

Village of Ashton Board Meeting – August 8, 2022

Village President Tim Henert called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

Present: Tim Henert, Susan Larson, Chuck Ellis, Martha Holder, Rhonda Cardot, Village Attorney Russell Crull, Village Clerk Katie Koks, David Chapman (arrived at 7:02)

Absent: None

Motion to approve July Meeting minutes as presented – Larson; Second – Cardot

Voice Vote – 4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent. Motion passed.

Motion to approve Street and Alley Committee Minutes - Ellis; Second - Holder

Voice Vote – 4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent. Motion passed.

Motion to approve Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes - Holder; Second - Larson

Voice Vote – 4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent. Motion passed.

Motion to approve financial statement as presented and to pay monthly bills and additional bill –Ellis; Second - Cardot

Voice Vote – 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed.

Citizens to Be Heard- None

New Business-

Resident Doralee Erickson requested a meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals to consider rezoning her property from an R1 to and R2. Henert said that the board would set up a meeting and they would begin that process.

Henert reported that one of the bills on the list is for work done on the tract of Blum Foundation land on the west side of town. After consulting Attorney Crull, he asked the board to approve submitting a request to the Blum Foundation for reimbursement.

Motion to request a Blum Grant in the amount of \$1,213.44 – Ellis; Second - Larson

Roll Call Vote – Cardot-Aye, Chapman-Aye, Ellis-Aye, Holder- Aye, Larson-Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed.

Audit presentation

Bill Newkirk from Newkirk & Associates presented the audit. He felt that this was a smooth audit and it is a very good thing that he is presenting the April 30th audit in August. He pointed out that the biggest negative number was in the Mills & Petrie Investments. He touched on several notes within the budget and suggested that the Village Clerk & Treasurer create some more specific line items to split out “Miscellaneous Income”. He made some suggestions to the board to look into the stipulations for some of the equity funds and to also look into a re-establishing a perpetual care fund for the cemetery.

Zoning

Manheim reported three permits this month- building a front porch, decks, and a roof replacement. He also touched on how many letters are being written to residents with little or no response. He said this is a common problem in many small towns. He feels that it takes a lot of time to write out these letters and Koks was helping develop a door hanger to issue warnings instead of sending letters – could potentially save some time and money on postage. The board discussed if that would make a difference with how much communication between Manheim and residents, but the idea would be something to try and see how effective it ends up being.

Community Economic Development

Henert reported for Andy Shaw, an amendment to the LOEZ Ordinance. The proposed change did not influence anything related to Ashton, so he felt it was okay to approve the amendment as is.

Motion to approve the Amendment to the LOEZ Ordinance – Larson; Second – Cardot

Roll Call Vote – Chapman-Aye, Ellis-Aye, Holder- Aye, Larson-Aye, Cardot-Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent.
Motion passed.

Koks reported on the progress on the website. Most of the content has been sent to the developer and she is expecting to have a test version of the site ready within the month. The board also commented on how nice the new logo looks on materials.

Streets & Alleys

Ellis read the report from the streets department for the remainder of July and beginning of August.

Completed Projects: Nate and Carson graded alleys and patched a sinkhole on Brown Ave. An abandoned property on Brown Ave. has been cleaned up and mowed twice, cleaned up trash and cleared weeds at all railroad crossings, trimmed trees for clearance on the east side of the park for better access to fire hydrant on the northeast corner, cleared a number of dead trees in the lower section of the park, Jeff coordinated Schmitt's out of Dixon jetted the sewer main on the south half of North Richardson (no blockage or restriction was found—the owner of 602 Richardson called in a backup), trimmed and landscaped both "Welcome to Ashton" signs and ordered more solar lighting for both, removed both stumps on the north side of the Mills & Petrie next to the alleyway, cleaned and removed debris around the Mills & Petrie parking lot, the entire street crew cleared all storm debris from big storm on 7/27/22—three days total to get back to status quo, repaired the John Deere zero-turn mower deck, repaired 2007 GMC dump truck (rear sway bar and hydraulic system leak).

Started Projects: Continue to clean and remove debris from sewer plant, second dumpster was scheduled for pickup from that location (crew has also started locking gate to stop unwanted dumping of construction materials and items not picked up by Northern Illinois Disposal), trimming trees and bushes in alley way and sidewalks, painting fire hydrants based on flow rate – about 60% completed, 40 out of 60+ hydrants are done, clearing and edging sidewalk on the north edge of the village, in front of the old co-op lot, street sweeping will continue after repairs to the main belt idler shaft bearings are replaced, repair of EzGo golf cart engine.

