

**VILLAGE OF BETHALTO  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2024, 6:00PM  
VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**Members Present:**

Gary Bost	Terri Keister
Brady Dugger	Jeff Mull
Maria Perkhiser	Rachel Sontag
Tim Tweedy	

**Also Present:**

Village Clerk Sue Lowrance	Fire Chief Brian Buhs
Village Attorney Ken Balsters	Police Chief Jason Lamb
PW Director Rod Cheatham	Denise Pickens, Klein Hall event venue

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Gary Bost at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers of Village Hall.

**BYOB Liquor License**

Mayor Bost presented the first reading of a proposed BYOB/Brown Bag liquor ordinance, that upon approval would create a new liquor license classification to allow an event center to let renters bring in their own alcohol for service at an event. The owner of the Klein Hall event venue has expressed interest in obtaining such a license. Upon initial review by the board, it was determined that any language referencing corkage should be removed, and that this type of license should authorize the service of beer and light wines only, with alcohol content not exceeding 12% in volume. Liquor could not be sold, and a bartender would be required to open & serve the beverages. Having wait staff serve the alcohol would assist the licensee in monitoring for any underage drinking and overconsumption. This would be an annual license to be renewed each May 1<sup>st</sup>. The annual fee was discussed, with \$100 proposed and \$150 also mentioned. Other liquor licenses range from \$300-500, but also allow for the sale of product. Only one (1) license would be allowed from the onset, with Klein Hall being the only suitable location within the Village at this time. The license could be suspended/revoked for violations, and the license holder would be required to adhere to all other guidelines currently found within our liquor code. This proposed ordinance will be revised and discussed further at the next committee meeting.

**Video Gaming Terminal Fees**

The Village currently has 56 total gaming machines spread out over several local establishments, for which our annual fee is \$100 per machine. The maximum fee allowed by the state, per machine, is \$250. Alton, Godfrey, and Wood River each charge \$250 per machine; East Alton still charges the initial fee of \$25. Increasing our annual fee would bring in an additional \$8400 annually, likely without any pushback from the licensees. Mayor Bost

reviewed the August report from the Gaming Board, which shows the total revenue for gaming by establishment. The Village's portion of the gaming revenue for the month exceeded \$14,000. Trustee Tweedy suggested the Village increase the annual fee to the maximum of \$250 per machine at the next renewal; others agreed. An ordinance will be passed prior to the May renewal deadline.

### **Senior Building Use**

Mayor Bost stated that the senior building gets heavily used throughout the week, daily from 7:30am to 1 or 1:30pm and some evenings. There is line dancing, yoga, TOPS, pinochle, blood drives, and various other events during the week, all of which are at no charge to the group using the building. The building is available for rent to the public on Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays. This leaves little time on the schedule for a good cleaning of the facility. Mayor would like some input as to whether we should block off time to clean or hire someone to clean during off hours. In the past we've had staff janitors and outside services; but we now are cleaning the best we can with the time & personnel we have, and designating a person from public works to consistently clean is difficult. We received a bid for \$45k for cleaning Village Hall, the PD, and the senior building after hours, and it was noted that for that amount we could hire a new employee for the job. Mayor further discussed the "free" use of the building, stating that these groups are the ones who tend to complain most about the cleanliness. There was discussion of whether residency is required and noted that many of the groups that use it don't require members to be residents of Bethalto; some of these groups date back to the original Bethalto Senior Citizens group, which has since dwindled in membership. It was suggested that only non-profits be allowed to use the facility for free, that maybe we should consider charging a fee, or possibly limiting the number of times it can be used as well; Mayor stated he would work up some suggested guidelines for further discussion at the next committee meeting, with the goal being those new rules be put in place in January. In the meantime, it has been suggested that we look for someone to hire part-time for cleaning.

### **Verizon Cell Tower Lease Agreement**

Our current lease agreement with Verizon for the Fifth Street tower expires in March of 2027. As discussed at past meetings, we've been negotiating a renewal with them at their request. We currently receive \$27k per year with an increase of 4% annually. At first, they offered \$17k per year which has since been increased to \$23,500 per year with a 2% annual increase over 20 years. The agreement would be in 5-year increments, renewed every 5 years up to a total of 20 years. We have counter-offered at \$22k per year with a 4% increase, which would net more income over a 20-year term. Trustees asked why we're lowering our income; we can still tell them \$27k or move your equipment. PW Director Cheatham stated it will be very difficult and costly for them to remove their equipment so that is unlikely, and Attorney Balsters stated we can counter-offer however the board would like. Both Balsters and Mayor Bost noted they believe the current offer on the table is the best we will get. Consensus was to agree to \$22k with 4% annual increases and move forward. Trustee Mull asked if there is language in the agreement for future maintenance, painting, etc.; Balsters stated that yes, we will retain the ability to maintain the tower as needed.

### **Elected Officials' Salary Ordinance**

By state statute, an updated Officials Salary Ordinance must be passed for the upcoming term no fewer than 180 days prior to the beginning of that term, so the time has come to update salaries for the mayor, clerk and trustee positions. Godfrey's proposed salaries were listed in today's issue of the Telegraph, and the Village also received a copy of Glen Carbon's survey salary as a thank you for our participation. Mayor distributed this information to the trustees, along with comparisons from other municipalities regarding their office staff and salaries for each, and a copy of Bethalto's mayor/clerk salary history over the last three terms, noting a 1% annual increase (and a 3% mayor's decrease at one point). Village employees received anywhere from 1.5-3% increases annually over the same period. Mayor asked the board to review the information presented and discuss how to proceed, stating it was for the board to determine salaries, including their own. Trustee Tweedy stated that in comparison to other neighboring communities, he believes we've got a "good deal" and that we should give appropriate increases to those who deserve it. Trustee Sontag stated she believes a bump up-front is necessary to adjust for the differences in past years, and then annual increases after that; Trustees Mull and Keister agreed and began discussing numbers. Trustee Perkhiser stated that a newly elected person should not be paid at the same rate as an experienced official, and that there are no guarantees of who will be in those seats; other trustees responded that the pay is for the duties of the position, not the person. Discussion turned to the trustees' annual pay, currently \$3300 per year. Trustee Tweedy suggested an increase of \$25 per month, which is what Godfrey proposed for theirs. Everyone felt that was fair and agreed. Trustee Keister returned the conversation to administrative salaries and noted that our administration provides the same services with only the mayor and clerk that other municipalities pay multiple personnel to do. She agreed that every election is an unknown but feels that we're getting more out of our people and that they haven't been compensated consistently with the CBA's and she is unsure why. Trustee Mull stated he believes everyone agrees that the annual increase should be consistent with contractual raises, but we should determine a starting bump in pay. Attorney Balsters noted that any increase set in this ordinance would likely set an expectation for upcoming union negotiations; Mayor Bost noted that there are still 2 years left on the public works contract, with the police contract expiring in 2025. Trustees Sontag and Keister reviewed the salary history and stated that they feel a fair start would be in the middle of the current rates of pay and what would have been had the contract raises been given over the past three terms and proposed those figures, along with a 3% increase the three years following. There was no opposition expressed, so Attorney Balsters will work up the ordinance for consideration at the October meeting to meet the deadline. Mayor added that if there needs to be further discussion prior to the meeting, let him know and we can arrange a special meeting as needed.

Having no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Mayor Bost at 7:21pm.

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Sue Lowrance, Village Clerk