**VILLAGE OF WESTFIELD**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES**

**DATE:** Monday, October 21, 2024 **TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** North Room – Eason Hall

**Members Present:** Mayor Dennis Lutes, Trustee Josh Freifeld, Trustee Judy Einach, Trustee Blake Maras, Trustee Johanna Kelley

**Staff**: Becki Betts-Paternosh, Treasurer; Dan Hogg, Code Officer; Josh Belcher, Fire Chief; Andrew Thompson, DPW Director; Erin Schuster, Asst. DPW Director; Corbin Meleen, Police Chief; Vince Luce, Village Clerk

**VISITORS:** Tom Herr;Steph Blount; Adam Duckett; Don McCord

**MAYOR & BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Nichole Ruf, Director and Nicholas Patronik Manager from the Village’s independent auditing firm Drescher & Malecki LLP presented their review of the 2023-2024 Audit of the financial statements of all funds of the Village of Westfield. They also audited the Justice Fund. In both instances, and in the opinion of Drescher & Malecki, its employees, agents and assignees, the financial statements provided “present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental and business-type activities, each major fund changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.” It was noted that no fraud was identified, and that all information was provided to the auditors in a timely and accurate manner by Village staff and other parties representing the Village where applicable.

The auditors asked if anyone had questions and there being none, the mayor thanked them for the work they do and its importance. He noted it assures residents and other interested parties that the funds are managed properly and there is accountability by the Village for the money it receives.

Finally, it was noted that any questions about the report or information contained in it should be directed to the Village Treasurer at the main Village address.

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

J. Freifeld motioned to approve the September3rd and September 16th, 2024, Village Board of Trustees minutes as presented, seconded by J. Kelley and carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION 24-2024 NY FORWARD GRANT REQUEST AUTHORIZATION**

The Village Board reaffirmed their decision to approve the following Resolution #24-2024, authorizing and supporting the submission of a grant application to the NY Forward Grant by the Village of Westfield.

**RESOLUTION #24-2024**

**Resolution Authorizing AND SUPPORTING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION BY THE VILLAGE OF WESTFIELD FOR THE NY FORWARD PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Village of Westfield has expressed downtown revitalization in Westfield as a goal to spur local economic development; and

WHEREAS, the NY Forward program from the NYS Department of State may fund $4.5 million in grant funding to two communities; or $4.5 million to one community and $2.25 million to two communities in each of the ten (10) regions of NYS for a combination of public sector improvements and private sector projects that all have the specified aim of spurring economic development and job creation; and

WHEREAS, the Westfield NY Forward application will seek funding for a combination of public sector and private sector projects within the Village of Westfield; and

WHEREAS, the NY Forward program does not require a “local match” but instead scores applications based on the amount of public and private sector leveraging that can be provided to augment the $4.5 million in grant funding; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the governing board of the Village of Westfield hereby authorizes and supports the submission of a grant application for the Village of Westfield NY Forward program.

VOTING RECORD

Dennis Lutes, Mayor Voted: Yes

Judith Einach, Trustee Voted: Yes

Josh Freifeld, Trustee Voted: Yes

Blake Maras, Trustee Voted: Yes

Johanna Kelley, Trustee Voted: Yes

MUNICIPAL CLERK’S CERTIFICATION OF PASSAGE

I hereby certify that the above resolution was approved by the Village Board of Trustees on October 14, 2024. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the Village of Westfield on this 14th, day of October, 2024

SEAL

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Vincent E. Luce

Village Clerk

**RESOLUTION 25-2024 JUSTICE COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION AUTHORIATION**

The Village Board reaffirmed their decision to approve the following Resolution #25-2024 for the Justice Court Assistance Program.

RESOLUTION #25-2024

Authorizing an Application for the New York State Justice Court Assistance Program

BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of the Village of Westfield authorizes the Westfield Village Court to apply for a JCAP grant in the 2024-2025 grant cycle of up to $30,000.

CERTIFICATION OF PASSAGE

It is hereby certified that the above resolution was approved by the Village Board of the Village of Westfield on this 7th day of October 2024.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the Village of Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York State on this 7th, day of October 2024,

Both resolutions were affirmed by the full board on a motion by J. Einach seconded by J. Freifeld and carried unanimously.

**CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE EVENTS OVERVIEW AND APPROVALS**

The Board approved the Christmas in the Village Events as submitted by Marilyn Hemmer and authorized use of the Portable Restroom for the weekend on a motion by J. Kelley seconded by J. Freifeld and carried unanimously.

**HALLOWEEN HOURS- OBSERVANCE IN WESTFIELD**

The Board approved for Halloween hours to be observed on Thursday, October 31st from 6pm to 8pm. J. Kelley/ J. Freifeld and approved unanimously.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Acting Chief Corbin Meleen presented the September 2024 Police Department report noting 348 incidents with 78 outside of the Village resulting in 18 Penal Law Arrests and 25 Vehicle and Traffic Law Arrests for the month. The report was approved on a motion by J. Einach/B. Maras and approved unanimously.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Fire Chief Josh Belcher presented the September 2024 Fire Department report noting 40 calls, 8 were fire calls and 32 were EMS calls. The monthly report was approved on a motion by B. Maras, seconded by J. Einach and carried unanimously.

Chief Belcher referred to an email he sent to the Board recently that 1st Asst. Fire Chief Chris Chasse has moved to Ripley and is no longer a Westfield Fire Department member. He has moved Dave Walker up to his position and Jake Alonge will now serve as the Second Assistant Fire Chief. This was approved on a motion by B. Maras, seconded by J. Einach and carried unanimously.

Josh requested approval for a new Fire Department member, Jared Carr who is already very well trained and will be able to step right into the role. They approved member Jared Carr on a motion by B. Maras, seconded by J. Einach and approved unanimously.

