

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, May 16, 2023**

As provided by public notice, the Village Board of the Village of Northfield met in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall immediately following the Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Greg Lungmus at 7:00 PM. The Village Clerk took the roll call.

PRESENT: President Greg Lungmus

 Trustees Todd Fowler
 Barnaby Dinges
 Tom Whittaker
 Matt Galin
 Tracey Mendrek
 Charles Orth

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Buzz Hill

ADMINISTER OF THE OATHS OF OFFICE

Todd Fowler, Charles Orth, and Tom Whittaker were re-elected and sworn in as Village Trustees by Village Clerk Stacy Sigman.

Sergeant Thomas Hanus was sworn in as Commander by Village Clerk Stacy Sigman.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Village President asked the Clerk to read the Consent Agenda items into the record. Those were reported as follows:

1. Approve the Report of Proceedings from the April 18, 2023 Village Board meetings
2. Bills and Disbursements from April 1, 2023 to April 30, 2023, in the amount of \$962,776.09
3. Approval of a resolution honoring Gordon Scott for his 10 years of service to the Police Pension Board
4. Board of Police Commissioners – Term: 3 years
 Kevin Flynn – re-appointment 5/1/2023 to 5/1/2026

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 4.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve the consent agenda.

AYES: Fowler	NAYS: Dinges	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT:
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

ANNUAL PRESENTATION ON THE VILLAGE’S MS4: MUNICIPAL SEPARATOR STORM SEWER SYSTEM – KAROLINA CHO, GEWALT HAMILTON ASSOCIATES

Village Manager Sigman noted that one requirement of the Village’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit was a public meeting to allow the public to provide input as to the adequacy of our Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program for reducing the discharge of pollutants to local waterways. This requirement was met in conjunction with the regular Board meeting. Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc. (GHA) assisted the Public Works Department with compliance with the NPDS permit program. Karolina Cho, a wetland specialist with GHA provided a brief overview of the MS4 program and was available to answer any questions from the Board and/or the public.

CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT WITH GEWALT HAMILTON ASSOCIATES, INC. FOR THE DESIGN ENGINEERING AND BIDDING SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MT. PLEASANT STREET WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT* IN THE AMOUNT OF \$27,000

Trustee Fowler made a motion, seconded by Trustee Dinges, to consider a contract with Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., for the design engineering and bidding services associated with the Mt. Pleasant Street Water Main Replacement Project in the amount of \$27,000.

Public Works Director Nystrand noted there was a proposal for professional design engineering services from Gewalt Hamilton Associates (GHA) for the Mt. Pleasant Street Water Main Replacement Project. The proposed water main improvements consist of replacing/lining the following priority water main segment as identified in the Village’s Capital Improvement Plan:

* Mt. Pleasant Street, Happ Road to West Frontage Road

He stated that this project would be designed, put out to bid, and constructed this fiscal year. The total length of the water main to be replaced is approximately 600 linear feet. GHA proposed to provide the design engineering and bidding services for \$27,000. Part of their work will include assessing if the water main could be slip-lined instead of replaced to reduce costs and minimize surface disruptions and tree loss. Staff was requesting approval for the design engineering so the project could be ready to bid in the spring and then be prepared for construction to commence after May 1, 2023.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a contract with Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., for the design engineering and bidding services associated with the Mt. Pleasant Street Water Main Replacement Project in the amount of \$27,000.

AYES: Fowler NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: ABSENT:
Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

CONSIDERATION OF THE APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING APPROVAL FOR A SPECIAL USE FOR DUNKIN DONUTS, LOCATED AT 1900 WILLOW ROAD, TO ALLOW CONTINUED OPERATION OF A DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITY AND COFFEE SHOP UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to consider an ordinance granting approval for a Special Use for Dunkin Donuts, located at 1900 Willow Road, to allow continued operation of a drive-through facility and coffee shop under new ownership.

Steven Gutierrez, Community Development Director stated that the petitioner was seeking a Special Use in order to continue the operation of a drive-through facility and coffee shop (Dunkin' Donuts) at 1900 Willow Road. On May 1, 2023, the Plan & Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed special use. Their recommendation was conditioned upon several exterior repairs and the landscape restoration being completed within 90 days of any special use approval.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve an ordinance for a Special Use for Dunkin Donuts, located at 1900 Willow Road, to allow continued operation of a drive-through facility and coffee shop under new ownership.

AYES: Fowler NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: ABSENT:
Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE VILLAGE’S POLICY HANDBOOK TO ESTABLISH NEW FOIA ARCHIVE LOG PROTOCOLS

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Mendrek, to consider an amendment to the Village’s Policy Handbook to establish new FOIA Archive Log protocols.

