

**VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Harry Walder called the regular council meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Walder were Peter Doerr, James Bracewell, Ed Brandes, Blake O'Halloran arrived at the meeting at 5:10 pm.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

Brandes moved, seconded by Doerr to adopt the regular agenda as presented, motion carried unanimously 4-0.

**ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approve Village Council Minutes from January 17, 2024
- b. Pay Bills with written additions
- c. Approve hall rentals-
  - i. March 2, 2024-Grand Beach Potluck Group
  - ii. June 15, 2024-David Shubert sponsored by Ed Trainor

Brandes moved, seconded by Bracewell, to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**COMMISSION REPORTS**

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Walder informed the council that he is looking into overhauling the website and providing a separate website dedicated to the golf course. The company that the clerk and deputy are familiar with is called Square Space and they will have a bid for them to look over next month. He is also looking to update the internet and email for the Village as well. Currently we use Go Daddy for email service and The Tech of Southwest Michigan for our server domain/firewall. Bracewell suggested we get several quotes for these services.

Harry said the Village Attorney, Sara Senica, attended the Appeals Court hearing regarding the lawsuit against New Buffalo township and she had 30 minutes to present the Village's position. The Appeals Court should take three to four weeks to render a ruling. Walder reported that the Village has received an anonymous pledge of \$1,000.00 to refurbish the merry go round and move it to another space as a bench. Thank you very much to the anonymous donor.

Harry is meeting with the owner of the property next to Jensen Court this Friday. They will discuss the proposal to purchase some of that land from the Village.

Walder asked if anyone was interested in forming a Holiday committee to decorate the hall on all the various holidays throughout the year. Neighboring communities seem to do this and it looks nice and builds community spirit. Bracewell said he like the wreaths on the arch and felt that was adequate enough. Walder asked for any volunteers to contact Kim or Harry.

Harry asked the Council members if we should respond to the SWMPC request for grant funded projects we may have in the near future. The Council members said we should. Harry will follow up.

Councilman Blake O'Halloran arrived at this time.

Harry asked the Street Commissioner, Jim Bracewell if he thought it would be a good idea to form a Road Committee. Jim stated he has not really heard any talk from residents that said the streets were in dire need of work but if there was to be a committee formed, he would definitely sit on it and contribute to it. Harry asked that anyone interested in joining this Road Committee to please reach out to Harry Walder or Jim Bracewell.

#### **REPORT ON NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP MEETING**

Ed Brandes attended the meeting and reported that New Buffalo Township approved 3 new additional marihuana licenses. Bracewell asked if there have been any reports on whether Grand Beach will see any of that revenue? Brandes said it is too early to tell but that issue is being closely watched. Walder added that he asked the township supervisor, Michelle Heit, if Grand Beach would be getting any funds from the licenses granted to the marihuana dispensaries and she replied "no." O'Halloran suggested the council write a letter to the township stating if they were not going to be the recipient of any of those revenues that the township declare a moratorium on Grand Beach taxpayers. O'Halloran volunteered to draft this letter for Council approval. Brandes added we are about 3 weeks away from a decision from the appellate court on our special assessment and that may give us some additional leverage.

#### **BUILDING & ZONING**

Walder had nothing to report on building and zoning.

#### **PARK & RECREATION:**

Doerr reported that he and Harry met with the contractor that built the stairs for beach access in Michiana and are in the process of gathering estimates for repairs of existing stairs and construction of new stairs to the beaches. He asked the public to contact him if they see anything that needs attention on any of the beaches or parks and he will get it taken care of. Doerr added that the maintenance department is hiring a summer position to mostly take care of beaches during the season and would love to hire a local resident first, at a rate of \$15.00 per hour. If anyone has a candidate for this summer position, please reach out to Pete Doerr.

#### **STREETS & WATER**

Bracewell praised the maintenance guys for their work in plowing the roads during the heavy snowfall last month. The council said they did an outstanding job.

