

Village of West Salem
Regular Meeting
February 20, 2024

Regular meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Village President Scott Schumacher. Trustees present: Curtis, Hennessey, Lautz, Leicht, and Twining. Excused: Anderson. Also present: Public Works Director Loren Schwier, Police Chief Kyle Holzhausen, Recreation Director Tony DeGaetano, Village Administrator Teresa DeLong, Village Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Bohl and La Crosse County Supervisor Dave Hundt.

Public Comment

La Crosse County District 26 Supervisor Dave Hundt appeared before the Village Board and advised the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors voted 15-10 to create a Police Oversight Committee. The new advisory committee will be composed of citizens. Supervisor Hundt voted against it, and it does not have his support. Supervisor Hundt feels the Chiefs and Sheriffs of La Crosse County do a wonderful job, and there is no need for a committee that has no authority. Supervisor Hundt also expressed his disappointment that the Villages of Bangor, Holmen and West Salem were not included in the discussion for the need of this committee.

Minutes

Motion by Trustee Lautz, seconded by Trustee Twining to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2024, regular meeting as written. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Claims

Claims were presented for payment totaling \$2,638,388.47.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Lautz to approve the payment of all claims as listed. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Request for Proposal 1.24

Motion by Trustee Twining, seconded by Trustee Leicht to approve the publication of the Request for Proposal 1.24, with the direction to add four-wheel-drive to the proposal. Roll Call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Public Safety Building Planning Ad Hoc Committee

Chair Schumacher reported on the February 19, 2024, Public Safety Building Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meeting. Chair Schumacher opened continued discussion regarding options for a new or remodeled West Salem Police Department building. The Committee began discussion by confirming they were no longer considering the building at 980 Hwy 16. A letter had been sent to the owner confirming this. Discussion continued on by re-evaluating the other Police Department buildings that were toured, including analyzing plans from the Viroqua and Sauk Prairie Police Department buildings.

Chief Kyle Holzhausen then discussed the recent visit from Senator Tammy Baldwin's team to tour the Police Department. Chief Holzhausen explained that there are grant funds available, and the application is expected to be available soon. Those that review the applications determine which financial fund the grant funds are awarded from and that it was stressed it was important to incorporate Public Safety into the building, including community areas, making it a multi-use facility. Administrator DeLong advised the

Committee that Congressman Derrick Van Orden will personally be at the Village Hall on February 20th to also tour the Police Department. DeLong also explained that Congressman Van Orden's team works in conjunction with Senator Tammy Baldwin's and vouches for applicants of the grant based on need. The Committee then discussed Viroqua's Police Department and how they received roughly \$5 million in grant money.

Committee Member Lassen inquired into if there was a timeframe in which the grant funds had to be used. Administrator DeLong advised the fiscal year 2025-2026, essentially giving the Village roughly two years to come up with bids and plans, as well as actual build-time. Lassen also inquired into if additional funds needed above and beyond the grant funds would have to be achieved through a referendum. DeLong advised that the funds could be bonded.

The Committee continued to discuss the pros and cons of building new versus remodeling an existing building, such as the building most recently toured at 1500 Hwy 16. Chair Schumacher explained the increased costs of building new versus a remodel found in costs associated with acquiring land, running utilities to the new building, etc. Schumacher noted that a new building would allow the Village to build exactly what they wanted versus having to piece together a remodel in an existing building.

Committee Member Lautz continued the discussion on possible options for the building at 1500 Hwy 16, including keeping the fitness center part of the building and opening it up for public-use, and the impact purchasing this building would have on the existing businesses that occupy the building. Lautz added that it would also mean a decreased assessment roll, but there are possible options for some of the existing businesses to be able to purchase other land to build new, including future options for the portion of the building currently used by Line-X.

Lautz then asked the Committee to go over all of the pros and cons of purchasing the building at 1500 Hwy 16 and purchasing land out by the water tower to build brand new. Chief Holzhausen thought both were good locations, but did prefer the location of the water tower due to its proximity to Highway 16 from Garland, the interstate overpass, and how close it is to the schools; however, it does not have visibility to the public. Holzhausen continued by stating the 1500 Hwy 16 locations is more visible to the public, but getting to and from the building would be more difficult due to its location on 16. The Committee also asked Administrator DeLong her opinion. DeLong stated she liked how close the water tower location was to Garland, was concerned with access to the building on Hwy 16, and concerned about the potential cost to remodel. The Committee also discussed the potential benefit of purchasing land from the County by the water tower, with the County having a potential interest in housing a 911 command center in the new building.

The process of obtaining plans was discussed next. Administrator DeLong advised the board that last week she and Chief Holzhausen met with students from UW-Madison who are a part of a Capstone project that takes issues, such as needing space in our Police Department, and comes up with plans and ideas to meet the needs of the department. The results are expected sometime this week or next week. The plans include a schematic plan sketch with estimated costs. The Committee inquired into whether or not Tri-State Ambulance would still want to work with the Village on plans to include space for their use. As far as the Committee is aware, they are still wanting to be a part of it.

The Committee agreed that Chair Schumacher should reach out to Dahl to inquire into their expected purchase price. They further agreed this will have a big impact on whether or not a remodel is viable and economical. The Committee wants to also review the UW-Madison Capstone project results. It was determined the next committee meeting would be March 6th at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by President Schumacher, seconded by Trustee Curtis to approve the February 19, 2024 Public Safety Building Planning Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Park and Recreation Director Tony DeGaetano reported on the department. They have been busy with the basketball season and have been working on the brochures for the spring and summer season, which will be released mid-March. Soccer will continue to be the dominate sport for the summer program, and historically it is their largest program in terms of roster, with 20-27 teams on average.

Public Works Director Loren Schwier reported on some of the maintenance items the department have been working on with the milder weather. A new sewer press was put on a jetter truck, mechanics rebuilt another truck adding on a beatbox spreader, LED lights, and the frame was sandblasted. Earlier in the day water lines were run for the chicken pit over by Village Park.

Police Chief Kyle Holzhausen reported on the department's January calls for service. Calls were overall down; however, they were more time-consuming. Included were an increase in domestic calls and a welfare check/suspicious death investigation. Chief Holzhausen also advised the Board the department, along with the West Salem Fire Department, West Salem First Responders, and the Boys and Girls Club plan to a host a Family Pizza and Bingo Night at the West Salem Middle School, tentatively scheduled for March 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Public Works Director Loren Schwier and Police Chief Holzhausen also reported on the decision to temporarily suspend alternate-side parking due to the mild weather. The Village residents were advised, through a Facebook post it would not be in effect unless there is a weather event. Discussion began on whether or not this is easily re-enforced when a weather event occurs and the difficulty in getting the word out to the public.

Motion by Trustee Hennessey, seconded by Trustee Twining to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Approved by voice vote.

Ashley M. Bohl, Village Clerk/Treasurer