

VILLAGE OF THORNTON, COUNTY OF COOK
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING – MARCH 4, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Acting President Pisarzewski called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Acting President Pisarzewski reported the meeting was being recorded by Clerk Pisarzewski, and also recorded on social media.

ROLL CALL

Present at Roll Call: Acting President Pisarzewski, Trustees Cunningham, Reynolds, Kaye, Glaser, Atkinson; Recreation Director Dunlop; Police Chief G. Beckman; Public Works Superintendent Roberts.

Also Present: Administrator Beckman; Attorney S. Dillner; Engineer Kaminsky.

Absent: Fire Chief Schweitzer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathleen Andersen Reingold, Executor for Violet Andersen, 106 East Harriet Street, asked who is overseeing public health inspections. This would include food handling, food sellers permits, sales taxes, etc. Administrator Beckman commented, at this time, the Village has been looking to other communities to help us until we can get a new health inspector certified.

Ms. Reingold discussed the residency requirements of the liquor license. Every business needs to follow the same rules; and she would like the long-standing ordinance that is in place to continue.

Ms. Reingold asked if Mr. Lungaro (Jimboo's) is going to be paying sales taxes on his catering business now that he is renting the American Legion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

2024 Cook County CDBG Grant – Engineer Kaminsky reported the Cook County Community Development Block Grant application is submitted to Cook County yearly. The County administers about \$7m to \$8m of funding. The maximum request each municipality could ask for is \$400,000. The Village of Thornton is going to submit an application for that amount. He is working with Village staff as to street locations to be included in the application. The Board members have a copy of the draft resolution and certificate that authorizes the mayor and the clerk to sign the application documents and submit them to the County. The applications are due March 22. The resolution and certification need to be completed to submit the application. The streets chosen need to be submitted with the application. Trustee Atkinson asked that, at some time, she be provided

with the list of streets being considered. Attorney Dillner suggested the resolution and certificate should list Joseph Piszczewski as Acting Mayor.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Thornton Library Lease; Thornton Historical Society Lease – Attorney Dillner reported the Village of Thornton has a lease with the Thornton Library; and a lease with the Historical Society. Both leases were 10-year terms at \$1.00/year. They both have either expired or are due to expire this month. The format on the two leases is a little different because the Library lease is a carry-over from the eighties.

The Board should discuss potential terms for both leases. The Library lease stated they need to provide insurance. The utilities are included in the Library lease. Since it's a free-standing building, the Historical Society lease calls for the Village to provide insurance and maintenance, and the parties split the utilities.

Administrator Beckman received a request from a trustee to provide the utility bills for each of the buildings, which he provided to all trustees. The Library has no utility bills because they are on Village services. Their phones are on the Village system but they reimburse us for those. For the Historical Society, nothing on the contract can be changed except rent, per the contract.

Trustee Reynolds thought the Village was spending too much money on utility bills for the Historical Society. Every month, the Village is paying for their utilities, paying to insure the building, and it's a money pit. She suggested \$500/month rent to help cover this cost. Also, the Library gets funding for certain things.

Trustee Cunningham thought, since the Village is paying utilities and insurance, and recently put a lot of money into the Historical Society building, they should be charged rent. The Library should be charged rent, also. It was determined the Village pays for the alarm system at the Historical Society, the Library pays for their own system.

Trustee Atkinson commented, as Treasurer of the Historical Society, she obtained its own tax ID and filed for their 501C3 non-profit certification. The building is owned by the Village. She stressed the Society is a not-for-profit. There is one meeting a month in the building. The museum is open every other Saturday for three months, then every Saturday for four months. Electricity usage is kept to a minimum. The phone is for safety purposes. In her opinion, \$500/month for rent is excessive, especially when commercial enterprises are using Village property for nothing.

There was extensive discussion among the trustees regarding whether or not to charge rent to the Historical Society and/or the Library. Attorney Dillner stressed the two contracts should have similar terms. Administrator Beckman suggested, since the Library didn't ask to renew their contract when it ran out two years ago, the contract should read the Village should have the right to renew after five years. Attorney Dillner continued to say, if the Village wants to charge rent in lieu

of utilities for the Historical Society, they would have to agree to it. The Library is different because they have an eternal source of revenue being the State. Trustee Reynolds mentioned, without the internet, without the water, without the insurance, \$296 is the total for utilities, which would go up if they paid on their own. She doesn't think the Village should be out any money. Trustee Cunningham commented people pay for Rec Center programs that are provided to the community. These are extra things provided to the community as well; and it's not a bad thing to charge them rent. Trustee Kaye agreed with Acting President Piszewski – that charging either organization is ridiculous. They exist primarily for the residents of Thornton.

