

Village of Winthrop Harbor  
President and Board of Trustees Meeting

**July 21, 2020**

Village Hall Council Chambers

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## **VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING - MINUTES**

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The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bruno at 7:00 PM

The following Elected Officials **Attended Remotely**:

Mayor: Dr. Michael Bruno

Trustees: Buddy Hargett, John Levin, Robert Marabella, Dana McCarthy, Hartmut "Fritz" Weiss, Alanna Whitmore

Also present:

Robert Long, Attorney  
Greg Jackson, Village Administrator  
Julie Rittenhouse, Village Clerk  
Michael Sheedy, IT Director  
Joel Brumlik, Police Chief  
Ed Mohn, Deputy Chief  
Justin Stried, Fire Chief

The Invocation was led by Mayor Bruno

### **ABSENT OFFICIALS WISHING TO ATTEND REMOTELY**

All Officials attending remotely

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1** - A motion was made by Trustee Marabella and seconded by Trustee Weiss to approve the **July 7, 2020 Virtual Regular Board Meeting Minutes** as presented. Mayor Bruno declared the motion carried on the following roll call vote.

**Ayes: (5) Hargett, Marabella, McCarthy, Weiss, Whitmore**  
**Nays: (0)**  
**Absent: (0)**  
**Passed: (1) Levin**

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

## **VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

- Have received communication from the Lake County Municipal League regarding applying for reimbursement through an Intergovernmental Agreement for the CARES Act. The Agreement has been reviewed by Attorney Long and will be submitted to the Board for ratification at the first meeting in August. This is for PPE equipment spent on the pandemic.
- Tomorrow Greg has a meeting with the new Superintendent of the Zion-Benton High School, Dr. Rodriguez just as an introduction.
- The 78 properties that the Village owns has been reviewed. A final evaluation of the properties will be completed so we can then decide to utilize or potentially put up for sale.
- Public Education documentation is being created for the upcoming referendum on the Clerk's position.
- Lisa Shaw, Greg Jackson and Julie Rittenhouse are working on the transition as a result of Lisa leaving. Transferring responsibilities over to Greg and Julie.
- Greg and Superintendent Nearing met today to talk about permit for right-of-way as it pertains to utilities as well as adjustments that would be required to the fee schedule. We will be looking at the fees from other departments as well.
- The Fire Dept. was awarded a Grant of \$4,345.00 which is a matching Grant. We applied for the Grant earlier in the year through ComEd and the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus.
- Attended first meeting since being appointed Local Government Director for the Land bank. We are looking at potential funding to acquire properties as part of the Land bank. We are looking at opportunities to take properties that are either in foreclosure or in distress and renovate those properties and put them back on the productive tax rolls.
- Communication with ICOP's regarding the Union negotiations. The first union negotiation meeting will be August 22, 2020. We will be formulating our counter proposal to their proposal between Greg, Chief Brumlik, D.C. Mohn and Mayor Bruno.
- The Appropriation Ordinance has been filed with the Lake County Clerk's Office.
- We are looking at companies that are interested in bidding on our Employee's Health Insurance.
- We are currently looking at our fee schedule across the Departments to be comparable to surrounding communities.
- Greg was asked to be a speaker at the Lake County Municipal Roundtable, which will consist of Mayor's and Managers throughout the County to talk about our response in Winthrop Harbor to the pandemic.
- We have an opening for a full-time Police Officer. We are under a hiring freeze so we will not be bringing on additional employees at this point.

### **Winthrop Harbor Pageant Proposals**

Administrator Jackson provide the Board with a staff memo and information from both groups with their concerns. Trustee Marabella said, in his opinion, the Mayor should be the person to handle this and it shouldn't be a Board decision as long as everything remains the same. Administrator Jackson clarified, this is not which group to recognize, but to determine if we

