

**VILLAGE OF THIENSVILLE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

DATE: Monday, March 1, 2021

LOCATION: 250 Elm Street

TIME: 6:00 PM

**Fire Department Training Room
Thiensville, WI**

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Mobley called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

President:	Van Mobley	
Trustees:	Jennifer Abraham	Rob Holyoke
	Angelina Apostolos	Ken Kucharski
	Kristina Eckert	David Lange
Administrator:	Colleen Landisch-Hansen	
Staff:	Director of Community Services/Public Works	Andy LaFond
	Fire Chief Brian Reiels	
	Police Chief Curt Kleppin	
	Village Clerk/Deputy Treasurer	Amy Langlois

III. BUSINESS

A. Update regarding Lionfest, Thiensville-Mequon Lions Club (Jim Doornek)

Jim Doornek, Thiensville-Mequon Lions Club shared that Lionfest will be held this year in Village Park on June 10-13, 2021. This will be the 56th year for Lionfest. Mr. Doornek appreciates the cooperation from the Village for this event; in turn, the Lions have contributed to the Village generously.

About two years ago some members suggested looking at moving Lionfest to Rotary Park in Mequon. The reasons for considering the move are due to concerns regarding space limitations due to landscaping, the stage and future plans for a water feature and perhaps ice skating. Mr. Doornek apologized for any false rumors regarding the future of Lionfest. Mr. Doornek is a liaison with Mequon to see if this move is feasible. The objective is only to do what is best for the Lions Club long term. There were some issues and concerns regarding making that change i.e. ordinances, costs, electrical capacity and softball tournament ability. After meeting with the City of Mequon it was learned that they developed in August of last year a new Large Event Policy. The application was submitted. In December of last year three meetings were held with Mequon starting with the Park and Open Spaces Board, Public Works and finally the Common Council, and in mid-January the Lions did get approval and a rental cost. Now a decision needed to be made. In late January there were several meetings with the entire membership and on February 2nd the Board met and voted not to make the move this year and stay in Village Park for 2021. The move will be explored further.

Mr. Doornek apologized for the short notice to the Village and made a commitment at the February meeting to get the club together to make a firm decision by August of this year for next year's event.

President Mobley thanked Mr. Doornek for his years of service.

Trustee Holyoke inquired if there was any contingency plan in light of any Covid issues. Mr. Doornek stated that plans are to do whatever can be done to stay safe in terms of signage for social distancing and requiring masks. The carnival supplier and tent provider have been contacted; most of their events for the season are still on. The Lions will do the very best they can to be safe.

Mr. Doornek thanked the Board.

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B. Presentation and recommendation regarding the 2020 Thiensville Police Department Annual Report Presented by Police Chief Curt Kleppin

Police Chief Kleppin presented the 2020 Thiensville Police Department Annual Report.

The year was somewhat uneventful due to Covid. A lot of the average numbers were below average; this is country-wide.

Chief Kleppin shared the following highlights:

1. Continue to work on updating the evidence room.
2. Implemented video referral. An officer now does not have to drive to the County to drop off paperwork.
3. Implementing annual employee evaluations.
4. Both holding cells are now certified with the state so people can be held here at the Village until transported to the County. Two cameras were added.
5. Use of Force Policy was updated which included training. This Policy was also sent to the state which was then certified. This will allow us to be awarded future grant money.
6. New computer server was installed.
7. Crime reporting was updated and are using a new program.
8. New business cards.
9. Warrants have been eliminated allowing the Department to put these fees on the tax roll.
10. The All-Hazard Emergency Plan is being updated.
11. New body cameras and squad cameras have been ordered.
12. A Stay-Out Letter Process was implemented. This will allow businesses to inform the Police Department of any individuals that are not allowed at that business.
13. In-house training was significantly improved.
14. Door-Hanger program has been implemented. A door hanger would be placed at a residence as a reminder to close garage door or lock up.
15. Constantly looking at pursuit policies.
16. Two officers have been sent to Field Training Officer (FTO) training. This is a four-month process and allows our Officers to train new Officers.

Trustee Kucharski inquired what a family offense is. Chief Kleppin shared that this could be a domestic of some sort or argument.

President Mobley thanked Chief Kleppin.

C. Update regarding Sex Offender Notice

Chief Kleppin shared that a sex offender was released back to the community on February 23, 2021. His name is Carl Johnson and lives in the 300 block of Freistadt Road. Mr. Johnson was convicted of possessing child pornography and was convicted in August, 2013. Mr. Johnson did three years of prison time and released after three years. Probation was violated then on two occasions. The last one was in July, 2019, and the Thiensville Police Department arrested him for that offense. Mr. Johnson went back to prison. Chief Kleppin did have a press release to make the public aware.

