

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, June 20, 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, June 20, 2023, for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Greg Lungmus at 6:45 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

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 May 16, 2023 and May 23, 2023 Village Board meetings
2. Bills and Disbursements from May 1, 2023 to May 31, 2023, in the amount of \$ 811,650.65
3. Consideration of the acceptance of the MFT Audit Report for 2018-2021
4. Consideration of Heritage Corridor Proclamation celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the Illinois & Michigan Canal
5. Consideration of a Resolution appointing Steve Gutierrez as the North Suburban Employee Benefits Cooperative alternate delegate

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 5.

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:	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT:
Dinges			
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

CONSIDERATION OF THE APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING APPROVAL FOR A SPECIAL USE FOR A MEDICAL OFFICE AT 1622 WILLOW ROAD

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Galin, to consider an ordinance granting approval for a Special Use and the associated relief from the Zoning Code off-street parking requirement for the operation of Forward Focus, a medical practice located at 1622 Willow Road.

Steven Gutierrez, Community Development Director stated that the petitioners were seeking a Special Use in order to allow the operation of a medical practice, Forward Focus, on the first floor of the office building at 1622 Willow Road. The proposed use required relief from the Village’s off-street parking requirement because they would be providing 106 parking spaces versus the 107 spaces required by the Zoning Code. On June 5, 2023, the Plan & Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed medical office use and associated relief from our off-street parking requirement with the condition that the landscaping on the property will be restored.

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

Trustee Orth asked if the building was completely occupied and Community Development Director Gutierrez replied that it was.

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 and the associated relief from the Zoning Code off-street parking requirement for the operation of Forward Focus, a medical practice located at 1622 Willow Road.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Gavin Blunt stated that at the last Village Board meeting, he had requested that the Village consider an ordinance to allow a recall of an elected Village official and there was a deafening silence. He asked if there was a cease and desist letter given to the trustees before that meeting occurred last month. President Lungmus noted that it was a public comment period and not a question and answer and stated that he could write the Village Attorney. Mr. Blunt said that he followed procedures and the agenda items have to go through the President and Village Manager but since the President might be the subject of the recall, he came to the Board for a motion and a second. He stated that he wrote to Village Manager Sigman and she replied that President Lungmus was not interested in a recall modification to the Code at this time. Mr. Blunt stated that President Lungmus was blocking it and the Board should do something about it. Gavin Blunt said he asked through FOIA for information regarding the finances of the Village. He asked that the Board set up a committee to look at the Village's finances in depth to see how it is administered and stated that this should be done every five years. He asked for two Board members to put a motion to form a committee to allow financial transparency. There was no response in support of such a committee.

Resident Patti Morrell stated that she had been a resident for 37 years and it was difficult to come this evening. She said that she loved Northfield and the employees of the Village, especially the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works. She noted that everyone in her family had benefited from their efforts. She remarked that she was not very social but was being inundated with phone calls asking what is going on in the Village and inquiring what is the problem. She said the gossip and innuendos were ridiculous. She pleaded with the Board to use their best judgment and professionalism and think about what they are doing, and what is being said, and do the right thing.

Resident Carol Ritchell stated that she believed what Gavin Blunt was requesting regarding transparency did not seem crazy. She noted she did not understand the details and noted the Board did not comment at all. She hoped that the Board would go forward with the transparency.

Administration

Village Manager Sigman had no comments.

Community Development Department & Building Department

Community Development Director Gutierrez said that on June 12th, the Architectural Commission unanimously approved a sports court at 2044 Middlefork. On July 5th, the Plan and Zoning Commission will consider a request for approval to allow the division of the existing property at 118 Dickens Road into three separate lots. On July 12th, the Zoning Board of Appeals will consider a request for an east rear yard 9.00-foot variation from the required 35.00 feet resulting in a 26.00-foot east rear yard setback to allow for the addition of a one-story screened porch to the existing single-family residence at 77 Brandon Road.

Finance Department

Finance Director Morley stated the April financial report had been provided to the Board. The results were very good, better than the prior year, and much better than budgeted. The budget had called for a small net surplus of \$71,730 before the additional transfer of \$355,000 from reserves to the capital fund. The Village had a surplus of \$1.6 million which was well more than planned. Throughout the year, staff did not know exactly when property taxes would be received. Initially, the first round of taxes was delayed and then the second round of taxes was delayed. But in the end, the taxes came in just \$5,000 short of the \$4.8 million budget. Throughout the year, other tax revenues more than made up for the shortfall of property tax revenues, so there was never a concern about cash. When comparing cash and investments to the same time last year, there was an increase of \$2,084,527 in investments because the Village took advantage of investing cash with the increased interest rates. The Village earned \$318,000 in interest compared to \$15,000 in the prior year.

