

COLON VILLAGE COUNCIL

Village Hall

REGULAR MEETING – February 8, 2022

Meeting Call to Order: at 7:00pm – Pledge of Allegiance was spoken.

Present: Dick Delp, Eddie LeBoeuf, Marilyn McManus, Michael Malmborg, Linda Norton, Jodi Gross, Sharon Craun.

Also Present: Chief Mark Brinkert, Billi Farrand, Matt Barrett, RA Kuhlmann, Kurt Kuhlmann, Tom Tenney, Matt Overholt, Ed Bell, Carol Richie, Julie Dekker, David Senkewitz, Isaiah and Darla Danberry, AFLAC Rob Parsons, and Christie Yonkers.

Approve Consent Agenda-

1. Approval of Agenda – J. Gross made a motion to approve the agenda with the following additions: *Old Business; g. Covid Policy. New Business: Add i. Bob Brown’s Farrand Property, e. Bike Event, g. Fire Department Budget Remove b. Postage Machine & h Cost of Living Increase.* Seconded by L. Norton. Motion passed.
2. M. McManus made a motion to approve the January 11, 2022 regular minutes, and payment of January 2022 bills in the amount of \$31,666.94 and payroll in the amount of \$72,712.05. Seconded by L. Norton. The motion passed.

Public Comment:

1. Tom Tenney talked about MSU funding from the Branch County Community Foundation. He mentioned the December 2021 minutes on how it was all over the place. How this was guarantee and a verbal agreement, there were two foundations. The foundations were going to pay for the first two installments. At one point they were going to pay the whole thing ect. Eddie said it was hinted. Tom said there was really no guarantee on the funding. It went through the Branch County Community Foundation, but it had to come back because the grant or asking for the funding comes from the Colon Foundation. That did not take place until January 13, 2022. The Colon Foundation voted on it, and it was for the first installment. The first installment is for \$2,500.00, which needed to be collected by March 2022. The Colon Foundation voted to do a matching on it which is \$1,250.00 in hopes that the DDA could match that amount. Tom was a little frustrated when going through the December minutes because this was not a done deal. Tom however thinks this is a great idea and hopes the DDA is working with the Planning Commission on this.
 - a. Tom wanted to know who the verbal was with. M. Malmborg said it was just a miscommunication between James Grey and himself. Tom stated again there was no verbal agreement between the Branch County Community Foundation and the DDA. He wants to see this go forward and the money is coming from the Colon Foundation not the Branch County Community Foundation.
 - b. E. LeBoeuf said that he thought this whole time that the money came from the Branch County Community Foundation. Tom said the Colon Foundation is part of the Branch County Community Foundation. If you receive a check from the Branch County Community Foundation, it is actually from the Colon Foundation.
 - c. Tom just wanted to let them know that when looking for money through Branch County Community Foundation it is actually the Colon Foundation.
2. Kurt Kuhlmann wants to know why the DPW is putting the snow on the frozen lake from the streets and the parking lots? He would think that would be against regulations. If you go down to Memorial Park Public Access, there is a ten-foot pile of trash snow from the streets. The Village of Colon is the largest land holder in the

Village and there is a lot of places they can dump the dirty snow instead of our lake. I hope that they reconsider dumping it on the lake.

