VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
October 11, 2021

Monday, October 11, 2021, 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 Dick Hileman, Erik Smith, Tim Hill, and Mayor Mike Serena. Commissioner Rob Wolf was absent. Also in attendance was Village Engineer Casey McCollom. Village Attorney Bryan Wellner was not present. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of September 27, 2021 and revised August 23, 2021 were presented. Comm. Hill made motion to approve the minutes as printed, second by Serena. Roll call September 27 – Ayes: Comm. Hill, and Mayor Serena. Pass: Hileman, Smith. Nays: None. Motion passed. Roll call revised August 23 – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Hill, Mayor Serena. Pass: Smith. Nays: None. Motion passed.

A list of current bills was presented. Comm. Hileman moved to approve the payment of the bills as printed, second by Hill. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

The Treasurer's Report for the month of September was presented. Comm. Hileman moved to approve the Treasurer's Reports as printed, second by Hill. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

Public Comments

Resident Sharon Pickles addressed the Board requesting a report on properties and legal proceedings. Mayor Serena reported that there is a court date of October 15 for one property and another for October 22, with one more added today. Ida Schopp requested that the plaque and light from the old water tower should be put in the archives. Mayor Serena said that we don't know where the plaque is. We were told that possibly the contractor who build the new one has it and we are looking for it. He also reported that he had the contractor doing the demo work cut out one of the "Gs" – probably a 3 x 4 or 3 x 5 piece of steel. It is in the shop right now and we are going to clean it up and put some clear lacquer over it and display it in the Board room.

Resident Dan Bell requested to hold his comments until the agenda item for train horns comes up for discussion.

Agenda –

The Gardner Fire District, represented by Brian Jensen, addressed the Board requesting financial assistance to purchase an AutoPulse (LUCAS) system, which would do compressions more evenly than EMTs and calls require three personnel for the at least 20-minute transport to the hospital. The device costs $21,280. They are requesting a possible allocation from the ARPA funds the Village is to receive which might be allowed under the public health portion. Mayor Serena said that we are looking into it but could not make a decision at this time. Comm. Hill made motion, second by Smith, to table the request. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

A discussion was held regarding train horn silencing. Mayor Serena reported that the train horns can be silenced but there is a procedure to go through. It has been discussed in the past. Before we would decide to do anything, there would have to be some sort of a public hearing to determine what residents want. Dan Bell addressed the Board, stating that when the gates come down, there is no way to cross the tracks. He said that the Board was elected to make these decisions. Mayor Serena commented that we could put it on a referendum for June or November of 2022. The Mayor and Commissioners Hill and Smith are in favor of keeping the horns. Sharon Pickles commented that she is not opposed to the horns but she was speaking for people in town who do not want them. Bell further commented that he had a relative killed by a train and the train horns remind him of that. Resident James Riley feels that the Board should make the decision.

Don Phillips addressed the Board at length regarding his experience driving locomotives and investigating train collisions, and expressed strong feelings about keeping the horns. Responding to previous comments, horns are either all on or all off, they cannot be turned off during certain hours.

Unfinished Business – No Unfinished Business was presented

Reports

Attorney Bryan Wellner – Absent

Comm. Hileman – Reported that the assessed valuation of the Village is $24,960,900. Industrial TIF is $607,878. Regarding the GFD request for ARPA funds, the Village is going to get $187,000; $93,000 will be received in about 30 days, with the balance next year. The Treasurer's Report shows that, for the first time in several years, we are down less than $1 million in the TIF fund. The water fund and sewer fund are not running good. We have been having problems with the EPA for about a year and a half. A few years ago some of the Board members wanted to bring the trailer park in. At that time the ponds were half filled and they haven't been pumped out in forty years. The solids are running high and we've been trying to get an estimate; it is going to cost between $300,000 to $500,000. The charge by the gallon to pump it out and it is 10 to 12 cents a gallon. If it can go into a landfill, that's alright; but if it has any chemicals we might have to go someplace else. We still owe roughly $200,000 on the water tower, $30,000 due for insurance, about $64,000 for the Sheriff's contract, around $13,000 for the generator for the water plant.

Comm. Smith – There are some old sidewalks in town that need to be addressed and maybe they just need to be removed and seeded. Mayor Serena suggested that he make a list to be reviewed.

Comm. Hill – Nothing to report

Comm. Wolf – Absent

Casey McCollom – Gave an update on the water tower. Grass seeding will be done next week. Mayor Serena requested that he take a look at the sidewalk at the water tower.

Clerk Malinowski – Nothing to report

Mayor Serena – To revisit the train horn issue, he has received many comments and is willing to listen to other points of view, but he is against silencing the horns. He said he would hate to have anyone get injured by a train.

At 8:00 p.m. Comm. Hileman made motion to enter into executive session pursuant to 5ILCS120/2(c)(1) of The Open Meetings Act, second by Smith. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

At 8:55 p.m. Comm. Hileman made motion to reconvene, second by Smith Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Smith, Wolf, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

Maintenance employee Dan Babcock attended a class for his license but did not pass. He had to pay upfront for his class and lodging, and requested some sort of compensation. Comm. Hileman made motion, second by Smith, to reimburse him for lodging, but this is a one-shot deal and Wiley Smith would get the same thing. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed.

As there was no further business brought before the council, a motion to adjourn was made by Comm. Hileman, second by Hill. Roll call – Ayes: Comm. Hileman, Smith, Hill, Mayor Serena. Nays: None. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

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Pat Malinowski, Clerk