In the water-sewer fund, revenues were in line with the budget, but expenses were lower than the budget by \$578,000. This resulted because some budgeted capital projects, like sliplining, did not occur. A big goal this year was to get the AMI project done. Even though the Village outsourced the switch out of the meters to an outside entity (UMI), it still required collaboration and coordination between Public Works, Finance, and UMI to get the job accomplished. The Village used \$729,700 in grant money for this project and had planned to use \$420,000 in Village funds for the project, but only \$238K was used, leaving \$181,000 unspent. Currently, there are only 5 meters that are being read by handheld devices. This is due to challenging issues that need to be resolved, such as lead service lines, a meter buried in concrete, and a meter at the bottom of a pond. Now that AMI is in place, the Village can more accurately track water loss. For the month of May, the water loss percentage was 7.6% which is an improvement over the previous month's water loss of 10.02%. There was a time discrepancy because Winnetka read their meters at 6:00 AM and the Village's meters were read at midnight. However, as of June 1st, Winnetka was able to make the change in their system so now both Winnetka and Northfield will be reading their usage at the same time at midnight.

Preliminary audit work will start this Thursday and Friday and the rest of the audit will take place from July 10th through July 21st.

Fire-Rescue & Public Works Departments

Assistant Fire Rescue Chief Tom Burke remarked that Public Works had been busy replacing a couple of fire hydrants and overseeing the painting by contractors of some fire hydrants. There have been two water main breaks since the last meeting and they have been removing dead trees throughout the town. The summer help has been busy cutting vegetation around sidewalks and stop signs to improve visibility.

The Fire Rescue Department responded to 137 calls for service since the last Board meeting. There have been rush calls on overturned boats in Wilmette 3 times and Winnetka two times. They are working with the Police Department and Park District to get ready for the 4th of July.

Trustee Orth inquired about the status of the pedestrian bridge. Village Manager Sigman replied it was substantially done and that Public Works Director Nystrand was working on a list of items that still need to be resolved. The power washing and staining are scheduled after the 4th of July.

Police Department

Police Chief Lustig stated that the new officer was on the street and riding solo now. The Police Commission met and interviewed 5 candidates and they were interested in 3 candidates so background investigative checks will begin on them. The department is gearing up for the upcoming summer events.

Trustee Galin asked if it would be possible to send out a public service announcement to remind people, especially kids, of the safety importance of wearing bike helmets. Police Chief Lustig replied that a reminder could be sent out through the Village's social media sites.

Trustee Dinges asked that a friendly reminder be made that people on bikes need to give the right of way to pedestrians.

Trustee Orth complimented the officers for doing a fine job at the Market & Music while patrolling the park and keeping the peace.

Special Board Projects

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

- 1) Centennial – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek stated that there were no updates but waiting for the firm to get back with the requested draft which is anticipated to be back soon.
- 2) Wayfinding Signage – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – There were no additional updates than those from the Committee of the Whole meeting.
- 3) Sidewalk Committee – Lead by Trustee Galin and Trustee Whittaker – Trustee Galin said that they had assembled a committee of 13 members who recently met. They are very enthusiastic about seeing what can be done and what should and should not be done regarding sidewalks throughout the Village. They will be hitting the streets next month to assess the sidewalk needs of the Village.
- 4) Mid-block Crossings – Lead by Trustee Orth – Trustee Orth stated that they are awaiting the attorney review of the documents and then the documents can be submitted to Cook County with the goal that this important safety project can be soon completed.

- 5) Library Campus – Lead by Trustee Fowler and President Lungmus –Trustee Fowler stated that they received an appraisal of the property so the next step is to meet with the Library Board at some point in the future.

Trustee Mendrek stated that as a rule, they do not respond to public comment because there is often more work that needs to be done or information that needs to be obtained. She said that she could not let Mr. Blunt’s comment go by without saying that she is not intimidated by anyone that she serves on this Board with and she thinks they all have a good relationship. She thought there were opportunities to bring items up for discussion at Committee of the Whole meetings and/or areas where public comment is welcomed. She wanted it to be clear that there is a mechanism to bring things up for debate when needed.

President Lungmus noted that the Board is getting the business of the Village completed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to adjourn into Executive Session to approve the Closed Session meeting minutes from January 17, 2023, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21), to discuss (1) the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) and (2) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of a specific employee pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

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

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

Upon completion of the Closed Session, Trustee Mendrek made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to re-open to the regular meeting session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Mendrek 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: 0 ABSENT:
Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.