

VILLAGE OF SPARTA
Kent County, Michigan
Special Village Council Meeting
Monday July 24 2023 at 7:00 PM
75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)

Present: Council President Robert Whalen, Council Members Brenda Braybrook, Robert Carlstrom, Dave Cumings, Courtney Mais, Tom Peoples, and Bill Taylor.

Also present: Village Manager Jim Lower and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Roll Call:** Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
4. **Additions or Corrections to Consent and Business Agenda**
 - a. Add item B: dehumidifier at the water building. With that addition, motion by Carlstrom with a second by Cumings to approve. Motion pass
5. **Approval of Consent and Business Agenda**

Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Mais to approve with that addition. Motion passed unanimously.
6. **Public Comment for Agenda Item**

Please Note: This Public Comment portion of the meeting is reserved for comment on agenda items. Personal or abusive attacks on Council members, staff members, or other participants will not be tolerated and may result in the Village President taking action, up to and including, having the speaker removed from the meeting by law enforcement officers.

A. None.
7. **Public Hearing**
 - a. None.
8. **Old Business:**
 - A. **Crack sealing:** The Village Manager and interim DPW Supervisor Miles Ring have been involved with this. They did a street by street analysis of everything in the Village and came up with a revised map of necessary crack sealing. The Village Manager also met with the Kent County Road Commission. In past years, the Village has used the KCRC for road repairs. However, in recent years, the Road Commission was no longer involved with this. Village Manager Lower has reestablished the Village's connection with the Road Commission. The Village will save staff time and

money by having the Road Commission include us with all of the other government entities in the county who need crack sealing. The Village Manager anticipates having the final numbers for this project at the August Council meeting.

9. New Business:

- a. 347 Evergreen Building Discussion:** This building was recently purchased from Kent County. It has been vacant for approximately five or six years. It is approximately 15,000 sq feet in area. Previously, it housed a Headstart daycare program for migrant families. The Council discussed several potential future uses for the building, such as having it be a daycare center again or moving the Village Police Department into the building. The consensus of the Council was that they preferred the Police Department to have a higher visibility location such as where it is currently located. Village Manager Lower said that Police Chief Milanowski supported moving the police department into that building. The Council also discussed the financial impact to the Village if the building were to become a daycare center. Village Manager Lower stressed that if it IS a daycare, it needs to be run by someone other than the Village due to liability issues and the impact on the Village staff. He also mentioned that the Village might receive some funding by the state Economic Development Corporation to rehab the building. The Council asked about Nash field which is the small sports field adjacent to the building. The Village Manager said that it's currently underutilized, so if the building did operate as a day care, some of Nash Field could go toward housing playground equipment while still providing room the ballfields. It was mentioned that the Village could raze the property and possibly construct residential housing. The consensus of the Council was to instruct the Village Manager to proceed with an RFP for a daycare facility as quickly as possible. The operation of the daycare would be handled by an entity separate from the Village.

The Council then discussed the Village Manager's expenses for any necessary lobbying he might do in the state capitol. They are fully on board with him doing what needed to be done in order to get funding and support for any Village projects. The Council also discussed whether the cap should be raised from 5K to 10K or left open ended for the Village Manager to authorize any necessary emergency repairs. This issue will be discussed further at the August Council meeting.

Village Manager Lower said that he would like to have more workshops/special meetings in the Village Hall because he believes that they are more productive.

- b. Dehumidifier:** Recently the dehumidifier at the water treatment plant failed which resulted in excess water in the plant. The dehumidifer is 37 years old, and parts are no longer available. The Village Manager stated that this will be expensive since we need an entire new system. He anticipates that it will be in the range of 40-50K. He will bring final numbers to the August Council meeting.

In addition, the telescoping valve on the primary clarifier failed. This was an emergency situation. The utilities subcommittee authorized the Village Manager to get this repaired.

Motion by Mais with a second by Braybrook to move forward with purchasing a new dehumidifier. Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Braybrook to authorize the Village Manager to pay for repairs on the telescoping valve. Motion passed unanimously.

It was noted that the Village had the Village engineering firm Fleis & VandenBrink look at the system while it was pumped down. They reported that the rest of the mechanicals looked to be in good shape.

10. Village Manager & Department Reports: The Village Manager reported that there was some movement in getting a new Public Works Supervisor. It was mentioned that the Village as a whole needs to increase the salaries of a number of key people in order to keep them working here in the Village. Those positions would include the Village Manager, the Finance Director, the Police Chief, and the DPW Supervisor.

The Village Manager's six month review will occur in August. Historically this has been done in an open session.

11. Communications:

a. None.

12. Public Comment:

a. None.

13. Council Member Announcements:

a. None.

14. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by President Whalen at 6:58pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.