Chief Kleppin contact Mr. Johnson's parole officer, and it was shared that Mr. Johnson is adjusting to his new life and doing very well. There are extensive rules that Mr. Johnson must follow. The law requires that if an offender had lived at a location prior to the conviction, he can legally return; it is different if the individual had not lived there before. The Police Department and the County have all met with Mr. Johnson sharing guidelines that must be followed: not allowed in the Park, not allowed to be around children, must register for the rest of his life and is on GPS monitoring

The SORP program has been implemented. This is a program where every 4-6 months the Department will stop by to check in on any sex offenders in the Village.

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D. Update regarding Thiensville Fire Department Staffing (Assistant Chief Deutsch)

Assistant Chief Joel Deutsch presented an update regarding the Fire Department staffing. Assistant Chief Deutsch is the sole full-time member of the Thiensville Fire Department.

Assistant Chief Deutsch shared that the Department's staffing is a critical low. Village Ordinance states that the Department must inform the Village Board any time the Department consists of less than 22 members. The roster at the end of 2020 comprised of 22 people. Assistant Chief Deutsch stated that the Department responded 944 times last year.

Assistant Chief Deutsch stated these three words describe what it means to be a member of the Thiensville Fire Department: dedication, passion and pride.

Members are required to be both firefighters and EMT's of which each are a semester course, they need to be on call for a minimum of 72 hours per month, at least 12 of those hours on the weekend and they also have to attend at least 65% of monthly practices.

Currently, there are 26 members on the Department; even though total numbers may be increasing, we are uncertain what the future holds. Of the 26 members only 18 are active, however, several of the active members are seeking full-time positions and will likely resign this year. There are two members who are inactive due to recent full-time employment and anticipate losing those members within a year as well. Two are Police Officers who have been very beneficial in providing initial care and treatment prior to our arrival; the Officers do not respond to calls nor are they signed up for monthly on-call hours. The remaining four do not hold any certifications but are currently enrolled in courses. There are six people currently in the hiring process.

Assistant Chief Deutsch thanked the Board for their support and investing money in recruitment efforts. At the beginning of February of this year, the Department enrolled in a recruitment software package. This package includes sponsored ads on social media. As a result, there are two individuals in the hiring process.

The hiring process starts with a candidate submitting an online job application. After that, an interview is scheduled and conducted. If selected to move forward, the next step is a background check performed by the Thiensville Police Department, Village Board approval, physical agility testing performed by a third party and lastly orientation. This can take 2-4 months. Once hired, courses may need to be taken to become a Firefighter and EMT which can take anywhere from 6-18 months to complete. Last year the call volume increased by 9%; simultaneously the membership decreased by 26% including the loss of two key responders.

In 2016, the Department responded to 649 calls versus 944 in 2020. This is a 45% increase with a 42% decrease in total members. When responding to the 944 calls, 2.5 people was the average per call. For reference, we need a minimum of two licensed medical professionals – an EMT and Paramedic or two Paramedics – for each ambulance call.

The average turnout for a fire call was 4.5 members. The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services requires a minimum of 4 Firefighters per call. Of those 4.5 members, two of them are typically Chief Officers. Furthermore, four of the same people respond to approximately 90% of the calls. Due to Covid, at one point three of the four key responders were unavailable at the same time which demonstrated how much these individuals are relied upon. These four individuals include:

- 1) Assistant Chief Deutsch (on-call hours totaled over 5,000 for 2020 – an employee is full-time at 2,080 hours)
- 2) Chris Wunsch which has been a member of the Department since 2015. Mr. Wunsch started as an EMT Basic and is now a Firefighter, Paramedic and Heavy Equipment Operator. Mr. Wunsch responded to approximately 1/3 of the calls and had over 2,700 on-call hours.
- 3) Peter Neuman – Due to most of the members having full-time jobs and are busy during the day, Mr. Neuman has been vital to the Department responding to day-time calls. Director of Community Services/Public Works Andy LaFond has been generous allowing Mr. Neuman to respond to many of these calls. Outside of his work hours, Mr. Neuman put in over 1,700 on-call hours.

4. Chief Brian Reiels – In addition to working a full-time job, Chief Reiels responds significantly on week nights and weekends. Chief Reiels had over 2,700 on-call hours last year.

Honorable mention is Captain Patrick Williams who has been with the Department since 1989. Mr. Williams is the primary Heavy Equipment Operator. Mr. Williams put in the second most on-call hours last year at almost 3,000 hours.

Assistant Deutsch shared that this model will not be able to be sustained moving forward. Inconsistency is one of the most challenging aspects of the current system. Some days staffing is sparse and other times all positions are filled. The majority of the staff are not from the immediate area so at times mutual aid is required. We are thankful for this as we can draw candidates from a larger area.

These issues will not be resolved on their own or tomorrow nor are they unique to the Village. All departments in the County are struggling.

Assistant Chief Deutsch stated that the Department looks forward to the discussion regarding the Wisconsin Policy Forum study in the coming weeks, however, if the strategies that are discussed are not viable for the Department, they will have to get creative with solutions for staffing of the Fire Department creating a plan to bring stability. It is owed to the community and those we serve to start putting together a strategy to provide reliable, consistent and sustainable solutions for staffing.

