

VILLAGE VOICE

JULY 2020

DRAFT

Volume 16, Issue 7

Minutes of the Village Board Special Meeting July 7, 2020

The Village Board meeting was called to order in the Village Hall Large Meeting Room by Village President Phil Budde at 7:30 a.m. Board members present were Garry Bahe, Jim Malmberg, George Naxera, and Amy Buffardi. Interim Administrator Margaret Budde was present.

Item 1. Call to Order. President Budde examined the affidavit of posting and verified that advance public notice of the meeting conformed to statutory requirements.

Item 2. Public Input: None.

Item 3. President Budde spoke for several minutes on the status of the Village. (What follows is a shortened paraphrase of his remarks, based on his notes.)

“The Village Board has important choices to make. They may be difficult choices, but doing less is wrong on every level. We must do what is right for the citizens of the Village.

“We have had an event-filled year. 1. In April 2019, immediately after I became President, long-term staff expressed concerns to me about their work environment. 2. The Village has continued to have a budget deficit in the General Fund (supported by property tax revenue). 3. In March 2020 the Administrator resigned effective immediately and a Volunteer then Interim Administrator filled those duties, with the assistance of Ron Senger, past Administrator. 4. We hired a new Deputy Clerk Jennie and bade a grateful farewell to Tana. 5. We lost long-time Board Member and friend Jeff Rasmussen unexpectedly and selected Amy Buffardi among seven candidates to serve the remainder of Jeff’s term. 6. We received 25 applications for the

Administrator position, with Trustee Malmberg chairing the search committee.

“In the last few months, we have come to recognize in earnest two significant challenges: A. Our utility infrastructure is aging and becoming fragile. B. The salary and benefits we provide our employees is *not adequate compared to other municipalities our size* and does not honor the service and loyalty they show to the citizens of the Village.

“Twenty years ago the Village embarked on a multi-million dollar investment in our water and sewer infrastructure. Eleven years ago, we saw a significant upgrade of Highway 78 through the Village. In 2012, Ron Senger started as Village Administrator and immediately set to work on repairing infrastructure items that had begun to fail. Now, in 2020, much of the mechanical aspects of our water/sewer infrastructure is at or near the end of their service life, and *we have set aside NO replacement funds for that equipment*, funds that would be used for purchasing replacement pumps, vehicles, SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system, etc. DNR requires municipal utilities who have received their “Clean Water Funding” (CWF) to set sewer rates to provide for yearly “replacement fund savings.” However, the Village of Merrimac’s sewer rates only cover current expenses and debt payments. *We have no sewer replacement fund savings.*

“I am convinced our priorities must be as follows:

Reasonable benefits for our current and future employees. It is *just and proper* that our skilled and dedicated employees receive benefits that help them support their families. Benefits are also essential to attract and retain a skilled Administrator.

Prepare for Engineered Solutions to our now-problematic Lift Stations, SCADA, and WWTP. *We can fix* the problems we have discovered, but it requires financing. The DNR’s CWF can offer the Village 15 percent principal forgiveness (“grants”) for our needs. But a sewer rate increase will be required.

Budget for and put in place reasonable and justifiable means to fund our current needs – and our expected future needs.

“You have read Interview Committee Chair Malmberg’s Memorandum on his recommendations for the Administrator job offer for Brian Mooney. In it he underscores his conviction that *the Village currently offers salaries and health and retirement benefits well-below-average of other municipalities of our size*. We must act on providing compensation and benefits that are competitive and maintain a stable and happy workforce.”

After several minutes of discussion in which all comments were in support of the Memo and proposed offer, Naxera/Bahe moved to make the offer to Brian Mooney based on the content of the Chair’s Memorandum. (The offer includes a base salary of \$60,000 per year, a one-time moving allowance of \$5,000, \$200 per month health insurance and \$40 cell phone stipends consistent with other full time employees, five days paid time off through the end of 2020, and eleven days of paid holiday each full year. The decision to offer moving allowance was based on savings of over \$14,000 plus payroll taxes incurred because of the Interim Administrator’s volunteering and later minimum-wage compensation.) Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 4. Discussion of LW Allen Service Visit of June 30: Sand build-up in LSs 3 and

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REGULAR OFFICE HOURS: Monday—Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m

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8 are causing pumps to struggle. One pump of LS 5 was found to have failed due to overamping in April. Naxera/Bahe moved to approve spending the \$7,000 previously authorized for LS 3 and 8 to purchase two new pumps at LS 5. Upon Roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 5. Bahe/Buffardi moved to approve hiring Country Plumber to assist DPW in cleaning and pumping out LSs. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.** (A1 was hired)

