

Grand Ridge Village Board
Minutes of the November 19, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Village Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Kay Hines at the Farm Ridge Township Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance. Trustees present: Jim Stricklin, Anne Hinterlong, Kim Olney, Dennis Rockey, Cindi Koetz and John Hettel. Also present: Village Attorney Sheryl Churney and Village Clerk Christy McGuire. A sign-in sheet was provided for all others present and a copy of the sign-in sheet is attached.

Minutes. Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024 Board meeting, September 4, 2024 Historical Committee Meeting and the October 2, 2024 Historical Committee Meeting; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report. Trustee Rockey made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented; second by Trustee Olney. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Payment of Bills. Trustee Olney made a motion to approve payment of the monthly bills; second by Trustee Hettel. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Public Comment.

1. Mike Harden expressed gratitude to attendees who came to the meeting to voice their questions and concerns regarding a proposed single waste hauler in Grand Ridge. Mr. Harden presented a petition to the village board with 99 signatures opposing the use of a single waste hauler for reasons of taking the rights and freedoms away from the residents. He commented this would be taking away the rights of residents to decide who they want to haul their garbage and their ability to negotiate what they pay for it and the village should not have a say in their right to choose.
2. A man commented he had questions regarding Ordinance 2024- 05 which was approved at the September Village Board meeting to amend the village code to update the village's water rate charges. He questioned if the charges were for a usage fee or a flat rate fee and questioned if the rates have been implemented yet and if they were tied to the cost of the water main that was added on Main Street. He also noted he agreed with comments made by Mr. Harden.
3. Alex Witkowski questioned whether or not the garbage bill would be part of the water bill and if someone did not pay their water bill pay would the village then be on the hook for that person's garbage bill.
4. Austin Walter thanked the Village Board for their time and participation in this subject and Mike Harden for initiating his petition. He commented mandating a single garbage service is a violation of our constitutional rights and affects property values by mandating a utility that we have no say in. It is Mr. Walter's opinion that a village wide garbage hauler makes sense if it is optional but if it is not optional it makes no sense.
5. Ron Wilson commented he agrees with Mr. Harden and Mr. Walter and he believes he should have the right to choose what service he wants and wonders where it would end.

6. A woman commented she agreed she should be able to choose who she wants as a carrier. She commented she has chosen to go with a small mom and pop place as she has had multiple issues with her previous garbage carrier. She prefers to support a small town company who she knows will be there to answer all of her questions when she calls them. She commented prices go up when there is a monopoly and then everyone pays more.
7. Wayne Cunningham commented he does not currently have trash service and does not feel he should be charged on his water bill for a service he does not use. Attorney Churney reiterated that at the last board meeting the board directed the Request for Proposals to provide the garbage company will be doing the billing and not the village.
8. Tim Koster noted he has a business and has not seen what the parameters would be for a business. It was noted by the single hauler service would only apply to residential users.
9. Joyce Bardson commented she wanted to confirm since the billing is done separately by the carrier if a person did not pay their garbage bill it would have nothing to do with their water and the water would not be shut off.
10. Pete Johnson noted it is hard for him to comment on something when he does not know what the prices are. He noted he realizes the trucks are getting bigger all the time and do cause damage to the alleys and roads.
11. Trustee Hettel noted having 2-4 haulers coming into town on different days is causing problems particularly with the large trucks and garbage cans on the roads. The goal would be to consolidate to a single carrier to reduce congestion and pressure on the streets.
12. Trustee Rockey emphasized the importance of price and holding garbage companies accountable. He noted having a contract in place would help keep companies responsible especially considering the community's dissatisfaction with frequent price increases. He acknowledged that reaching this point involved extensive discussion and months of planning to get to the stage of soliciting bids.
13. Sharon Stricklin commented garbage trucks are big and she understands there are 3 to 4 carriers but the grain trucks going up and down Burlington Ave. and Railroad Ave. are also big and carry a lot of weight.
14. A women asked how the billing would work for residents who currently do not have garbage service and asked if they would be charged. Attorney Churney noted there would be further discussion on this topic later in the meeting.
15. Marcia Hettel asked about potential charges once a month to have one bulk item picked up and if that cost is factored in to the bill so everyone would have to pay for it even if they do not need to dispose of a large item frequently.
16. Steven Fulkerson commented he is against the village taking away his freedom to choose his own service provider. He believes when you have competition it can be used as leverage to bring costs down. He commented he does not want his freedom to choose taken away.
17. Teirra Fulkerson noted taking garbage trucks out of alleys means the trucks are on the streets more and expressed concerns over more cans on the roads which causes parking issues. She sees more cons than pros over the issue. She noted she is aware public comment is meant to express public opinion but would like to see more answers to the concerns expressed.

Travel Request(s). None.

Old Business.

