

# APPROVED MINUTES

**VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
Village of Antioch, Lake County, Illinois  
Municipal Building: 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL 60002  
January 10, 2024**

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gartner called the January 10, 2024 committee of the whole meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:31 pm at the Antioch Municipal Building located at 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL and via Zoom.

## **II. ROLL CALL**

Roll call indicated the following Trustees were present: Bluthardt, McNeill, Pierce\*, Macek and Pedersen. Also present were Mayor Gartner, Attorney Vasselli, Acting Administrator Guttschow and Clerk Romine. Absent: Trustee Burman.

*\*indicates attendance via Zoom*

## **III. Absent Trustees Wishing to Attend Remotely**

There were no objections to Trustee Pierce attending remotely.

## **IV. Mayoral Report –**

Mayor Gartner recognized the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. He further provided an update on Grimm Road, the easements necessary to move forward with the reconstruction, and detailed the potential grant funds available.

## **Citizens Wishing to Address the Board**

None.

## **V. Regular Business**

**1. Approval of the December 13, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes as presented –** Trustee Pedersen moved, seconded by Trustee McNeill, to approve the December 13, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes as presented. Upon roll call, the vote was:

**YES: 5:** Bluthardt, McNeill, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen.

**NO: 0.**

**ABSENT: 1:** Burman.

**THE MOTION CARRIED.**

**2. Veteran’s Committee Presentation –**Mrs. Mary Dominiak introduced board members for the Veteran’s Memorial Committee. She discussed the fundraising goal of approximately \$500,000 to build the memorial. She presented the renderings prepared for the Veteran’s Memorial Park and the monuments included for each of the 6 branches of service. She asked the board if they had any suggestions or recommendations on the memorial. Mrs. Dominiak discussed fundraising efforts to include corporate, civic, and individual donations. She said the Board can continue to support the project, engaging and sharing on social media.

Mayor Gartner added that soil borings and pre-engineering have been completed, and the Great Lakes Construction Association and Boller Construction have agreed to assist with the project.

Trustee Bluthardt said he appreciates all of the effort going into the project. Trustee McNeill suggested working with School District 34 on their efforts to create a wall dedicated to Veterans.

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Trustee Pierce likes the eagle statue, and thinks it looks wonderful. Trustee Macek discussed involvement by others and hopes the committee reaches out to others to get them involved. Trustee Pedersen agreed with the majority that the memorial looks wonderful.

**3. Discussion regarding an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Village of Antioch and the Board of Education of Antioch CCSD #34 for the shared use of a School Resource Officer** – Acting Administrator Gutschow presented the agreement, which was approved by School District #34 at their last meeting. He provided an overview of the discussion which took place in order to primarily provide a mentor to work with students and school support staff while providing necessary security.

**4. Discussion regarding the Planning and Zoning Board recommendation related to a Special Use Permit for an Electronic Message Board Sign at W.C. Petty Elementary School** – Director Garrigan reviewed the positive recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Board related to an Electronic Message Board (EMB) sign at WC Petty School to replace their existing sign donated by the Petty Booster Club. He stated that the proposed sign would be 36 square feet, and would incorporate white or red lettering on a black background. This request also includes 19 graphics identified by the school they would like to utilize.

Trustee Bluthardt confirmed that this sign is not visible outside of the school campus. Director Garrigan said this is not visible by any residents, and faces a parking lot and unloading zone on the school's campus.

Trustees commented on the visibility, size, brightness and of the sign. Director Garrigan said the applicant has agreed to comply with all other requirements for an EMB sign in the Village Code.

**5. Discussion regarding the Planning and Zoning Board recommendation related to the final plat of subdivision for Clublands Phase 4** – Director Garrigan reviewed the history of the development, stating that Lennar Homes is working with the applicant to start construction in Spring, 2024. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended re-approval for the final plat unanimously.

**6. Discussion regarding a Hotel Market Study – Field Research Analysis Report related to hotel recruitment** – Director Garrigan stated that staff has been working with a consultant over the past several months regarding the recruitment of a new hotel franchise in the Village. Based on discussions with the consultant, it was recommended that a market study be completed. The vendor would conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Antioch market, and assess the style of a proposed hotel, locations, services, prices, brands and size. The cost for the study is \$9,000, which includes a \$4,500 retainer. Director Garrigan further discussed the timeline for the study.