Attorney Dillner's suggestion is to have the Historical Society put the utility bills in their name and pay them directly. As far as the insurance, it's the Village's building, so it pays to have it insured. Trustee Atkinson stated the Historical Society has its own insurance. Attorney Dillner stated the Library should have its own insurance rider as well. Trustee Cunningham wants that stated in their leases.

After taking a consensus of the Board, two trustees wanted to leave the contract the same, three trustees wanted to charge rent. Discussion continued. Attorney Dillner commented, even though legally only rent could be changed by the Board, he asked Trustee Atkinson to check with the Historical Society to see if \$1.00 rent plus paying the utilities would be acceptable.

Acting President Piszewski asked Attorney Dillner to write to Paulette Pearson, President of the Historical Society, informing her of the Board's discussion. In the meantime, it will be tabled for this evening; and the Board will await their response.

Attorney Dillner reasoned that, as far as the Library, there is no way to have them pay utilities because that would involve separating services. Their IT and stuff is with the Village; but their Board is discussing separating IT from the Village.

Acting President Piszewski suggested keeping things easy and charging each entity \$200/month to recoup some of the Village costs, and the Village pays utilities. The length of the lease for the Library will be adjusted. The length of the Historical Society lease will remain 10 years. It was decided by the Board to charge \$225/mo. rent to the Historical Society. The Library lease will be tabled until the next meeting, but it was discussed to charge them \$225/mo. for five years.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

CMATI Purchase – Administrator Beckman reported there is a request to purchase some equipment for CMATI, which is a Chicago arm of the SOS grant. They have gotten pre-approval from the council, so they are asking to make this purchase not to exceed \$74,000.

DCEO Grant – Administrator Beckman stated the Village received a grant from DCEO through the legislature. He thanked Representative Jones and Senator Harris for supporting this. The Village was granted \$150,000 for capital purchases. Currently, the Village is about \$150,000 short from CDBG for the Indianwood project. After speaking with staff and the mayor, it was determined it would be the most economical and best use of the money to finish all of Indianwood Drive.

SOS Vehicles – Administrator Beckman reported ISATT has several old vehicles they would like to surplus, said ordinance being previously provided to the Board.

SOS Vehicle Purchase – Administrator Beckman stated, after surplus the above vehicles, ISATT would like to purchase new vehicles. They will need to ask the council for a transfer of funds. Pending those transfers, they would like to purchase equipment. At the meeting, he will ask for the Board to give them permission to approve this, pending the transfers.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Liquor Ordinance Amendment – Acting President Pisarzewski reported Gerard and Terry from Trackside are asking the Board to amend the liquor ordinance to allow the resident manager to live out of Thornton. Gerard stated he purchased the building. He has had a liquor license in the State of Illinois for over 20 years without incident. He lives in Lansing – literally 12 minutes from his place of business in Thornton. He would like to bring his catering company, as well as the new business, to this location. This would bring in two additional sources of revenue for the Village. He is hopeful the Board will consider either relaxing that ordinance or creating another classification of liquor license which would include a non-resident manager that may come with a little higher fee than the regular license.

Acting President Pisarzewski commented this ordinance has been in effect for a long time in this Village. In his opinion, there are not many people in Thornton that will do this anymore; and usually, it's either an owner, part owner, or someone affiliated through the town. He would consider a five-mile radius of Thornton. Trustee Reynolds likes the higher rate for non-resident manager. Her concern is how can the Village require a resident manager to live in town but Public Works, Fire Department and Police Department heads do not live in Thornton. It should be the same for everyone.

After Board discussion, Attorney Dillner suggested changing the ordinance to adjacent towns and within a five-mile radius. Gerald stated all food handling and Bassett certificates have been submitted with their business application. Trustee Cunningham thought it would be better to waive the whole ordinance. The Board asked Attorney Dillner to draft an amendment to the ordinance to also include a \$100 non-resident fee.

OLD BUSINESS

Trustee Cunningham asked what the Legion is allowed to sell. Jimbooo's is now renting, and they are serving people at the bar and the hall. The hall is not inspected. There was a free buffet. People are complaining to Trustee Cunningham that they don't think the Legion hall is a restaurant. What is the rule?

Administrator Beckman commented, under the business license, they have the ability to cater and serve take-out food or deliver food. The only area inspected for that business was the kitchen area. He knows he cannot open the hall as a sit-down restaurant; but he could cater to the same places that may get catering in the Legion under the Legion's ability to have catering.

NEW BUSINESS

No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the good and welfare of the Village, a motion was made by Trustee Atkinson, seconded by Trustee Kaye, to adjourn the Committee meeting.

All in favor.

Motion carried.

Acting President Pisarzewski adjourned the Committee meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Debra L. Pisarzewski, Clerk