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should still provide financial support in the way of a Scholarship or waived fees for use the Village's facilities for the current group, the new group, both or neither group. This decision would be a Board decision due to the allocation of funds. Just asking for the Board's direction on the allocation of financial and facility resources to either one organization, the other organization or none. Attorney Long give a little bit of history on the pageant and how we got to where we are today. The Board decided all they were going to do is welcome them, thank them for their duties and honor them with a scholarship fund of \$500.00. All other aspects were handled by them, not the Board. Trustee Hargett said fundamentally, the pageant and the community service aspect, that it's had for years, the way that it helps to grow and shape young girls in our community, is really good. Trustee Hargett said he has always been impressed by the current pageant but looking at the new, non-profit group, it looks like they would be a good partner to the Village. Trustee Weiss says the way he sees it, in order for us not to be involved at all, including the Mayor, we should not recognize either program and let both programs run on their own. Let the people of Winthrop Harbor decide on which program they like. Trustee Weiss feels the Village Board should not be involved and we should pull the \$500.00 and not be involved at all. Mayor Bruno said since there were two entities, he felt the best thing would be to bring it to the Board. He wanted to allow the Village Board to look at both proposals and be able to discuss them. Trustee Hargett appreciates that he does bring things like this to the Board. He would be fine going the route that Trustee Weiss suggested. We can still bring the Queens in and honor them. Trustee McCarthy abstained from the discussion due to the fact his wife is part of one of the groups. Trustee Levin said he has no issues with either group. Trustee Whitmore said we have a very small Village, and I don't know why we would have two groups. If two groups want to move forward, I guess that's great. She hopes the two group don't have issues coming together smoothly. Obviously we will invite both to all events. If there have been issues with the current group, that's not for the Trustees to get involved with. Trustee Whitmore said she doesn't think this really should have come to the Board. The unfortunate part would be through Parks and Rec. because the Queens are heavily involved. Trustee Weiss feels the Board should be neutral because this isn't really a Village function. He suggested a cost reduction for using the Village facilities. Administrator Jackson wanted to make sure it's clear to the Board, for any Trustee to say that this should never have come to the Board, or they don't understand why this came to the Board, let me say, with no hesitation, there were members of the group who addressed me in a call on a Wednesday evening, who dropped the names of Trustees who they said were told to contact me about this issue. Administrator Jackson said he will do whatever elected officials ask him to do because that is his job. He has a difficult time sitting here listening to statements of absolution of, I don't understand and how did this get in front of the Board when he has heard from multiple sources, that Trustees have directed this to him. He felt an obligation, not only to that Trustees but to that constituents.

2 - A motion was made by Trustee Weiss and seconded by Trustee Levin to **Remove the Village from the Debate and let the Pageant Run Itself and to Not Recognize Either Program.** Mayor Bruno declared the motion carried on the following roll call vote.

**Ayes: (5) Hargett, Levin, Marabella, Weiss, Whitmore**  
**Nays: (0)**  
**Absent: (0)**  
**Passed: (1) McCarthy**

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Attorney Long asked about the \$500.00 that was budgeted for the Scholarship. Administrator Jackson asked the Mayor if the \$500.00, that would have come out of the Tourism fund, be removed from that line item as an expenditure. The Mayor said that is correct. Administrator Jackson will be sending written communications to both groups of the Board's decision and will include in that communication regarding the \$500.00.

**CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None Reported

**OLD BUSINESS**

None Reported

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Accounts Payable Warrant**

**3** - A motion was made by Trustee Weiss and seconded by Trustee Levin to approve **Accounts Payable Warrant W2020-6** in the amount of **\$208,279.35**. Mayor Bruno declared the motion carried on the following roll call vote.

**Ayes: (6) Hargett, Levin, Marabella, McCarthy, Weiss, Whitmore**  
**Nays: (0)**  
**Absent: (0)**  
**Passed: (0)**

**Fire Department Staffing and Equipment Needs - Discussion**

Trustee Levin asked Administrator Jackson if he would explain the information that was provided in the Agenda Packet. Administrator Jackson said, just to make the Board aware, Trustee Levin had a concern that as we continue to look at funding various functions going forward in this fiscal year, that we keep in mind and we continue to make sure, from a public safety perspective, the remaining needs at the Fire Department. Two things that need to be looked at are, age of the equipment and lack of equipment. Everything has been documented. Chief Stried has well represented his department and his concerns regarding providing EMS services in the Village. The bulk of the calls are for EMS vs. working fires. Paramedics are a priority for us. Chief Stried and Administrator Jackson have talked about a step program for purposes of retention of the firefighter staff. Potential of applying for the AFG Grants, SAFER Grants to hire full time firefighters. We would have to retain those firefighters or be on the hook for those costs up until that point. Eventually develop a model of Full-time and paid on premise firefighters allowed into the model. Eventually, unless the Village intends to find an alternate source for fire service and EMS, that is the model that inevitably this Village will have to go to. The time frame on when that will happen, remains to be seen, but it's inevitable based on the firefighter retention and firefighter training. In an effort to be proactive, we have to respond to this. We have also talked about identifying alternate revenue sources to be dedicated strictly for public safety purposes. Because of COVID, we have to maintain the status quo, but it still poses challenges. Trustee Levin just wanted to make sure this was on the radar.

