

**VILLAGE OF BETHALTO
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 25, 2025, 6:00PM
VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Members Present:

Gary Bost	Brady Dugger	Rachel Sontag
Maria Perkhiser	Jay Wright	Terri Keister

Also Present:

Village Clerk Sue Lowrance	PW Director Rod Cheatham
Police Chief Jason Lamb	Finance Director/Treasurer Aleisha Randolph

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

Museum Use by Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce has expressed interest in utilizing the Village Museum as a home base, to offer their services to local businesses as well as those interested in starting up and/or locating in town. The Village received a substantial monetary donation from the Fowlers for upkeep up the museum, and by having the Chamber housed there, the building will be utilized, and more attention can be given to the needs of the building. HVAC work has been completed (\$20k) and a new front door is being constructed for the building (\$9800), but it was noted that much work still needs to be done. Trustee Keister, President of the Chamber, stated they have plans to set up a “small business incubator” as well as offer space for start-up businesses to utilize the Chamber’s services. A small conference room is planned for upstairs in the old school room as well. Once completed, the building could also be offered for other outside groups’ use. Keister noted that she would like to see a program offered through the high school that may get younger residents involved as volunteers, etc. Trustee Perkhiser asked what benefit this would have to taxpayers; Keister noted that the building is currently not utilized nor open to the public except twice a year, and that services offered by the Chamber are beneficial in promoting Bethalto and enticing businesses to locate here. Mayor Bost added that there would be no additional costs to the Village by hosting the Chamber, as utilities and upkeep are already paid monthly anyway. Having the Chamber housed there would allow the museum to be open to visitors on a regular basis as well, as there are no volunteers any longer who are able to do so. Bost stated that the Chamber is working to update the facility to meet their needs, and Keister added that supporting current businesses and recruiting new businesses is beneficial to taxpayers as well. Keister stated that the Chamber is committed to keeping the building functional and putting it to good use. Perkhiser noted that the Village charges entities like Cloud 9 for sports fields, and those groups also benefit the community; Keister stated it is not unusual for chambers to partner with their municipalities in this way, and a lot of needs of our local businesses are not being met by the RBGA. Perkhiser asked if there would be set open hours; Keister answered that is the goal, but it would likely not happen right

away. Perkhiser asked who would manage any reservations if future use allowed other groups to use the building, and Bost replied that we would figure that out when the time comes.

1% Grocery Tax

As discussed in previous meetings, the State of Illinois is discontinuing their implementation of the 1% grocery tax that has been in effect since 1990, effective January 1st. To maintain this stream of revenue, municipalities can elect to impose their own 1% sales tax by passing an ordinance prior to October 1st. The Village is predicting the loss of approximately \$360k in funding annually if we do not impose the tax; neighboring municipalities have already passed their ordinance. Bost noted that he initially was hesitant to implement the tax, and it was difficult to get an estimate from the State of the revenue that would be lost; once we determined the amount at stake, we realized that it would have an impact on our budget if we do not act. We can eliminate any tax imposed at a future date if we decide to do so. Trustees were reminded that this is not a new tax and will not cost residents more at the store, it is just a trade-off for a state-imposed tax vs. a locally imposed tax. Trustee Wright asked if the County could implement the tax; Randolph stated that if a business lies within a municipality, the municipality governs it; if unincorporated, the County could impose it.

All-inclusive playground

Mayor Bost stated that the Village can “borrow against” future PEP grants from Madison County as additional funds for the all-inclusive playground to be constructed behind the bandstand, just like we did when funding the Splash Pad, if the board wants to go in that direction. Our 2025 grant amount is \$73,549, with an estimated cost of the project at \$145,000. The County charges “interest” of 3% to do this, but this would allow the project to be completed all at once rather than spread out over a few years. This project would likely utilize our entire 2025 & 2026 grants, and a portion of our 2027 grant. Trustee Perkhiser asked if we could fund the project up-front and then reimburse ourselves with the grant funding, rather than “paying” the 3% interest; funds must be tied to an existing project, so reimbursement of a completed project is not allowed. Bost noted that the amounts generally increase annually, and are based on EAV and population, but that we are guaranteed a grant each year—the next two years will cover the total amount of the playground and then some. Trustee Keister asked if we could also use these funds for improvements at Field of Dreams; we can utilize the funds for improvements at any park, but money must be spent on parks only.

