

APPROVED MINUTES

VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH
BOARD OF TRUSTEES – REGULAR MEETING
Village of Antioch, Lake County, Illinois
Municipal Building: 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL 60002
January 25, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gartner called the January 25, 2023 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:31pm at the Antioch Municipal Building located at 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL and via Zoom.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Mayor and Board of Trustees led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following Trustees were present: Pierce, Macek, Bluthardt, Burman and Dominiak. Also present were Mayor Gartner, Attorney Vasselli, Administrator Keim and Clerk Romine. Absent: Trustee Pedersen.

IV. Absent Trustees Wishing to Attend Remotely

There were no Trustees absent wishing to attend remotely.

V. Mayoral Report

1. Antioch Vikings Peewee Cheer 2nd place State Champions – Mayor Gartner recognized the Antioch Vikings Peewee Cheer -2nd Place State Champions with a score of 80.33. They had 3 first place wins at competitions throughout season. The 4th grade team is led by Head Coach Elizabeth Wilson and Assistant Coaches Heather Wickert, Amanda Rivera and Jessica Lipinski

2. Antioch Vikings Varsity Cheer 2nd place State Champions – Mayor Gartner recognized the Antioch Vikings Varsity Cheer -2nd Place State Champions with a score of 90.6. They had 3 first place wins, and a 2nd place win at competitions throughout season. The 7th and 8th grade team is led by Head Coach Alissa Francke and Assistant Coach Kelly Sheehan.

Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

Carmen Mereniuc, Antioch resident, discussed recent public comment and a public forum where a letter from the Village Board to a specific trustee is being used to publicly shame a resident.

VI. Consent Agenda

Trustee Dominiak moved, seconded by Trustee Bluthardt, to approve the following consent agenda items as presented:

- 1. Approval of the January 11, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.**
- 2. Approval of a Resolution authorizing the annual Easter Parade to be held on Saturday, April 8, 2023 – Resolution No. 23-03**

Upon roll call, the vote was:

YES: 5: Pierce, Macek, Bluthardt, Burman and Dominiak.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 1: Pedersen.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

VII. Regular Business

3. Consideration and approval of payment of accounts payable as prepared by staff in the amount of \$1,148,698.82 – Trustee Bluthardt moved, seconded by Trustee Burman, to approve payment of accounts payable in the amount of \$1,148,698.82. Upon roll call, the vote was:

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YES: 5: Pierce, Macek, Bluthardt, Burman and Dominiak.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 1: Pedersen.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

VIII. Administrator's Report

No report.

IX. Village Clerk's Report

No report.

X. Trustee Reports

Trustee Macek commented on the fence at the police department and asked if it's level. Administrator Keim will review.

Trustee Burman read the following into the record:

I would like to request that my trustee report be entered into the meeting minutes verbatim along with your letter to me. I also request that I be allowed to read my speech in its entirety as it is in response to that letter sent by the majority of the village board.

Your letter states that a majority of the village board feels that the current battle has gone on too long and cost the village too much money. This is not and should not be village business and this board could have stopped this immediately by stating so the first time it was brought up before the board. Your inaction is the only reason this has gone on this long at Village Board Meetings. To my knowledge, discussion regarding this letter never occurred during a village board meeting, meaning discussion never took place in front of the public. I believe that is an open meeting's violation. How and when exactly did this discussion take place? Who was present during this discussion? Before I receive an answer, please be reminded that "2 plus 2" meetings circumvent the open meetings act. The appearance of a secret meeting should also be avoided at all costs.

I would like to know exactly how much money the village has diverted to this non-village business. What is the exact amount? I'd like to know what that amount was specifically spent on. Was this board provided official documentation by D34 stating a breakdown of costs incurred by D34? We are separate taxing bodies, therefore the village would have had to request this information from D34. Did the board make these statements of fact without proper documented proof?

I am a duly elected board member with the same rights and privileges as you. I have worn my title of mother since the day I found out I was pregnant. That title is worn 24 hours a day; 7 days a week. It's a title that I will always fight to protect, whether this board wants to acknowledge or accept it or not. This board has no right to infringe on my parental and private rights. Each member of this board has one vote and one vote only and that one vote can only be exercised at this time in this board room. Our elected duties only exist inside this board room, not outside it. I have been and continue to be well within my rights as a parent and a private citizen. My right to protect my child from those who do harm. That is my right until my child reaches adulthood and can protect himself. The title of mother supersedes all other titles. Period. This board does not have the authority to tell me when my title of mother can be used or that my elected title supersedes my title as mother.

Not once have I crossed the line between parent duties and elected duties, and that is a fact. If I believe that a village ordinance has been violated, not only do I have the right to question it-it is my duty as an elected official to question it. I questioned the book "Gender Queer" being in the D117 library because I believed that violated village code. When I

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was finally informed by the village attorney that it in fact was not a violation because our school districts are separate taxing bodies, the conversation/discussion as an elected official stopped there. I was well within my right to question this as an elected official, regardless of public opinion.