Item 6. Adjourn. Naxera/Bahe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m.. **Motion carried.**

Minutes of the Plan Commission Meeting July 13, 2020

The Plan Commission (PC) meeting was called to order in the Village Hall Large Meeting Room by Chair Jim Malmberg at 5:00 p.m. PC members present were Ann Hoffman, Bob Garrison, Tom Gallus, and Village President-appointed member Bob Pfaff. Dan Heffron was present to speak on Item 3. Tim and Jennie Klecker were present via Zoom to speak on Item 4. Shawn Redman, and Sean, Richard, and Darlene Dilley were present to oppose Item 4. Interim Administrator Margaret Budde and Board President Phil Budde were also present

Item 1. Call to Order. Chair Malmberg examined the affidavit of posting and verified that advance public notice of the meeting conformed to statutory requirements.

Item 2. Public Input: None.

Item 3. Borowski Boat House Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Dan Heffron answered a few questions on the proposed boat house at 115 Lu Foster Ln (Parcel 0268). Gallus/Hoffman moved to recommend approval of Borowski CUP to the Village Board. All Ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 4. Klecker Land Division. Tim Klecker presented his wish to divide his parcel 0255 to create an additional parcel at the corner of Baraboo and Main Streets. Their

plan is to maintain ownership of all the wetland and drainage swale with their Lot 1, and sell the proposed half-acre Lot 2 right at the street corner. Mr. Redman and the Dilley family expressed concern about the potential effect on wildlife and on water drainage from their lots across the street if a single or multi-family home is constructed there. Mr. Klecker indicated he is working with DNR to expand the wetland on their property, for the benefit of wildlife. Possible drainage concerns were discussed. Chair Malmberg noted that the PC is charged with deciding all matters *based on the Ordinances as they are written*, and that it is not appropriate for them to decide based on whether they like the proposal nor on engineering or wildlife matters for which it is neither qualified to or charged to evaluate. *If/when the property is sold, it will be a future builder's responsibility to address drainage.* Garrison/Gallus moved to recommend the Klecker Land Division to the Board. All ayes. **Motion passed.**

Item 5. Improvements in the Review Process. Commissioner Hoffman has been reviewing PC procedures, including CUPs, Land Division, and Signs. Commissioners discussed changing the fee structure for residents' appearance before the PC to a flat fee, rather than the current practice of sharing the \$150 meeting cost equally among all applicants. Proposals included a flat fee of \$100 - \$150. No decision was rendered.

Item 6. Adjourn. At about 6:00 pm Gallus/Hoffman moved that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

Minutes of the Village Board Meeting July 14, 2020

The Village Board meeting was called to order in the Village Hall Large Meeting Room by Village President Phil Budde at 5:00 p.m. Board members present were Garry Bahe, Jim Malmberg, George Naxera, and Amy Buffardi. Interim Administrator Margaret Budde was present. Members of the public included: Sean Redman, Richard and Darlene Dilley, and Bob Pfaff.

Item 1. Call to Order. President Budde examined the affidavit of posting and verified that advance public notice of the meeting conformed to statutory requirements. **Item 9. Plan Commission (PC) Recommendations** on the agenda was moved up to after **Item 3.**

Item 2. Public Input: None.

Item 3. Consent Agenda. Malmberg/Bahe moved to approve Items 3a-h of the Consent Agenda, including June meeting minutes, Balance Sheets and Budget Comparison, Village Inspection Reports, Alliant spreadsheet, Operator's License for DeAngelo Maddox, Temporary Operator's License for Merrimac Fire and Rescue beer tent on Aug 1, Plan Commission confirmation of Member Bob Pfaff and appointment of Tim Klecker to Alternate Member, and Reminder of Open Book (7/21) and Board of Review (7/28). **Motion carried.**

Item 9. Recommendations from PC. 9b. Klecker Land Division. The PC Chair reported that the PC unanimously approved land division recommendation. Shawn Redman and the Dilleys were present to show their opposition to the land division, based on possible effects on drainage and wildlife if the new lot is built upon. Bahe/Naxera moved that recommended Land Division take place. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried. 9a. Borowski Boat House.** PC Chair Malmberg reported that the PC found the CUP met all Village requirements and unanimously recommended the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Boat House. Buffardi/Bahe moved to approve CUP. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 4. Approval of Outstanding Bills Naxera/Malmberg moved to approve payment of the bills as listed on the Agenda and the In-Progress Checks Report, along with the Prepaid Expenses, as listed on the Agenda and Reprint Check Register. Upon roll call vote, all ayes, **Motion carried.**