Assistant Chief Deutsch thanked the Board for their support and looks forward to working together to solve these issues.

- E. Review and recommendation regarding Appointing New Fire Department Members:
 1. Rebecca R. Brunette
 2. Jetta V. Nunez-Mura
 3. Samuel J. Parlapiano

MOTION by Trustee Lange, **SECONDED** by Trustee Abraham to recommend to the Village Board to Appoint Rebecca R. Brunette, Jetta V. Nunez-Mura and Samuel J. Parlapiano as New Fire Department Members. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- F. Review and recommendation regarding Resolution 2021-02 Authorizing the Full Redemption of \$460,000 Special Assessment B Bonds, Series 2013A

Administrator Landisch-Hansen presented Resolution 2021-02 which authorizes paying off the remaining principal of the 2013 Special Assessment B Bonds for Laurel Acres.

MOTION by Trustee Holyoke, **SECONDED** by Trustee Eckert to recommend to the Village Board to Approve Resolution 2021-02 Authorizing the Full Redemption of \$460,000 Special Assessment B Bonds, Series 2013A. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- G. Update on 2020 Audit

Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that the annual audit fieldwork was conducted the week of February 8, 2021. There are still a few open items. A very preliminary estimate from the financials for 2020 is that the General Fund Operations operated at a loss last year of about \$100,000. This is mostly due to loss of revenue. When the budget was approved, interest rates were on the way up so interest revenue was projected to increase for 2020, however, interest rates tanked.

Other revenues that were lost include citation revenue and Village Park rentals. The Village does budget an appropriation every year for use of Fund Balance which for 2020 was \$240,000. The Village was under budget in regards to expenses.

H. Review and recommendation regarding Fourteenth Amended Agreement for the Operation of the Mid-Moraine Municipal Court

The Mid-Moraine Municipal Court Administrative Committee passed a motion to renew the Village's Agreement to continue with Mid-Moraine Municipal Court.

MOTION by Trustee Abraham, **SECONDED** by Trustee Apostolos to recommend to the Village Board to Approve Fourteenth Amended Agreement for the Operation of the Mid-Moraine Municipal Court. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

I. Discussion regarding Selecting Trustee to Conduct Village Administrator Annual Review

Trustee Kucharski offered to join President Mobley to conduct Village Administrator Landisch-Hansen's Annual Review.

J. Update regarding Wisconsin Policy Forum Joint Fire/EMS Study Timeline

Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that based on Assistant Chief Deutsch's report, there is a trend that calls are going up and staffing is going down. Administrator Landisch-Hansen would like commend the Fire Department and the Village Board for working together on this cooperative study with other municipalities throughout Ozaukee County to get valuable information for moving forward.

The draft report is very close to being finalized. Once released, things will move very quickly. Hopes are to get the report to the Board early next week for review. There are plans to have a virtual launch meeting throughout the County. Logistics are still being finalized. The date for the virtual launch is Thursday, March 11, 2021. The report is scheduled to be released publicly on Friday, March 12, 2021.

President Mobley encouraged the residents to take a look at this study.

At the Village Board meeting on Monday, March 15, 2021, there is tentatively scheduled a presentation from the Wisconsin Policy Forum. The presenter is expecting their first grandchild so this date may need to be moved to the April Board meeting.

President Mobley stated that the Fire Department provides a critical service that the Village must focus on and get right.

K. Update regarding Gala in the Park, 2021

Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that the Park Committee met last week. Last year's Gala was cancelled, however, plans are to move forward with the 2021 Gala in the Park. This is an outside event. The vendors that were scheduled for last year's event have all committed to return this year. Some modifications may include not having dancing and maybe having more of a show so those attending can remain in their seats and still get an entertaining experience. The Gala is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2021.

The Village has been fortunate that a number of generous individuals have donated to the Park in 2020. There were some boulder sales for the Giving Tree and the Board received a presentation from a community member looking to donate for an ice rink. Meetings have been held bi-weekly to continue this discussion and vendors, architects and designers are being researched. The direction currently being looked at is a reconstructed pavilion with the ice underneath and increasing the size. Also being looked at are what efficiencies could be made if doing both the ice skating and splash pad at the same time to save on construction time.

**L. Discussion regarding Role and Future of Historic Preservation Commission
(Trustee Lange)**

Trustee Lange asked to open this discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Commission. About three months ago the Board ruled differently on an item than the HPC. A comment was made from a resident that questioned if the Board and HPC were on the same team. Trustee Lange stated he has learned how technical the HPC is in regards to materials, technique, etc. There have been some resignations and Trustee Lange would like to open this up for discussion i.e. adding a construction person or work with another municipality. Appointments are made to Village Committees and Commissions in April so this may be a good time for this discussion.

