

Grand Ridge Village Board
Minutes of the January 28, 2025, 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, Village Clerk Christy McGuire and Police Chief Josh Jabczynski. 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 December 17, 2024 Village Board Meeting, the October 30, 2024 Long Range Planning Committee Meeting, the December 4, 2024 Historic Committee Meeting and the January 16, 2025 Park Committee Meeting; second by Trustee Hettel. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

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

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

Mayor Hines addressed those in attendance to express her apologies over miscommunication regarding the start date for Waste Management to begin service. She explained Waste Management containers will be delivered tomorrow to all locations. For those whose opt-out requests are approved by the Village Board, Waste Management will then pick up the container. She noted Waste Management will begin garbage pick-up on Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

Public Comment.

1. Ron Wilson commented he had questions regarding the start date for garbage pick-up. He understood service would begin on April 1st and noted he had already paid his bill through that date. Mayor Hines clarified that Waste Management will begin garbage pick-up starting the first Tuesday in February and noted that anyone who has paid their bill in advance to another carrier should be receiving a reimbursement. Mr. Wilson further commented he believed this matter could have been handled more effectively if it had been put to a referendum for public decision.
2. JoDanna Oates commented she had concerns regarding the decision-making process and communication surrounding the new garbage pick-up contract. She noted she had reviewed the contract which states it is set to begin on April 1, 2025 and questioned whether it would be rewritten. Additionally, Ms. Oates emphasized the importance of full board involvement in major decisions, rather than decisions being made by one individual. She stated while the Mayor may have executive authority, the entire board was elected to represent the community and should be involved in decision-making processes. She also commented that when decisions such as the garbage contract are made, a clear timeline for public notification should be established immediately. She pointed out that since the board voted on this issue in December, there was ample time to notify the public through an official letter, reducing confusion and frustration. Ms. Oates stressed that shared decision-making would help ensure transparency, accountability, and better communication with the public. She stated that board-wide involvement in such matters would allow residents to direct their concerns to multiple

representatives rather than a single individual, reducing undue pressure on the mayor. Mayor Hines responded by reiterating that the board was aware of the decision and confirmed that residents who paid in advance would receive a refund.

3. Jim Hinterlong raised a concern that the contract up for approval does not seem to mirror the request for proposals that was published in the paper. He stated this contract should not be signed tonight particularly because there are things in the contract that were not in the RFP.
4. Steven Fulkerson thanked Trustee Hinterlong and Trustee Stricklin for their commitment to residents and for wanting April 1st or the next election to be the time for us as a community to decide this issue. He also thanked Mike Harden for his efforts in submitting a petition to the village board to help the community voice their concerns on this matter. Mr. Fulkerson thanked Mayor Hines for taking the time to speak with him on the phone even if they did not agree on everything discussed. He noted that there were discrepancies between what was said on the phone and what was communicated in writing regarding when Waste Management would begin services. He also believes he has the right to use Michael's Disposal for his garbage service for the next two months and that other residents have this same right.
5. A Woman commented that when she came to the meeting in December it was her understanding that the village wanted to switch to one garbage hauler due to concerns over the roads and alleys. She asked to be exempt from the services since she lives on the north side past the school on Route 23 and that due to her unique location the garbage trucks would not be using side roads or affecting the infrastructure that the policy was meant to protect. She also expressed concerns over the garbage company potentially coming into her property and causing damage to her gravel driveway and trees. Mayor Hines noted that she had recently spoke to this resident and had a note to discuss this at a time during tonight's meeting when the board discusses opt-out requests.
6. Teirra Fulkerson questioned if the ordinance would be changing. Attorney Churney noted that the ordinance is changing and that the revised resolution reflects a February 1st start date. Ms. Fulkerson also commented that there should be an allowance for current garbage haulers to be in town past the February 1st date to complete their final collections before the transition takes full effect.
7. Cathy Cole commented that she would like clarification on whether existing services will be honored through their final scheduled collection dates and questioned if she had until April 1st to cancel her current service since that is what was stated in the letter that she received in the mail. Mayor Hines noted that the letter that went out in the mail has been nullified and we will be going with the February date stated in the contract with Waste Management. She also noted that residents should be receiving a refund for their remaining time with their current haulers.
8. Kevin Harden commented that he would like more clarification on when opt-out forms needed to be submitted and what type of documentation is required as proof for an opt-out. Attorney Churney noted that the opt-out form states that you must show a valid contract or agreement with another disposal service, such as a business with a dumpster in town. Ms. Churney noted that simply sharing a garbage bin with a neighbor is not considered a valid opt-out reason as this is what the board decided when it passed the ordinance last month.
9. A woman commented that she would like clarification on how many people the village has to have for the contract with Waste Management and what would happen should the Village fall below that number. Ms. Churney advised the agreement with Waste Management was for 120 residential pick-ups and if the Village should fall below this number that the Board could decide to deny future Opt-

Out requests. The resident also made it known that she did not appreciate how any of this process was handled and how it has affected the community.

