

VILLAGE OF COPEMISH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Sept. 10, 2024

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: by President Shannon Saunders at 7:09 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: 7:09 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Shannon (P) Misty (P-Clerk) Jan (P) Clifford (P) Mary (P) Open Trustee position (A)
Open Treasurer position (A)

VISITORS: Travis Saunders, Dave Myers, Mike Longo.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: ***Mike Longo** – As a member of the Village Planning Commission and a Village resident, Mike would like to know the status of the blight issues. Have any tickets been issued? Have any fines been paid? Clark Scarbrough also asked for an update; what's the follow-up on the tickets? Did John turn in any tickets to the County for them to follow-up? Shannon indicated it's up to the Planning Board to handle and report back to the Council. She is not sure why Mike and Clark are asking for an update. Shannon said the State Street issue has been turned over to the attorney. Same with the church issue, but with the intent to be condemned and torn down, at least the steeple. Shannon has not heard back from our attorney. As far as tickets; you would have to reach out to the County. Clark talked with John a week or two ago. John indicated he didn't know what happened to the tickets, if they got turned in or what? John told Clark he would look into it. Clark asked if the Village office has seen any correspondence from the County on these issues. Misty and Shannon said no. Mike reiterated we need to get this figured out; blight is an important issue. ***Dave Myers (1)** The County Sheriff's Dept. has recently hired two new full-time deputies, bringing them to four total. **(2)** Proposed Township Park project update: Tyler Dula and Joshua Shields from the Manistee Conservation District did an on-site visit on Sept. 4. They provided Dave with a lot of insight as to the pros of making this more of a nature park. They identified four invasive species that could also help get us funding. A board walk was discussed, but the cost is very expensive, \$200-300/foot. They promised a detailed write-up that should help us moving forward.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- **MINUTES FROM LAST COUNCIL MEETING (Aug. 13):** Shannon is still waiting for the corrections on the short-term rental and shipping/storage container ordinances from our attorney. Reminder that Misty will be off for surgery Sept. 13: two weeks paid; two weeks unpaid (New Business). She has put in extensive hours for the audit. Did the bills get initialed?

- **PAYMENT OF THE BILLS:** Shannon mentioned item #9 on invoices received, \$2,200; a lot more doable. Bucks Plumbing & Heating received the emergency approval needed to get the new furnace installed with ducting.
- **TREASURER'S REPORT:** Shannon read off the fund balances: GF – \$106,070.89. Major Street – \$161,809.91. Local Street – \$44,372.34.
- Motion by Clifford, 2nd by Mary to approve the consent agenda. AIF.

STREET ADMIN. REPORT (Clifford): Nothing to report this month. Jan asked if the drains are still being snaked. No for now.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND ZONING REPORT (Clark): Shannon indicated the three Frank Gillis properties and the church steeple property have been turned over to the attorney. Shannon said John mowed the grass for a property in violation, charged \$100, we will see if he pays. She also doesn't know if the real-estate company has paid for when Donnie mowed. Shannon thought it's time to have the County put a tax lien on the property. When we receive payment, then we can pay John and Donnie. ***Proposed Amended Short-Term Rental Ordinance:** Clark indicated he has a person lined up to do inspections, he wouldn't charge over \$300. He was supposed to be here tonight. Clark also said they are looking into possibly creating a long-term rental ordinance, so they can also be inspected annually. Not sure if the State is still doing LT rental inspections. ***Proposed Village Shipping/Cargo/Storage Container Ordinance:** Clark indicated we are now considering rewriting this to not allow them permanently. Decided to table it and do more research. Shannon expressed concern over attorney costs for reviewing proposed ordinances, and then starting over. Clark said the main issue is appearance, too gaudy. The Planning Commission will have to address other issues regarding existing containers (Setback, safety, square footage).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Included under New Business.

