

VILLAGE OF SPARTA
Kent County, Michigan
Special Village Council Meeting
Monday, January 16, 2023 at 7:00 PM
75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)

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

Also Present: Interim Village Manager Blaine Wing and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

Absent: Robert Carlstrom

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.
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. None.
5. **Approval of Consent and Business Agenda**
Motion by Braybrook with a second by Cumings 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.
Mike Metzger, 13761 Pine Lake Ave, Cedar Springs spoke. Said he looked forward to the Council decision.

Doug Pickney, 11353 Stebbins Ave, Sparta, spoke. He said that with all the memorabilia that the American Legion has and with the help of the Sparta Township Historical Commission (STHC), that we'll be able to make a great military museum for Sparta.

Jim Lyles, 97 S State St, Sparta, spoke. He said that he was also on the committee to build "Shorty's Monument" which will honor WWII veterans. He said that almost 78% of the costs of that monument have already been raised. He said that he expected that work will commence on that project shortly.

Dale Bergman, 9280 Sparta Ave, Sparta, spoke. He said he appreciated the Council calling a meeting on this issue so quickly.

7. Public Hearing:

a. None.

8. Old Business

a. None

9. New Business

a. Discussion and Appointment to fill vacant Village Council position.

Two candidates had submitted applications to fill the vacant council seat: Christina Owens and Bill Taylor. Both candidates addressed the Council and answered council members questions. After the applicants spoke, the Council voted. Motion by Braybrook to select Bill Taylor to fill the vacant council seat. Second by Cumings. Motion passed 4:1 with council member Peoples opposing. Bill Taylor was then sworn in as a council member and took his place with the council members.

b. Discussion of Historical Commission's Request to use the Civic Center:

At 7:17 pm, the Council adjourned so that council members could tour the American Legion space. Chris Carlisle, post commander, gave a tour and answered questions.

At 7:27 pm, the Council meeting recommenced.

Council President Whalen said that while the Village potentially has other uses for the space, he believes that letting the STHC take over the administration of this building and ownership of the memorabilia in order to establish a military museum in Sparta would be the best thing to do. All of the military items currently housed in the STHC building would be moved over to the Legion space. He would like to see the building open at least two days a week as well as for other special occasions, such as during Town and Country week, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, 5th and 6th grade school tours, and the annual walking tour.

There was a consensus of the Council to move forward with this. The interim village manager will draw up an agreement outlining terms such as

the length of time for the contract, rental cost, utility payments, and contents insurance. After that agreement is drawn up, there will be a formal Council vote.

Council President Whalen stressed that he didn't want to see the space used as a closet. It's imperative that the military museum be open for the public to tour and to enjoy.

Council members then discussed the potential lease length (one year versus multiple years) as well as rental cost and who would be responsible for utility payments.

Chris Carlisle spoke. He said that he was the post commander of the American Legion. He said that he was very pleased that the Council has decided to move forward with a military museum. He then presented the STHC with a check in the amount of \$2000 to help establish this museum.

10. Public Comment:

The STHC as a whole thanked the Council for going ahead with this. They hope to get more young people involved in Sparta history. Sparta has a rich history, and we need to nourish and remember it. If you don't feed it, it dies.

Christina Owens thanked the Council for their time in considering her candidacy, and said she looked forward to serving on the Council in the future.

11. Council Member Announcements: It was brought up that Courtney Mais is an honoree from Michigan for the American Mothers Association. The members all congratulated her.

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by President Whalen at 7:40 pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.