10. A man commented that he is very annoyed with the way this process has been handled and hopes that the village will do better planning and have better communication with the way things are handled in the future.
11. A man questioned if he would be denied an opt-out if he decides to take his garbage to a farm. The Village Attorney noted that this would be up to the board.
12. A woman commented that she would like to know if an official notice will be going out. She noted that if she had not come to tonight's meeting, she would have had no way of knowing that the date was moved back to February.
13. A woman commented that she had 2 properties and questioned if she was able to opt-out. It was noted that she would be able to complete an opt-out request form.

Travel Request(s). None.

Old Business.

- A. **Discuss and Act on Purchase of Welcome to Grand Ridge Sign.** Trustee Rockey reported he is waiting for a progress update from Midwest Signworks. He noted final colors for the sign have been picked out and a partial payment has been submitted. Once there is a draft or nearly completed version, the sign will be reviewed and any necessary changes can be made prior to installation. Once the signs are complete, Trustee Rockey will discuss options for a new park sign with the company.
- B. **Update on Vacant Homes on Poundstone Ave.** Trustee Hettel reported the owner of the property at 225 Poundstone Ave. stated he has secured financing to begin work at the residence. The property owner contacted Mayor Hines on Friday and stated he plans to begin work on the roof soon. Ms. Churney noted the property at 305 Poundstone Ave. is the subject of an ordinance violation matter and court will be next week.
- C. **Update on 160 W. Main Street.** Mayor Hines spoke to the property owner who stated he was assured he would be paid for the property within 60 days. It was noted that even under an installment purchase contract the original owner retains legal title until the contract's terms are fulfilled. If taxes have been sold on the property the original owner typically has a redemption period depending on the property type to pay taxes owed, interest, and penalties to prevent losing ownership. Safety concerns were expressed over the building's deteriorating conditions. The Village Attorney noted that citations could be issued for code violations to pressure the owner to address the property condition.
- D. **Resolution Approving Waste Management Agreement.** Trustee Hinterlong stated she had some concerns about additional fees outlined in the final contract and noted she was not aware of the full breakdown of these charges. It was noted by the Village Attorney that the majority of this information was discussed by a representative of Waste Management during the Townhall Meeting and that the village contract reflected typical charges that are in other hauling contracts for other communities and there is nothing that is surprising or inappropriate about the agreement. Trustee Rockey made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-01-28 as presented; second by Trustee Olney. Ayes: Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: Stricklin and Hinterlong. Motion carried.

E. Action on Garbage Service Opt-Out Requests.

- (1) Request by Robert Bertel, 455 Sylvan Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (2) Request by Renee Durdan, 223 W. Main Street. Motion by Trustee Olney to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (3) Request by Alex and Kylie Witkowski, 740 Sylvan Avenue. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Stricklin. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (4) Request by Sean Maltby, 310 Prospect Street. Motion by Trustee Olney to approve; second by Trustee Rockey. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote with Trustee Koetz abstaining.
- (5) Request by Emma Koetz, 300 Prospect Street. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Olney. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote with Trustee Koetz abstaining.
- (6) Request by Kelly Harsted, 305 W. Washington Street. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Olney. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (7) Request by Hunter Sutton, 225 W. Liberty Street. Motion by Trustee Hettel to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (8) Request by John and Michelle Sutton, 300 Burlington Avenue. Motion by Trustee Olney to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (9) Request by Lane and Bianca Barbier, 320 Burlington Avenue. Motion by Trustee Hettel to approve; second by Trustee Olney. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (10) Request by Austin and Sierra Walter, 135 Parkway Street. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Olney. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (11) Request by Christopher and Paula McGill, 212 Finley Circle. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (12) Request by Bob Buckley, 325 Sylvan Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to deny; second by Trustee Stricklin. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote. The Board will consider a new request from Mr. Buckley if he has a dumpster in connection with his moving from the house.
- (13) Request by Donald Trager, 640 Sylvan Avenue and 145 Porter Avenue. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (14) Request by Carter Gualandri, 230 Pavilion Street. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (15) Request by Vicki Redman, 440 Burlington Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to deny; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (16) Request by Grand Ridge UMC. No action needed on this request as the parsonage is vacant property.
- (17) Request by Lawrence D. Applebee, 105 E. Washington Street. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

(18) Request by Martin and Sally Ruhland, 125 E. Lincoln Street. Motion by Trustee Hettel to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

(19) Request by Judy Ashley, 235 Parkway Street. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Rockey. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

(20) Request by Beth McCormick, 455 Railroad Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to deny; second by Trustee Olney. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

(21) Request by Bonnie Gama, 325 Parkway Street. Motion by Trustee Olney to deny; second by Trustee Rockey. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote. Upon further review by the Board, Trustee Koetz made a motion to reconsider and rescind the denial of Ms. Gama's request; second by Trustee Rockey. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote. Trustee Koetz made a motion to approve Ms. Gama's request; second by Trustee Stricklin. Motion approved on unanimous voice vote.