Item 5. Successful 1998 Truck Bid. Malmberg/Buffardi moved to accept the high bid of \$1,550, received in a sealed envelope from Mark Prescott on July 9, 2020, at 1:35 pm, and to accept the runner-up high bid of \$1,500 received from Willoughby Watson on July 10, 2020, in

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case the high bidder withdraws. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 6. Resolution Regarding Property Taxes. Naxera/Bufardi moved to approve Resolution 2020-01-07 waiving interest and penalties on (this year's) property tax payment installments due on or after April 1, 2020. **Motion carried.**

Item 7. Refinancing Village Loans. Refinancing will lower yearly debt service payments from about \$171K to \$135K. Bufardi/Naxera moved to authorize the Interim Administrator Margaret Budde, Village President Phil Budde, and Trustee Jim Malmberg to sign refinancing documents for the Highway, Wastewater, Tractor, and Water Tower Loans through the Bank of Prairie du Sac. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.** Bahe/Malmberg moved to allow Interim Administrator to authorize Rural Development and Board of Commissioners of Public Lands to initiate the full payoff process of Highway, Wastewater, and Tractor loans. Upon roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 8. GEC performing Commercial Inspections. Naxera/Bahe moved to affirm Village's desire to continue using GEC for all building inspections. **Motion carried.** Naxera/Malmberg moved to pursue Delegated Status with respect to commercial building and commercial electrical inspections. **Motion carried.** Naxera/Bufardi moved to allow Administrator to markup Ordinance Template "Adoption of Residential and Commercial Building Codes" required to use GEC for commercial inspections, for approval and adoption at a future Board meeting. **Motion carried.**

Item 10. PSC Water Rate Increase. Malmberg/Naxera moved to allow Administrator to apply for (the typical annual) 3 percent Water Rate increase through PSC by August 11 for a September 25 effective date. Upon a roll call vote, all Ayes, **Motion carried.**

Item 11. Damage-related repairs. 11a. Lake Wisconsin Drive. Bufardi/Bahe moved to authorize Davis Construction bid of \$1,470 to perform Lake Wisconsin Drive repair and continue to pursue insurance settlement through culprit's insurance.

Upon a roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried. 11b. Baraboo St. Sewer.** Naxera/Bahe moved to pay S&L Underground's \$6,900 invoice for work performed on June 26 and pursue insurance settlement through Sauk County's insurance. Upon a roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried. 11c. 555 River St sewer lateral repair under Highway 78.** Bahe/Malmberg moved to allow DPW to authorize the approximately \$4,000 Prairie Plumbing bid to repair 555 River St sewer lateral and to authorize approximately \$325 Davis Construction quote for asphalt patch, not to exceed \$5,000. Upon a roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.** Bufardi/Bahe moved to recoup from owner of 555 River St sewer lateral repair costs from Prairie Plumbing and Davis Construction plus DOT and Village-incurred costs, either through invoice or, if unpaid, on the property tax bill, with 10 percent penalty. Upon a roll call vote, all ayes. **Motion carried.**

Item 12. IT purchases. Administrator explained that large majority of costs of proposed purchases will be either covered by CARES grant, offset by elimination of copier lease, or funded through the CWF. Naxera/Bufardi moved to approve printer, television, tablet computer and/or Zoom subscription purchases not to exceed \$1,350 plus cellular subscription fee. Upon a roll call vote, all Ayes, **Motion carried.**

Item 13. Administrator's Report. 13a. \$6,900 CARES Grant. Administrator explained that CARES grants assist municipalities and counties to pay for COVID-related costs, and that, unless the Village must pay significant COVID-sick pay for employees, it will be difficult to "use up" much of the Village's \$6,900 allocation, which it is allowed to allocate to other governments or sub-units (e.g. schools, police, or fire departments). Naxera/Bufardi moved to postpone discussion of allocating unused portion of CARES Grant to the Merrimac Community School and Sauk Prairie School District COVID-related costs. **Motion carried. 13b. Brian Mooney Start date of August 10.** The Village's incoming Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer will begin August 10.