Trustee Abraham, the Board appointed Trustee to the HPC, shared the Village Code in regards to the Historic Preservation Commission:

- The purpose and intent is to protect, enhance and perpetuate such improvement in districts that represent or reflect the elements of the Village's cultural, social, economic, political, engineering and architectural history.
- Safeguard the Village's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in its historic structures, sites and districts.
- Stabilize and improve property values.
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the pasts.
- Protect and enhance the Village's attractions for residents, tourists and visitors, and support and stimulate business and industry.
- Strengthen the economy of the Village.
- Promote the use of the historic structures, sites and districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the Village.

The powers of the Historic Preservation Commission include:

- Recommend to the Village Board the designation of structures, sites and districts within the Village as historic Village landmarks.
- Recommend to the Village Board the rescission or modification of any such designation.
- Conduct public hearings.
- Regulate construction, reconstruction, exterior alteration and demolition activity on or affecting any historic landmark site, structure or district.
- Recommend to the Village Board appropriate procedures for public recognition of structures, sites or districts.
- Do such other things as are consistent with the purpose and intent of this chapter and these ordinances or as the Village Board from time to time shall direct.

Trustee Abraham shared that the HPC does have regular meetings which for the most part are regulating the construction, reconstruction, exterior alteration and demolition activity on or affecting any historic landmark site, structure or district. The other things the HPC is involved with on a regular basis are participation in state-wide seminars regarding historic preservation, there is a plaque program and a walking tour as well as other activities.

The Village President is not a member of the HPC and looks to the Trustee on the HPC for information. President Mobley suggested to the HPC to streamline the process and widen the scope to possibly have the Administrator and/or Director of Community Services/Public Works review and approve basis items. President Mobley inquired if this has been discussed among HPC members. Trustee Abraham shared that this discussion has not occurred.

Trustee Abraham shared that guidelines could be developed for remote meetings, however, the concern is color, texture and three-dimensional issues that cannot be done on a zoom call. This could possibly be handled by Administrator Landisch-Hansen or Director LaFond. This may alleviate the monthly in-person meetings.

Mr. Heinritz, Chairman of the HPC, asked to speak. President Mobley stated Mr. Heinritz cannot speak at this time.

Trustee Eckert believes as though there may be some procedural and efficiency issues with the HPC and wondered if Administrator Landisch-Hansen and Director LaFond could report back to the Board in the next couple weeks with suggestions for improvement. President Mobley agreed and asked to coordinate this with Trustee Abraham.

Trustee Holyoke believes that the HPC is needed and has concerns about the extra work for Village staff. Trustee Abraham agrees and would like to see the HPC remain and finds value in their work.

M. Discussion regarding Parking Lot Lease, 121 South Main Street

There has been much discussion regarding parking in the B-1 District. The parking lot lease between the Village and Greg Mueller at 121 South Main Street is renewed on a year-to-year basis. If there are any changes to this lease, a 60 day notice must be made prior to the expiration date.

The lot at 121 South Main Street includes about 12 spots now – if made contiguous with the Village lot currently owned, this could get 15-16 more spaces by redesign, paving the area in between and possibly burying an electrical pole. There are about 22 in the public lot on Buntrock Avenue and could add 12-16 more.

Trustee Abraham inquired if this lot is within the distance that a recent parking study had shown that people are willing to walk. Director LaFond confirmed, that yes, this lot is within the 350 feet that people are willing to walk.

Trustee Holyoke inquired if the Village could get some spaces from that parking lot without taking away the lease from Mr. Mueller. Director LaFond stated this would be an opportunity to connect both lots and all of it would be needed to have the circulation to use those additional spots. Trustee Holyoke hopes to reach some compromise regarding this lot.

B-1 District parking will be discussed again at a future meeting.

N. Discussion regarding Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department/Vaccinations

Trustee Holyoke shared that the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department has been trying to vaccinate people that do not have access to computers. The County's charge on vaccines is only to vaccinate 15% of the population – people can go to CVS or Walgreens.

President Mobley shared that what he has heard from other constituents is that the County government, not the Village government, is responsible for distributing vaccines and that people from other counties are getting their vaccine faster than those in Ozaukee County. President Mobley would like to know why. President Mobley asked Trustee Holyoke to forward this concern to the County.

Trustee Holyoke shared that just from watching the news, it appears that Ozaukee County is one of the better in the state as far as the percent of those vaccinated.

**O. Discussion regarding Communication with the Public in Response to Public Concerns
(Trustee Eckert)**

Trustee Eckert shared that there have been many emails shared lately and believes that as a Village we can do better in acknowledging these emails and responding to them. Trustee Eckert is unclear as to legally what can be responded to and has had many conversations with residents saying that their emails have never been responded to. Trustee Eckert is not comfortable with this and asked what can the Board do to do better.

President Mobley thanked Trustee Eckert and has the same concerns and shared that whenever there is an email addressed to the Board, how can one member respond on behalf of the entire Board. Administrator Landisch-Hansen will bring this to the Village Attorney for direction.

Trustee Eckert stated that if a poll were taken among the residents, she does not believe that they realize their emails have been read due to the fact that they have not received a response. Trustee Holyoke believes that a response can be made, however, responses should not be made to “reply all” but can respond to one person.