Melissa Jewett, Director of Administrative Services, noted that at the April Committee of the Whole meeting, the Board discussed and recommended the implementation of a new practice of maintaining a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Log containing information on the FOIA requests received by the Village. This new procedure has been documented in a proposed amendment to the Village’s Policy Handbook as section 5.10:5.10 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Archive Log. To ensure transparency, the Village of Northfield FOIA Officer shall keep a current log of all FOIA requests received by the Village.

“The FOIA log shall include the following: (1) requestor name, (2) date received, (3) specific information requested, (4) status, and (5) response. The Board will receive the monthly FOIA log with the Departmental Updates section of the Board Packet. The monthly log will go from the day after the last date of the prior log through the Wednesday prior to the Board meeting.”

The plan would be to include the first log with the June Board packet. Village Attorney Milluzzi sent an email to the Board regarding a small operational tweak to the log. The police department raised a valid concern about the privacy of certain requestors such as victims of sexual assault requesting a police report. To address this privacy concern, prior to publishing the log each month, it will be reviewed by the Village Attorney so no highly sensitive information is released. This includes statutory items such as juveniles, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Information will be removed that reveals their identity as a victim. The attorney will note the reason for any redaction.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve an amendment to the Village’s Policy Handbook to establish new FOIA Archive Log protocols.

AYES: Fowler
Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

CONSIDERATION OF A NEW LEASE WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AT 1787 ORCHARD LANE

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to consider a new lease with the United States Postal Service at 1787 Orchard Lane.

Village Manager Sigman noted that the Village has a current lease with the post office that expires on November 30, 2024. The post office has asked that the Village consider a new lease as soon as possible as it is very challenging to relocate a postal center. The current lease has a flat rate, for the second 60-month term, of \$47,266/yr or \$24.61/sf. Under that agreement, the Lessee covers all electric and gas costs and the Lessor maintains the building and all equipment, fixtures, systems and appurtenances, pest control, a once every 5 year painting, trash removal, snow and ice removal, water and sewer costs. The postal service sent an initial proposed lease, and based on his professional background, Trustee Fowler was asked to assist in its review. He determined that the proposed rate reflected current market conditions but recommended that the broker commission and a percentage of the landscape costs be added to the base rent and that the Lessee pay for metered sewer and water. The post office agreed to those changes. The proposed lease is for a 5-year term with one additional 5-year term. The initial term is at the rate of \$56,261/yr or \$29.30/sf. The second five-year term has a 10% increase to \$61,887/yr or \$32.23/sf. As negotiated, the 4% commission (\$11,252) is payable by the Village but that cost has been added on to the initially proposed lease amount, as well as their share of the landscape maintenance.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

Trustee Galin inquired if the five-year lease and subsequent five-year lease would be in the Village's best interest. Trustee Fowler replied that it was pretty standard rental terms and that there would be no out-of-pocket costs to the Village.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter.

Resident Gavin Blunt stated that the post office looked shabby and asked what the plan was to ensure that it was cleaned and painted to look nicer. Trustee Fowler replied that this was not contemplated in the lease and would be up to the U.S. Postal Service. Gavin Blunt remarked that they should be asked to maintain the property properly. President Lungmus said they would talk to the post office.

Trustee Dinges remarked that people from surrounding communities have stated that they come to Northfield's post office because they like how it is run. He believed that it is an asset that is greatly appreciated.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a new lease with the United States Postal Service at 1787 Orchard Lane.

AYES: Fowler	NAYS: 0	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT:
Dinges			
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Gavin Blunt stated that he resided in Northfield for 35 years, built a home, raised a family in town, took an interest in various committees and the Home Rule referendum, and interacted with various Village departments. He owned a successful business for 30 years and contributed to the tax and well-being of the Village. He noted that he felt the United States was for the public and that the right of the citizens is fundamental. He said that he resided in both California and Northfield and follows the media in Northfield. He noted that in these past few months, the Village has been on a slippery slope with the administration and the media. He believed it was time for the adults to stop the Village from being the likes of Washington D.C., Springfield, or even Chicago. He said that under normal circumstances, he would have discussed this issue with the Village President and Village Manager. However since the issue may create a conflict of interest, there is no other option but to come before the Village Board and speak to the trustees.

