

**VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council president Paul Leonard Jr. called the regular council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Leonard were James Bracewell, Frank Giglio, Deborah Lindley and Blake O'Halloran.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

Bracewell moved, seconded by O'Halloran to approve the agenda as presented with an amendment to add "*Police Car Tires*" to New Business. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**APPROVE MINUTES**

O'Halloran moved, seconded by Bracewell to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of August 16, 2017. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITION**

**BRIAN POYNTON – AMTRAK RAIL SAFETY WEEK PROCLAMATION**

Leonard introduced Brian Poynton of the Amtrak Police Department who explained that rail safety week will be held September 24-30, 2017 to raise awareness of the many people that are injured or killed each year by going around the crossing gates at the train tracks across the state. Leonard read the proclamation and Bracewell moved, seconded by Giglio to approve the proclamation. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**COMMISSION REPORTS:**

**Building & Zoning:** Bracewell reported that the number of homes on the building department inspection report has been reduced since many of the projects have been completed.

**Parks & Beaches:** Giglio reported that the beaches are about the same with a little beach near the pier and at Lake Avenue. People are waiting for DEQ permits to allow them to install stone in front of their properties. The maintenance department planted nice flowers at the entrance and will also plant tulips there.

**Streets & Water:** Leonard reported that he attended a meeting about a concerted effort to connect a bicycle trail from Chicago to New Buffalo. There is a proposal to connect Michigan City to New Buffalo. They propose to run the bike trail parallel to the tracks between Grand Beach Road and the tracks going from Michiana Shores all the way up to Forest Beach. He is concerned that there isn't enough room between the tracks and Grand Beach Road, and said there is no interest in having a trail that runs through the Village. Amtrak Police Officer Brian Poynton said that their right-of-way is 50' from the center of the tracks.

He also attended a meeting with the city and township regarding the municipal water systems and explained that all of the communities' water departments have maps for their own departments, but there is no area wide disaster plan that would supply water to all of our communities. The communities do not know where the hydrants, water and sewer lines are located in other communities so they are working on a plan to create a GIS map with Wightman & Associates that will show the hydrants, water and sewer lines for all of the communities that have been meeting. This map will allow a superintendent to take over for another municipality if their superintendent is not available during an emergency. They will continue to meet about this and hope to have something in place by the end of the year.

**Police:** Lindley said the new trail signs have been installed in the 42 acres and reminded everyone to please stay on the trails. She also asked that adults remind their children that they must be 16 years old with a driver's license to drive a golf cart on the road.

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Leonard said people are still driving off the trails and causing damage. Police Chief Dan Schroeder suggested that golf rangers be put under the control of the Police Department so they can patrol the 42 acres in addition to the golf course.

Leonard said that that Chikaming Open Lands (COL) offered to assist with the grant proposal to purchase the 42 acres and if Grand Beach can't show that they place a value on that property, COL might have a problem working with Grand Beach down the road. At the last meeting Leonard said the Council would revisit this if the situation doesn't improve, and it doesn't seem to be improving. The Village has been formally put on notice by the owner of the land that it will be held responsible for any damages to the property. The Council will discuss this at the October meeting.

Pro Shop & Golf Course: O'Halloran reported that this has been a good season and up against a record season from last year. The brick program has generated approximately \$13,000, and the bricks will be installed in the spring.

**SERVISCAPE REPORT**

Clay Putnam reported that routine maintenance is occurring on the golf course. They've experienced four irrigation leaks in the past month. Greens were aerified and will be top dressed tomorrow.

**PERSONNEL REPORTS**

Superintendent: In addition to his written report, Bob Dabbs reported that Reith & Riley will be here during the first week of October.

Police Chief: In addition to his written report, Chief Dan Schroeder suggested a route to be used by emergency vehicles and residents while a house is being moved on September 28<sup>th</sup> from Royal Avenue to the Fifteen Acres.

Leonard moved, seconded by O'Halloran to put up signage and put the information on the website to say when the house will be moved and what route to use for emergency ingress and egress. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Building Inspector: Bill Lambert had nothing additional to add to his written report.

**PAY BILLS**

Leonard moved, seconded by Bracewell to approve the payment of the bills with the written additions as presented. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**POLICE CAR TIRES**

Lindley moved, seconded by Leonard to approve the purchase of new tires from Grand Beach Auto for the Taurus now and for the Explorer after November 1<sup>st</sup> at a total cost of \$1,355.28. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. A second proposal was received from Three Oaks Ford at a cost of \$1,028 for each car.

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**MITIGATION OF “PUBLIC TRUST” IMPACTS FROM REVETMENT AND SEAWALL REPAIRS**

Leonard said he had a conversation with Ben Zimont of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding the Denny and other properties that need work done on their seawalls and revetment. He said the people at the DEQ are having concerns about access to the beach with the amount of rocks that will be placed in front of the seawalls. Once the rock is in place and if we ever get useful beach back it will be difficult to walk the beach. Zimont asked the council to mitigate “public trust” impacts from revetment and seawalls.