Projects To Do: power wash and paint both buildings by the sewer plant, reset swing set pole next to lower shelter at the park, clearing brush in front of the parking lot nearest to the lower section of the park so it can be viewed from the street, trim bushes that line entire south side of the cemetery, power wash the marker stone at the park along with repainting the parking blocks, updating park flower gardens, and removing stumps.

Henert reiterated that one of the properties in disrepair (Brown Ave.) is being maintained (yard and rubbish waste clean-up) by the Village and neighbors to the property seem to be pleased that the work is being done. Crull mentioned to keep a record of the number of times the village cleans and mows the property.

Ellis updated the board that he and Chapman are still working on gathering data for the discussion on speed bumps and a decision about the issue will be tabled to a future meeting.

Water & Sewer

Chapman reported that the railroad is still on board to work with us to clear out the area around the tracks. He is waiting on numbers (costs) from them for the right-of-way, the railroad will do some more research on what would be the village's responsibility and he has reached out to a couple excavating companies to get a preliminary quote.

Parks

Holder reported that a meeting was held on August 2nd and duties relating to fall fest were delegated to various committee members. Holder said she would like to see an additional bounce house for toddler-aged children. This would be a highlight for that area so smaller children can also bounce without fear of being crowded by older children.

Liquor Commissioner- None

Police Report

Henert reported that Kolton Morgan has resigned his position, within the probationary period, as police chief due to changes with his full-time job. Henert said we are looking at our options and will be advertising for a police chief. The village does have normal coverage with the county.

On the advice of the village attorney, Henert asked the board to review a list of fines to send out to residents for ordinance violations. Crull clarified that this would not be something the board would regularly do. It's the absence of a police chief which makes it necessary for the board to do. This duty generally falls on the Police Chief in conjunction with the Building Inspector who sends the initial warning letter. If the date to comply from the letter has passed, the Building Inspector gives the information to the Chief to send the ordinance violation and fine. If a resident communicates with Manheim about the issue in the letter and develop a plan or timeline to fix the issue, they may avoid the ordinance ticket and fine all together. Manheim stated that he just wants to have a good dialog with residents so they understand what he is looking for.

Motion to approve sending tickets and fines for ordinance violations – Larson; Second – Holder

Roll Call Vote: Ellis-Aye, Holder-Aye, Larson-Aye, Cardot - Aye, Chapman – Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed.

Chapman asked who was liable to check what the offset off the property for barricade as a building is being worked on. Crull and Manheim said it's the owner's responsibility to make sure that's compliant. Crull didn't think that the village was involved in the process if the street crew was just putting up barricades/tape around the area.

Clerk's Report

Koks asked the board to grant permission and financial assistance to attend Year 1 of the MCI Clerks Academy and Institute in Bloomington in October. The three-year program would make her eligible to be a Registered Municipal Clerk in the State of Illinois upon completion and would benefit the Village overall by providing the most up-to-date instruction and guidance for all things related to being a municipal clerk.

Motion to approve request from K. Koks to attend the Year 1 of the MCI Clerk's Academy and Institute – Cardot; Second-Holder.

Roll Call Vote: Holder-Aye, Larson-Aye, Cardot-Aye, Chapman-Aye, Ellis-Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed.

Koks also reported that there were 33 red letters for delinquent water bills placed on doors earlier in the day (August 8th). This number was down from the billing before, which was an encouraging sign.

Cemetery Board

Henert reported that in light of the findings from the auditor about the need for a perpetual care fund for the cemetery, he asked the board to approve re-opening the perpetual care fund that was closed last year. He would also look into all options for setting that up.

Motion to re-open the perpetual care fund for the Ashton Cemetery- Holder; Second – Cardot

Roll Call Vote: Larson-Aye, Cardot-Aye, Chapman-Aye, Ellis-Aye, Holder-Aye. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed.

Mills & Petrie Board

Holder reported that the board was working on making some repairs and updates to equipment at the Mills & Petrie building. They were also still working on putting policies in place for the library.

Village Attorney

Crull is still waiting on a legal description for the property on the west side of town.

Other – None

Motion to adjourn - Holder; Second – Ellis

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:59p.m.

Submitted by Katie Koks, Village Clerk