Gavin Blunt requested that the Village's Municipal Code be amended to provide the electorate of the Village of Northfield the right to recall an elected Village official. The current Village ordinance does not contain procedural mechanisms for the electorate of Northfield to use the tool of recall when required. He brought a copy of the Mount Prospect draft that was enacted in 1995 that can be used as a potential template to draft an amendment for Northfield. He stressed that it was time for accountability and the restoration of decades of board integrity. He said that regretfully it seems that we live in a world where hype, deflection, spin, and a litany of phony truths are passed off as reality. He said to consider that when a boulder is tossed into a pond, it creates a ripple. The tonality of the last several board meetings and related media articles is that ripple. He noted that there could be no harmony amongst this board or the people of Northfield or a real democracy when there is no integrity. He remarked that the recent actions of the Village President caused a huge issue for this Village. His actions made a person who came to work in the Village to be so intimidated and fearful that he would not avail himself of his lawful rights. It caused him to change his place of employment outside of Northfield. He said that he had heard peripherally that this issue may have been laughed off in a Country Club conversation. He felt that one of the trustees had failed to take responsibility for a public apology. He noted that in a public meeting, other trustees were asked if they leaked this to the press, and because of this, the incident crossed the line from a private matter to an entwinement in the public realm. He stated there was clearly a division among this board resulting in a dysfunctional government body, a spillover into every aspect of Village

management and the residents through division and gossip. He emphasized that conduct like this is unacceptable in Northfield. He stated he was presenting a remedy for the current issue by proposing and empowering the electorate with the proper tools to take appropriate action when required. There must be honesty and transparency established once again to earn back the trust of the community. The amendment to the Village ordinance is a tool that provides a balance between those who are serving and the electorate. He asked if two of the trustees would sponsor and second an official agenda item to be scheduled for vigorous debate by the Village Board and members of the electorate. It could then put forth a vote to amend the Village Code to include the process to recall an elected Village official for next month's board meeting.

Administration

Village Manager Sigman stated that regarding the repair of the Bosworth Bridge, the structural engineer said the delay was due to the contractor not wanting to undertake the power washing and staining. She said that Chief Nystrand was working to procure additional quotes. The goal is to get the repairs done as fast as possible.

Trustee Orth asked if repairs will be made if they are deemed necessary. Village Manager Sigman replied that there remains a list of items that need repairing but the engineer said it is safe to operate in the meantime. She was hoping they would be out within the week to make the necessary repairs but noted the lighting was back ordered due to a supply chain issue.

Community Development Department & Building Department

Community Development Director Gutierrez said that on May 8th, the Architectural Commission approved the replacement of one of the Northfield Park District's scoreboard sign panels in Willow Park. On June 12th, the Architectural Commission will review at least one sport court application at 2044 Middlefork.

On June 5th, the Plan and Zoning Commission will review a special use application for a medical office use at 1620 Willow Road.

Community Development Director Gutierrez stated the department is running down numerous property maintenance issues such as high grass and peeling paint.

Village Manager Sigman said that staff continues to work on the zoning code amendments and hopes to have this for Board review at the Committee of the Whole meeting in July.

Finance Department

Finance Director Morley stated that the General Fund had an overall budget surplus of \$232,000. Revenues continue to come in higher than expected and more than made up for the delay in property tax distribution by the County. Property taxes throughout the fiscal year, have been delayed, but as of today, they were just \$36,000 shy of the budget at \$4,698,789 versus the budgeted \$4,734,980.

Water and sewer revenues were over budget by \$264,000. Part of this increase is due to the excess funds being invested and earning interest income with the current high-interest rates. Expenses were under budget by \$572,000. Similarly, the capital was below budget because of the timing of the capital projects. Water purchases over the prior year from Winnetka have declined, resulting in lower-than-anticipated water purchase costs.

One of the Board Projects that was budgeted for this fiscal year is the water customer portal for which \$27,700 is budgeted - \$21,000 for the set-up and \$6,700 for the annual fee. Shortly after the Village received the quote, the vendor, Sensus Analytics, entered into an agreement to sell and promote a different portal vendor. Staff received pricing this week for the new vendor, and it is higher, so general direction from the board is needed on how to proceed. Previously with the Sensus Analytics product, it would cost \$27,000 the first year, and the next year, there would be a \$6,900 user fee that would increase by 3% per year. The 5-year contract would cost just under \$57,000 and \$27,700 was budgeted for this year. With the new product, the first-year cost is \$37,000, which is \$10,000 more than budgeted. In addition, the annual user fee starts in year 2 at \$12,350, then increases by 3% per year over the 5-year contract. Overall, the 5-year contract pricing would be \$88,810.

If the Village continued with the original Sensus Analytics option, they would honor the original pricing. However, they would not renew that portal contract so the Village would have to switch to a new vendor portal in year 6 to continue with a water customer portal. The Village would likely have to pay another setup and integration fee and customers would have to switch to a new platform. Customer support would be available on the Sensus Analytics platform, but they won't be investing in it anymore. Additional information will be presented at the June Committee of the Whole meeting.