Monthly Reports

1. Department of Public Works – report as presented.
 - a. Christmas decorations were taken down and put away.
 - b. Been busy working on snow removal and keeping up with the storm.
 - c. Well #6 furnace failed. Having a technician repair it the best as possible. Parts on order. We have two electric heaters running full time to keep the well house from freezing.
2. Police – report as presented
 - a. Council did not have any questions.
3. Office Manager – as presented
 - a. Worked on year end. W2's was given to employees, 1099's was sent out to all sub-contractors. All 4th quarter reports were filed.
 - b. Cost of Living increase is 5.9% as of October 2021.
4. Fire board – presented by Marilyn McManus
 - i. Pretty much reported everything for the January meeting in January.
 - ii. Next Fire Board meeting is February 9, 2022.
5. Lake Board – nothing to report.
 - a. Our first meeting will be April 9, 2022. We are in the process of filing out permits for the treatments of our lakes.
 - b. We did have a meeting with the county board about the E. coli. We do not have the exact dates, but we will start monitoring it and see if it necessarily to find out the source of it. Once that is turned over to the health department it will be their responsibility to take action.
 - c. Any questions our first meeting is April 9th at the Township Hall.
 - d. You can find out more information on www.colontownshiplakeboard.com
6. Planning Commission – presented by Kurt Kuhlmann
 - a. The Council received the new village zone map that we worked on to look at. Need to schedule a Public Hearing after the council approves it.
 - b. Take the current unofficial Master Plan. We have some updates. It will be on the website in PDF form for people to review. We want to go on March 1 during the planning commission meeting to have a public hearing to approve it.
 - c. The Master Plan is not just DDA project. It is for the whole Village of Colon.
 - d. Carol Campbell resigned from the planning commission. We have openings.
 - e. More discussion about the Master Plan. If anyone has questions, they can contact anyone on the Planning Commission.
 - f. State of Michigan mandates an update of the master plan every 5 years.
7. Colon Community Park – nothing to present
8. DDA Committee – RA Kuhlmann presented an oral report
 - a. Ruth Ann wanted to tell everyone that Tom Tenney is correct that they do not have the funds. The DDA did not intentionally mislead everyone. It was a miscommunication and I was not at the meeting where it was stated that it was a go. Looking back at when it was a go, MSU had accepted us into the program. That was the go and not that we had the money from Branch County Community Foundation.
 - b. We have a matching grant from BCCF, and we have to raise the rest. We are about halfway there. We do need an additional \$5,000.00 to complete the MSU project.

- c. The MSU project is huge, it is not a DDA project. I want to put that out there right now. It is not a DDA project, it is a Colon project. It involves everyone in our community. It is the foundation of the Master Plan.
 - d. DDA & Planning Commission are working together on this. MSU project is very important to the community. When MSU comes down they will have forums. Everyone will have an input on where we want to grow.
 - e. Everyone knows we need a Master Plan, the one we have is not adequate. It was turned down when it was submitted. They have tweaked it, but it is not adequate. At some point we are going to have to have a Master Plan done. We have the opportunity right now with the MSU program to have that developed. You have a group of people who are volunteers on the DDA that are willing to work through that program. To do all the work for you for free on this hugely important issue.
 - f. I apologize for the misunderstanding. We did not intentionally do that. I want to clear that up.
 - g. We are in the process of raising those funds. We have a donate button on our website. We have several fundraisers planned.
 - h. Its paramount that we do this in Ruth Ann's opinion. It will benefit everyone. The DDA is doing their part to raise money. She also thinks that because it will benefit everyone that the council needs to back them financially on this project.
 - i. Ruth Ann is asking the council not to exceed \$5,000.00 to finish the project. They have several things planned; they have the donation button. They have letters going out to different organizations and are talking to areas to bring this in. I don't think we will need the whole \$5,000.00 from the Village. Ruth Ann thinks it is important for the Village to invest in this. This is a everybody plan.
 - j. Ruth Ann asked Carol Richie if she want to add anything. Carol said she had a lot to say but she'll keep it short. She will start by telling you her thoughts and then about herself.
 - 1. Carol thinks this will really help the community. Emily from Cassopolis showed us what they did. Their community was welcomed in and encouraged and included in the process. Their businesses are doing really well. It really impressed her, and she thinks it will create great synergy with our village. All the group and all the people together and in the future, we can pass the baton and still enjoy it.
 - 2. Carol grew up in Battle Creek, MI (Cereal City). She was proud to be from somewhere that had a great reputation for being a wonderful community. Her and her husband moved to Texas, where they lived for many years. When they moved back, they choose Colon because her husband's grandfather took him here as a child. We had a vested interest. She has had a cooking show for many years and wanted to recreate that in a small town. The timing is perfect for it because of technology. She spreads cheer as many know that is my character. My passion in this village is solid. Right now, she is working with community leaders and finds herself in the middle of everything. Which is amazing. She is excited to share her gifts with the community.
 - ii. Much discussion continued.
 - k. E. LeBoeuf made a motion to budget for DDA 22-23 fiscal year not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the MSU SBEI. Seconded by J. Gross. Roll Call. M. McManus - Yes, D. Delp – Yes, M. Malmborg – Yes, E. LeBoeuf – Yes, J. Gross- yes, L. Norton – Yes, S. Craun – Yes. Motion Passed.
 - l. The DDA website is live now, www.visitcolonmi.us.
9. Blight Report – as reported.
- a. S. Craun wants to schedule a meeting and go over a few things.
10. Zoning Report – as reported.
11. Other committee Reports