Trustee Bluthardt thinks this is well overdue and a much needed expense.

Trustee McNeill asked if there were an option to work with the hotel directly. Director Garrigan said after several discussions, it was strongly recommended to complete this study in order to reach out to the franchise hotels.

Trustee Pierce would like to know the vacancy rate of the existing hotel, and if the Village is taking and initiatives to help them to succeed. Director Garrigan said the board may be able to accomplish both goals in working with the existing hotel, while considering the addition of another hotel. Director Garrigan said there is a very viable market for a franchise hotel in Antioch, and doesn't see that this study will affect the existing hotel.

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Trustee Macek discussed other expenses the Village has committed to, and asked where this is in the budget. Director Garrigan said this funding has come from the downtown business district, and other companies have produced higher quotes for the same service. Trustee Macek discussed sidewalks in disrepair that need to be addressed, and money spent on studies when the Village has other needs such as a new Village Hall, Grimm Road and Public Works. Mayor Gartner added that he was a part of these discussions, and the need for this study and report was required by any interested party. Trustee Macek said he would like to see infrastructure repair before this is approved. Mayor Gartner asked Finance Director Torres regarding this item and others, and if they could be worked into this year's budget. Director Torres said it is doable for this budget year due to other items in the business district fund that will not be completed, as well as other projects not being completed. Trustee Pedersen expressed the importance of moving forward with this study in order to recruit a hotel.

## **7. Discussion regarding a contract providing for the recruitment of a New Village**

**Administrator** – Mayor Gartner advised the Board that he has been in communication with the Acting Administrator as well as another potential candidate. He was surprised by this amount, and said this may be a possibility if discussion with other potential candidates doesn't move forward.

Assistant Administrator Ashley Eccles provided an overview of the proposal from GovHR to run a nationwide recruitment process for a new Village Administrator. She explained the firm's experience with recruitment, and provided an overview of the selection process. Assistant Administrator Eccles reviewed the different tier options available with this vendor, and the one-year guarantee provided with the highest tier option. She provided a list of other municipal clients who used GovHR in their recruitment.

Trustee Bluthardt commented that there is no more important position than a Village Administrator, and the next Administrator needs to be qualified and experienced. He thinks we need to use a source to get the best possible candidate for our town, and that this is a necessary expense.

Trustee McNeill asked for clarification on the options. Assistant Administrator Eccles said there is not a true ala cart option, but there are limited areas in which they customize their recruitment process.

Trustee Pierce clarified that the Mayor would like the Board to approve the proposal in case the other potential candidates don't work out. Mayor Gartner said he would prefer to save the \$25k if there is another potential path forward. Trustee Pierce thinks the Board needs to proceed with this immediately.

**8. Discussion regarding amendments to the Employee Handbook to include Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday** – Assistant Administrator Eccles reviewed the handbook amendment to align with other communities that observe this holiday. This federal holiday is an official day of service, and if approved by the Board, the village offices will be closed this coming Monday, and each year after.

**9. Discussion regarding amendments to the Employee Handbook related to a vacation payout policy** – This item will be placed on the next Village Board Committee of the Whole meeting for discussion.

**10. Update on 2024 It's Thursday and Kickoff Concert Series and other events** – Business Development Manager Mark Sural discussed the concert series lineup for 2024, as well as some newly proposed events such as a Shamrock Shuffle and BBQ smoke-out event. He added that there have

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been sponsors added to the concert series, so the expenses should be covered.

**11. Discussion regarding an Ordinance authorizing and approving an economic incentive agreement by and between the Village of Antioch, Illinois and Raymond Chevrolet, Inc. (d/b/a Raymond Kia)** – Director Garrigan reviewed the economic incentive agreement, which was drafted based on the Letter of Intent approved by the Village Board in October, 2023. The agreement formalizes the letter of intent, and outlines the incentives available.

