projected timeline for the Scheid Park improvements project. The Village has not yet received a project agreement from the DNR. The project has been recommended for funding but the funds have not been appropriated by the legislature. Based on this information, the project will not commence until the summer/fall of 2023.

Council members discussed the condition of the restroom at Scheid Park and whether it should be utilized for another year or if it would make more sense to place porta johns at the park until the project is completed in 2023. The consensus was to reevaluate the condition of the restrooms after winter 2022/2023.

Discussion was had regarding potential expansion of the gravel parking lot by the new ballfield. DPW Simmons was approached by a local contractor who offered to do the work at his cost.

Darby reported that the Dirty 30 Gravel Grinder Bike Race event resulted in a \$1,000 donation to the Scheid Park project.

Streets

Straubel will continue to follow up with Richter on a potential TEDF Category B grant opportunity. If applicable, council would like to apply for the grant for reconstruction of Church Street, along with any necessary utility improvements. Council discussed what could be done with Church Street, until such time that the project could be funded, with or without grant funding. DPW Simmons suggested roto-milling the street and leaving as is.

Klutman would like the Streets Committee to meet soon to discuss which streets to chip seal this year. Darby suggested referring to the PASER rating spreadsheet which has been recently updated.

DPW Simmons reminded council members and Deputy Farrell that Spring clean-up is May 16th, so residents will be putting items out by the road this weekend. He requested that everyone be on the look-out for people who live outside of village, dumping their unwanted items in the Village. Spring Clean-up is for Village residents only!

Buildings & Grounds – No report.

Water & Sewer

Straubel reported on the results of the bid opening for the Drinking Water Asset Management grant project. The low bid was \$93,432.98 and engineer's estimate was \$70,240.00. The \$23,192.98 difference will have to come out of water fund. F & V engineer, Jeff Wingard is looking for areas to cut costs, but they will be minimal. He is reviewing all bids, checking references on the low bidder, and will prepare a recommendation letter for council prior to June's council meeting.

Straubel reminded council members of the Public Hearing scheduled for Thursday, May 12th at 7 p.m. The Public Hearing is for submittal of a CDBG grant application for a sanitary sewer rehabilitation project. The Village applied for this grant in 2021 for the same project scope and was not awarded the grant.

DPW Simmons reported that well #4 is back in service. The 2022/2023 budget includes \$25,000 for well rehabilitation. Per Simmons, the cost will be more than that as additional repairs were required.

Personnel – No report.

Public Comments – None.

Additional Business

Doll provided council members with a letter from his wife, Sarah Doll, in which she recapped her experience in attempting to pay her water bill at the Village Office on 4/26, when the office was closed due to Covid.

It was at that time, that she discovered that the fee to pay online by credit card is 3.5% of the bill total. In her letter, Doll requested that the village research options to provide a no-fee online payment system for paying water/sewer/refuse bills.

Straubel explained that the village cannot use taxpayer dollars to pay the credit card fees of those who choose to pay by credit card. Straubel did inform council however, that she has been speaking with another credit card processing company, GovCard. They have recently formed a partnership with the Michigan Rural Water Association, of which the Village is a member. GovCard charges a lower fee for credit card processing (3% as opposed to 3.5%) and also offers processing of ACH and e-check transactions for a flat fee of \$1.75.

Straubel requested that council allow her to switch credit card processing services after completing her research. Council members concurred to allow Straubel to make this decision.

Chief Simmons informed council that the Saranac Fire Department is serving food at Jones Meat Market's Customer Appreciation Day, Saturday, May 21st from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jones is donating a portion of their proceeds to the Fire Department.

Sharon informed council that she will be on vacation May 23rd through the 30th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Treasurer/Deputy Clerk