

# Village of Benton

January 17, 2024

## Board Meeting Minutes

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**Members present:** Scott Cruse, Chuck Wartner, John Perkins, Jill Knight, Joe Slater, and Kenneth Farrey

**Absent members:** Cal Robbins

**Village employees present:** Sonya Silvers, Eric Mowry, Brian Hammill

**Others Present:** Michelle Savatski

The regular board meeting of the Benton Village Board was called to order by Village President Scott Cruse at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Benton Business Incubator Building at 244 Ridge Avenue on Wednesday, January 17th, 2024. In compliance with the open meeting law, proper notice of the meeting had been posted in four public places; the Zephyr Depot, Benton State Bank, Benton Post Office, and the Benton Business Incubator Building.

The minutes from the previous Village Board meeting were presented.

*Motion (Wartner, Slater) to approve the minutes from the regular Village Board meeting held on December 06<sup>th</sup>, 2023 after correction. Voice-all ayes. Carried*

Eric Mowry reported there has been a lot of hours spent on snow plowing. There is still a lot of snow to clean up and haul out. Scott Cruse praised the Village workers on the snow plowing and cleanup during the storms.

Sonya Silvers presented the board with an invitation to the annual Fire Department supper.

Brian Hammill has been issuing more parking and speeding tickets, trying to eliminate accidents in inclement weather. Benton was not awarded the grant from the New Glarus Brewery to purchase speed signs. Brian will travel to Madison on Thursday to meet with State Legislators.

### Committee Reports:

- ≈ The Finance Committee reported that three grants for 2023 were not received and will be recognized in 2024 revenue.

Scott Cruse has contacted Leland Felderman about his empty lot. Leland has been in contact with Sonya and the building inspector and is hoping to start a building this spring.

Scott gave some background information on the Welcome to Benton sign that is on Ryan Kern's property at 590 E. Main Street. The sign was installed by John Perkins and Jim Goffinet in July 2002. Since installation there have been five different land owners. As far as Village records show, there was no easement or lease agreements filed for the sign to be on the property. Ryan Kern has owned the property for the past couple years and would like the sign removed or would like the Village to sign a lease agreement and pay \$400.00 a month.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, Scott Cruse received a message from Ryan Kern regarding his property taxes. Scott and Ryan met and addressed several issues. On December 12, Ryan completed a sign permit application at the Village Office. He was issued a sign permit for his property at 590 E. Main Street for a Fever River Fitness sign on his property. The sign was placed over top of the Welcome to Benton sign. Ryan removed the Fever River Fitness sign within the hour. Ryan then presented the Village with a lease agreement for the Welcome to Benton sign. The lease agreement was placed on the agenda and Scott invited Ryan to come to the Village Board meeting and address the board. Ryan stated he would not be able to attend the meeting. Scott then invited Ryan to meet with the Street Committee or to have a one on one with Scott. On January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Ryan texted Scott and emailed all the board members listing issues and concerns regarding property taxes in the Village, house assessments done by the Village hired assessor, the Welcome to Benton sign needing to be updated and maintained, and to have something done with the speed sign on his property.

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The lease agreement was presented to the board in the board packet and discussion was held. The board will decline the lease agreement as presented.

***Motion (Knight, Farrey) to approve declining the lease presented from Ryan Kern for the Welcome to Benton sign to remain at 590 E. Main Street. Roll-all ayes. Carried***

Discussion was held regarding options to remove the sign and to place it at a new location. The Park Committee will discuss new relocation options. Scott will speak to attorney Eileen Brownlee about the electric on the property.

***Motion (Perkins, Wartner) to approve the removal of the Welcome to Benton sign at 590 E. Main Street with the possibility of relocating when the weather permits. Roll-all ayes. Carried***

The updated contract from Vierbircher to work with the Village for project funding was presented to the board.

***Motion (Farrey, Perkins) to approve the contract to work with Vierbircher to obtain funding for the Main Street water main project. Roll-all ayes. Carried***

Michelle Savatski updated the board on funding for the community center. Currently, there is a non-state grant for capital projects and the Village qualifies. The grant will be submitted in the amount of \$300,000.00. The grant is a matching grant and the Village will need to pass a resolution of support for the non-state grant. The resolution was also submitted to attorney Eileen Brownlee for edits and suggestions.

Resolution #2024-01 support for application of the non-state grant fund was presented to the board.

***Motion (Knight, Slater) to approve resolution #2024-01 support for application of the non-state grant funds as presented. Roll-all ayes. Carried***

Pay the claims against the Village.

***Motion (Wartner, Farrey) to pay the claims against the Village. Voice-all ayes. Carried***

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

***Motion (Perkins, Wartner) to adjourn. Voice-all ayes. Carried***