Trustee Apostolos asked if there could be some clarity and a suggestion regarding some type of response that would not only acknowledge that an email was received but also what they can do further if they felt like they wanted a response.

Trustee Lange believes that if writing to a federal official a letter or email is sent in reply stating that the letter has been documented.

The state has clear rules regarding communication among Board members.

**P. Discussion and recommendation regarding Hybrid Virtual Meeting Format
(Trustee Apostolos)**

Trustee Apostolos shared that this evening she has brought to the agenda a desire to further discuss whether including a virtual or hybrid meeting option is something the Board would like to temporarily add to the Village meeting procedures. This topic deserves attention given the current Covid health situation and the feedback received from neighbors as well as some of those serving on the HPC. Trustee Apostolos personally regrets that the meeting on February 15th did not include any meaningful open discussion between Trustees and Village staff regarding this topic.

Trustee Apostolos believes that part of her role as Village Trustee is to listen to and consider requests from residents and making decisions while collaborating with the Board to do what is best for the Village as a whole. When appointed in August, 2020, meetings were held in-person and have been held in that manner ever since. Trustee Apostolos personally believes that the meetings are safe due to wearing masks and with the physical distance between participants and finds a lot of value meeting in-person. There is a level of energy and collaboration that leads to better decision making that is fostered through in-person interaction. In addition, there is a lot of formality and process involved, and meeting in-person has helped Trustee Apostolos follow along, participate and understand processes. In no way, is Trustee Apostolos undervaluing the importance of the health safety measures at this time and has not participated in any Village hybrid meetings. Trustee Apostolos is relying on the Board and administrative staff for their experiences when virtual meetings were held.

Trustee Apostolos has not attended an HPC meeting and asked if anyone who has had experience on this Commission can speak to the importance of meeting in-person and whether a virtual meeting format would potentially impact decision making or delay the process. Also, it would be interesting to learn how frequently this type of presentation occurs.

Lastly, if it is found that the review and examination of building materials is best in-person, Trustee Apostolos asked whether a workaround could be made if it is decided to proceed with virtual meetings. For example, perhaps the presenter could have materials available for viewing at Village Hall days prior to the meeting creating a private and safe material review option. Trustee Apostolos asked for Board input.

Trustee Eckert regrets not speaking up at the last meeting and believes her responsibility as an elected official is to listen to the public. Also, Trustee Eckert stated that her definition of “safe” is different from someone else’s definition of “safe” and respects that and likes the suggestion of having materials available to view prior to the meeting. It is the hope that we are headed forward and leaving Covid behind us but it is understood that this will not be a quick process. Trustee Eckert feels that we should listen to our volunteers; they love the Village they serve and if meeting virtual means that much to them, the Board should consider this.

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Trustee Abraham appreciates the suggestions and believes that all the options should be evaluated. The one concern is to have something that is workable for the long-term.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that the Village did initially have hybrid meetings which Village staff made work. By having the meetings in-person we have ensured that we are following open meetings law. Once you start going into different formats, accessibility to the public must be offered so if we offer meetings in a virtual format, we need to ensure that the public is able to also view it that way.

Other communities are offering the virtual option, but a lot of these communities are larger than us and have a larger staff. On Mondays when we were virtual, a good portion of the day went to testing the technology. Administrator Landisch-Hansen believes we did very well with what was available.

President Mobley shared that accessibility has to be provided if offering hybrid meetings – if hybrid meetings are held, a viewing area needs to be set up for people to view the meeting. This applies to all governmental body meetings. There cannot be the assumption that everyone has access to a computer, internet, etc. and that is why we would have to provide that avenue if going to this format. There is a time function for the staff as well as costs; this is not in this year's budget. Trustee Abraham inquired if a cost estimate of what this would cost is available. Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that back when this all started, we were not able to get some of the equipment we needed due to demand.

As President Mobley stated, these items are not currently budgeted; so if the Board would like to pursue purchasing this equipment, then something that was already approved in the capital projects fund may have to be reconsidered.

Trustee Holyoke stated that he was able to hear fine when the meetings were held by Zoom and agreed it is not perfect. In regards to making the meeting accessible to the public, Trustee Holyoke stated that the meetings are still open to the public and they can attend in-person.

Trustee Holyoke stated that there has been a number of people volunteer to be the Zoom operator to help the Village and does not think this is too expensive to do. Trustee Holyoke cautioned about putting a timeline on any decision. President Mobley suggested asking the staff to look into the expense.

Trustee Kucharski suggested that temporarily we just offer Zoom meetings for the members of all the other committees. President Mobley believes that the implications should be known before a decision is made. Trustee Kucharski feels as though there is a middle ground and has heard that by July 1st everyone will have been offered or have been vaccinated in the State of Wisconsin. Trustee Kucharski suggested offering Zoom for the remainder of March, April, May and June with July as the target date and then resuming as normal. Trustee Holyoke stated once arriving at that date, this should be evaluated/revisited.