Staff had asked Core and Main if they have submitted all their invoices because, at this point, the AMI project is under budget by about \$200K. Currently, there are a total of 21 customers that need to still have their meters changed out. The Village is now able to better track water loss because of being on the AMI system. Last month there was a negative water loss number due to the difference in the time the data was pulled from the customers' meters at midnight and the time that Winnetka pulls their data at 7 am. This month's water loss was 10.02%. Public Works investigated and found the water loss was from a water main break, a flow test at Medline, a pipe break at a home on Dickens, and a water leak at a location on Winnetka Ave. The Village is seeing a huge reduction in water loss with the meter change out and can better account for the losses.

Fire-Rescue & Public Works Departments

Fire Chief Nystrand remarked that the department responded to 73 calls for service since the last Board meeting including structure fires in Wilmette and Evanston.

Public Works has been busy with sanitary systems, water main breaks, cleaning storm sewer drains, and cutting grass.

Trustee Dinges asked if there was an update on the Happ Inn's request for outdoor dining. Public Works Director Nystrand replied that the request was turned over to the inspector and there has not been a response yet. Trustee Dinges noted that there had been an estimate for \$40,000 in bollards and asked if there was a more cost-effective solution. Public Works Director Nystrand responded that they will use water-filled barriers similar to those in front of Stormy's.

Police Department

Chief Lustig stated that next week, there will be training for the New Trier graduation. He stated that the new officer is progressing very well in his training. On the upcoming Thursday, he and Stacy Sigman will be giving their annual Fox Meadow presentation.

Special Board Projects

President Lungmus noted there were the following five special Board projects:

- 1) Centennial – Led by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek stated that they had their first kickoff meeting with ChandlerThinks. After this discussion, ChandlerThinks will come back with a proposal outlining a plan of attack for a centennial celebration. After further refinement, this will be presented at a Committee of the Whole meeting in the next couple of months.

- 2) Wayfinding Signage – Led by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Dinges remarked that the committee walked in downtown Northfield and identified 4 potential good locations for signage announcing the downtown area. In 3 of the 4 places, existing light poles that had already accommodated some sort of sign could be utilized so these would be low-cost efficient locations. They will present this at an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting.

- 3) Sidewalk Committee – Led by Trustee Galin and Trustee Whittaker – Trustee Galin said that he and Trustee Whittaker had a meeting with Village staff a couple of weeks ago. The committee will consist of 13 people and they hope to have their kickoff meeting at the end of May or early June. Trustee Whittaker noted that a couple of the trustees' spouses were interested in being on the sidewalk committee. If spots are open, they will become members of this committee, but if not, their ideas can be shared at public meetings. Village Manager Sigman noted that in talking with the Garden Club, there was a lot of enthusiasm that there would be a public forum where there could be input on sidewalk improvements throughout the Village. President Lungmus noted that the Garden Club noted the sidewalk segment in front of the Community Church was a problem. He thanked Trustee Dinges for also bringing it to the Board's attention.

- 4) Mid-block Crossings – Led by Trustee Orth – Trustee Orth thanked Melissa Jewett for her work on the project, as well as Ben Mesler, the engineer on the project. Cook County has provided permit tracking for the Lagoon/Winnetka crossing but the documents are still under review. They cannot submit bonds and insurance until a contractor has been selected who will subsequently send this information to the Cook County Department of Transportation for approval. They anticipate the first draft of the project's specifications from Clark Dietz on May 18th. The solar survey was completed and the project will be able to be completely solar on both of the crosswalk lights. Cook County requires a 30-day battery life.

- 5) Library Campus – Led by Trustee Fowler and President Lungmus – President Lungmus noted that he and Trustee Fowler were working to understand the plat of survey as well as some right of way issues. After that, they will determine the value of the property. They will then work with the Winnetka/Northfield Public Library to move forward on a contract. Village Manager Sigman stated the appraisal on the property was expected the following week. An executive session can then be scheduled to review this with the Board. She said that she and

Village Attorney Hill were working to get a plat of survey done. Gewalt Hamilton and Patrick Engineering need to do the acquisition and right of way survey for the Happ Road project. They were showing it as having already been dedicated. However, there are recent maps that indicate that these portions of right of way have not been dedicated. So these are inconsistencies which are problematic. They are working with the Cook County Highway Department and their plat team to determine if the right of way has already been dedicated or needs to be adjusted. Trustee Dinges inquired if the library was also getting an appraisal and Village Manager Sigman replied yes.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to adjourn the meeting.

Upon the following roll call vote, the motion was approved.

AYES: Fowler	NAYS: 0	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT:
Dinges			
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.