

## REGULAR MEETING

February 27, 2024

The Village of Ashmore Board of Trustees met in regular session on February 27, 2024 at the Ashmore Municipal Office. Proper notice of the meeting was posted. President Kurt Crail called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Freezeland acknowledged that a quorum was physically present, and that there were no requests for electronic attendance. Freezeland took roll call attendance:

### Trustees Present:

- Bill Edwards
- Thomas Grissom
- Dane Perdieu
- Terry Price
- Bryan Watson
- Cathy Welborn

### Also Present:

- President Kurt Crail
- Clerk Jackie Freezeland
- Treasurer Kathy Childress
- Lee Beckman of Milano & Grunloh Engineers, LLC (exited 6:14 p.m.)
- Chief Deputy Tyler Heleine of Coles County Sheriff's Office (exited 6:23 p.m.)

Trustees Absent: None

## Guests

Lee Beckman of Milano & Grunloh Engineers (MGE) gave the following updates on the Village's ongoing grant projects:

- IEPA's Unsewered Communities Grant, a grant for the development and installation of a solid waste sewage system, is awaiting Notice of Funds Opportunity so that an application can be submitted, which is expected in the next month;
- IDOT's Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), a grant for sidewalks and streetscaping along Route 16, is awaiting Notice of Funds Opportunity so that an application can be submitted, which is expected in the fall;
- IDOT's Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS), a grant for sidewalks leading to the school, application has been submitted, and we are now awaiting award announcements;
- IDNR's Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD), a grant for park development, application has been submitted and was rejected; MGE has reached out to IDNR for more details to explain the denial and the Board is waiting to hear back;
- DCEO's Community Development Block Grant, a grant for storm disaster relief funds, application has been submitted and unofficially approved; MGE is waiting on paperwork to move forward;
- IEPA's Lead Service Line Inventory Grant (LSLI), a grant for taking inventory of the materials in the water line infrastructure, application is being finalized and will be submitted tomorrow; the inventory must be turned in to the IEPA by April 15, and this grant is intended to cover the costs of completing the inventory; it is unsure how quickly funds will be released or how effective this grant will actually be; and
- USDOT's Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A), a grant for radar limit speed signs, Notice of Funds Opportunity has been brought to our attention; MGE will research more to find out how Ashmore might benefit from it in light of last month's decision to purchase radar speed limit signs.

Beckman answered questions, and then exited at 6:14 p.m.

Chief Deputy Tyler Heleine of the Coles County Sheriff's Office advised the Board of police presence and enforcement in and around the Village, including non-specific Drug Task Force activity and changes in staffing within the department. Heleine spoke about speed enforcement and took note when Freezeland reported that a resident complained of a speeding car on Oak St.

Freezeland complimented Heleine's team for their presence and assistance when the Village recently cleared junk/rubbish from a resident's noncompliant yard per court agreement. She noted that the officers were very effective at diffusing potentially explosive moments, and they did an excellent job of helping the resident control their temper/emotions. She expressed gratitude for their presence and noted that the situation would not have gone as smoothly if not for them. Heleine answered other questions before exiting at 6:23 p.m.

### **Reports, Approvals, and Claims**

Freezeland gave a thorough update about new and ongoing projects in the Municipal Office, including:

- The effect on the Village if Illinois House Bill 1634 passes, restricting vehicle emissions to benefit the environment but forcing the municipalities, townships, and other contractors to decommission large trucks currently being utilized.
- Trustee Dane Perdieu was approached by a resident who wanted the Village to clean their ditches and address drainage issues in the Cedar/Tennessee neighborhood. The Village maintains drainage lines and drop boxes throughout town, especially in this low-lying neighborhood, but will not set a precedence of raking out ditches.
- A letter was mailed to Ashmore residents notifying them of the newest electrical rate aggregation agreement, but the language in it was confusing and caused a lot of questions. Freezeland clarified the terms of the agreement so the Board would be prepared to answer questions if asked, and she referenced a Facebook post to help people stay informed.
- Regarding a federal lawsuit filed against the Village by Tracy Luster, the IML-appointed attorneys have reached a settlement. The settlement decision was made to minimize expensive litigation costs and to prevent any future claims from Luster; it was emphatically not an admission or judgment of fault against the Village.
- A notable property in town which has been cited for years for their junk/rubbish has finally been cleared by the Village. The action is the result of several court hearings and a good-faith agreement between the property owner and the Village attorney. Administrators are hopeful that the work completed there will set an example for other non-compliant properties in town. A follow-up hearing is scheduled for March 13.
- Ashmore's municipal attorney Cara Shoaff has resigned as the Village attorney, citing a shift in specialty away from municipal law and a desire to localize her clientele to Clark/Cumberland County. Crail and Freezeland have already spoken with Tracy Willenborg of Taylor Law Offices in Effingham, another well-reputed attorney who worked with Ashmore previously during the initial planning of the sewage treatment facility. Shoaff recommends Willenborg and believes the transition will benefit the Village. A resolution and a legal services agreement will be presented at the March Board meeting.

- Superintendent Jake Johnson has been named by the Illinois Rural Water Association as runner-up for the 2024 Water Treatment Operator of the Year. Additionally, he is being recognized by ClassE and Elevate in Charleston as one of their “20 Under 40” recipients.

Board Minutes dated January 23, 2024 were approved on a motion by Edwards, seconded by Welborn. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye.

Minutes from a Special Meeting of the Board on January 25, 2024 were approved on a motion by Price, seconded by Welborn. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye except Watson who abstained.

Minutes from a Special Meeting of the Board on February 7, 2024 were approved on a motion by Grissom, seconded by Welborn. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye.

Personnel Committee Minutes dated January 23, 2024 were approved on a motion by Edwards, seconded by Watson. In a roll call vote, Committee members Edwards, Perdieu, Watson, and Crail voted aye.

Accounts Payable for the period ending February 27, 2024 and Payroll for February 2024 were passed around, reviewed, and approved by trustee signature.

Upon recommendation from Treasurer Childress, Welborn motioned to transfer \$15,000 from the General Fund to the Water Fund to cover expenses. Perdieu seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye; motion carried.

The Treasurer’s Report for January 2024 was placed on file with the Clerk on a motion by Grissom, seconded by Edwards. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye.

Superintendent Jake Johnson was not present to offer a Superintendent’s Report. In his place, Crail reported that recent extreme weather changes have caused water in the tower to invert, resulting in discolored water throughout town. Johnson has been working diligently to flush hydrants throughout town to rid the lines of sediment and alleviate the discoloration. Residents have been pleased with the Village’s response to complaints.

Trustee Perdieu asked about the recycling trailer being full, and Childress reported that Johnson emptied the contents just today. Trustees complimented the popularity of the recycling program.

There were no Committee reports.

### **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

### **New Business**

Edwards motioned to approve an Interagency Agreement with Charleston Fire Department (CFD) allowing CFD to install a radio antenna on the Village water tower, which will make CFD radios more functional when responding to emergencies in and around the Village. Price seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye.

Freezeland reported the Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission is offering their annual Recycling reimbursement grant again for 2024. She asked for feedback from Trustees about the success and/or inadequacies of the program in the past few years. Freezeland proposed that the Village and the Township offer dumpsters twice in 2024, one dumpster in the spring to encourage “spring cleaning” and one dumpster in the fall to coincide with the annual tire/electronics/prescriptions recycling event. Perdieu motioned (a) to approve this plan, (b) to present this plan to the Township for approval, and (c) to seek reimbursement for

the program through the CCRP&D grant program. Welborn seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, all trustees voted aye; motion carried.

There was no other new business.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. on a motion by Edwards, seconded by Welborn. All trustees voted in favor. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

Jackie Freezeland  
Ashmore Village Clerk