

**VILLAGE OF SPARTA**  
Kent County, Michigan  
**Village Council Meeting**  
**Monday November 14, 2022 at 7:00 PM**  
**75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)**

**Present:** President Robert Whalen, Council Members Brenda Braybrook, Robert Carlstrom, Dave Cumings, Bill Taylor, and Gale Taylor.

**Also present:** Finance Director David Carpenter, Police Chief Andy Milanowski, DPW Director Dennis Brinks, Village Manager Shay Gallagher, and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

**Absent:** Jayne Heath.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Roll Call:** Formal roll call was taken. Those members in attendance or absent are noted above.
4. **Additions or Corrections to Consent and Business Agenda**

Consent Agenda:

- a. Approve Regular Village Council Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2022
- b. Approve Downtown Development Authority Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2022
- c. Approve Fire Authority Meeting Minutes October 20, 2022
- d. Shop Sparta & Tree Lighting Fireworks Approval – November 18, 2022 (inclement weather date of November 19, 2022).

Per Village Manager Gallagher: move item d to the new business agenda.

Per Council member Gale Taylor: his name was incorrectly recorded as “Robert Taylor” in the Oct 10, 2022 Village Council minutes.

5. **Approval of Consent and Business Agenda:** With those changes, motion by Carlstrom with a second by Braybrook to approve the agenda. 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.

Jim Lynema , 291 Doris St, asked about the location of the Hickory St alleyway. It is between Prospect and Aspen near the building which recently burned down. The alleyway will be split down the middle with each half going to the adjacent property owners. This proposed vacation is just like the recent Mark St vacation.

## **7. Public Hearing**

- a. Public Hearing – Resolution 22-25 – A Resolution to vacate the Hickory St. Alleyway:** Public hearing opened at 7:05pm. Per Village Manager Gallagher, this is the second hearing on this item. This alleyway is located between Aspen and Prospect and is not used by the Village at all. It’s not actually Hickory street itself; rather it’s an alleyway between a storage building and the recently burned down structure. Public hearing closed at 7:07 pm.

## **8. Old Business**

- a. None**

## **9. New Business**

- a. Shop Sparta & Tree Lighting Fireworks Approval – November 18, 2022 (Inclement weather date of November 19, 2022):** Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Cumings to approve. One abstention (Whalen.) Motion passed 5:0.
- b. Resolution 22-25 – A Resolution to vacate the Hickory St. Alleyway:** This alleyway has never been utilized by the Village, and the Village has no plans to utilize it in the future. All properties adjacent to the alleyway are, or will be, under single ownership in the near future with plans to redevelop the entire block. To date, the Village has received no feedback whatsoever on this vacation. Motion by Braybrook with a second by Cumings to approve this resolution. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Personnel Manual Update – Appendix C:** Currently, the Village does not have a personnel or operational policy in place to compensate recently retired officers who are required to attend court or other legal proceedings for work or cases prior to retirement from the Village. This personnel manual update would compensate these officers for a minimum of three hours at their previous hourly rate was whenever they are required to attend legal proceedings for a case or cases they were involved with or in as a member of the Sparta Police Department. This provision would be in effect for twelve months following retirement. Motion by Braybrook with a second by Gale Taylor to approve this update. Motion passed unanimously.
- d. 398 N. State St. Proposal Review:** The Village requested an RFP for the division and sale of a portion of 398 N State St pursuant to the Village Council’s request. One proposal was received, from Nicolas Gill, owner of Auto Care Excellence

(374 N State St), in the amount of \$5000.00. It is for the purchase of the approximate 1.16-acre parcel which would be used to expand company parking. It would not impact the nearby historical marker for the railroad depot. Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Braybrook to accept this proposal and grant the Village Manager the authority to execute all necessary documents. Motion passed unanimously.