**12. Discussion regarding an Ordinance amending the Antioch Village Code regarding the Loading and Unloading of passengers within the Village of Antioch, Illinois** – Attorney Vasselli presented the ordinance based upon the Village’s statutory non-home rule power to ensure the safety of its community. The proposed ordinance regulates bus traffic and the dropping-off of passengers in the Village. A mass drop off of people would require contact with the Police Chief and a permit.

Trustee Bluthardt asked if the fine structure of \$500 is sufficient or within parameters of state law. Attorney Vasselli believes it would serve as a deterrent, and is similar to amounts other communities have identified.

Trustee Pierce asked how this would apply to tour buses such as the sailor dinner and chamber events. Attorney Vasselli said there is control to allow for those events that have occurred in the Village in the past. He added that the Police Chief would have the final determination.

Trustee Macek asked what would happen if passengers arrived by train, and we are the last stop. Attorney Vasselli said the Village has no right to regulate rail traffic by federal or state law.

Mayor Gartner discussed the instructions provided in the case of buses arriving in Antioch.

**13. Discussion regarding the Village’s Social media Police and Code of Conduct** – This was a requested item to be added by a Trustee for discussion.

Trustee Macek asked the Village Board who would police the policy of the code of conduct. Attorney Vasselli said for the most part, relative to Trustees, the Village Board is responsible for enforcing the policy, not staff or a Village Administrator. Trustee Macek asked how far a sanction could go, and if it could include removal of pay or repayment of incurred expenses. Attorney Vasselli discussed impeachment or removal, and sanction through censure under parliamentary procedures. He said the Board can act to cite a violation of rules, but monetary fines are questionable. Attorney Vasselli added that a person has a right to defend themselves and to know what they’re being accused of violating. Trustee Macek asked the Board to put this on the next agenda to take action on a violation of the code of conduct. He claims Trustee Burman is using privileged emails and posting them on Facebook. She was sent a letter and has been asked to cease certain activity. Trustee Macek said she has used his name on her email, posted his business name, posting Village emails, and has started a Go Fund Me page.

Mayor Gartner added that numerous hours are spent behind the scenes related to this Trustee and the issues raised.

Trustee Macek thinks she crossed a line posting other businesses on her page to start her battles. There was a request from Trustee Macek to move this to a regular business item on the next agenda for review of code of conduct and violations.

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Trustee Bluthardt commented that this issue is beyond frustrating, time consuming and not related to Village business. He thinks it's disruptive at the Village level, and he doesn't know if a censure will improve the situation, but is willing to listen to other Trustees if they feel it is needed. He will need evidence presented in a way that shows what she is being accused of and how it violates the code of conduct. If it's fair to all parties, he will be open to the discussion.

Trustee McNeill asked if Village officials can block individuals. Attorney Vasselli responded that it's an issue still before litigation, and discussed posting public items on a private Facebook page. Trustee McNeill asked what the next steps are provided for in the policy. Attorney Vasselli said it would go back to rules of procedure and there are sections related to sanction of members.

Trustee Pierce asked the attorney if he is able to issue a statement of fact that laws have been violated. Attorney Vasselli said he is not a prosecutor in this instance, and if the Board Member makes the accusation, that Board member would have to support those allegations. Trustee Pierce has asked why outside authorities have not been made aware of allegations of illegal activity. Those present discussed the potential for violations, the investigating and prosecuting authorities based on the violations, and the capabilities of the Village Board in this instance. They further discussed first amendment rights and options available for discipline.

Trustee Macek said there does not have to be criminal activity in order to be found in violation of a code of conduct or ethics. He said she was given direction in a letter to cease this activity, and has not done so.

Trustee Pedersen agrees that the process needs to be fair on all sides, and understands the ethical concerns raised. She doesn't like sitting here discussing this, but doesn't know how to stop this, and made a plea to Trustee Burman to stop. If Trustee Macek wants this on the next agenda, she will need more information, a clear concise objective look at all of it, and then determine if there is an ethics violation.

Mayor Gartner said this will move to the next regular business meeting for a hearing on the potential violation by Trustee Burman on the Village of Antioch code of behavior and conduct for Village Elected and Appointed Officials.

## **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, the Village Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lori K. Romine, RMC/CMC  
Village Clerk