

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 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, Simmons, Whorley
Absent: Mulnix
Guests: Deputy Jacob Sommer, Glenn Fountain, Julie Klynstra, Boy Scout Troop 71 (see guest sign in sheet)

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

Public Comments

Steve Hale, Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 71, informed council that members of the troop were in attendance tonight to observe a public meeting and take notes as a requirement of earning their Communication Merit Badge. The scouts will be required to report to their Merit Badge Counselor, Norm Day, as the final step in earning this badge.

President Darby paused the meeting for a moment, to present Tim Simmons, Village DPW Director and Fire Chief, with a Letter of Commendation, framed and signed by council members. On January 6, 2022, Tim recognized and responded to an unsafe situation in the village. Thankfully, nobody was injured in the incident and due to Tim's quick thinking and actions, loss of village water service was avoided.

Law Enforcement Report

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

Deputy Jacob Sommer was in attendance and introduced himself to meeting guests. According to Sommer, the trailhead vandalism incident is at the prosecutor's office at this time. Sommer reported that he and Deputy Veenstra conducted ALICE and AED training with Saranac Elementary and Highschool staff today. Sommer also reported that Emergency Manager Stan Hoskins has retired. Lieutenant Jack Pieters is serving as the point of contact for the role of Emergency Manager, until the position is filled.

Glenn Fountain, owner of 51 Bridge Street and Fountains Fundraising, announced that he will be opening an ice cream shop this year. He plans to paint the exterior of his building, and would like council's permission to remove landscape items from the south side of the village alley (north side of his building). He would like to place three benches in that area for customer seating, as the ice cream shop will be takeout only.

Darby inquired about the type of bench and suggested that they be the same or similar to the memorial benches throughout the village. Fountain concurred.

According to DPW Simmons, the alley measures 18 ft wide and the sidewalk is 5 ft. wide, so that leaves a 6.5 ft wide area adjacent to Fountain's building, which is plenty of room for bench placement. DPW Simmons suggested that cement pads be placed under the benches.

Fountain added that he wouldn't claim the area "as is own" in regards to upkeep and that the benches could be used by anyone. Council members briefly discussed lighting, but Fountain doesn't feel that it's necessary for his business purposes, as he won't be open after dark.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Simmons, to allow Fountain to remove overgrown landscape items from the south side of the village alley, and place approximately 3 benches adjacent to the north side of his building, 51 Bridge Street.

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

Julie Klynstra addressed council, summarizing a letter she submitted to them regarding her vision for a non-profit community center in the Village of Saranac. Her ideas include space for community projects, gatherings, exercise and youth exploration (rock wall, art center, music center and youth groups). She also talked about her desire to potentially open a for-profit business, perhaps a climbing gym/coffee shop. Her thought is that she would get the non-profit community center up and running and then hand the day-to-day operations over to the community so she can focus on her other business opportunities.

Klynstra spoke with Mark Schaafsma, owner of Harker House on Vosper Street, and she would also like to get in touch with Dave Shaw, owner of the BOSS. Straubel will provide her with Shaw's contact information.

Klynstra inquired whether council members wish to welcome youth from other communities. Darby responded that we currently do, by way of Scheid Park (baseball/softball, skatepark, pavilion rentals), the rail trail, and bike races. We would be open to additional youth activities.

Klynstra thanked council for being open to her ideas and said she would welcome any input.

Motion was made by Doll at 7:26 p.m., supported by Klutman, to open the Public Hearing to set the 2022 property tax millage and approve the 2022/2023 budget. All yeas.

No public comments were offered on the proposed budget and/or the millage rate to support it.

Motion was made by Whorley at 7:28 p.m., supported by Doll, to close the Public Hearing. All yeas.

Prior to tonight's meeting Straubel had provided council members with budget reports as follows: Summary and Detail Budget (with notes) for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, Cash/Reserve Balances by Year and Fund, Net Income/Loss Estimates for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 and Projected Vehicle/Equipment Replacement Timeline with Projected Costs.

Darby and Straubel went through the detailed budget by line item, highlighting major changes and/or new line items.

DPW Simmons informed council that #14 (page 1 of the detailed budget) needs to be decreased to \$3,000, per his recent conversation with John Deere. Straubel will adjust the budget accordingly.

Darby explained the Personnel Committee's proposal for wage increases effective 3/1/22, as follows; a \$2 per hour increase for Koster, Lake and Darby, and a 6 – 7% salary increase for Straubel and Simmons.

Additionally, the committee is proposing to increase Village Council and Planning Commission members pay from \$40 per meeting to \$75 per meeting, committee meeting pay from \$20 per meeting to \$50 per meeting, clerk's pay from \$50 per meeting to \$75 per meeting and Village President's pay from \$1,000 annually (plus meeting pay) to \$2,000 annually (plus meeting pay).

Darby explained the Personnel Committee's rationale for the proposed wage increases. They are needed because of inflation, economic pressures of wage increases, retention and performance of the staff over the past year. Wage surveys for local and like municipalities were reviewed for input in determining potential increases.