Façade Grant Awards

The full façade grant budget was not utilized in the last round of awards, but this round has several applications submitted already: Lifebrook Church, Bethalto Floor Store, Action Cleaning, Bethalto Animal Clinic, and the building that houses Terry’s Barber Shop. Businesses still have until September 15th to apply, but currently all of the submissions received to date can be funded with this round of awards.

Request for Stoplight at Moreland/Roosevelt

Over the years we have had several requests for a stoplight at Moreland/Roosevelt, so Mayor Bost asked Chief Lamb for his thoughts on this. Lamb stated that since 2020, there have been

10 accidents at that intersection, none of which are ever minor. Lamb agreed that traffic can be hectic along that route, especially when school is in session and at the start/end of the school day. He has had complaints from the church that drivers cut through their lot to avoid traffic as well. Mayor Bost noted that staggered school starting and ending times would be helpful, but it was noted that transportation logistics with buses could make that difficult. Keister further noted that traffic in general is increasing on Moreland Road, and Lamb added that if programmed correctly a light would likely not turn red often enough for Moreland traffic to get backed up too much. Lamb stated he would not be opposed to installing a light there. Cheatham stated that installation would likely cost around \$500k. Trustee Perkhiser asked if grants were available for this; Cheatham stated there is Safe School funding but only 10 accidents over 5 years probably wouldn't score the project high enough to be approved, and most grants also require installation of sidewalks which would add an additional \$500k to the project. Cheatham also noted that the future expansion of the bike trail would need to be considered, as it is planned for along Moreland Road. We already have 2-3 years' worth of projects outstanding, so looking at a project of this magnitude would likely come 4 years down the road or longer, but it is something we can investigate in the long run.

Mayor Bost asked Chief Lamb to address the rumors regarding SRO Shank "losing his job". Lamb stated that Shank has injured his knee and will be off work for an undetermined length of time, and since we have a contract with the school to provide an SRO, Lamb has appointed Patrolman Kelly McLaughlin to the position. McLaughlin has been a substitute teacher and currently teaches youth jiu jitsu classes and has expressed interest in serving as SRO in the past, so Lamb sees this as a good opportunity for McLaughlin and believes he will do an outstanding job as well. Lamb pointed out that there are several positions within the department that are "fluid": detective, field training officer, SRO, etc. and it is not unusual to move personnel around between duties.

Water Update

PW Director Cheatham announced that the entire system has been flushed and that 20 auto flushers have been installed and are in regular use. We are making some adjustments with filters at the water plant and have a team from our filter design company coming tomorrow to do some re-packing of filters. We have contracted with a dive team from South Dakota to examine the interiors of our storage tanks for any defects. Cheatham stated we are doing all we can do to address the discolored water issues at this time. The EPA-approved construction permits were signed and returned this morning, so the East Alton project should be going out for bid within the next few weeks; Cheatham anticipates that project being completed by the end of the year. Cheatham received word from school Superintendent Jill Griffin that the water at all five school buildings is clear, and Cheatham added that we are finding the same at Village Hall and residents are also reporting clear water. Any discoloration at this point will likely be isolated incidents. We had no calls for water quality on Thursday, one on Friday, and none today (Monday). Cheatham noted that we will be battling these issues for a long time, but that he feels we are on the upward trend. Two additional main replacement projects are in the engineering phases; one will require purchase of some property which will add a bit of time to the project, but he feels those are still moving along nicely. Cheatham and Mayor Bost had a

phone conference with Amy Elik and Erika Harriss, who stated they both will help push through any required EPA approvals so that we aren't waiting for those when the time comes. Cheatham addressed the packet of independent test results and other information that each trustee received in the water office night drop, noting that he can neither validate nor invalidate the tests as they were not our samples, but that they were processed by the same lab that the Village used for our testing. Trustee Wright pointed out that without knowing exactly how the samples were obtained, we cannot know the integrity of them. Trustee Keister asked if the project soon to be out for bid is the area of worst concern; Cheatham replied yes.

Having no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Mayor Bost at 6:40pm.

Sue Lowrance, Village Clerk