

Village of Michiana Council Meeting
March 22, 2024 at 1:00p.m. EST

The meeting was held in person and virtually via Zoom.

Roll Call

Council members: Tim McCarthy, Brian Cassidy and Mike Mumper were present. Tim McCarthy excused Nancy Thill and Mike Botelho. Also, present were Police Chief Ryan Layman, Water & Street Superintendent, Rick Reitz, Building Inspector Bill Lambert, Treasurer Tracey McCay, Village Attorney Sara Senica and Village Clerk Anne Heywood. Present were 12 residents and 9 participated via Zoom.

Additions/Deletions – N/A

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only - N/A

Minutes

Brian Cassidy made a motion to approve the December 8, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes and February 12, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes, Mike Mumper seconded the motion; motion passed.

REPORTS

Building Inspector Report - Bill Lambert reported 10 permits for the year so far and they will be starting a new house soon over on Chippewa.

Fire Chief Report – Chief Bendix - absent – report on file

Police Report - Police Chief Ryan Layman reported 92 calls for the past 3 months. The Officers attended CPR training class which is required every 2 years. Ryan and Rick are working on an application with the State regarding the buoys that are placed in the Lake. They are trying to have it registered as a swim area to keep the boats behind the buoys. The way the buoys work now, they are just a no wake zone and boats can come inside those areas and park close to the shoreline. Chief Layman announced that LT. George Knoll official retirement date is set for July 1st. Heather Crooks who is at the academy for training, will be taking over as soon as she graduates on May 10th. Ryan mentioned that they started working on the Marquett Bike Trail on the Indiana side along the frontage road. The trail sits across from the train tracks working its way to Woodcrest where the path will stop and move across the street and run along the train tracks on the Michigan side. This area is under construction and may have the road closed while working during the day.

Beach Report - Brian Cassidy reported the Beach Stop numbers have been placed on the shelters facing the lake so they can be seen from the beach in case of an emergency.

Public Works Report - Rick Reitz has been working on a list of needed drywells throughout the Village and getting quotes to see how many can be put in the new budget.

Water Report – Mike Mumper stated he is working with Rick and getting brought up to speed on the village water system and future needs since he has taken over for Brian

Cassidy. Rick explained he is working with Merritt to provide blue prints on the water lines located on the east side of White Ditch Creek. Rick stated the Village still has to complete the installation of new water lines on Choctaw, Comanche and Chickagami. Merritt is working on the schematics and cost estimates for the final phase.

Tree Report - Nancy Thill was not present but Rick Reitz talked about AEP starting trimming below power lines in the Village next week. The trees with red dots will only be trimmed and red X will be taken down. Rick said that the Village was awarded \$11,500 a matching grant that Nancy Thill had worked on with her community. Tim McCarthy thanked Nancy for all her hard working making this happen.

Planning Commission – Mike Botelho was not present but was present via zoom. Mike has filled the last opening on the planning commission. Mike asked the council if they could appoint Ron Rossato. Tim McCarthy made motion to appoint Ron Rossato to the Planning Commission; Brian Cassidy seconded the motion; there was discussion regarding Ron’s background. Ron has lived in the Village for 35 years and has been a full-time resident for the past 4 years; a roll call vote was taken 3 ayes and 0 nays; motioned passed. Mike thanked the council and will be putting together a Planning Commission Meeting in April. The plan is to talk about a few items like the Noise and Lighting Ordinance that may need to be amended and a future review of updating the Village Master Plan. Mike explained the role of the Planning Commission is to look at these issues and make recommendations to the council, and the Council will then have the final approval.

Treasurer Report – Tracey McCay gave the treasurer report and stated we currently have \$40,691 in the Pokagon Fund. Tracey told the Council that the Water CD maturity date was on March 5th and the Village council allowed a rollover since the interest rates were higher than 4.5%. Tim McCarthy also thanked Tracey for a great budget workshop that was held earlier that morning.

Clerk Report - Anne Heywood asked the council for approval for the Check Register in the amount of \$509,074.96; Tim McCarthy made motion to approve the check register as presented; Mike Mumper seconded; motion was approved by all. Anne stated annual lottery for the kayak and paddle board spots would be taking place and the last day to enter the lottery will be May 1st. The beach stops for kayak racks will be stop 38, 39, the new 40 and 41.5. The spots will again be \$75.00 one per home. Golf and parking stickers for 2024 are available for purchase, the fees are the same as last year. Golf cart stickers \$20 and parking stickers for the marked parking area at stop 41 are \$10 each, limit 2 per home. Anne has Michiana wear, tan hooded sweatshirts. There are only a few navy hooded sweatshirts available. Please call the office if you’re interested.