- a. John Dobberteen (Mechanical Inspector) requested that the council adopt the 2018 State of Michigan Plumbing Code. S. Craun thinks that John should be here to present this.
- b. E. LeBoeuf said whether John is here or not we should prepare a resolution to adopt the 2018 State of Michigan Plumbing Codes. S. Craun said yes, we can do that.

12. Fleis & VandenBrink-

- a. S. Craun said over the course of the last couple of weeks, she has reached out to Tyler Sutkowi. He informed her that he was no longer with Fleis. S. Craun reached out to Fleis and expressed her concerns that we were never notified that Tyler was no longer there. She is in contact with Jeff Wingard. He sent an email apologizing for Fleis dropping the ball and contacting us. There were some miscommunications in their firm on who was going to take the lead after Tyler left. Jeff wasn't able to be here tonight. He was going to send one of his colleagues but neither one of them could make it. Jeff has requested that we meet before the next meeting.
- b. M. Malmborg asked when our contract would be up with Fleis. M. Brinkert said we do not have a contract with Fleis. It is work by work. If we choose not to use Fleis, we will just have to find another firm and get quotes from them. S. Craun said with all of our projects going on, we need to figure out where we are with them and then we can go from there.
- c. More discussion on Fleis & VandenBrink.

Unfinished Business

- a) Handbook Review – Personnel Committee.
 - a. L. Norton made a motion to table the handbook review until next month. Seconded by M. Malmborg. Motion passed.
- b) Sharing/Donating Sick Time
 - a. This will go along with the personnel committee reviewing the handbook.
 - b. E. LeBoeuf made a motion to table the Sharing/Donating Sick Time until next month. Seconded by M. McManus. Motion Passed
- c) Marijuana Public Hearing
 - a. Much discussion.
 - b. E. LeBoeuf made a motion to table the Marijuana Public Hearing until next month. Seconded by M. McManus.
 - i. L. Norton made a motion to take E. LeBoeuf motion off the table and to postpone the Marijuana Public Hearing indefinitely. Seconded by M. McManus. Motion passed.
 - c. E. LeBoeuf made a motion to postpone the Marijuana Public Hearing indefinitely. Seconded by M. McManus. Motion passed.
- d) Lease Agreement – Sharp
 - a. M. McManus made a motion to table the Lease Agreement with Sharps until next month. Seconded by M. Malmborg. Motion passed.
- e) Clerk/Treasurer
 - a. S. Craun said the Personnel Committee would like to recommend Carol Richie as Clerk/Treasurer. S. Craun asked if anyone had any questions for her. She also stated that Carol has been very active in our community. The Personnel Committee would also recommend that Carol is considered a part-time employee, that way she can help out in the office if needed when one of the girls are gone at a part-time pay rate.
 - b. E. LeBoeuf made a motion to accept The Personnel Committee's recommendation to appoint Carol Richie as Clerk/Treasurer and to hire as a part-time employee. Seconded by D. Delp. Roll Call E.