## **POLICE**

Ed Brandes thanked Creo Brewster for filling in for Ryan Layman tonight running the equipment for zoom services. Bracewell commented on the canopy/tent issue before the Planning Commission and as of the last Planning Commission meeting, they still do not have a definitive answer as to whether they are allowed in a driveway or not. Walder informed him there is a public hearing regarding this exact issue and other Zoning issues in April.

## **PRO SHOP & COURSE**

O'Halloran reiterated the number one task ahead for the golf course was the repair of the intake water line. Several of them met with Merritt Engineering to figure out the repairs needed and they got a lot of good suggestions as well as an alternative temporary solution for the course this summer. He will have more information for the council soon. He said we need to address options to increase the number of tee times on the course and he will present a plan next month. He is looking into replacing the various benches throughout the course as well as the designated markers for them.

## **SERVISCAPE REPORT**

None

## **PERSONNEL REPORTS**

**SUPERINTENDENT:** In addition to his written report, Superintendent Bob Dabbs reported his department is in the process of spring cleaning and looking at pricing for a new back hoe. He expects to also bring some bids for the purchase of new water meters and their installation to the next council meeting.

**POLICE CHIEF:** Officer Brewster reminded residents to bring in their packages as soon as they have been delivered if they can or arrange for a neighbor to do that for them as there have been reports of package thefts.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR:** In addition to his written report, Building Inspector Chad Butler stated things were still pretty quiet with 17 permitted homes, 8 of those pools. There are 2 new builds coming soon as well. Bracewell asked about the place on his report where it stated that the police stopped work? Butler said that was for working on a Sunday.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of Master Plan review period-** With the Planning Commissions' approval of the Master Plan as presented to them, it is now before the council for approval so it can be sent out to neighboring communities for their 63-day review period. Any changes will go before the Task Force, then back to the Planning Commission, and finally back to the Council for final approval. Brandes moved to approve the draft Master Plan to start the 63-day review period; seconded by Doerr. O'Halloran commended the task force for all of their hard work on this difficult project and said they should be proud of their work. He said it was needed and necessary and provides procedures and accountability. Brandes agreed. Bracewell stated he is not in agreement with this report at all as he feels it was more of an

interpretation instead of a report brought forth by a professional, unbiased opinion. He was in favor of hiring a professional firm and not having residents put it together, regardless of their background. The motion passed 4-1 with Bracewell voting nay.

- b. **Streetlights-** Walder stated that Chief Layman requested 7 new streetlights for Golfmore Estates. Discussion was held on whether the Village wanted to look into establishing a uniform streetlight standard. Some newer areas are without streetlights at all. After much discussion, Ed Brandes volunteered to research this issue and come back to the Council with a recommendation. This may be fall under zoning and therefore be under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission. Bracewell asked Butler if developers were meeting the requirements of how many lights and where they should be? Butler replied that currently, there are no specific requirements in our Ordinances which is the reason for the question.
- c. **Police Storage Box-** Brandes moved and Bracewell seconded the purchase of police storage box and new bed for the police vehicle at a cost of \$3,000.00. They asked Officer Brewster to elaborate on the need. Officer Brewster said that it is a container to store the supplies and gear that are currently just loose in the trunk area, they need one nice bin to get to their equipment quickly and efficiently. They have water rescue equipment in there, flares, vests, flashlights etc. Bracewell asked if that container will fit into the next vehicle the Village will purchase for the police department as they get replaced every 4 years. Officer Brewster did not know but would look into it. This motion passed unanimously.
- d. **Claire Sullivan Payment-** Doerr moved and Bracewell seconded a motion to approve payment in the amount of \$500.00 to Claire Sullivan for her work on mapping out the parcels in Grand Beach that were owned by the Village and the unbuilt roads. She did a beautiful job and they all concurred. This motion passed unanimously.
- e. **Signage Identifying Beach Access Points-** Doerr reported the Beach Committee has discussed buying very basic signage to identify the beach access points using the name of the road they are on as their access name. They just want something inexpensive and simple that will direct emergency personnel and visitors unfamiliar with the area, to each of the beaches here. Harry asked Bob Dabbs what he thought something like that would cost. Dabbs said if he ordered 13 3x4 signs that could be close to \$2500.00. Doerr moved and Brandes seconded the motion to order one sign at a price not to exceed \$250.00. The council members can then look at it next month and decide if they want to move forward with the rest. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. **Golf Cart Parking at Beach Access Points-** Doerr wants to delineate Golf Cart parking at beach access points with something discreet and small. These would instruct people where to park since it is hard to tell where a resident's lawn ends and parking begins. Doerr moved to approve purchasing Golf Cart Parking Signs for the Ely Beach access not to exceed \$250.00; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously.
- g. **2024 Golf fees and Golf Cart Parking Stickers-** O'Halloran moved seconded by Brandes to increase 2024 Golf fees as follows:

