VILLAGE BOARD
December 14, 2015

Monday, December 14, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., Mayor Mike Serena called to order the regular meeting of the Gardner Village Board in the Village Hall Council Chambers. Roll call – Commissioners Terry Jensen, Dick Hileman, James Riley, Rob Wolf, and Mayor Mike Serena. Also present were Atty. Scott Belt and Village Engineer Guy Christensen. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of November 23 were presented. Comm. Jensen made motion to approve the minutes as printed, second by Riley. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Mayor Serena. Pass: Wolf. Nays: none. Motion carried.

The current bills were presented. Comm. Hileman moved to approve the payment of the bills, second by Riley. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented. Comm. Hileman moved to approve the report, second by Jensen. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Public Comments –

Resident Ida Schopp said that since she is on the agenda, she would wait with her comment. Resident Patty Pfaff asked why the Christmas decorations on Main Street do not light up. Comm. Hileman explained that there is no power source on those poles and it would cost approximately $35,000 to provide it. Elizabeth Johnson introduced herself as a candidate for Grundy County State's Attorney. Resident Don Phillips complimented the 911 contractual services for rapid response to two recent calls made by him and his wife.

Agenda –

Comm. Hileman moved to approve the tax levy ordinance, second by Riley. Hileman commented that we have left the tax levy the same for about the last eight or nine year and all of the bonds have been paid off. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

A discussion was held regarding the water/sewer/garbage bills. Comm. Hileman explained that there are approximately 35-50 residents that are consistently delinquent. Some have come in to sign agreements; some have honored them but others have ignored them and then want to come in to sign another one. One had signed an agreement to be paid three weeks ago and then, last week, he packed up and left town. When water bills are not paid, we need to reach into the general fund to pay the garbage bill, of which the Village already pays 60 cents for each account. Hileman contacted Com Ed, which will make a payment arrangement, limited to one in a 12 month period. They will run it for 3 months, 6 months or 12 months – they will let the customer choose – and there is an upfront charge of $75. If you miss one payment, they will not call and the power will be turned off. Nicor is the same way. Hileman proposed a limit of one agreement in a 12-month period. He acknowledged that this will hurt some people but a procedure must be set up that would be followed. We clear approximately $3,000 a month on water bills and we have raised the rates only twice in 16 years, although we have an ordinance that states that we are allowed to raise the rates by 5% annually. Comm. Jensen added that when he was Water Commissioner, residents wanted to sign an agreement on an already existing agreement and he maintained that this should not be allowed. Comm. Wolf expressed his opinion that anything over 60 days should be shut off, that there are organizations around the county that will help with payment of water bills. Jensen added that some residents are turning the water back on themselves and if we learn of this, maintenance employees will lock them out. Mayor Serena suggested that we impose fines for tampering with the meters. He questioned whether someone on a payment plan should be disqualified from the free water/sewer. He suggested that a standard formula should be established that would work in all situations and that would be fair to all, and special circumstances should taken into account and put into writing. Comm. Hileman suggested a six month period for agreements broken down into six equal payments of the past due amount, paid with the current bill. Mayor Serena added that a portion of sewer charges will be rebated if a homeowner can prove that they had a leak that did not go through the sewer

system. Sewer charges can also be rebated for filling swimming pools if a resident brings in paperwork that shows the gallon capacity of the pool. Belt interjected that the Sheriff's office should be called if someone tampers with water shut-off. A discussion followed regarding due process rights for those in arrears with water bill payments, agreements to pay and late notices stating that a hearing can be requested. This is covered with our current ordinance. Comm. Hileman made motion to table a decision until the next meeting so that further research can be done, second by Jensen. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Mayor Serena interrupted the agenda to allow a representative of Grundy County Sheriff's Department to present his report, which was read by the Mayor. Both stressed that suspicious activity should be reported.

Returning to the agenda, Comm. Hileman made motion for Christmas bonuses to employees of $150 to Brad Kingma, $100 to Denice Muzzarelli, $75 to Pat Malinowski, $50 each to Kaitlyn Marks and Joseph McMeen (a total of $425), second by Riley. This will be paid on December 23 and will leave a balance of $403.30 in the scrap fund which is used for the purpose of bonus payments. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Comm. Hileman made motion to pay Village employees (including Pat) for the full day for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve if they work four hours on those days, unless there is an emergency such as a water leak or snow storm and then maintenance employees would get the four hours at another time, second by Jensen. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Comm. Jensen made motion to cancel the December 28, 2015, Board Meeting, second by Hileman with the amendment that any emergency bills would be paid with the approval of the Mayor and Hileman. Roll call - Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Stephanie Coleman of Standard Bank and resident Ida Schopp presented a check to the Village in the amount of $4,515, which were the proceeds from the Festival of Trees, to benefit the Parks. Mrs. Schopp thanked everyone for donations of items and the purchase of raffle tickets which contributed to the success of the event.

Reports –

Atty. Belt – Has ordered title work on Division Street as discussed and confirmed that the prior work that was done did not include Division Street. Also acknowledged that he owes the Village a draft of the business license ordinance to be presented at the next meeting.

Comm. Hileman – On December 2, he received a letter from Mr. Perrot regarding a shortage of TIF money. The current bill list presented tonight shows a payment to GSW High School of $11,468.26, another installment of $11.60 and one more of $430.77. The holdup was due to misdirection of the statement, but everything is straightened out now.

The Flea Market has put up an illuminated sign without obtaining a permit.

Comm. Jensen – Nothing to report

Comm. Riley – Expressed a thank you to Ida and Stephanie for doing a great job on the Festival of Trees. Mrs. Schopp suggested that some of the money be used for bushes on Depot Street. Also thanked Don Phillips, Kate Cloonen and Pastor Jan for their participation at the tree lighting and also the Mayor, Regina and Paul Chase for decorating the tree. Resident Don Phillips extended thanks to Comm. Riley for taking on the responsibility for the ceremony. Comm. Hileman added that a sign of some sort should be installed at the site of whatever is purchased, stating that the item was donated by the first Festival of Trees.

Comm. Wolf – Absent

Engineer Christensen – Storm sewer work is continuing and, depending on the weather, will go on.

Clerk Malinowski – A couple of notes have been received and several residents have expressed thanks for the free water.

Mayor Serena – Pleased with the attendance at the Festival of Trees and the tree lighting. Thanked the Haltermans, who are farmers just west of town, donated the use of their lift; also his wife Jackie, and sister/brother-in-law Regina and Paul for helping to decorate the tree. The lights on the overpass are not working and IDOT has been notified. The winners of the decorating contest will be notified on December 22 by 7:00 p.m.

As there was no further business brought before the council, a motion to adjourn was made by Comm. Riley, second by Jensen. Roll call – Ayes: Jensen, Hileman, Riley, Mayor Serena. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

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Pat Malinowski, Clerk
Village of Gardner