- e. **2022 Budget Amendments:** The FY Budget Amendments report was presented by the Finance Director David Carpenter. He gave a short presentation and answered some Council questions. Motion by Cumings with a second by Bill Taylor to approve this report. Motion passed unanimously.
- f. **Traffic Order – Pedestrian Crossing:** The Village and the Downtown Development Authority have long discussed ways to improve pedestrian safety in the core downtown and throughout the community. One way to do this is to have the Chief of Police submit a traffic order that requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks. The main areas of focus would be the core downtown, and more specifically on Division St between Prospect and Union. The downtown area would be updated with additional signage to make drivers aware of the requirement to stop for pedestrians. The consensus of the Council was to move forward with these procedures.
- g. **Public Works Aggregate and Material Storage:** Currently, sand, gravel, millings, and spoils are stored in large piles in the rear of the DPW yard. While this has worked for years, it's not the most efficient nor effective way to store these materials. DPW Supervisor Brinks has received a proposal from Grand Rapids Gravel company for concrete bin blocks at a cost of \$7,380.00 including delivery. An outside contractor will be needed to unload and place the blocks given their size and weight. This cost is estimated at \$5,000.00 depending upon exactly how many hours it takes to complete the job. Motion by Braybrook with a second by Gale Taylor to approve this project at a not to exceed cost of \$12,380.00
- h. **Village Manager Annual Review:** The consensus of the Council is that Village Manager Gallagher is doing a good job. Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Braybrook to approve a 5% annual raise. Motion passed unanimously. It was noted that the Village Manager is underpaid in comparison to other communities.

**10. Village Manager & Department Reports:** The Council discussed the recent (non-work related) injury suffered by a DPW employee. Council member Gale Taylor asked if other village employees can donate their sick time to other staff. The Village Manager said he would investigate this. There will be an upcoming 2023 budget and CIP meeting with the Village Council and Finance Director Carpenter. Newly elected council members Courtney Mais and Tom Peoples were invited to attend this meeting. The DPW's project of completing the lead and copper water service line verification report is almost complete. The galvanized pipe replacement is on track. Council member Bill Taylor asked whether the Code Enforcement officer is paid hourly or salary. She is paid hourly.

The trees on W Division Street across from McDonalds are leaning over and need to be cut down. It was stated that this is the responsibility of the adjacent property owners. Police Chief Milanowski reported that the change over with the new car is proceeding slowly due to computer issues.

**11. Communications:** Village Manager Gallagher said that the sewer meters for the I&I study are in. The project is proceeding.

**12. Payment of Bills**

**October Payables**

PAYABLES	OCTOBER
(101) General Fund	\$ 192,723.58
(202) Major Street Fund	\$ 143,129.97
(203) Local Street Fund	\$ 96,490.27
(351) Capital Improvement Bond	
(376) 2008 USDA Sewer Debt	
(381) Water Redemption Fund	
(401) Sidewalk Fund	
(581) Airport	\$ 57,958.79
(590) Sewer Department Fund	\$ 80,133.37
(591) Water Department Fund	\$ 114,707.16
(661) Equipment Rental Fund	\$ 5,147.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 690,290.40</b>

Informational:

(206) Fire Department	\$ 119,972.52
(208) SRA Park Fund	\$ 2,845.22
(248) Downtown Development Authority	\$ 7,164.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 129,982.11</b>

Motion by Bill Taylor with a second by Gale Taylor to approve the payment of bills in the amount of \$690,290.40. Motion passed unanimously.

- 13. Public Comment:** Jim Lynema, 291 Doris Steet, stated that everyone was happy with the Village Manager's performance. Asked when there would be a public hearing on the meters that will measure rainwater. Was told that more information on this is expected at the next Council meeting. He asked about sidewalk installation on the west side of Rogers Park and along State Street as there are no sidewalks there presently. He also asked why the sidewalk closure around the (currently being renovated) Choice One Bank building was so large. He stated that this was quite an impediment to pedestrians – especially during public events. He was told that the sidewalk closure size is dictated by the insurance company responsible for that property.

DPW Supervisor Brinks stated that he'd been approached by a local business owner who commended the Council for their efforts in directing business to local companies as opposed to companies located outside of the Sparta area.

Council Member Braybrook asked the Village Manager to get a price on installing a sidewalk on the west side of Rogers Park along State St.

- 14. Council Member Announcements:** Council member Bill Taylor told the Council how happy he was to have worked with the other council members. He stated that Finance Director Carpenter was doing a great job. He also wished new council members Mais and Peoples the best of luck in their new roles.

- 15. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm by President Whalen.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.