Darby pointed out that even with the increases, our 2022/2023 budget is still lower than the 2021/2022 budget (which came in nearly \$25,000 under budget), due to the fact that two long-time, highly paid employees resigned in June of 2021 and two new employees were hired to replace them, at a much lower rate of pay.

The proposed 2022/2023 budget projects that General Fund will have to dip into reserves by approximately \$40,905 (#14 decreased by \$2,000, which increases #17 to \$40,905), due to the Scheid Park project. The proposed budget also projects that the Sewer Fund will have to dip into reserves by approximately \$60,739 due to a projected \$100,000 in various sewer system preventative maintenance and repairs. Other funds are projected to generate reserve funds as follows: Major Street \$71,000, Local Street \$2,300 and Water Fund \$45,100. Capital Outlay budgeted for the 2022/2023 year is \$23,000 to replace the 2009 John Deere tractor, \$200,000 (net of grant) for the Scheid Park project and \$100,000 in sewer system repairs.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Simmons, to approve property tax mills for 2022 of 13.9321 as well as a 1% administrative fee, and to approve the budget for fiscal year March 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023 in the amount of \$1,998,407, which includes the wage increases proposed by the Personnel Committee as stated above (7% salary increase for Straubel and Simmons was agreed upon).

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

Motion was made by Simmons, supported by Doll, to accept the minutes of the January 10, 2022 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Doll, supported by Klutman, to accept the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2022. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

DPW Simmons explained his rationale for purchasing a 14 ft. push box from Grand River Excavation for \$3,500. Owning this piece of equipment will substantially reduce subcontractor costs for pushing/removing snow. It will pay for itself after a few heavy snowfalls. Council concurred that the purchase makes sense.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Simmons, to approve the Accounts Payable of February 21, 2022, in the amount of \$78,635.76.

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

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

Council members reviewed a proposed 2-year agreement submitted by Jeanne Vandersloot, for continued zoning administration services.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Simmons, to accept Vandersloot's proposed agreement, as presented.

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

Planning Commission Report – No report.

Committee Reports

Budget

The Budget Committee met and recommended the budget that was approved tonight after the Public Hearing that was held to receive public comments on said budget.

Public Safety – No report.

Parks & Recreation

Straubel reported that the village is still waiting on the official grant agreement from the MDNR for the Scheid Park project. In anticipation of receiving the agreement soon, Straubel will touch base this week with Fleis & VandenBrink to discuss the steps that follow signing of the agreement.

DPW Simmons brought up the fact that it would be wise to have our security cameras backed up to the cloud. Council members concurred. Simmons will research and report back to council at the next council meeting.

Darby informed council that the SCA (Saranac Community Association) would like to move all Bridgefest events/activities to the Trailhead/Boat Launch Park. The SCA would like to use the boat launch itself, but council is not sure that's allowable, as the DNR requires that access into and out of the water is maintained at all times. Additionally, the SCA would like to have a beer tent in the park. In previous years, there has been a beer tent during Bridgefest, but it's been located on private property. That option is no longer available. Some council members expressed concern over allowing alcohol on village property. However, in a previous meeting, council agreed to allow a beer tent on village property during the Dirty Thirty Bike Race coming up. Council members concurred that as long as the village does not incur any expense or assume any liability and the SCA takes care of insurance riders, they will allow it.

Per Darby, the SCA inquired about adding lighting at the trailhead pavilion. According to DPW Simmons, they were specifically left out of the project, to deter after dark loitering.

DPW Simmons suggested that if council wants to add lights, they should be controlled from inside. Whorley added that putting them on a timer would work also.

Per Darby, the SCA also inquired whether the village would consider putting commercial toilet paper dispensers in the restrooms at the trailhead, as they hold more paper. Apparently, the toilet paper runs out quickly during events. DPW Simmons suggested a second dispenser in lieu of a commercial unit and will look into it.

Darby inquired whether the fire department plans to host a hog roast this year. If the fire department chooses not to, the SCA would discuss options to have one. DPW Simmons confirmed that the fire department does plan to host a hog roast again this year.

Darby stated that the SCA is looking into establishing an ice-skating rink at Scheid Park. There is a containment system that can be purchased for approximately \$2,500, and the SCA would purchase it. Council members indicated that they are on board with the idea. DPW Simmons said it would be convenient to locate the ice rink near the first ball field and suggested we look at adding a water spicket for the ice-skating rink.

Streets – No report.

Buildings & Grounds – No report.

Water & Sewer – No report.

Darby shared information with council from a letter she received from EGLE, regarding the village's Water System Sanitary Survey for 2021. The letter includes EGLE's recommendations for improvements to the system. DPW Simmons must reply in writing by February 28, 2022, with plans and schedule to address the recommended items.

Darby informed council that she had been approached by a village resident regarding costs incurred, associated with replacing lead pipes in his home. Straubel is consulting with Doezeema on the topic and will report back to council.

Per DPW Simmons, he has not found a lead pipe in the Village of Saranac, to date.

Personnel – No report.

Public Comments – None.

Additional Business – None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.



Becky Straubel, Treasurer/Deputy Clerk