Minutes
Village of Glen Ellyn
Village Board Workshop
Tuesday, January 16, 2024
7:00 PM
Glen Ellyn Civic Center, Room 301

A. Call to Order – 7:00 P.M.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Roll Call

Upon roll call by Deputy Clerk Page, President Senak and Trustees, Fasules, Kalinich, Gould, Simon, and Thompson answered "Present." Trustee Christiansen was absent.

Also in attendance: Village Manager Franz, Director Brankin, Police Chief Norton, and Management Analyst Irizarry.

D. Audience Participation

There was no audience participation. Before getting to the agenda items, Trustee Kalinich thanked President Senak for his communications with the community regarding the busing of asylum seekers/migrants into the Village. She emphasized that the Village takes this matter very seriously and that there is constant monitoring going on.

Trustee Kalinich also wanted to thank Police Chief Norton for all of his work in this matter. She reiterated that communication has been ongoing, not only internally but with the neighboring communities and DuPage County as well. She added that her understanding was that the County as a whole was taking the matter very seriously as well and working very closely with all involved. She acknowledged that it is tricky and important to have at the forefront of discussions in the future.

President Senak thanked Trustee Kalinich and said that it is a very fluid, dynamic environment so it is under constant reevaluation. He mentioned he had spoken with the Mayor of Wheaton and he was equally supportive of what both communities were doing, as well as all communities on the train line. He added that no single community is being selected as the preferred destination to the exclusion of others. He said that all communities on the train line, with the exception of Elburn, have not applied restrictions.

Trustee Fasules added that the Village as a community needs to know the process regarding the logistics of getting the asylum seekers/migrants to the City of Chicago, and that the Village does not want to disrupt this process.

President Senak stated that Police Chief Norton had given an update on the recent number of buses since the drop in temperature. Police Chief Norton confirmed this and that when it warms up, more buses may arrive. President Senak praised the department's handling of the entire situation.

E. Property Tax Abatement

1) Discussion regarding the potential abatement of Ad Valorem Property Taxes in the Amount of $278,750 for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2024 and Ending December 31, 2024 for the Village of Glen Ellyn, Illinois (Finance Director Brankin)

Village Manager Franz gave some history and an update on the current abatement process and the hope to get it on the January 22, 2024 agenda. He then turned it over to Finance Director Brankin to present details.

Finance Director Brankin reviewed the past conversations leading up to the current point in the process. He then reviewed the details of the two primary options that were reached, as well as the total of the abatement for each option.

President Senak confirmed that staff was looking for direction on which of the two options the Board would like to pursue. Finance Director Brankin replied, adding that the direction could also be something in the middle of what had been presented.

Trustee Fasules asked about where surplus could be placed. Village Manager Franz replied. Trustee Fasules questioned the need to bring up the topic currently given past conversations the Board had on this subject. He suggested that Village Manager Franz move the surplus and negate the need for this abatement. His point was that the levy could be zero for the year just by moving surplus, thus eliminating the need for an abatement for this year. Village Manager Franz asked Trustee Fasules to refrain from making it "his" decision, which was agreed upon.

Trustee Kalinich remembered the past conversation but not understanding its outcome in the same way. She reviewed her understanding of the abatement conversations and why it's on the table now. She added that she did not support, as a Trustee, going through the budget and reducing budgets that she did not set. Trustee Kalinich explained further a past conversation she'd had with President Senak on her understanding of this.

Trustee Fasules came back with his philosophy of why he believed his approach was better. Trustee Thompson disagreed with his premise. Trustee Kalinich felt the difference was that Trustee Fasules wanted to reduce the budget and her proposal was to keep the budget the same while reducing the levy through abatement. Discussion ensued.

President Senak suggested looking forward in this matter as opposed to focusing on the history. Trustee Simon agreed. The discussion continued on the subject of surplus versus abatement.

President Senak asked if, at this point in time, abatement was the only option. Finance Director Brankin replied yes, adding detail as to why. President Senak added that the only question left was what the amount of the abatement would be.

Trustee Gould thought the Board should abate the entire amount. She asked if there was additional money in the budget for one-time expenses so that more could be abated. Finance Director Brankin replied.

Trustee Kalinich asked about other possible one-time sources. Finance Director Brankin replied.

Trustee Fasules added more thoughts on his surplus approach. Village Manager Franz added his thoughts on activities and direction surrounding surplus that have been done in the past. Discussion continued, considering both approaches for now and for possible use in the future.

Trustee Gould asked about the Finance Commission and their stance on the subject at hand. Finance Director Brankin replied. The role and responsibilities of the Finance Commission was discussed further.

Trustee Thompson spoke about the increase in services that Village residents are demanding that make it necessary to raise the tax levy. Discussion ensued regarding ways of funding the increase in Village services.

Trustee Simon asked for confirmation of the options at this point. Finance Director Brankin replied and asked for the Board's guidance. Debate on the abatement options and which to recommend to staff continued.

Trustee Gould commented that this was the second budget season where compromise has been in form of an abatement. She wanted the record to show that next year, she wants there to be an actual reduction of the $8.7 million. She felt that the true compromise was being neglected.

President Senak polled the Board as to which option they favored to get the feedback needed by staff.

President Senak appreciated this discussion that was brought about by his line-item veto approach.

F. 2020-24 Strategic Plan Quarterly Report (CY23 Q4) and Priority Goal Setting for 2024

1) Presentation of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan Quarterly Report (CY23 Q4) and discuss prioritizing goals for 2024 (Manager Franz)

Village Manager Franz presented the background and process used in prioritizing goals for 2024. He continued with review of the goals that have been reached as of CY23 Q4. Considering changes that have occurred, he felt this was a good time to revisit the plan to see if there are other objectives or goals and obtain feedback from the Board on the action plan and the nine priorities set for this year.