- A. Discuss and Act on Purchase of Welcome to Grand Ridge Sign.** Trustee Rockey presented a handout with an initial design draft from Midwest Signworks based on the old sign, as well as suggestions from the village board. He noted he has obtained the necessary permit and rules from IDOT and has permission to install the sign on the state right-of-way Trustee Koetz noted the sign should read "The Little Town with A Big Heart" instead of "The Little Town with The Big Heart." Trustee Rockey noted a final proof of the sign will be sent via email for approval by all trustees and Mayor Hines. He will also contact Midwest Signworks to discuss costs for installation.
- B. Drainage in McBride Subdivision and Storm Water Drainage Water Line Connection Agreements.** Trustee Rockey reported lateral work and pipe laying for the project started today. Lemrise Tile Repair expects to have the work completed soon. It was noted payment for the job would have to be approved at the December board meeting. Homeowners are paying separately to connect to the line.
- C. Update regarding vacant homes on Poundstone Ave.** Attorney Churney reported one of the property owners on Poundstone Ave. has committed to addressing the issues over the next two months. We will monitor the situation to ensure the owner follows through. The second property owner has not responded. It was noted the property was bought at a tax sale. Attorney Churney will conduct further investigation and provide an update at the December meeting. The board directed Ms. Churney to send a letter to the owner of 160 Main Street.
- D. 2024 Tax Levy.** Attorney Churney reported the Equalized Assessed Evaluation ("EAV") from the county supervisor of assessments has been received. The EAV continues to rise, which is positive. The rising EAV helps lower the tax rate. The estimated tax rate is 87¢ per \$100 of assessed evaluation. Attorney Churney noted this is the lowest it has been in ten years. Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to approve the 2024 Tax Levy Ordinance (Ord., No 2024-07) as presented; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- E. Open Bids For Residential Garbage Service.** Two bids were received for residential garbage service. **Bid#1** from Waste Management which included their bid bond and one 96 gallon cart for \$20.50 per month with an annual 5% increases. It was noted an additional cart is available at a cost of \$4.00 per month. **Bid #2** from Republic Services as follows:
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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>3 Year contract</u> | <u>5 Year contract</u> |
| Year one - \$28.00/month | Year one - \$26.50/month |
| Year two - \$29.40/month | Year two - \$27.83/month |
| Year three - \$30.87/month | Year three - \$29.22/month |
| | Year four - \$30.68/month |
| | Year five - \$32.21/month |

A 95/96 gallon company cart is provided, a second cart is available from Republic Services at a cost of \$4.50 per month.

Bids are based on 120 residents. Bids did not include a discounts for veterans or seniors. It would be up to the village board who could opt out of the agreement.

The village will hold a "town hall" meeting on Tuesday, December 3rd at 7 p.m. at the Farm Ridge Hall to give residents an opportunity to have questions answered by the two garbage carriers who submitted bids.

- F. **Revisions to Chapter 53 of the Village Code concerning Garbage and Recycling.** Attorney Churney discussed proposed revisions to Chapter 53 of the Village Code concerning garbage. The draft ordinance provides the village would not be responsible for garbage billing; definitions have been added to match the request for proposal and eventual contract; totes and containers to be used will need to be those provided by the garbage hauler. Additional language was added prohibiting dumping on public property. It also specified only the hauler that has the contract can provide residential service within the village. Residential users use the service unless they get an exemption from the village. The current draft provides exemption requests would need to be sent to the village clerk and would need to be voted on by the village board. The draft ordinance remains subject to change.

New Business.

- A. **OSF Hospital update by Dr. Manigold.** The update was postponed until the December Village Board meeting.

Engineers Report. None.

Committee Report. No reports by Finance, Insurance, Building Permit, or Health/Storm Drains.

Streets and Alleys. Trustee Rocky reported he has scheduled a meeting with Conxus and they have a representative coming out on Thursday to look at an issue with a box that was put in poorly by the fire station and is causing the street to fail, as well as multiple boxes that are damaged throughout the village. He noted the village has experienced issues with Conxus not showing up when there are issues. He also reported a new storm drain came in for a location on Liberty Street and he hopes to have it installed soon. Trustee Hettel noted an auction is being held on December 7, 2024 with items that may be of interest to the village. There will be a special board meeting at 6:45 on December 3, 2024 prior to the town hall meeting to discuss and take action to authorize a village representative to place bids at the Merv Eutis public auction.

Water. Trustee Hettel reported the valves have been put in the pits. We received approval from the EPA to put the residue from the pits in the landfills. The village needs to find a landfill that will accept it and then Grand Rapids Enterprises will pump it out. One pit will be done this year and another pit next year. It was noted the water line on Main Street has been put in and the fire hydrant has been installed.

Police. Trustee Koetz reported Officer Pagakis resigned as of November 1, 2024. Jordan Risley has been hired. It was also noted the police department is working with Glen Cole and the state to get the REJIS system in service.

Park. It was reported water at the park has been shut off and the park has been winterized. Trustee Koetz will contact Mike Jaegle to have keys collected from those who did the park maintenance and mowing.

History. Trustee Hettel reported the pancake breakfast held in November went very well. A Christmas Walk will be held on December 7th and tickets can be purchased through members of the Historical Society. It was noted the Historical Society continues to work on confirming the location where the veterans monument will be placed.

Ad hoc Long-Range Planning. No report.

Mayor's Report. No report.


Correspondence. None.

Adjournment. Trustee Koetz made a motion to adjourn; second by Trustee Olney. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Christy McGuire, Village Clerk

*Approved by the Board of Trustees
on December 17, 2024*


Christy McGuire, Village Clerk

Sign-in Sheet

November 19, 2024

Village Of Grand Ridge Board Mtg.

First Name	Last Name
Tim	Hunterling
Cathy	Cole
Chen	Cole
Stephanie	Uricotz
Mike Harden	Harden
Martha	Harden
Sharon	Ashley
Judy	Ashley
Maria	Cole
DPH	Schmitt
Jill	Dickson
Carrie	Scribby
Jenna	Boyd
Jacque	Fairbanks
ZACK	HARVEY
Tim	Koster
Mary	Cummins
Zach	Kenderson
Jim	Patt
Nastasha	Morris
Kelly	Hersted
Johanna	Cates
Anita	Walter
Ron	Wilson
Terina	Fulkerson
Steven	Fulkerson
Holly	Koster
Nick	HETTEL