

Village of Ashton Board Meeting – March 14, 2022

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

Present: Steve Garrison, Martha Holder, Susan Larson, Chuck Ellis, Tim Henert, Village Clerk Katie Koks, Village Attorney Russ Crull;

Absent: David Chapman, Rhonda Cardot

Motion to approve February Meeting minutes as presented – Larson; Second – Holder

Voice Vote – 4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent. Motion passed.

Motion to accept financial statement as presented and to pay monthly bills – Garrison; Second Holder.

Holder asked what the additional ComEd bill location was on the additional bill list. Koks said the bill was for the lift station and the Rt. 38 LED sign.

Public Comment (5 Min. Limit)

1) Sterling Cone addressed the board to ask about the feasibility of getting a skateboard park built in Ashton. She asked who would speak to about that. She was directed to Martha Holder and will touch base with her at a later date to get more specifics about what she is looking for.

2) Lirim Mimini addressed the board about video gaming and the proposed increase in license fees. He spoke about the importance of the video gaming at the general store and he was concerned about increase in the fees. He brought a PNL statement explaining the breakdown of his revenue from 2021 with video gaming at the store and how difficult it will be to cover the costs of a large increase for that location. He is requesting that the verbiage in the ordinance reflect a dual responsibility between the terminal operator and the business owner.

Old Business:

Non-Home Rule Video Gaming Fee Vote. Henert asked that the board table the entire conversation to the April meeting. Henert would like to sit down and continue to look at the numbers with all the local businesses to see how it would impact their profits.

Motion to table the vote on Video Gaming Fees until the April 2022 meeting – Holder; Second – Ellis

Roll Call Vote: Ellis – Aye, Holder-Aye, Larson-Aye, Garrison-Aye; 4-Ayes, 0-Nays, 2 Absent – Chapman, Cardot. Motion passed.

Henert began the update about the Ashton Splash Pad. Burbach Aquatics would like to meet both the Blum foundation and the board to present what options may be for the splash pad. Larson volunteered to be part of the committee to work out the best route to take since she was part of the initial committee.

Henert asked the board members to review the updated verbiage for the ordinance for Overdue Bill Policy. The changes were discussed at the February meeting.

Motion to Approve Revised Ordinance for Overdue Bill Policy – Larson; Second-Ellis

Roll Call Vote: Garrison-Aye, Larson-Aye, Holder-Aye, Ellis-Aye; 4-Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent-Chapman, Cardot. Motion passed.

New Business:

Henert reported that Koks had filled out a Blum Grant Request in line with what has been submitted in the past –a total of \$30,000 for sidewalk repairs. Larson thought this was year three or four of the five years' worth of requests.

Motion to approve the Blum Foundation Grant Request for \$30,000.00 for sidewalk repairs – Ellis; Second-Holder.

Roll Call Vote: Holder-Aye, Ellis-Aye, Larson-Aye, Garrison-Aye; 4 Ayes, 0-Nays, 2 Absent – Chapman, Cardot. Motion passed.

Henert was asked by the YWCA in Sterling to proclaim the month of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. He read a proclamation in full announcing April 2022 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the Village of Ashton.

Zoning

Manheim reported that things are picking up a little bit. Projects include rooftop solar, a deck, and several property maintenance letters have been sent out. He will be driving around more to make sure properties are in compliance as the weather warms. He asked that residents make sure their yards and porches are cleaned up.

Community Economic Development

Garrison e-mailed several vendors to see what their offerings were. Garrison, Koks, and Henert spoken with Stahr Media in Rock Falls and have scheduled meetings with two other vendors in the coming weeks. A recommendation should be made by the next meeting.

Streets & Alleys

Ellis and Henert will do a survey on sidewalks to determine what will be fixed to include in the Blum Grant request.

Water & Sewer - No report.

Parks

Holder reviewed the calendar of events included in the packet. The list had also been published on the website, social media, and the Ashton Camp Program Facebook page. Holder hope to expand the festivities at the Easter Egg Hunt to include a hot dog lunch and a petting zoo. She also mentioned that Camp Registration will be on Saturday April 30th.

Liquor Commissioner

Henert made a reminder that the renewal for Liquor Licenses will be due by April 30th. Renewal applications are ready so businesses should contact the Village office.

Police Report

Yater introduced Kolton Morgan to the board. Yater is asking to step down from Police Chief to Patrolman and to have Morgan take his place as Chief with a probationary period. Yater recommends Morgan because he is familiar with the area, has been a part-time officer in Ashton for around a year, and has a great record as a Lee County officer as well. Yater said that he would like the system he's put in place stay as is because it works very well for the residents of Ashton and Morgan is familiar with what needs to be done. Yater will stay on for a period of time for training and guidance for Morgan.

Motion to accept status change request for Jared Yater from Police Chief to Patrolman - Larson; Second – Holder

Roll Call Vote: Larson – Aye, Garrison-Aye, Ellis-Aye, Holder-Aye. 4-Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent - Chapman, Cardot

Motion passed.

Motion to grant status change request for Kolton Morgan from Patrolman to Interim Police Chief with a 60-day probationary period – Holder; Second- Ellis

Roll Call Vote: Ellis –Aye, Holder-Aye, Larson-Aye, Garrison-Aye. 4-Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent- Chapman, Cardot

Motion passed.

Yater also addressed the board's request at the February meeting for a monthly activity report-and apologized that he did not have a good answer for them right away at that meeting. He said that the recent lack of reports is due to a miscommunication and training with some officers. They are not used to doing a daily report which is located in the squad car, and there are also sometimes doing assignments that cannot be reported on. Morgan will be looking at this process and providing the board with a monthly report going forward.

Clerk's Report

Koks reported that water meters have arrived and that the staff would be meeting with a representative from Ferguson for some training later this week. Koks also reminded board members to complete the statement of economic interest and return to her by April 11th, or send it in and let her know. Crull said that any late submissions incur a \$15 fee from the county.

Cemetery Board

Henert said that with the weather warming, cemetery cleanup will begin with some volunteers. Larson said there were some rut issues-there has been a lot of traffic and the natural settling created and those would need to be addressed this year as well.

Mills & Petrie Board

Sherrri Stauffer gave the report for Holder. She reported that they are happy to see a light at the end of the tunnel with regard to COVID restrictions and the board is focusing on building a policy book. The board will be going into closed session in March to discuss employee reviews. Rentals at the building are up and overall things are going better. Larson asked about the museum – Stauffer said that she is stalled getting equipment and software, but has many volunteers lined up to help get set up when the time comes.

Village Attorney – No report.

Other – None

Motion to Adjourn- Holder; Second-Larson

Voice Vote: 4-Ayes, 0-Nays – 2 Absent - Motion Passed

The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

Submitted by Katie Koks, Ashton Village Clerk