Item 14. Water/Sewer Operations/Maintenance. 14a. Lift Stations (LS). Sand

has accumulated in LS 8 (~2") and LS 3 (0"-4"), likely due to collapsed sewer lateral (see Item 11c.). A1 pumped out all sand and grit. **14b. Well House Power issue.** On July 7-8, the Village's only water supply well was unable to start, due to Alliant Energy-planned Merrimac substation outage. Staff was able to fill water tower using our portable backup generator several times during the outage. Alliant personnel determined that impedance-induced degradation of the 3-phase power from the Dam Heights substation (near Prairie du Sac) to the well house's "Open Delta" configuration was culpable. Switching to the Caledonia substation solved the problem, and Alliant has changed its procedures to this plan for future Merrimac substation outages. **14c. Hiring Engineering Firm.** Village staff's examination of our sewer infrastructure has revealed many needs to our system that is approaching 20 years old. (See July 7 Special Meeting minutes.) Naxera/Bufardi moved to allow Village President, DPW, and Interim Administrator to write a Request for Proposal (RFP) to send to engineering firms qualified to provide water, wastewater and other municipal services. **Motion carried.** LW Allen will make service visit on July 15 to replace at least one pump to LS5, and to leave second new pump to have on hand.

Item 15. Adjourn. At 6:30 pm Naxera/Bahe moved that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Margaret Budde,

Interim Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer

Board of Trustees

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12

5:00 P.M. VILLAGE HALL

Please note date change

No Grass Clippings in Village Streets

Did you know that when your grass clippings are blown into the street, it not only clogs our storm sewer inlets, but it also harms Lake Wisconsin and its fish? That's because grass has Nitrogen and Phosphorus which together make the Lake **green**, and that uses up Oxygen that the fish need. **Please help us keep our storm sewers clear and our Lake healthy.**

Not Getting Village Updates?

When the Village has important and time-sensitive announcements, we send emails to those who have signed up. If you **have** signed up but aren't receiving our Friendly Updates, **please check your junk folder**. Also, we have several merr.com addresses that bounce back to us. To sign up, just email **"Sign Me Up!"** to merrimac@merr.com.

Fireworks Permits



The Village is streamlining its Fireworks Permit Application process. Go to our website and type "Fireworks" into the Search field. Respected pyrotechnic guru & artist Cory Muth applied for his Permit a month in advance of his Colsac Cove 4th of July Fireworks show. Thank you!

Saturday, August 1

Merrimac Fire and Rescue
Horseshoes & Bags
Tournament and Brat Stand.



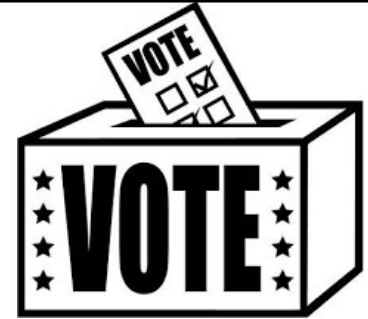
9 am – Registration
10 am – Tourney
begins.

There are still a few slots for teams! For shoes, contact Justin at 697-2862. For bags, contact Ryan at 697-6715

Meet our New Administrator!

The Village Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that **Brian Mooney** has accepted our offer to become the new Village of Merrimac Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer. Brian comes to Merrimac with a wealth of prior governmental experience and training. Brian began his career with the Social Security Administration, working out of the Portage Office. Over his career, he has held progressively responsible positions within Social Security Management in various field offices in Wisconsin, Illinois, and most recently California, where he oversaw the operations of the largest Social Security District in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. Brian was raised in northeast Wisconsin and has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and History from UW-Madison, as well as a Masters of Public Administration from the LaFollette School of Public Affairs at the UW. His wife Christina is an architect specializing in design of schools. Their 7-year-old daughter Linnea will be entering 2nd grade at the Merrimac Community School. Brian, Christina, Linnea, and their dog Tully look forward to returning to their native Wisconsin and making Merrimac home. Brian Starts on August 10!

To see a photo of our new Administrator and his handsome family, go to our Website and type "Brian" in the search bar.



Election News!

Partisan Primary Election

>>Tuesday, August 11, 2020<<

Go to myvote.wi.gov for information

"What kind of ballot do you want?"

When you come in to vote, you always have a choice of whether to vote with the "Express Vote" machine or the traditional "paper" ballot. Why might you want to **switch to Express Vote**? Thanks for asking! The traditional paper ballots are 25 cents each, and any unused paper ballots can never be used again. However, the "Express Vote" Ballots are only 13 cents each, and any leftovers can be used at the next election. But, there's a better reason: **Express Vote will not let you make a mistake!** No "overvotes," or mistakenly voting in more than one party. It won't help you with ring-around-the-collar though.

Brush Pick-Up

Weds. August 12 and 26

4' wide by 4' high by up to 8' long,
with brush stacked parallel to and
near the roadway. Yard waste
should be in clear plastic bags.

*Help keep Justin and Derek
safe: Please don't put large
brush piles right under low
power lines.*