

**VILLAGE OF CASSOPOLIS  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
August 27, 2018**

President Johnson called the Workshop Meeting of the Cassopolis Village Council to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Council Members Present: Yoder, Johnson, Williams, Sims & Wagner

Council Members Absent: Parsons, Jackson-Ash (arrived at 7:05)

Pledge of Allegiance was given in unison.

**Approval of Agenda:** Yoder motioned, seconded by Sims to approve the agenda as presented.

**Motion Carried.**

**Public Comment(s) on Agenda Items:**

Tom Hartzell from Cass Auto Supply presented his concerns regarding the parking lot that Cass County recently put an RFP out for. He stated that the County had not utilized this property since the courthouse closed, however his business, Meridian Title, Shephard House and Turtle Lodge all utilize that property at this time for parking and would like to see it remain a municipal lot. He is asking that the Village try to purchase this lot. He also stated that with all the Imagine Cass and planning that the Village is doing, that it would be in the Village's best interest to have this property.

Tom Katovch wanted to speak as a representative of the Shephard House. The Shephard House is owned and operated by his son and daughter-in-law. He stated that it would be a benefit to everyone for the Village to own this property. He expressed concerns about that lot being privately owned and the effect that would have on the businesses that currently utilize that lot. He asked questions regarding what the Village's future intent would be if the Village owned that lot.

**Move into Special Meeting**

Wagner motioned, seconded by Sims to go into a Special Meeting at 6:40 pm.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Yea: Johnson, Williams, Sims, Wagner and Yoder

Nay:

Abstain:

Absent:

**Motion Carried.**

A. **Parking Lot RFP:** Motioned by Williams, seconded by Wagner to approve the Village Manager to respond to the County's RFP for the parking lot next to the old fire station in the amount of \$1, citing the benefit to the local businesses and the future development of Cassopolis that the Village has been working on through the Imagine Cass initiative and the Master Plan process. Discussion between Council and Commissioner Grice regarding the reasoning that the County no longer wants this property.

**Motion Carried.**

### **Move out of Special Meeting**

Yoder motioned, seconded by Wagner to move out of the special meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Yea: Johnson, Williams, Sims, Wagner and Yoder

Nay:

Abstain:

Absent:

### **Motion Carried.**

### **Discussion & Action Items:**

- A. Cemetery Trees: DPW Superintendent recommended that we take the low bid for removal of trees at the Cemetery. Williams questioned why Grimes was so much higher.
- B. DPW Equipment: DPW is proposing to purchase a new service truck, a boost sprayer and a mini-excavator. Superintendent Anderson stated that these were items that were budgeted for purchase this year. Wagner asked about quotes for various trucks. Superintendent Anderson stated that we were utilizing the Mi-Deal Program which does a comparison for us and then gives us the best deal. Yoder and Williams commented that we had used this in the past for the purchase of squad cars.
- C. Stone Lake Shores Roads: Village Manager discussed the email from Mickey Bittner regarding his suggestions for the roads out at Stone Lake Shores and the improvements required prior to accepting the roads into the Village. Village Manager stated that we are continuing to work towards accepting the roads into the Village and wanted to make sure that this was still the direction Council wanted to move. Johnson expressed concern about putting too much money into the roads and then tearing them up with the equipment. Village Manager stated that was considered in recommendation and that we were looking to increase the life of these roads and the appearance of this area to encourage development – without putting too much into it because of the construction. Yoder expressed concern over an exposed gas line. This area was also mentioned in the recommendation from M. Bittner. DPW has filled that area several times.
- D. Village Council Stipends: Sims recommended a change to the Village Ordinance so that the Village President and Village Trustees would be paid on a monthly basis, regardless of if they attend the regular council meeting. Village Manager stated this was brought up last year, and the Council did not want to move forward. Council would like to consider options for this.
- E. Housing Programs: Sims has been looking into housing programs that would benefit our residents, and had originally wanted to have a program through the Village like that. However, after talking with a lot of different individuals, she believes that this is better left to the outside agencies that are already in place.
- F. Regular Meeting Start Time: Village staff would like to see the start time for the Regular Village meeting moved to 6:30 pm to coincide with the start time of workshops. Most Council was not opposed, however Jackson-Ash stated that would be extremely difficult for her to arrive on time. Meeting times will remain as is.

### **Council Concerns/Items:**

Williams expressed concerns over candidates in the upcoming election being unaware of certain laws and rules, as well as the possibility that the Village may have to hold open a job for four years if an employee was elected. (See Attached handed out by Williams) Williams stated that the Village Manager or Clerk should be responsible for informing candidates about the rules and laws. Village Manager stated that anyone with questions should be directed to the LaGrange Township Clerk, County Clerk or Bureau of Elections, and that neither she, nor the Village Clerk should be answering election questions. Johnson

and Wagner agreed that the Village Manager and Village Clerk should not be handling any election information.

Yoder suggested contacting the County Clerk to see if this information could be handed out when candidates picked up their forms. Sims expressed concerns about residents being uninformed regarding the election process, including if the Village has open seats, when the elections are, how to run for a trustee position and the deadlines associated with this and would like to see the Village post this information in the paper. Village Manager stated that LaGrange Township is responsible for posting election information, and that the Village should check with the LaGrange Twp. Clerk and the County Clerk prior to doing anything like that to ensure the Village stayed in compliance with the law.

Johnson inquired about the progress regarding the body cams for the police department. Chief stated that he had two quotes and he was waiting on the third. Wagner and Johnson asked why we're not using the body cams that were donated to the department by SJTPD, and Chief stated that he would prefer getting new ones that were the same as what Cass County is currently using. Wagner requested Chief to bring one of the donated ones and one of the ones that the County is currently using to the next meeting to explain the difference between the two of them to him, as he believes we should be using the ones we currently have until we are able to upgrade to a new one.

Williams stated that he is still concerned that the Chief is the employee that is under contract. Sims questioned why the Chief had a contract and Johnson stated that the prior Chief was under contract the last few years he worked for the Village and the Personnel Committee utilized that same format when hiring the current Chief, and the current Chief is under his second contract. Jackson-Ash questioned if Village Manager could arrange for the attorney to come in and discuss the pros and cons of contract vs. non-contract employment.

Sims requested that Johnson look into representing the Village with MML for the purpose of election of officers.

**Public Comment on non-agenda items:** None

**Announcements:** None.

**Adjournment:**

President Johnson declared the Workshop adjourned at 7:45 p.m. by unanimous agreement.

Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emilie Sarratore, Village Manager

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
David L. Johnson, Village President