

**VILLAGE OF BELLEVUE
REGULAR SESSION
MARCH 14, 2023 (TUESDAY)**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Village of Bellevue Mayor called the Village of Bellevue meeting to order at the Village Hall. He indicated that an audio tape recording was made of all discussions during the Regular Session.

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Merriman asked for Roll Call Attendance to be taken by Mrs. Pesch.

Present: Trustee Aaron Lannert, Trustee Martin Schuettler, Trustee Judith Wight, Trustee Leroy Wiseman

Absent: Trustee Sandra Cooper, Trustee Ross Pesch

Also in Attendance: Attorney Lane Alster; Matthew Raible, Village Zoning Officer; Theresa Johanson, Village Treasurer; Susan Pesch, Village Clerk; Peoria County Deputy Winder; Terry Johnson, Village Resident; Chad Murphy, Village Resident; Dara Reeder, Business Owner

III. ACTION ITEMS

- A.** Trustee Lannert moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes held on February 28, 2023. Trustee Wiseman seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote: All Ayes
Motion Passed**

- B.** Trustee Lannert moved to approve the Bills for March 14, 2023. Trustee Wiseman seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Motion Passed**

IV. PRESENTATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mayor Merriman thanked the visitors in attendance and gave them an opportunity to address the Village Board.

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Mr. Murphy inquired about the justification to raise the Village of Bellevue property taxes. Mayor Merriman said the amount of roadwork has increased. The Village also has an increase in cost for drainage issues. Mr. Murphy asked why the Board members were donating money because the Village is not a charity. Mr. Murphy said that he has discussed this with an accountant and it is illegal. Attorney Alster responded that the Village appropriates \$3,000 to \$5,000 each year. It has to be for public purpose. Charitable gifts are not allowed unless it is for poverty, sick people, or poor people within the appropriated amount. There is also a limitation to gifts for kids at the school for clothes as long as it is within the appropriated amount. Mr. Murphy commented that he was going to do more research. Mr. Johnson commented that he is present for the same reasons. He cannot believe that the Board voted to raise property taxes in the Village. He asked Mayor Merriman if he had gone through the million dollars. Mr. Johnson commented that to give away money to charities and raise property taxes, every damn Board member, should be ashamed of themselves. Trustee Wiseman asked if the Board voted to raise taxes. Mayor Merriman said the Board voted on this when they discussed the appropriations. Trustee Wiseman said that if he was aware of this, he would not have voted for it. Mr. Johnson stated that there is no reason to raise property taxes in the Village. The Village has TIF money. Mayor Merriman stated that he did not know how much they would go up but it would be a little bit. Attorney Alster said that there was a Truth and Taxation Hearing. This was discussed at four separate meetings. The meeting was posted publicly. The purpose of the meeting was to balance out the entire appropriations which has to be done legally. It is not unusual because of the change in percentages, roadwork, and things of that nature. Mr. Johnson stated that no one can remember the last time the Village raised taxes and there is no reason to raise taxes. It is crap to give money away to the church and all of the other places. You are here to represent the tax payers in the Village, not the White Rose Church. Trustee Wight commented that the church has not received money. The Food Pantry has received money. Mr. Johnson stated that it is the same thing. Trustee Wight responded that it is totally different. Mayor Merriman stated that the next time appropriations are done, he is taking all charitable donations off. Mayor Merriman explained that when Mr. Johnson was the Mayor, the Board gave \$10,000 to the school for playground equipment. Mr. Johnson reminded Board members that they are on the Board to represent the tax payers.

Mr. Johnson stated that he was contacted in regards to an Open Meetings Act violation for a meet and greet gathering. People that are running for office were in attendance. Mayor Merriman stated that he did not attend the gathering. Attorney Alster commented that it was a posted gathering and is questionable in regards to a violation.

Ms. Reeder introduced herself and stated that she submitted the liquor license application for the Miss Daisy's location for the Bellevue Pub and Grub.

V. NON-AGENDA BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND VILLAGE EMPLOYEES

Mayor Merriman asked if there was any non-agenda business to be brought before the Board from either Village Trustees or the Village Employees.

Mayor Merriman informed Board members that Trustee Lannert went to Sherman's to purchase a dryer for Norwood Primary School. Sherman's gave a deal on a dryer for \$466.00. Mayor Merriman stated that he wanted to notify the Board. It would be picked up this week. Mr. Johnson asked if the kids need clothes at school. Trustee Lannert stated that there is in fact a need for clothes at the school. People donate items. Mrs. Lannert started working at the school two years ago. Mr. Johnson asked if people have seen the amount of money the school has

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received due to COVID. Trustee Lannert stated that the money cannot be allocated for clothing for kids.

Trustee Lannert asked if Dollar General was going to be 50% groceries and a DG Market. Mayor Merriman stated that if they are not going to have groceries, the Village could try and deny the occupancy. He was not sure if they could do it. Trustee Lannert asked if the original plan was a DG Market. Attorney Alster commented that they were trying to use this to get the liquor license. The building permit did not include the food. Trustee Lannert stated that it was misleading. Mayor Merriman said that it was implied that if the Village worked with them, there would be 50% food.

Trustee Wight inquired about having a pavilion with picnic tables instead of a park. She asked for reactions on this subject. Steve informed her that it would be too expensive to have a park.

Trustee Wight asked if they would have access to restrooms at the Food Pantry. She stated that Steve has done a wonderful job. Matt as well. It is going to be very nice. They have done a good job. Mayor Merriman stated that he is not sure if anyone can be given a key because of confidential documents kept in the building. Trustee Wight stated that nothing is going to be bothered. They just want access to the restrooms.

Trustee Schuettler stated that he heard information at Casey's that people help themselves at the Food Pantry. Trustee Wight responded that she cannot turn people down if they need food. Trustee Schuettler said that there are food pantries in Peoria for individuals that do not live in Bellevue. People in the Village and Norwood should be taken care of. Trustee Wight commented that she does help people in the Village and Norwood as well. Trustee Schuettler stated that a couple of months ago, only 5 individuals in the Village were given food. The other 30 did not live in the Village. This is what the papers reflected at the Food Pantry. Mayor Merriman said that the papers were laying on the counter. Trustee Wight said that the papers were not there. She takes papers home every week because they are sent to the state. The Food Pantry fed over 400 people during that time. Mayor Merriman stated that he did not make up what he had seen. The papers were there. Trustee Wight replied that it is not his business to look at the papers. She is asking to only use the restrooms and not look at paperwork that belongs to the Village. Trustee Wight commented that Mr. Johnson helped with the Food Pantry to get it started while he was the Mayor. She gives him praise for that. Mr. Johnson responded that if he had to do it over again, it would have been the Village Hall. Attorney Alster informed Board members that public records cannot be accessible to non-members of the municipality. The records need to be sealed and not accessible to the public. This is part of the Open Meetings Act.

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VI. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Trustee Lannert moved to approve the Liquor License @ 5715 W. Plank Rd. Trustee Wight seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Motion Passed**

***Item added to the Agenda.**

Trustee Lannert moved to approve to put in a bid for 100 ton of salt for 2024. Trustee Wight seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Motion Passed**

VII. INFORMATION / DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Salt 2023-2024
B. Next Village of Bellevue Meeting – March 28, 2023

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Merriman asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Wiseman moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Wight seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote: All Ayes
Motion Passed**

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:24 p.m.