

**VILLAGE OF BELLEVUE**  
**320 Main Street**  
**Bellevue, IL 61604**  
**Meeting of Village Board**  
**November 28, 2023**

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 Village Clerk stated that the meeting was also being video recorded.

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 the Village Clerk.

**Present:** Mayor Dean Merriman, Trustee Aaron Lannert, Trustee Sandra Cooper, Trustee Paul Eichhorn, Trustee Judith Wight, Trustee Leroy Wiseman, Trustee Ross Pesch

**Absent:**

**Also in Attendance:** Attorney Lane Alster; Steve Wilson, Village Maintenance; Matthew Raible, Village Zoning Officer; Susan Pesch, Village Clerk; Theresa Johanson, Village Treasurer; Terry Johnson, Village Resident; Chad Murphy, Village Resident; Tim Meneffee, Village Business Owner

**III. ACTION ITEMS**

- A.** Trustee Eichhorn moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes held on November 14, 2023. Trustee Wight seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: All Ayes  
Motion Passed

- B.** Trustee Lannert moved to approve the Bills for November 28, 2023. Trustee Wiseman seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0  
Motion Passed

**IV. PRESENTATION FROM THE AUDIENCE**

**\*All public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person**

Terry Johnson stated that he stopped by yesterday to look at the agenda. The Village Clerk or Manager, whatever she is known as, came out and asked if he needed any help. Mr.

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Johnson said that the Village Clerk commented that she hoped he was not there to complain about the tax increase. He stated that it was the reason why he was there. Mr. Johnson said that the Village Clerk commented that it was an embarrassment what the Village is charging for property taxes. Mr. Johnson said it is not an embarrassment but something to be proud of. He does not know a town in the state that would not want to charge what the Village is charging. The Village Clerk responded that his conversation explanation was in his words, not actually her words. Mayor Merriman said it was a poor choice of words, in his opinion. Mayor Merriman said that he was part of the Board as a Trustee and Mayor. At the time, the Village had no idea that COVID was going to hit and minimum wage would increase to \$15.00 per hour. The Board did the best that they could with the information they had. Mr. Johnson stated that for 80 years the Village let the businesses pull the weight for taxes. If this has got out of hand, maybe you guys should stop spending money. Do not spend any more money unless you have to. Maybe a place to start would be with the Office Manager. Previous Clerks did not ask for that kind of money and did it for their civic duty. They were not out to rob the Village for a paycheck. You should cut spending instead of raising property taxes. I am sure the towns that you called got a good laugh when you hung up the phone. I have talked with different Mayors. They were impressed with how the Village handles their finances. Mr. Johnson stated that he hopes to sway a few Board members to vote no.

Chad Murphy asked the Board what the urgency was to compare to other Villages. You can cut spending if you do not need it. Why does the Village need to be like other people. It is not Bartonville. Mayor Merriman stated that he understands. Currently, the Village is flush. If things continue, like diesel fuel at \$4.00, and equipment prices going up, the Village will not be flush. Mr. Murphy stated that the Village has done a lot more than what is needed. The roads are in pretty good shape. You have spent a load of money down the street and bought a tractor. We do not need all of this. There should be a way to slow the process. Mr. Wilson stated that the property taxes would increase to \$31,500 from \$30,000. The Village needs to work on getting the businesses to pick up the tab a bit. The Village will spend more next year. Mr. Murphy asked if the Village could raise sales tax. If he cannot buy something at home, he cuts the fat. The Village has not even tried to cut the fat, in his opinion. Terry Johnson stated that maybe the Village Board members should go out and hunt for business instead of sitting and drawing their money every week. Mayor Merriman stated that it is on the agenda to discuss the cannabis ordinance. Chad Murphy said that the taxes are the draw in the community. Tim Menefee asked the Board members what his business pays in property taxes. Trustee Pesch reviewed the estimated number of properties in the Village of Bellevue and the estimated property tax percentage received from businesses and homeowners. Mr. Menefee asked Trustee Pesch what he pays in property taxes to the Village. Roughly, Trustee Pesch would pay \$4.00 more to the Village. Trustee Pesch showed Board members a chart with the breakdown of percentages for property taxes. He reviewed Limestone and Norwood School District percentages. Mr. Murphy said when you have drugs and meth cooking next to you, it sucks to pay taxes. He said that the Village should concentrate on this instead of raising his taxes. Mayor Merriman responded that he would have a conversation with Sheriff Watkins.

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

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Trustee Lannert inquired about the contest for the Christmas lights. Attorney Alster stated that he could drive around on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. The winner would receive a \$100 gift card.

Trustee Wight asked all Board members to have their wives take cookies or fudge on December 8<sup>th</sup> to the Limestone Fire Department for their Christmas gathering. They do a great job for the community.

Trustee Wight commented that the Board members should be part of the hiring process when the Village employs a new individual.

Trustee Wight stated that all renters in Bellevue should be registered with the Village.

Trustee Wight informed Board members that they needed to review and increase permit fees for the gaming machines. Mayor Merriman responded that he would like to increase the fee to \$50 per machine.

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

- A.** Trustee Wight moved to approve the Ordinance Creating a Policy for Paid Leave of Village Employees. Trustee Pesch seconded the motion. Attorney Alster informed Board members that this was discussed at the last meeting.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0  
Motion Passed

- B.** Trustee Pesch moved to approve the BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois Renewal for 2024. Trustee Wiseman seconded the motion. Mayor Merriman stated that Michael Moser is not through his probationary period yet. The insurance is only for Steve and Matt.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0  
Motion Passed

- C.** Trustee Eichhorn moved to approve to Adopt Ordinance 2023-2024 Tax Levy. Trustee Wight seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0  
Motion Passed

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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**VIII. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- A.** Revision of Cannabis Ordinance-Board members discussed amending the ordinance.
- B.** IDOT Audit 2022-Final audit was given to Board members for review.
- C.** Next Village of Bellevue Meeting – December 12, 2023

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Voice Vote: All Ayes  
Motion Passed  
Meeting Adjourned @ 6:57 p.m.