President Mobley shared that there are other options for those people concerned about attending meetings i.e. suspend the meetings or resign at this time and step forward again later. There are other people in the Village who want to serve. There is a financial aspect if offering virtual and hybrid meetings and suggested looking into these costs and asking Village staff to come back with information. Trustee Holyoke asked that in the meantime we would have hybrid meetings? President Mobley stated that in the meantime the Board and Plan Commission will meet in person as they have been, and there are no other meetings scheduled before the Board meeting on March 15, 2021.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen stated that if the meeting format was changed there would have to be formal action by the Board. According to the open meetings law, an avenue would need to be provided to residents to view virtual meetings even if the Board attends in-person.

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Trustee Holyoke inquired if other communities have been contacted regarding their processes. President Mobley stated they may not be doing it correctly. Trustee Holyoke stated, so what we should just do it the way other communities are doing it and let someone come after us. Administrator Landisch-Hansen stated she is not comfortable violating open meetings law and would like to look into this further to ensure that we are conducting meetings correctly. President Mobley would like to ask the Village staff to look into this further and report back to the Board. Trustee Holyoke believes that now is the time to be offering hybrid meeting and not waiting for three months.

Technology has come a long way since the beginning of the pandemic and there is more guidance from the League and from DOJ than what we had initially. Administrator Landisch-Hansen does not feel that this will take the staff long to do more research.

MOTION by Trustee Holyoke, **SECONDED** by Trustee Kucharski to recommend to the Village Board to Approve Hybrid Meetings Through July 1, 2021.

It is Trustee Apostolos' understanding that hybrid meetings can be more cumbersome to facilitate than an all virtual meeting. Administrator Landisch-Hansen agreed. Trustee Apostolos inquired if there was a reason we have to do hybrid and cannot just do all virtual. Trustee Apostolos believes the Board should continue to meet in-person, however, offer to all the commissions to have the choice of going all virtual if they believe they can continue to do their jobs and make decisions.

Trustee Lange asked for clarification regarding whether the motion was for all commissions. Trustee Holyoke answered yes, all committees and Board.

Trustee Holyoke stated that final action will be taken at the Board meeting leaving two weeks for the staff to look into this. President Mobley asked for the expense of this to be looked into. Trustee Holyoke does not see this change costing anything because we have done it.

Trustee Lange asked if Trustee Holyoke would be willing to amend his motion to include Colleen and Andy to come up with costs, procedures and to look into the open meeting law.

Amended MOTION by Trustee Holyoke, **SECONDED** by Trustee Kucharski to recommend to the Village Board to Move the Issue of Hybrid Meetings for Administrator Landisch-Hansen and Director of Community Services Andy LaFond to Look Into the Feasibility, Costs, Legality and Options for Village Board and All Commission Meetings Through July 1, 2021.

President Mobley shared that Administrator Landisch-Hansen and Director LaFond are busy with other things in the budget as priorities of the Village i.e. Gala in the Park, garbage truck, redevelopment of the Village. The more you have them do and spend on other things, the less time they have to do and spend on these things that were identified in the budget.

Trustee Eckert emphasized that our Village Administrator should not ever be asked to do something that would be unethical or compromise the Village. Trustee Holyoke stated he didn't say do to something illegal, we should do what we think is right. President Mobley shared that there have been serious problems generated in southeastern Wisconsin by meeting by Zoom and if going to Zoom, that takes sacrifice and is not cost free.

Trustee Apostolos asked if the motion could be amended to include hybrid or all virtual and be considered this for each commission. Administrator Landisch-Hansen appreciates the direction from the Board.

Amended MOTION by Trustee Holyoke, **SECONDED** by Trustee Kucharski to recommend that Administrator Landisch-Hansen and Director of Community Services Andy LaFond Look Into Feasibility, Costs, Legality and Meeting Options for Hybrid, All Virtual or Keeping Meeting Format as It Is Now, for Village Board and All Commission Meetings Through July 1, 2021 for Review and Action by Village Board. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Q. Discussion and recommendation regarding Televising Village Board Meetings and Committee Meetings

Administrator Landisch-Hansen stated that in the past there was discussion to broadcast meetings so people could view at home; there would not be public interaction. Televising is different than hybrid or virtual because there is no interaction. This is purely for viewing.

When using Zoom, all the participants appear in a square on the computer. Televising would be a camera in the Board Room showing the entire room. Trustee Apostolos believes that televising is long-term and Zooming is temporary and would like to look into this in the future.

Trustee Lange shared that his church has started streaming and televising service and it is a big investment and takes a fair amount of skill and knowledge. Trustee Lange agreed with Trustee Apostolos.

This has been tabled until discussing the budget.

R. Review and recommendation regarding accepting Resignation from Bob Blazich, Historic Preservation Commission, Term to Expire May, 2022

Trustee Holyoke asked if the Board would not take any action on this until the decision by the Board regarding hybrid and virtual meetings. President Mobley stated Mr. Blazich did give a dated resignation and has resigned from the Historic Preservation Commission. President Mobley thanked Mr. Blazich for his service.