OLD BUSINESS: *Hall septic/Drain field replacement: Bob Carpenter to inspect, give opinion & quote. Will want to get another quote. Probably won't be done this year. ***Audit of FYE 2/29/2024:** Misty is still working on it. We have balanced the General, Major Street and Local Street funds. We have two other accounts/funds, bank reconciliation (Not touched since 2018) and debt retirement bond (Not reconciled since before 2000). Our books were overstated by \$51,644. They had to be zeroed out. Still can't find the money for previous contribution checks. Misty expressed concern over working over 50 hours/week on the audit while being paid 50 hours/month. Her goodwill is coming to an end. She would like to see more help from Council members. She's thankful for Linda and Amy's help. Once the audit is complete, the books will have to be reconciled from March 2024 forward. Shannon expressed concern as to why we are going back to 2000 when the audit is done every two years. Maybe they are trying to get more money. Misty said the auditors are only asking to reconcile bank statement from March 2022. Misty has to recreate activity before 2022 to come up with beginning balances for Debt

Retirement and Street Savings account (Act 51 activity?). ***New Hall Furnace:** Misty to call Bucks to get it scheduled. ***Dam removal, beavers:** Shannon expressed concern as to why we have been dealing with this, spending time and money as Lake Drive is a seasonal road. Dave Myers provided an update indicating as of Sept. 4, it appears the beavers have built a new dam upstream about 100 yards, leaving the culvert clean and clear. ***Dead limbs removal:** Shannon got emergency approval to hire Thompson's. ***Safety and security in the Village:** Tabled until next month. Shannon has information from the State Police survey (MOPS) she recently completed. She will share results next month.

NEW BUSINESS: *Former sales of Village property: As previously discussed, Shannon indicated these two sales (**1.** Mish-A-Mish Park and **2.** Fire Dept./community center/ball field) were illegal. She indicated the Board knew full well the sales were illegal. There is documentation from the Village attorney stating as much. **1.** Mish-A-Mish Park. A portion was sold to M&R Products for around \$9,000 with a future tax abatement. It appears proper procedures were not followed. Also, it appears M&R Products did not provide enough setback from the park when they did their expansion. **2.** The Fire Dept. building was donated by Cleon Township to the Village. The Village converted the old Fire Dept. building into a community center. When the community center building was sold, there are three different sale amounts showing??? The old ball field was to remain a Village Park. Municipal real estate law requires an extensive procedure for a municipality to sell public park property. When sold, the procedures were not followed by the Village. It appears there were multiple sales to Archangel involving the building, old ball field, and street closers. Also, the money from the sales should have gone back to the Township. Don't know if that happened. Shannon has given all this information (110 pages) to our attorney. Jan asked at this point in time, what can we do about it? Shannon recommends we have the attorney investigate. Motion to approve our attorney to investigate this and give us options made by Clifford, seconded by Mary. AIF except Jan. Jan expressed concern over the attorney costs to the Village. Can we win against the corporate attorneys? Shannon thinks we can as it is the law. ***Future plans for Village owned properties:** Shannon gave Allen O'Shea a list of Village properties. Allen will get back with us if he is interested. ***Complete Street Resolution:** Needed for the proposed/approved MDOT sidewalk project in conjunction with Cleon Township. Dave Myers provided an update as to MDOT's timeline; engineering work to start next Fall, completion in 2027. It will be important for us to provide input to MDOT, mainly on the two proposed crossings of M-115 to the trail. Motion to do a complete street resolution as written by Clifford, seconded by Jan. Roll call vote: Shannon – yes, Jan – yes, Clifford – yes, Mary – yes. Resolution passes. This also made for some discussion regarding the need to reduce the speed limit on M-115 within the Village. This will be on a future agenda. ***Appoint a Street Administrator (Make it official):** Resolution to appoint Clifford Kelley as the Village Street Administrator. Motion made by Mary, seconded by Clifford. Roll call vote: Shannon – yes, Jan – yes, Clifford – yes, Mary – yes. Resolution passes.

FINAL PUBLIC COMMENTS: Not offered.

FINAL COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS: Not offered.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Mary, 2nd by Jan, AIF. Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by Misty O'Shea, Village of Copemish Clerk, with recorded support from Dave Myers.