**Resident 9 hole**

Weekdays \$14. Increase to \$16

Weekends \$16. Increase to \$18

**Non- Resident 9 hole**

Weekdays. \$17. Increase to \$20

Weekends. \$19. Increase to \$23

**Resident 18 hole**

Weekdays \$24 Increase to \$26

Weekends \$25 Increase to \$28

**Non- Resident 18 hole**

Weekdays. \$26 Increase to \$30

Weekends. \$30 Increase to \$33

**Seniors (62+)**

Currently 9 hole is the same rate for non- residents and residents for weekdays or weekends.  
\$11 increase to \$14

**Juniors (14-21)**

Currently 9 hole is the same rate for non- residents and residents for weekdays or weekends.  
\$11 increase to \$13

**Children (6-13)**

Currently 9 hole is the same rate for non- residents and residents for weekdays or weekends.  
\$6 increase to \$8

**Resident Only punch cards (10 rounds)**

Adult \$160 increase to \$180

Senior. \$110 increase to \$140

(Still one free round included)

**New Season pass unlimited golf for one individual (non-transferable) \$1,500**

**Rental Golf Carts**

9 holes \$15 increase to \$17

18 holes \$20 increase to \$22

O'Halloran stated we have a very unique course with 3 blind holes and an unusual topography. We need to raise revenue without losing any golfers and his proposed fee increases will raise \$45,000-\$50,000. Brandes asked what the percentage of golfers was between resident and non-resident. O'Halloran stated it was 45% residents to 55% non-residents. Doerr thought the rates were still too low but thought it was a good starting place. Bracewell thought it was a 27% increase for the seniors and thought that was too much. Motion passed unanimously. O'Halloran moved and Doerr seconded increasing the Golf Cart Sticker fee by \$5.00. O'Halloran added we are still cheaper than neighboring communities

that have parking stickers. Motion passed 3-2 with O'Halloran, Doerr, Bracewell voting aye, Walder and Brandes voting nay.

- h. **Letters of Support for Short Term Rentals**-The Council received a letter from State Representative Joey Andrews asking for their support in backing the proposed short-term rental legislation that would allow the State to regulate local governments and communities. The Council discussed how this would benefit Grand Beach as we seem to have a good handle on our rentals and do not see the need for the far-reaching hand of the State wanting their share of our revenue. They agreed not to send letters of support.
- i. **Public Comment**- None
- j. **Correspondence** – Jim Bracewell said Frank Giglio wrote a very succinct letter about the proposed MDOT bike path and how it should be relocated to US 12 instead of forcing the railroad to put up a fence and Grand Beach to tear down their trees. He said it would also put pressure on MDOT to remove semi-truck traffic on US 12 as well. Safety should be their first priority.

**Adjournment**-There being no further business before the council, Brandes moved to adjourn at 5:50 pm; seconded by Doerr and passed unanimously.

Kimberly Wolnik  
Clerk-Treasurer