

Committee of the Whole
February 20, 2012
7:00 p.m.

A Meeting of the Village of Lemont Committee of the Whole was held on Monday February 20, 2012 in the Board Room of the Village Hall at 418 Main Street in Lemont, Illinois.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Reaves called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and acknowledged that the following were present:

Trustees Paul Chialdikas, Ron Stapleton, Debbie Blatzer, Cliff Miklos and Rick Sniegowski. Trustee Virgilio arrived at approximately 7:15

Also present were Village staff members Ben Wehmeier, Charity Jones, Ed Buettner, George Schafer, Chief Kevin Shaughnessy, Ralph Pukula, and Village Attorney Jeffery Stein.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion of 120 Doolin Street Variation

Owners of the property at 120 Doolin have requested a variation to allow a shed in a corner side yard. The Planning and Zoning Commission narrowly voted to recommend approval of the shed, staff did not recommend the variation. The shed has already been constructed and upon inspection, it was found that the shed was built in a location not authorized by the permit, hence the variation request. Mayor Reaves stated that Trustee Virgilio, who would be late for the meeting, stated that she had no issue with the variation and would likely vote in favor of it. There were no neighbors that objected the request. Trustee Miklos, Chialdikas and Mayor Reaves said they had no issue with it and thought the new location worked well. Trustee Blatzer, Sniegowski and Stapleton said they were not in favor. A simple majority of the corporate authorities is needed to approve the variation. The item would be up for approval at the next Village Board Meeting.

Discussion of 307 Freehauf Variation

The owner of the subject property at 307 Freehauf Street is applying for a variation to allow the construction of a new driveway with access from Freehauf Street. In the R-4a district, garages must be accessed via the alley if possible. The driveway was constructed already and upon inspection, it was determined that a variation was needed to be in compliance. The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval; staff did not recommend approval. As a condition, the Planning and Zoning Commission requested that the homeowner must replace the curb where the original curb cut was located. Several neighbors spoke in favor of the request, none against the request. The majority of the Board was in favor of the request. The item would be up for approval at the next Village Board meeting.

Discussion of Emerald Ash Borer Action Plan

Mr. Pukula led a discussion on the Village's action plan against the Emerald Ash Borer. Many communities in Chicagoland are tasked with coming up with a plan to control the invasion of the ash borer. Since the onset of the invasion in Chicagoland, the Village has not allowed new ash trees to be planted in new developments. However, it is determined that the Village has approximately 10,000 ash trees Village wide, 2500 of which are trees in public right of ways. The Village will be monitoring the trees on Village owned property, but there are still many more on private property. The ordinance drafted by staff is a model ordinance that allows for a process for the Village to have infested trees removed from private property, if the property owner does not take care of the trees. The ordinance sets up a process of notification to property owners, and if needed, authority for the Village to have trees removed on private property. The ordinance also gives the Village authority to charge back the homeowner for proper removal of these trees.

There was a lengthy discussion on the topic. The Village was recently notified by the Department of Agriculture that trees in Lemont tested positive for infestation and have been quarantined on 6th Street south of McCarthy Road. A couple property owners in the area, one located at 524 6th Street spoke out against having to pay for the trees being removed from their property. The area likely has close to 100 ash trees and the removal of the trees could be very costly for the homeowners. Another factor brought up by the homeowners is that the Village has been using this property as detention for years. Until recently, the Village had been maintaining the area for the property owners. But with limited staff and budget, the Village no longer maintains this area, because it is private property. After further discussion, the Mayor reiterated the intent of the ordinance is to provide for a process to remove trees from private properties if they are deemed a hazard. If the Village went to this measure it would be for drastic purposes. The Mayor also wanted it put in the minutes that this area on 6th street near 524 6th Street shall be viewed as a special case because of the amount of trees in the area and miscellaneous other issues. There are few areas of town with this many ash trees and he could not see a scenario in which the Village enforced this ordinance on this property and charged back the property owners for the removal of the trees. The model ordinance as it is stated would be presented to the Village Board for approval at a future meeting. The Village needs to have the authority to enter private property to remove ash trees if there is a hazard to the community. However, because of the special case in this instance, he does not see the Village enforcing the ordinance to its fullest extent. Discussion was closed on the topic; the item would be up for approval at a future meeting.

Discussion of Lateral Entry for Police and Temporary Appointment of Police Officers.