**Acceptance of ComEd and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Grant for Fire Department – Total Request was \$8,690.00 (a matching grant of \$4,345.00)**

4 - A motion was made by Trustee Levin and seconded by Trustee Marabella to approve **the Acceptance of ComEd and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Grant for Fire Department – Total Request \$8,690.00 (a matching grant) \$4,345.00 to be reimbursed.** Mayor Bruno declared the motion carried on the following roll call vote.

**Ayes: (6) Hargett, Levin, Marabella, McCarthy, Weiss, Whitmore**  
**Nays: (0)**  
**Absent: (0)**  
**Passed: (0)**

**ORDINANCE 2020-O-13 An Ordinance Amending the Administrative Fee for Police Vehicle Tows – from \$350.00 to \$500.00**

5 - A motion was made by Trustee McCarthy and Seconded by Trustee Marabella to Set Aside the Rules of the President and Board of Trustees and Waive the First and Second Reading of **ORDINANCE 2020-O-13** and approve as submitted. Mayor Bruno declared the motion carried on the following roll call vote.

**Ayes: (6) Hargett, Levin, Marabella, McCarthy, Weiss, Whitmore**  
**Nays: (0)**  
**Absent: (0)**  
**Passed: (0)**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None Reported

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Trustee Weiss – Finance Department

- Thank you Greg for your insight and leadership. It takes a lot of pressure off of the Trustees.
- Thank you to all of the Department Heads for pulling together and doing all of the extra duties and helping one another. It's a real team effort and I'm real proud of Winthrop Harbor, Village Trustees, Mayor, Greg, all of the Department Heads. We're all in this together. I'm proud to live in Winthrop Harbor.

Trustee Levin – Fire Department

- Thank you Greg for helping get the document together on the Fire Department. Just wanted to be open and transparent with everybody.
- Thank you Chief Stried for your patience. It's nerve racking to see guys are working more than their share to keep the department going.

Trustee Marabella – Public Works

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- I believe our community is doing great because of what we put in place and what we are trying to do. Everybody works hard and everybody that's in the position they're in does their best to fulfill that.
- Public Works has been working hard. They've been helping Scott in Recreation.
- The Village Administrator has helped us a lot. It helps everybody do their job better.
- Appreciates everything that everybody has done.

### Trustee Hargett – Community Development

- A few weeks back there was a virtual town hall meeting for the Northern Lakeshore Connectivity Plan. They have now published their draft plan on their website: [connectthenorthernlakeshore.com](http://connectthenorthernlakeshore.com). It shows all of the connections they want to make from Winthrop Harbor to North Chicago.
- Greg, Pat, the Mayor and I have been talking about how do we recover. How do we continue with economic development after some of the challenges that we are in right now? We look at our roll as Government. Our lakefront is a huge success as far as activating a portion of our community. It was the Village that pushed to get the beach cleaned up. There's a couple of ideas that I've been kicking around for a while with Pat and a couple of Board members. Micro Retail. How do we develop tiny house sized shops that would fit within the Triangle that are very unique in nature? Grant opportunities may be available to assist. I have shared a couple examples of this with the Mayor and Greg. We want to get the actual parcel maps to make sure there is room for this.

### Trustee McCarthy – Police Department

- On the issue of the pageant, anytime an outside organization forms a partnership with the Village, whether it's an official partnership or an informal one, it is our responsibility to be aware of a number of things. Such as, is that organization upset, are they representing us well? It is an issue for the Village Board to monitor and be aware of.
- Thank you Greg for all of the work you did putting things together.

### Trustee Whitmore – Recreation Department

- Thanked Tim and all of Public Works for helping Parks and Rec during this time.

### Mayor Bruno

- Harbor Shores Newsletter was just sent out. Thanked all of the Departments for putting together their part of the newsletter and Greg for coordinating that.
- Thursday I will be having my first Brown Bag Lunch in the Park with Mayor Bruno.
- Earlier this evening, I released a video addressing the state of the budget. It tells the public exactly what challenges we face.
- Thanked all of the Trustees who approved the budget. These are challenging times. It's important we come together.
- Thanked all of the Trustees for their contributions in unfinished business. Thank you for all that you do and all of the Department Heads that work with you.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

6 - A motion was made by Trustee Weiss and seconded by Trustee Marabella to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Bruno declared the meeting adjourned at 8:26p.m. on the following roll call vote:

**Ayes: (6) Hargett, Levin, Marabella, McCarthy, Weiss, Whitmore**

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**Nays:** (0)  
**Absent:** (0)  
**Passed:** (0)

**APPROVED:**

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**DR. MICHAEL BRUNO, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**JULIE RITTENHOUSE, VILLAGE CLERK**

**Note: This is not a verbatim record.**