Hearsay is NOT fact. It's obvious that this letter stems from hearsay and bullying, NOT facts. What other statement can I make other than the fact that I have ALWAYS taken these actions as a parent and private citizen? Being elected to my trustee position does not negate the facts I've stated and it does not remove my rights to act in this position.

Not only did the D34 school board president reach out to the mayor during the summer of 2021, she also reached out to individual trustees to complain about me voicing my concerns to the district as a mother. Those initial calls from the D34 school board president should have been met with, "I'm sorry, but this is not village business." Period, end of story. Is there a requirement for elected officials that I'm unaware of that states I must give up the ability to voice my opinion or facts on social media? Does this board understand that I went public with my concerns because the D34 school board president's first response to the first email I sent to her as a concerned parent was met with threats to my elected position? You should, because I told you. Does this board understand that the D34 school board president threatened my elected position in her email response to me as a parent? You've ignored it just as D34 has.

This letter states that there is no way this board can or will stop the relentless harassment, mental abuse, and discussion of non-village business during public comment. The most telling part about that statement, "or will". The village is concerned about MY safety? Really? Is this why the village has allowed this relentless harassment, mental abuse and discussion of non-village business for over 9 months now? Is this why the village has ignored the fact that I filed for a restraining order against a former elected school board member? Is this why the village has ignored the fact that I had an official letter excusing my absence from a meeting last month? I told our village attorney that I would provide both documents to the village as proof, but instead I was advised not to send them. Is this why the mayor felt the need to tell me back in 2021 that he felt that the school board president "had it out for me" and placed a target on my back after his meeting that the D34 school board president demanded? That's what this board calls concern for my safety? That's not a concern, that's ignoring the facts in the hope that this will be brushed under the rug. Actions against me have been based on nothing but hearsay, demands, threats, and bullying, not due process. Your solution was silencing me and adding a timer to public comment. Sorry, but that's not sufficient.

The letter also states that the village hopes resources, taxpayer dollars, personal and professional time will stop being diverted from other daily tasks because of this. It also states that I'm the only one who can stop this from continuing. I'm the only one lol? The village had the power to stop this before it even started by simply stating this was not village business, but you didn't. Instead, you fell prey to the relentless demands and threats made by a small majority. Why? All the village had to do was make a public statement at the board meeting at which this first occurred. You knew they were coming, you saw it on social media and you had plenty of time to properly prepare. You didn't. If necessary, this public statement should have been repeated at every meeting thereafter. You didn't. Five simple words, "This is not village business." It's really that easy. Village staff should have been instructed not to engage in any discussion of non-village business on village time or the taxpayer's dollar. Sorry, but personal time cannot be regulated by this board. It's very easy not to talk about something if you don't want to talk about it.

This board refuses to take a stand on the important issues facing our town. Not only in regards to the well-being of our children but also public safety. What happened to the resolution opposing the SAFE-T Act? I initiated discussion on the SAFE-T Act last month during my trustee report. It was discussed at great length at our last strategic planning session and the decision was made that the village would place this resolution before the

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board to vote on. That's not a waste of time? That's not a waste of my time? Is that not a waste of village resources, taxpayer dollars, and professional time?

If this board was so concerned with being fiscally responsible, why was the board presented with a \$500,000 gazebo imported from Italy? Why would this board even entertain the idea if they're concerned with fiscal responsibility? Btw, that price tag is deceitful. When all is said and done, that gazebo would be much closer to the million dollar price tag than \$500,000 due to the foundation and maintenance. Prices listed on separate line items do not change the final price tag.

Since this board has allowed non-village business discussion to occur for the last two years, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask the mayor and trustees if they actually support/promote these harmful ideological theories in our schools and in the town which they govern. This board owes our town a public statement against these harmful ideological theories being forced on our children and town. If you won't make this public statement, why won't you? You, not I, made this village business. If these harmful theories are not present in our schools, this board would have no problem with making this public statement. If children of this town ARE in fact being subjected to these harmful theories, it is your duty to our children to speak out against it. If this board and the village administrator truly want the Village of Antioch to be a destination, the biggest draw is an exceptional school system where ALL are welcome, not a \$500,000 plus metal gazebo.

My fight as a concerned private citizen is not damaging to the village's reputation. This board's inaction is damaging this town's and my reputation. The school district's are damaging their own reputations as well as this town's and mine. If what I've stated as a private citizen is not true, why has the school already spent and continues to spend so much money on people and companies promoting these harmful theories?

Confronting and voicing our concerns to the D34 and D117 school boards, documentation, and solid proof have proven that parents in this town can't get anywhere with them. They refuse to listen and they have discriminated against certain citizens of Antioch. They have made it clear that they will stop at nothing to silence anyone with opposing views, even if it means ruining reputations and lives. That's not democracy. That is not acceptable.

Trustee Burman asked that the letter sent to her be entered into the minutes and that her comments be entered into the record verbatim. There were no objections to being placed into the record verbatim.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Village Board of Trustees regular meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori K. Romine, RMC/CMC
Village Clerk