The Village Attorney was requested to provide the Village Board with options for hiring police officers that are currently or previously employed as sworn police officers in other departments, as an alternative to typical hiring process through the new hire lists. All hiring is done through the Lemont Police Commission, and currently there is no provision for them to hire from other departments and/or temporary hires. This issue has become topical as there have been some illnesses in the department and other needs that may arise for officers in quick notice. Currently the lag time for a new hire is over 9 months. In addition, the Village's current list is expired. There were some questions on where a new officer would come into the pay scale yet. This is undetermined as the collective bargaining agreement is silent on this issue. There was general consensus from the Board that the Village needs to adopt an ordinance that allows for this option. The item would be up for approval at a future Board Meeting.

Discussion of Proposed Second Budget Amendment and 3rd Quarter Budget Review/Discussion of Financial Conditions and Initial FY12-13 Budget Discussion.

There was a multi-pronged presentation regarding the budget. The Second Budget Amendment, the discussion of the financial conditions for the region and the Village, and a preliminary preview of the upcoming budget.

Mr. Wehmeier discussed the upcoming budget amendment. Since the village moved to the budget process, quarterly amendments are required and changes are made due to trends and unforeseen circumstances that come about throughout the budget year. Some changes include the increase of expected franchise fees, decrease of sales tax due to trending, reduction of building revenues and related expenditures. There were various minor expenditure changes as well. Changes were also viewed in the TIF funds and other project funds. The Board did not have any issues with the amendment request. The item would be up for formal approval at the next Village Board Meeting.

The second part of the budget discussion was the financial conditions. Mr. Schafer gave a general overview of the financial outlook from the country, Illinois, regionally and how that effected housing, commercial outlook and other economic indicators. As part of an ongoing program, Mr. Schafer showed the revenue, expenditure, fund balance and other trends for the Village using the Village's audited financial data and other information. In general, the Village's trend lines have been improving over the last few years, specifically fund balance levels. There was discussion on the various topics that led to the budget discussion.

The last part of the discussion focused on the upcoming budget. Mr. Wehmeier went through the department requests through each of the funds. The projected revenue for the general fund is staying relatively stable at 8.48 million with projected expenditures at 8.25 million. The expenditures reflects a projected union raise but not non-union. There are funds remaining for a potential nominal increase for non-union staff, but this will be discussed at a later date. On the revenue side, there is a one-time infusion of funds from the real estate relating to adjustments of levies for IMRF and Social Security. All other revenues have remained flat. Expenditures will stay flat as well unless further cuts from the State surface, then there will be adjustments in expenditures. Other requests mentioned by Mr. Wehmeier included marketing expenditures, an economic development research tool through Buxton, replacement of signage near downtown and canal path, train viewing platform, replacement of public works radios, and a 6 x 4 dump truck. The Village will also be budgeting for siren upgrades throughout town. With the FCC's new narrow banding requirements, many of the Village's sirens will need to be upgraded. The Lemont Township has committed to assisting with this funding. There was general agreement from the Board on these requests, staff will be further defining costs and presenting them as part of the March budget COW.

Mr. Wehmeier also went over the various project funds. The Downtown TIF will be used for bridge repairs, I&M Canal repairs, and engineering for Illinois. It was decided by the Board to put 1 dumpster enclosure in the budget for the downtown, location to be determined at a later date. There was further discussion on Illinois Street. It was determined by the Board that undergrounding the utilities for the entire stretch is too costly and should not be looked into any further. However, a minor undergrounding of the wires that run across Illinois Street should be examined. As the project gets closer, further discussion will surface on funding for the other improvements including streetlights and streetscape. Future projects for the Downtown TIF include the resurfacing of Canal, Stephen, Lemont, Holmes, Julia, and sidewalk paver repair. The TIF ends in 2014. Water and Sewer projects include the Carriage Ridge detention basin cleanout, further sanitary sewer evaluations/televising of lines, Logan Street watermain, and McCarthy Road water main partially via CDBG. A decision will have to be made in future about the Bell Road water extension, possibly a special assessment area. The motor fuel fund will pay for bridge

repairs on Derby and Old Lemont bridge, thermoplastic striping on Timberline and school crossings, and Timberline (Roberta to 127th) and Deborah (East of Timberline) resurfacing. In the road fund, the majority of the funds will be used for the Village's contributions to the Triangle project and Walker/McCarthy. In addition, the Holmes Street wall will need to be replaced. There was general discussion on the various requests. These items would all be up for another workshop meeting in March for an April approval.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor Reaves stated that he wanted the Village Board to individually contact Mr. Wehmeier regarding the sprinkler issues in the downtown. One of the property owners in the downtown approached the Board at a previous Committee of the Whole on relaxing standards for sprinkling requirements. Ben needs to get back to this property owner, and needs feedback from Board.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

No Audience Participation

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Reaves adjourned the meeting at 10:00 PM