Trustee Kalinich mentioned a typo she had seen in the mission statement, as well as the Comprehensive Plan. Another thing she wondered was if there could be a "working" strategic plan that did not include the items that have been completed. Village Manager Franz replied.

Trustee Simon asked some clarification questions. Village Manager Franz replied.

Trustee Simon felt that there needed to be a conversation about prioritization of projects before talking about the strategic plan.

President Senak said his number one priority was the Roosevelt Road project for Q1 2024.

Trustee Thompson asked how Streetscape Phase 3 would be prioritized in relation to Roosevelt Road. President Senak replied. Discussion ensued about both projects.

Trustee Kalinich suggested that perhaps the priorities discussion should jump off of Village Manager Franz's list and then be augmented as needed. Village Manager Franz began reading through the nine items.

It was agreed that train station funding should be at the top of the list. Village Engineer Daubert added funding information. President Senak added that additional debt would not be part of the train station project. Discussion continued to clarify everyone's view on the debt/funding point.

Village Manager Franz continued to read through the nine items. Trustee Gould asked about the date mentioned in Priority 2, the item on finalizing the Redevelopment Agreement and sale of property to the Glen Ellyn Park District.

Trustee Kalinich asked what does "guide the community" mean in Priority 3, the item regarding the Roosevelt Road/Taft Avenue property Purchase and Sale Agreement. Village Manager Franz replied. It was agreed that this should be updated. It was discussed and decided that it is a multi-stage process and that the staff will work on appropriate verbiage.

Trustee Gould asked how many personnel hours McKee House involves. She added that for every item on the chart, it would be helpful to have an estimate of personnel hours or financial investment in order to give the Board perspective in evaluating each item. Village Manager Franz addressed the challenges in executing this request. Discussion continued on this subject and the value it would add to the decision-making process, turning specifically to McKee House funding, particularly grants.

President Senak felt that all commissions should complete their objectives and perform their duties.

Village Manager Franz felt that a separate conversation needed to happen regarding McKee House and logistics of making the project a reality with the SOARRING Foundation and grants. After some back and forth, the Board agreed that the Village needs to understand and decide how to proceed regarding McKee House.

Priority 7 regarding developing a governance policy for the Village Board was brought up. Trustee Gould talked about the consultant's plan and the takeaway that more work needed to be done, as well as subsequent workshops and work on this priority. Her concern was that having three trustees work on it was not an optimal approach.

Trustee Kalinich said that her take on this priority was that the three trustees were putting together a template to facilitate the decision on what the Board wants to do. She felt that if the Board could come up with a document on their own, it would be more efficient and allow people to stay in the loop if they miss a meeting and not have to start over again. Discussion on the past and current process of this priority ensued.

Priority 8, on selecting and implementing a new Community Development software with the help of a consultant was then discussed, and the obstacles that have been part of this priority. Trustee Kalinich felt that the process has taken too long and the May 2025 goal was too far off and expressed her reasons why. Discussion turned to the need to be methodical in order to get each step right, as well as the lack of staff, as reasons why this has been such a lengthy process. The discussion also included how to get it implemented sooner.

Trustee Simon commented that if Community Development software is a high priority, then the staff needs to tell the Board what they need to do to facilitate getting it implemented as soon as possible.

Trustee Kalinich asked if there were some creative ways to get the software implemented. Village Manager Franz suggested that the biggest factor will be the software company that is selected and their logistics. The discussion continued.

President Senak said that the software implementation was his number 2 priority, after Roosevelt Road. Trustee Thompson and Simon agreed but the Board wanted to see the entire list.

The Board then discussed Priority 9 on the list, employee retention. Trustee Thompson highlighted that fact that much has been done towards facilitating this as an ongoing priority.

Village Manager Franz said he should have included the construction of new Fire Stations, public works facility improvements, and Village Links on the priority list as well.

President Senak wanted to add negotiation of the union contract for Public Works to this list as well. Trustee Thompson asked if this should be a priority. President Senak replied that it will be if the contract is not negotiated.

Trustee Kalinich emphasized that when prioritizing these items, it's not just the time of the staff but resources that need to be allocated to each priority to bring them to fruition. She felt this tied into the Board governance as well.

President Senak wanted to add the effort to fill the retail space in the Village to the priority lists, specifically Young's, APEX, and Roosevelt Road. The need for a grocery store in the downtown area was brought up as something residents want. This discussion continued focusing on the seemingly slow process of filling the empty space. 411 Main was addressed as one of these slow processes. Village Manager Franz talked about actions being taken to get businesses into the Village.

Norris Eber, Village resident, gave his opinion on the priorities and what he thought they should be. He was concerned with the time and money spent on the train station project. Village Engineer Daubert replied with a current cost summary of this project. Mr. Eber wanted to know more about the timeline. President Senak replied.

Mr. Eber asked about the south side Fire Station planning and his concerns about the funding going to a railroad underpass instead of the needs of the Fire Department.

G. Reminders

1) Village Board Meeting, Monday January 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Trustee Gould asked if the Glenwood agenda item was being moved to January 20th. Village Manager Franz replied it was moving to a February workshop. Trustee Gould wanted to know if he could ask the developer for whatever slides he has prior to the workshop. Village Manager Franz replied.

H. Adjourn – 9:11 P.M.