LeBoeuf – Yes, D. Delp – Yes, M. McManus – Yes, M. Malmborg – Yes, J. Gross – Yes, L. Norton – Yes, S. Craun – Yes. Motion passes

f) Covid Policy

- a. L. Norton made a motion to table until next month. Seconded by J. Gross. Motion passed.

New Business

a) Point-N-Pay – Julie Dekker

- a. We are currently using Invoice Cloud for our residents to pay the water/sewer bill and it has been a nightmare. We are going to change over to Point-N-Pay, which will save us and our residents a lot of money.
- b. More discussion about why we want to change.
- c. The Council thanked Julie for her research.

b) Ambulance Service – Matt Overholt CCFS Chief

- a. Matt started off by letting everyone know about the national wide shortage with paramedics and EMTs. Last year we paid \$11,500.00. This year with the new contract it's going up to \$24,808.00 The Village and The Township are going to come together. There is going to be (5) Nottawa, Centreville, Village of Colon & Township of Colon, Mendon, Leonidas. The cost of it going up so much and not having ambulances like we normally would because of the shortage. Normally there would be three ambulances in St Joseph County. Right now, on a daily basis we might have one for the whole County. We (Colon) have been fortunate to have our response time. With the cost going up, The Township and The Village are going to look at a different service.
- b. There will be a meeting on February 15th at 6pm with Pride Care. The five villages and townships are going to come together and see what price we can get with Pride Care. They were thinking about putting an ambulance in Mendon and cover the five. They would only be doing e-calls not ambulance calls.
- c. More discussion.

c) Township/Village Agreement

- a. In the packets is also the Township/Village agreement that is coming up. Lance Thornton had sent this to S. Craun with changes that were made. S. Craun forwarded it to the Village attorney for review. Our attorney was supposed to be here tonight to discuss this, he did not send me any changes or recommendations on his part.
- b. M. McManus has some concerns with the agreement. M. McManus is going to address her concerns to S. Craun. S. Craun will send them to the attorney.
- c. J. Gross made a motion to table Township/Village agreement until next month. Seconded by L. Norton. Motion passed.

d) New Water/Sewer Increase – Julie Dekker

- a. April is time to increase the water/sewer rate. According to Resolution 16-3-8A and 16-3-8B Water and Sewer rates will be adjusted to the National Cost of Living index each year not to exceed 2%.
- i. A 2% increase is .82 cents per water bill per month. In the grand scheme of things, it isn't a lot of money. Julie called different municipalities inquiring about water/sewer rates. Water we are pretty close with the surrounding areas. Marcellus's base rate for water/sewer is \$73.44, our base rate will be \$46.43. With everything that we have going on with the infrastructure, .89 cents per water bill is not going to cover it.
- ii. I think that the resolution should be worded differently to the cost of living. Like Billi stated 5.9%. Fleis was talking about raising the sewer rate 15% over a 5-year period. I, in all honestly,

think that should be done in a less amount of time. Julie doesn't think that putting a 2% cap on a water bill every year is feasible. The cost of everything is going up.