MOTION by Trustee Lange to recommend to the Village Board to accept Resignation from Bob Blazich, Historic Preservation Commission, Term to Expire May, 2022 With Much Gratitude For All the Work He Has Done in the Past. No Second. **MOTION FAILED.**

S. Review and recommendation regarding accepting Resignation from Jamie Awe, Historic Preservation Commission, Term to Expire May, 2023

Trustee Kucharski noted that the resignation from Jamie Awe is due to keeping his family safe. President Mobley thanked Mr. Awe for his service.

MOTION by Trustee Kucharski, **SECONDED** by Trustee Abraham to recommend to the Village Board to accept Resignation from Jamie Awe, Historic Preservation Commission, Term to Expire May, 2023 With Much Gratitude.

Ayes: Trustees Abraham, Apostolos, Eckert, Kucharski, Lange and President Mobley

Naes: Trustee Holyoke

MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT RESOLUTION NUMBER:	2021-03
NEXT ORDINANCE NUMBER:	2021-02

IV. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

A. Citizens to be Heard

Open to any citizen who wishes to speak on items not on the agenda. Please step to the podium and give your name and address for the record.

Deb Michalski – 111 Ellenbecker Road – Ms. Michalski inquired if agendas could be posted earlier than the Friday before the meeting giving residents time to submit questions/concerns. President Mobley shared that in an effort to include all items on the agenda, that is the latest the agenda can be published. Ms. Michalski believes that is purposefully excluding questions from residents. By law, agendas must be published 24 hours before a meeting. Trustees were asked to get requests for agenda items to the Administrator by Wednesday. Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that this could be discussed.

Ron Heinritz – 202 Grand Avenue – Mr. Heinritz (who also chairs the Historic Preservation Commission) would like to address the ability of citizens to be able to speak at meetings noting citizens can be heard at meetings “on items not on the agenda.” Mr. Heinritz looked into the Village Code and found that nowhere in the Code does it say anything about not allowing members to speak at meetings. He understands not allowing at the Board meetings as these items were discussed at a COW meeting and the Trustees have to act unless a Trustee would ask permission to have a person speak. Mr. Heinritz served on the Board for 25 years and this has been on the agenda since then, however, was loosely enforced. Tonight’s agenda included an item concerning the future of the Historic Preservation Commission and Mr. Heinritz was not able to speak. Mr. Heinritz has been on this Commission for 26 years. Mr. Heinritz challenged the Board to research this. Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared that she has been in contact with the Village Attorney and per open meetings law, public comment is not required unless at a public hearing. The Village has allowed for public comment period and this has been on the agenda for a long time. It is common practice among other communities as well. Administrator Landisch-Hansen shared a Q&A issued by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities in November, 2019 – one of the question was should governmental bodies allow the public to speak outside of public comment periods. Guidance shared was, “Generally speaking, no. Although governmental bodies may disagree with this answer, allowing the public to interject outside of public comment periods raises significant legal issues and is probably not a best practice. Most concerning is that governmental bodies that regularly allow the public to speak outside of the public comment period is arguable setting up its meetings as a designated public forum which will greatly curtail the body’s ability to control its meetings.”

President Mobley thanked Mr. Heinritz and shared that this will be on a future agenda for discussion. Trustee Holyoke, who has been on the Board for 24 years, stated citizens have always been able to speak at Committee of the Whole meetings in the past, however this is not happening now and Committee meetings is where discussion happens. President Mobley shared that the February Board meeting was combined with a Committee of the Whole. At this meeting Mr. Heinritz wished to speak, however, submitted a letter that Trustee Abraham read. Trustee Abraham does not hold Mr. Heinritz’ view on hybrid meetings and, therefore, this Board has an obligation to listen to the Trustee and allow the meeting to proceed particularly because it is a Board. President Mobley does not mean any ill will. Trustee Holyoke stated that when the St. Cecelia development was on the agenda, there were some residents that wanted to speak but were not allowed to speak. President Mobley shared that Trustee Holyoke could have made a motion asking for them to speak.

Mr. Heinritz stated that Code does not address preventing citizens from speaking at a Committee of the Whole meeting.

Sue Wilkerson – 307 Crescent – Ms. Wilkerson has lived in Thiensville since 1988. Ms. Wilkerson wanted to bring up and make sure that the item of public comment is on an agenda. If this is on the next agenda, citizens cannot make comments until after it was discussed. Ms. Wilkerson read the State Statute and agreed that the Village is not required to have public commentary, however, it does not prohibit the Village from have public commentary. Ms. Wilkerson recommended meeting with the Village attorney. Also, Ms. Wilkerson sent an email to Board members and stated than anyone could have chosen to reply to her individually without breaking a law or could have even make a call to her. She would like the Board to look at the law to make the citizens happy instead of looking into the law to try to not give citizens what they want.