(22) Request by Kevin Harden, 405 Porter Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

- F. **Donation to Grand Ridge PTO.** Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to make a donation in the amount of \$200 to Grand Ridge PTO for Trivia Night; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

New Business.

- A. **Resolution Approving Intergovernmental Agreement with LaSalle County (Main Street Improvements).** Trustee Rockey reported that LaSalle County approached the Village with an opportunity to include parking berms as part of the Main Street Resurfacing Project. He noted the Village would only be responsible for the cost of the asphalt and a portion of the engineering fees which would come to approximately \$15,900. The County will cover the milling and most of the engineering costs. Trustee Rockey also discussed potentially paving driveway aprons between the sidewalk and the new road, particularly for those that are currently gravel, however, further evaluation would be needed. The bidding process is expected to take place in March or April, and resurfacing is expected to take about a week. The goal would be to try to have the project completed before the town festival. Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-01-28A approving an intergovernmental agreement with the County of LaSalle for resurfacing Main Street within the Village of Grand Ridge and payment for work performed on same; second by Trustee Hettel. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- B. **Resolution Approving Park Grant Administration Agreement with NCICG.** This matter will be addressed at the February board meeting.
- C. **Resolution Approving a Utility Permit for Stratus Networks.** Trustee Rockey and Ms. Churney explained the permit request and work to be done. Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-01-28B; second by Trustee Rockey. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Olney, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- D. **Reschedule February Meeting Date.** It was the consensus of the Board to keep the February meeting on its scheduled date and to hold the February meeting at the Township building.

Engineers Report. None.

Committee Reports.

Finance, Insurance, Water, and Ad hoc Long-Range Planning Committees. No report.

Streets and Alleys. Trustee Rockey reported that Connexus has started the process of replacing the pole in front of the fire station. The contractor on-site acknowledged the original installation was done incorrectly. It was noted this area has sustained cracking and deterioration due to the vault sinking and repeated truck traffic. He also noted the Village is holding back funds from Connexus until the project is completed properly. The Village will continue to monitor repairs and ensure the work is completed to proper standards before releasing remaining funds.

Building Permits. Trustee Hettel reported no permits were issued.

Police. A written report was provided.

Health/Storm Drains. Trustee Koetz noted with the sudden changes in temperature she has noticed the presence of a sewer gas smell on Sylvan Ave. Trustee Rockey noted there was a water main break on East Main Street on Friday at which time a catch basin was located. He noted the catch basin was full and did not appear to have ever been sucked out. Grand Rapids Enterprises will be submitting a bill for the work that was completed.

Park. Trustee Rockey reported a donation letter will soon be sent to businesses, organizations, and potential donors to help raise funds for the park. A follow-up phone call will be made a week or two after letters have been sent. It was also confirmed the first \$150,000 of the \$300,000 Grant can be spent in advance, while the Village works towards raising matching funds. It was the consensus of the Park Committee to consider starting with a second shelter, additional playground equipment, and a walking track as part of the first phase of work. It was noted bidding for the projects could start as soon as the weather breaks. Trustee Rockey will speak with Midwest Signworks about the cost of making a fundraiser thermometer to display in a prominent location, such as along Route 23 to effectively raise awareness and motivate contributions. The Park Committee also discussed park maintenance and mowing services and noted they would like to not solicit bids for these services. Trustee Rockey noted it is essential to ensure the individuals chosen for these jobs are dependable and capable of meeting the Village's requirements. Park maintenance and mowing will be placed on the February meeting agenda for further discussion.

History. Trustee Hettel reported the Historical Committee has raised approximately \$10,000 towards the cost of a Veteran's Memorial. A location for the memorial has been secured at Grand Ridge Grade School on the corner of Main Street and Route 23. Additional fundraising ideas were discussed to help bridge the remaining \$50,000 gap within the next year to year and a half. It was noted that maintaining momentum is crucial to this project.

Attorney's Report. No report.

Mayor's Report. Mayor Hines noted she has received a bill for \$1,000.00 to renew the membership with the Starved Rock Foundation. It was noted that it may be worth reaching out to the foundation before the next meeting to ask for a report on their efforts and see if they have a plan to assist in the coming year. If they can commit to more active support now that we have a grant, then renewing might make sense. If

not, it may be time to explore other partnerships or allocate those funds elsewhere. It was decided to place this item on the February agenda for further discussion.

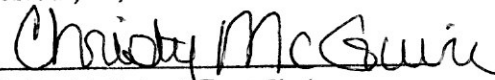
Correspondence. None.

Adjournment. Trustee Koetz made a motion to adjourn; second by Trustee Rockey. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Christy McGuire, Village Clerk

*Approved by the Board of Trustees on
February 18, 2025*


Christy McGuire, Village Clerk