- b. With all that being said if we go up 2% in April for the cost of living, it will only be an .89 cent increase. Julie is asking guidance on which way we should go with this?
 - i. E. LeBoeuf said that he can speak on this a little. The Village has been looking for a little guidance too. We are supposed to be hearing from Paul Bristol USDA on our lift station repairs and get a final number. That is what we were going to base our rate increases on. We are being told to increase the rates and we are asking what the final number on our lift stations are. We haven't heard anything. Now Tyler is gone, and he was the one who was working with Paul on this.
 - c. Julie asked do we wait for Paul to give us a number and steadily lose money or write a new resolution and not put a 2% cap on it, do we raise it 5% this year and 5% next year? Julie isn't talking about the water, just the sewer.
 - d. Much more discussion.
 - e. Julie wants to know if she can get an approval on the 2% water/sewer increase for the April billing cycle.
 - i. M. Malmberg made a motion to approve the 2% water/sewer increase affective April 15, 2022. Seconded by D. Delp. Motion passes.
- e) Darla Dewit – Bike Event
- a. J. Dekker said she wasn't here, but she could speak about it. Darla Dewit went to the Chamber of Commerce back in the fall. She wants to have a Motorcycle "Bike" contest. This may bring more activity into Colon. Darla would like permission to shut down S. Blackstone from State St. to Mill St. June 18th, 2022, from 10:30am to 3pm. She wants to have a Motorcycle show. Darla has already talked to have Dave Wickey about bringing his BBQ Wagon up here. She has music planned in the Bordner Gazebo. Bring money into the community. Darla talked about going around to the businesses and having them print out certificates for different categories for the bikes. Something different, something fun. She is asking if we could close the road from 10:30am to 3:00pm.
 - b. Much discussion.
 - c. D. Delp made a motion for Darla Dewitt to have her Bike event on June 18th, 2022, on S Blackstone Ave from M-86 to Mill St. from 10:30am to 3:00pm. Seconded by L. Norton. Motion passed.
 - i. E. LeBoeuf want to make sure Darla knows there is no alcohol drinking or walking around with alcohol drinks.
 - ii. S. Craun she would let Dawn's & Tomlinson's know and Julie is to let Darla Dewit know.
- f) Aflac
- a. Rob Parsons and Christina Yonkers did a presentation on what AFLAC has to offer.
- g) Fire Department Budget
- a. The fire department budget did go up. One of the biggest things they have had were the fire runs. Matt stated that they went from 397 calls in 2020 to 523 in 2021. 80 of these were in September as a result of the storm. They have been running strong all year.
 - b. S. Craun said for those of you who do not know Matt Overholt does an excellent job at fundraising.
 - c. L. Norton made a motion to approve the Colon Community Fire & Rescue Budget for 2022-2023. Seconded by J. Gross. Motion passed.
- h) New Building – Sharon Craun
- a. Since we are working on the budget S. Craun became aware of the Old Colon Medical Center is up for sale. S. Craun along with a couple of council members, along with Billi & Julie went to look at it. Nothing has been decided. I did ask for a 2nd VPO. I've been given a name for a possible grant we may be able to apply for.

- b. Much discussion.
- i) Bob Brown (Farrand Rd Property) – Billi Farrand
 - a. Bob Brown came into the office and wanted to inform us he is thinking about selling his North Farrand Road property. It runs from the north side of the old Farrand Brick house to Brandt Rd. roughly 36 acres and thought that the Village of Colon might be interested in purchasing it. He doesn't have a price, but thought if we wanted to extend the lagoon it would be an ideal place for it.
 - b. More discussion about it.
 - c. J. Gross made a motion to table the Bob Brown property. Seconded by M. McManus. Motion passed.

Public Comments

- a) Ed Bell is on the County Planning Commission, and we review the application of all the Villages and communities. The Plan was reviewed at our last meeting and the recommendations were sent back to the Village. Its not an absolute, but it is highly recommended to follow the application recommendations. Because your plan overlaps the Township plan, your community, the lake, the lake association, future businesses, State Highways, and every individual in this community. You want to make sure you're not just looking at present but your potential. I hear a lot about potential. When people in an organization or a community, they are looking for is what can this community offer them, fire department, churches, police, etc... All that is involved in your Master Plan. Kurt Kuhlmann is right, you do not have to do it, but you should follow it. The majority that come through use that as good advice and go to work and resubmit their plan. The most important is the Public Hearings. Your public needs to know what you are doing. You want your public to support you and not work against you.

E. LeBoeuf said even though Doug said we didn't have to; we are taking your recommendations. They were good recommendations.

Correspondence

- a) No Correspondence

Adjournment – M. Malmborg made motion to adjourn. Seconded by E. LeBoeuf. The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Billi Farrand

Billi Farrand