Leonard moved, seconded by Lindley to mitigate the impacts on “public trusts” from the revetment and seawall repairs and that the Village will pay for building the stairs to assure public access to the usable beach when and if we get usable beach back. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**BACKGROUND STUDY REGARDING IRRIGATION SUPPLY – PROPOSAL**

O’Halloran said the Council has to be very cognizant about what’s going on with the pump house because we don’t want to be in a situation where we can’t water the course. He explained that the Village has an intake pipe in the lake that brings water to the pump house which is then pumped to the holding tank and used to irrigate the golf course. The question came up about what might happen in the future since there is a problem with all of the erosion and trouble along the shoreline. He said that if the Village loses the system, the DEQ won’t let the Village repair it. The Village has to be responsible, look at the system and have a study done on the integrity of the system today and how it works. There is a proposal for a study at a cost of approximately \$3,500.

Clay Putnam of ServiScape said that the first part of the study would be to try to evaluate the integrity of the current system. He said they might not be able to view the pipe because it was installed under sand and is under water. They will look at other data such as Long Beach who abandoned their system and tied into municipal water. The second step is to appropriate \$3,500 to begin a study that will tell the availability of wells and how much water is available. They would need to do test wells, but they don’t know what the cost would be.

**REPLACE FOURTH FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER**

Lindley said that Officer Keeler will retire soon and before he retires they thought they would look at numbers to decide if he should be replaced by a full-time officer. Lindley said that when working on the budgets for the last several years, we are working with a deficit of \$50,000 and have to start cutting expenses. The Council wants to continue to give benefits, and as you can see in the Building Inspector’s report the construction is slowing down so our income will not be increasing. She asked Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson to come up with numbers to show the cost to replace Keeler with a full-time officer or with part-timers. Lindley suggested paying \$20 an hour for the position. Using part-time officers means there might be some shifts that aren’t covered by Grand Beach, but they are covered by other departments. She would like to talk with Michiana in the future to see if they can cover for us when we don’t have an officer on duty and vice versa. She thinks we should try the part-time officers and if we have trouble getting officers and it doesn’t work out, we might have to go to a full-time officer. She said the Village will save about \$30,000 a year in benefits by not hiring a full time officer

O’Halloran said we have part-time officers now to cover shifts for vacations and illness. We have 24 hour police coverage which is wonderful, but we might not need 24 hour coverage and we can go to part-time for some of those hours and maybe cut back hours in the winter. He said at a recent election by a small number of votes, a millage was passed and the township is now paying \$900,000 for police coverage. The

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Village is part of the township and is now paying direct taxes to the township for police coverage and we should get that service. He doesn't want people to think that the Council wants to change things, but the Council needs to look at this on a fiduciary side and now is a good time to cut back. He applauds the officers for the great job they do in the Village, adding that it's difficult for them because they know everyone. He thinks it makes financial sense to discuss this when someone is retiring. We have a plethora of officers available for back up with Michiana, New Buffalo Township, State Police and the Tribal Police.

Leonard said there are times when we don't have an officer on duty and this is more of a budget driven issue than anything else. With the loss of beach from New Buffalo south, property assessments have been reduced and taxes will be reduced and catch up with the Village. The Village will have less tax revenue because of the assessments being reduced and that concerns him as he wonders how the Village will close that gap. When the Council gets together during budgeting they have been cutting, cutting and cutting because most of the budget is personnel cost driven and there is nothing left to cut, and most of our personnel cost is related to our Police Department. If things don't change there will come a time when the Village can't afford to have a Police Department. There are times when we have other Police Departments in the Village covering for our officers.

Lindley said there is always something that comes up to increase expenses. She said the Council is very prudent with their budget and spending. Long Beach has been sharing police services with Michiana Shores and Duneland and if we can make arrangements with Michiana for coverage between the two, we can start with that.

Bracewell said of 2,000 registered voters in the township, he thinks only 170 voted and there was only a 34 vote swing on the public safety millage. He thinks Grand Beach needs to have a discussion with Michiana and he thinks they are wrestling with the same challenges as Grand Beach.

Chief Schroeder said money is an issue and has always been an issue. He had a meeting with Lindley and he is not in agreement. He said it is becoming very difficult to get part-time officers and paying \$20 an hour might help some, but he doesn't think that's the answer. He is going to talk with the Chief of Police in Michiana who works part-time here about combining shifts.

The council heard concerns and suggestions from audience members and Police Officer Patty Mattson about the possibility of replacing the full-time officer with part-time officers.

Leonard spoke about the possibility of putting a proposal on the ballot to help cover the cost of police protection. He said that the state is looking to share services between municipalities and especially with those that can't balance the budget. He would hate to see Grand Beach get rolled up into New Buffalo Township who would then plow the streets, contract for paving and provide police protection someday down the road in Grand Beach. He doesn't want to see the Village lose control of what it's doing.