Old Business

- 1. Update on Village Hall Renovation** – Holly Duran said they were working on an update of the details for the hall renovation and will be posted on the Village website.
- 2. Update on the New Buffalo Lawsuit** – Sara had to appear before the Court of Appeals for an oral hearing where you present your case and argument before the judges. Sara felt that her presentation went very well during her oral appeal and answered all of the questions that the judges asked regarding the lawsuit with the

Township. The Court has approximately 2 -8 weeks to provide their written decision. The link was available in You-tube to watch. Depending on the outcome, the Villages (Michiana and Grand Beach), if needed, can still take the case up to the Supreme Court.

New Business

- 1. Tree Grant** – Rick reported on the grant under the Tree Report.
- 2. Resolution 2024-002 Operating Millage** – Sara Senica the Village Attorney explained the renewal of the Operating Millage which helps maintain the Villages ability to provide all of the services necessary to manage our Village and provide services to our residents. Tim explained to the residents this tax was not an increase, this millage has to be voted on every 5 years. Tim McCarthy made a motion to adopt the renewal of the Operating Millage by Resolution along with the Ballot language for the August 6th election; Mike Mumper seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; motion passed.
- 3. Creek Grant** – Biran Cassidy was excited to announce we recently received notification from Congressman Walberg’s office that the Village of Michiana was approved to receive the Federal Grant that we applied for in 2023 for improving a large portion of our water infrastructure in the of \$620,000. This grant was for the project on Creek and Chickagami replacing 4” pipe with 6” plastic pipe for better quality and flow of water. The grant will also allow us to replace a 500 GPM pump in the pump house with a 750 GPM for better flow to the residents and to replace 600 feet of 4” cast iron pipe with 6” plastic pipe along Lake Shore Dr. north of Michiana Drive. Tim McCarthy thanked Rick, Anne and Brian for working to get this grant done in less than 48 hours. Tim also thanked Nancy Thill for her attending around table meeting where she was able to introduce herself and explain our need for major improvements to our water system. She also invited the Congressman and his staff t join us for our Arbor Day celebration in the Park last Fall. Great networking Nancy!!
- 4. Michiana Shores Volunteer Fire Contract Renewal** – Tim McCarthy made a motion to renew the Michiana Shores Volunteer Fire Contract for another 4 years. Tim explained that the cost of the contract for the first renewal year would remain the same and after that there will be a 2% annual increase. Brian Cassidy seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; 3 ayes 0 nays; motion passed.
- 5. Employee Retirement & Salary Resolution 2024-001** - Tim McCarthy made a motion to approve a 3% salary increase for all the employees to be built into the 2024/2025 budget. Mike Mumper seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; 3 ayes and 0 nays; motion passed. Tim McCarthy explained that the employees have a weak retirement plan. After months of research and review of several types of retirement plans, including at simple IRA, 401K’s and the MERS system, the Council decided it would be too costly and not beneficial. The council put together a 3-tier retirement plan based on number of years of service over a ten year period. Each employee would then be able to pick where he or she would like to invest their money. The Village will deposit the funds directly into the employees chosen retirement account. Tim McCarthy made a motion to move forward with the 3-tier retirement plan for the employees and have Sara Senica draft language to include

in the Village employee HR manual as an added layer of protection for the employees; Brian Cassidy seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; 3 ayes and 0 nays; motioned passed.

Correspondence – N/A

Public Comment – Tyler Wilson from Ponchartrain would like a drywell in the area of Tahoma and Ponchartrain from the water that runs down from the hills. Holly Duran also reminded the council about the run off at Hillside and Dune Ridge Road. Pam Schutt from Creek Drive would like to see more signs at the beaches with the times dogs can be at the beach. Would like to see different surface material for the bocci ball court. Tim asked her if she would explore different ideas and report back with cost. Pam asked about White Ditch being cleaned up. Brian Cassidy said he made many calls to the DNR, EGLE, Corr of Engineers, and to the State Rep and was not getting much help. He said he would continue again to see what could be done. Mike Botelho reminded the attendees that the awarding of the water grant to the Village was huge win for Michiana. we were awarded is a BIG deal for our Village. Mike thanked the staff for making this happen. Nancy Thill reminded everyone that AEP will be trimming trees and taking down around 11 trees in the village that are sitting in public right-away. Nancy also said we were accepted in the Tree USA program and can use their logo. Nancy thanked everyone who worked with her in writing the grant. The Village was awarded \$11,500 of a matching grant to be used for caring and planting of trees in the Village

Tim made a motion to adjourn Mike Mumper seconded.

Respectful submitted,

Anne Heywood/Clerk