Josh requested permission to purchase four sets of bunker gear to include four (4) coats and four (4) pants from Witmar Supply in the amount o $15, 921.60 under state contract bid pricing. Josh noted he had $10,000 in Bunker Gear Account 0215. The Treasurer reported that he would need to request a budget transfer from the Board which was approved in the amount of $5,922 from General Equipment 0211 to Bunker Gear 0215. This was approved on a motion by J. Freifeld and seconded by B. Maras and carried unanimously.

**RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

The mayor presented Andrew’s Recreation Department report for the month noting the 41st annual Tour of Chautauqua and also the grant kick off meeting with Frank Puglisi of the Governor’s Office. Skating will start this year on December 20th, 2024. The Recreation Department report was approved on a motion by J. Freifeld/ J. Kelley and carried unanimously.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Code Officer Dan Hogg reported that for the six months he’s been the Code Officer there were 83 permits issued bringing in over $5,100 in permit fees.

Dan also asked for approval to move forward with the RECI Grant Code Enforcement Software developed by the ICC which is the same group that develops the Fire and Building Codes that the State adopts. Dan mentioned that the first year will be completely free with a high chance of years 2 and 3 also being completely covered. The program then offers the opportunity to pick and choose what components the Village would want to keep and then subsequently pay an annual fee of approximately $7,500. Dan noted that this software also has GIS capabilities that can be used by all Village Departments. He said this software is a full municipal management software package. We are trying to scale up building and code enforcement in the Village and this software will certainly provide much more capabilities in terms of applications for permits, permit payments and several other functions that are not automated currently.

The Board approved the monthly Code Enforcement report and affirmed to move forward with the Code Enforcement Software Grant program as recommended by Dan on a motion by J. Freifeld/ J. Einach and carried unanimously.

 **ZONING OFFICER**

Zoning Officer Rob Genthner submitted his report on Zoning Activities in the Village of Westfield for the month of September 2024. The report details several enforcement activities related to complaints from residents about trash, unregistered vehicles, trailers, un-mowed properties. It was noted, however, that improvements have been noticed by many in the community. Trustee Einach and Asst. DPW Director Erin Schuster both commented on people from outside the community stating how nice Westfield looks and what a beautiful community it is. Everyone affirmed that Zoning and Code Enforcement in addition to the many community beautification projects implemented over the years and continuing have had a very positive effect on Westfield.

The Board unanimously approved the Zoning Officer Report on a motion by J. Freifeld / J. Kelley.

**HISTORIAN**

The Board approved the September 2024 Historian Report as submitted by Marybelle Beigh on a motion by J. Einach seconded by J. Kelley and carried.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

DPW Director Andrew Thompson reported that leaf pickup is slated to begin on October 28th. Andrew also asked for an executive session to discuss the hiring of individuals to fill the vacancies in the Public Works Department.

**WATER & SEWER**

Assistant DPW Director Erin Schuster reported that hydrant flushing has begun working from the south of the Village to the northern end. Typically, the flushing takes approximately 4-5 weeks they anticipate it being finished around Thanksgiving.

Erin also said that he was contacted by Kingsview Paving and they anticipate finishing the CSX Manhole by the end of November.

The Water & Sewer report was approved on a motion by J. Freifeld seconded by B. Maras and carried unanimously.

**ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT**

Andrew requested that the Village award the recent utility pole bid to Stella Jones in the amount of $16,891.10 on a motion by J. Freifeld/B. Maras and carried unanimously.

Andrew also gave an update on the status of the EV charging station going up in Barcelona which will allow for four separate charging stations. Andrew noted this project was through the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and the private developer.

**TREASURER**

The revenue and expense reports were approved by the Board unanimously with J. Freifeld on the motion and B. Maras on the second.

Unpaid Village Taxes amounting to $69,764.90 was approved to be sent to the County to be placed on the next tax bill were approved unanimously by the Board on a motion by J. Kelley/ J. Einach and approved unanimously.

The Board approved adding the unpaid water and sewer bills in the amount of $1,173.28 to the Town of Westfield 2025 Tax Levy. The vote was unanimous on a motion by J. Einach seconded by J.Kelley.

The following warrants were approved unanimously, with J. Freifeld/B. Maras motioning: General #24 $62,708.07; Electric #24 $180,677.50; Water #26 $30,915.20; Sewer #27; Electric #22 $250,010.55; Water #24 $27,187.19; General #22 $41,203.16; Sewer #25 $40,251.21

Budget Transfers submitted by the Treasurer were approved unanimously under a motion by J. Freifeld and seconded by J. Einach.

Becki noted that a recent NYCOM training session discussed that all ARPA monies must be obligated by December 31, 2024. We still have until 2026 for them to be spent but any monies remaining must be under contract by the end of this year. She noted that we still have $9,900 in ARPA funds remaining but not under any obligation. It was suggested that these remaining funds be considered for use by with the Fire Department Roof and/or the Police Department roof.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM VISITORS**

There being none, the Board moved to go into Executive Session to discuss the hiring of individuals in the Public Works Department on a motion by J. Freifeld /B. Maras and carried unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The Board exited the Executive Session at approximately 8:20pm on a motion/second by J. Freifeld/J. Kelley respectively, and all voting yes.

As a result of the Executive Session, the Board approved hiring the following individuals at the Utility Worker rate of $19.56 per hour and one alternate on a motion by J. Freifeld and seconded by B. Maras with all voting yes.

Brett Mullen

Hawk Harrington

Collin Carlson

Noting that Colin McKinley would be an alternate hire if one of the others declined.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:32pm on a motion by J. Kelley/J. Freifeld and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Vincent Luce, Village Clerk