Lindley thinks the Village should try for three to four months over the off season with part-time officers, and if it doesn't work, we can still hire a fourth full-time officer. It has to be an honest effort, and we can try and work with Michiana. The Council will make a decision on this matter in October.

**COPY MACHINE PURCHASE**

Leonard moved, seconded by Bracewell to purchase a 1-year old Savin MP2852 Copy machine from

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Adams Remco at a cost of \$4,450 and to approve the service agreement as presented. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**COMPUTER PURCHASE –WATER BILLINGS**

Leonard moved, seconded by Lindley to purchase a new computer and Microsoft Office software for the clerk's office for the water billings at a cost not to exceed \$900. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**PART-TIME DEPUTY CLERK**

Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson told the council that she had 15 applicants for the part-time position and Debbie Lindley helped her with three interviews. She is happy to say that she found an applicant that is very qualified and has worked in a municipal setting for 7 years in the past. She has bookkeeping experience with limited Quickbooks use, and is experienced in Excel and Word.

Lindley moved, seconded by Giglio to hire Cheryl Cook as a part-time deputy clerk at a rate of \$15 per hour to work not more than 28 hours per week with a 180-day probationary period. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. The position does not include benefits, but the Council will discuss the possibility of paid holidays after Cook's probationary period.

**CLOSE OFFICE OCTOBER 6 & OCTOBER 13 TO ATTEND TRAINING**

Leonard moved, seconded by Bracewell to close the Clerk-Treasurer's office on October 6 and 13 for ongoing clerk training. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. Robertson will ask the temporary office employee if she is available to keep the office open on those days, and if so, the office will not be closed.

**QUIT CLAIM DEED – PRIVATE PROPERTY BEING USED AS PART OF SKYHI**

Leonard said there is a new home under construction at the top of SkyHi and there is an issue regarding the private property and the street used to access the water tower, and in order to avoid future issues, the property owner has offered to transfer to the Village a very narrow strip of land with a quit claim deed so that when the Village vehicles go up there, they are not crossing private property.

Leonard moved, seconded by Giglio to accept that part of lot 79 of the New Park Addition to Grand Beach Springs as described in the quit claim deed once the deed has been signed. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**TREE REMOVAL**

Superintendent Bob Dabbs said there are two trees that are dangerous and need to come down and two dead trees on the streets that he would like to address. There is a tree in the park and one along a cart path near a home that are dangerous and two along the road that need to be removed. There is \$3,000 budgeted for tree removal in the street funds.

Leonard moved, seconded by O'Halloran to approve tree removal by A&A Tree at a cost not to exceed \$4,500. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**LAKE VIEW AVENUE ONE-WAY DISCUSSION**

Giglio told the council that several people asked him about keeping Lake View Avenue as a one-way street year around so he sent out a survey on a card to 150 people living on Lake View and all adjoining streets . He received 117 cards back with 50 yes, 61 no and 6 didn't care. No action was taken by the Council.

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**HALL RENTAL CONTRACT REVISION**

Leonard explained that there was a wedding reception on Saturday and a few days before the wedding Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson contacted him after she learned that they were going to put a tent up and have a live band on the patio and she told them that it wasn't allowed. Leonard looked at the contract and it doesn't prohibit playing music outside of the hall and technically we couldn't stop them and the music was very loud. Leonard and Robertson came to a mutual decision to amend the contract so there would be no music played outside the hall again unless the council approved it such as during Family Fest. Robertson included language from the anti-noise ordinance in the contract.

Leonard moved, seconded by Giglio to approve the changes to the Hall Rental Contract as presented that include a blanket provision against outdoor music whether recorded or live with the addition that all music, recorded or live is to be shut down at 1:00 a.m. EST. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**AUTHORIZED BANK SIGNATURES**

Clerk-Treasurer Mary Robertson asked the Council to add James Bracewell to the bank signature cards since it is sometimes difficult to find someone to sign checks. The Council agreed to add Bracewell to the signature cards.

**AUDIENCE RECOGNITION**

Ed Sebastian said that he spoke with O'Halloran and Robertson earlier and sent a note to Giglio and O'Halloran about painting lines on the basketball courts for pickleball. They are willing to find funding for the painting and don't expect the Village to cover the expense.

Giglio moved, seconded by O'Halloran to paint lines on the basketball court for pickleball use. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**MICHAEL STOKES – FUNDING SUGGESTION FOR PURCHASE OF 42 ACRES**

Leonard said we will have a meeting regarding our grant proposal to the DNR in October. At that point in time we can talk about funding suggestions. He said he appreciates Mr. Stokes bringing the funding suggestion to their attention.

Sheila McGinnis asked about fund raising and would like to get started on fundraising right away so that the Village can buy the property outright without a grant from the state. Leonard said that the Council is not saying that the property has to be purchased by a grant, but is looking at different funding options. McGinnis will start making calls to see if she can get pledges so that the Village can make the purchase outright. She hopes to have a report for the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Leonard moved, seconded by Giglio to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m. EST.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary J. Robertson  
Clerk-Treasurer