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Ms. Wilkerson stated hybrid meetings are all about accessibility and shared that if you are someone who just had surgery, they do not have accessibility to this meeting; if you are blind and want to listen to it and cannot get out of your house, there is no accessibility to this meeting.

President Mobley asked if Ms. Wilkerson's concern regarding accessibility would be answered by offering Zoom or if the meetings should be televised. Ms. Wilkerson suggested that at a minimum, Zoom meetings should be offered.

Jeff O'Donnell – 510 Crescent – Mr. O'Donnell thanked the Board members for their service. There are differences of opinion, however, we all care about Thiensville which is the most important thing. Mr. O'Donnell wanted to thank the Fire Department and stated that accessibility is also very important and hopes to get this resolved.

Randy Ray – 210 South Orchard – Mr. Ray is a 35 year Thiensville resident. Mr. Ray has signed petitions for Rob Holyoke for 35 years and stated that Trustee Holyoke is 100% right. Mr. Ray pointed to a staff member stating that he has been watching the meeting on his laptop and asked why this is not being Zoomed. He also shared concern regarding individuals not social distancing at the meeting. Mr. Ray asked Trustee Holyoke to put forth a motion that Van Mobley resign tonight.

Jim Counsellor – 609 Sunny Lane – Mr. Counsellor has been part of the Thiensville community for 26 years. First, Mr. Counsellor shared his deep appreciation for the commitment of all the Board members in serving the community. Thiensville is a tremendous community, however, there are some issues. Mr. Counsellor shared these concerns: communication - between this Board and the public is currently inadequate and needs to be more frequent and detailed; transparency – it is felt, true or false, that too much of the Board's decisions do not include the public input i.e. investments in development; uniqueness - when the Board is considering combining public services with the City of Mequon, this community stood up stating we are unique (there are those residents that have lived here a long time as well as those new younger families coming here because of that uniqueness). Mr. Counsellor asked that the Board take these things into consideration: communication, transparency and keeping this community unique.

Dave Michalski – 111 Ellenbecker – Mr. Michalski shared that he was not able to talk at a meeting concerning the Orchard Street development. He stated it is not fair to the community for the citizens not allowed to speak during the meeting. Mr. Michalski shared his disappointment after hearing that at the February 15, 2021 Board Meeting that Chairman Heinritz was escorted out by a police officer. Mr. Michalski also stated that Chairman Heinritz has devoted countless hours to this community.

Williams Edwards – 400 Alta Loma Drive – Mr. Edwards is in total agreement with what has been said this evening. Mr. Edwards is a Ron Heinritz fan and absolutely adores all those who work on the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Edwards also stated he is absolutely appalled at the way Tom Streifender and Jamie Awe were forced out over concerns about attending in-person meetings. There is close to 500,000 people that have died from Covid. Mr. Edwards questioned why money is being bickered over and safety is second-hand. We are in a crisis and it will take some time to get through this and there are plenty of capable people who can run audio equipment. Mr. Edwards was disappointed to hear what happened at the February 15, 2021 meeting stating Chairman Heinritz was only trying to clarify what he said in his letter. Mr. Edwards believes that President Mobley owes Chairman Heinritz an apology and should resign.

President Mobley stated that the reason that Chairman Heinritz was asked to leave is because he was shouting down the woman who beat him in an election.

Trustee Abraham apologized stating that in no way did she want Chairman Heinritz to think she was personally attacking him. Trustee Abraham called the Village office on February 15th because she was researching the agenda and on the agenda we were approving the bike committee's minutes from March 5, 2020 thinking it was odd that we were approving these minutes so late. There were no other meetings in 2020 after March 5th. Trustee Abraham did not doubt that there were meetings attended by Mr. Heinritz in 2021. What Trustee Abraham's concern was the efficiency of the operation if these meetings were held by Zoom. One of the concerns is the length of time it takes for information to get to us. Also, another concern is that meetings were held monthly until March 5, 2020 and then the rest of 2020 were cancelled. Trustee Abraham did not think that this was questioning Mr. Heinritz attendance at the 2021 meetings. She questioned

the procedure and efficiency of the operation and potential problems with efficiency that we might have if we have Zoom meetings. Again, in no way did Trustee Abraham intend to insult Mr. Heinritz – that did not even cross her mind until it got very heated. Trustee Abraham was thanked for her apology.

It was clarified that there was a January and February Mequon-Thiensville Bike Commission meeting in 2021.

V. **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS BY TRUSTEES AS MAY PROPERLY BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD**

- A. Inter-Governmental Committee with Mequon
- B. Use of 101 Green Bay Road, Old Village Hall & Fire Station
- C. Acceptance/Report of Gifts Received:
- D. Dialog with Mequon regarding water utility service
- E. Review meeting date schedule
March 15, 2021 – Board of Trustees at 6:00 PM
April 19, 2021 – Combined Committee of the Whole and Board of Trustees at 6:00 PM

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Trustee Abraham, **SECONDED** by Trustee Kucharski to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Submitted by,



Amy L. Langlois
Village Clerk