

**RANTOUL VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR STUDY SESSION
JANUARY 6, 2009**

LOUIS B. SCHELLING MEMORIAL BOARD ROOM
RANTOUL MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 333 S. TANNER, RANTOUL, IL

A Regular Study Session of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Rantoul was held at 6:15 P.M., President Neal Williams presiding. President Williams called the proceeding to order at 6:16 P.M.

Roll Call

The Clerk called the roll, finding the following members physically present:

President Neal Williams and Trustees Herman Fogal, Clifford White, Margurette Carter, Joe Bolser, Charles Smith, and Jim Stubblefield – 7.

The following representatives of Village departments were also present:

Bruce W. Sandahl, Administrator; Paul Farber, Police Chief; Robert Bruce, Economic Development; Kenneth Beth, Attorney; Scot Brandon, Comptroller; William Clayton, Aviation; Ken Waters, Fire Chief; Rich Thomas, Recreation; David Coffey, Human Resources; Greg Hazel, Public Works Director; Mike Loschen, Community Development; Dan Culkin, Inspection; and Village Clerk Jeremy Reale.

Public Participation

Ms. Marion Trotter, 429 S. Steffler Street, had submitted a request to address the Board with respect to her issues with the Police Department regarding a stolen vehicle complaint. Ms. Trotter stated that she was prepared to begin working with Village officials to address the substance of her complaint and would thus reserve her remarks at this time.

Items from Trustees

(A) Trustee Smith suggested that the welcome signs placed at the major entrances to the Rantoul were in need of updating and beautifying to enhance the appearance of the Village to visitors. He cited a photograph of the signage employed by the Village of Alsip as an example of a more visually attractive marker for the gateway to their community. President Williams responded that he had spoken with Mr. Sandahl regarding the issue of new signage and that officials would be trying to incorporate funds for this project in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

(B) Trustee White requested an update on the status of the codification project. Mr. Beth explained that he was currently in the process of completing final revisions of various code chapters before submitting the draft code manuscript to Municipal Code Corporation for editing, formatting, and publication. He informed the Board that he and the Clerk had participated in teleconferences with representatives from the codifying agency and, after reviewing the code manuscript that had been prepared by Municipal Code, determined that certain sections and provisions were in need of further editing to conform to longstanding practices of the Village. The Clerk added that, upon in-depth examination of the code, staff had determined that the document was more deficient than originally believed at the outset of the project. As such, the codification project had taken substantially longer than originally anticipated, with the additional time necessary to ensure that all deficiencies were adequately addressed before the final revised code is prepared. He noted that the combined efforts of Municipal Code and Village staff had thus far resulted in the elimination of approximately 150 pages of outdated and duplicative material from the current Village code. The Clerk estimated that the project should be completed

by late spring 2009, with the target date for publication being contingent upon Mr. Beth's completion of the revised manuscript.

Items from the Clerk

(A) The Clerk reminded the trustees of their legal obligation to review and approve the minutes of the Board's closed session meetings and to further determine whether or not the confidentiality of those minutes is still necessary. He noted that a closed session had been placed upon the formal agenda for the purpose of conducting this review after the conclusion of regular business.

(B) The Clerk then presented a proposed resolution to authorize the destruction of certain closed session audiotape recordings. He noted that the Illinois Open Meetings Act required all government bodies to maintain verbatim recordings of their closed session proceedings; however, these records could be destroyed after eighteen months and the approval of the official minutes. Since the previous authorized destruction of closed session tapes in January 2007, the verbatim records of an additional sixteen closed meetings had met the statutory requirements necessary for disposal. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

(C) The Clerk announced that some citizens and candidates for the April 2009 election may have been given incorrect information from his office regarding the legal requirements for signing nominating petitions. He informed the public that the state election code permits citizens to sign petitions for as many candidates as they desire in the Village's independent election. This contradicted an earlier statement that citizens could only sign petitions for one candidate per office to be elected. The Clerk apologized for the misinformation and any inconvenience that it may have caused to the candidates seeking nomination for 2009.

Items from the Administrator

(A) Mr. Sandahl reported that a staff committee had been reviewing the Village's animal control ordinance for possible revisions at the direction of the Village Board. He stated that a draft proposal was in the process of being finalized for possible Board action in February. At this stage, the proposal had focused upon establishing a maximum number of dogs and cats allowable per household, corresponding to the size of the individual dwelling and land parcel. The highest maximum number allowable would be any combination of dogs and cats up to a total of four pets. Households with more than four dogs and/or cats would be declared boarding facilities and would need to be properly zoned for that use. Additionally, the proposal would mandate that any outdoor animal shelter be situated at least ten feet from any adjoining property, alley or easement and that property owners would not be permitted to chain dogs in their front yards. In response to a concern raised by President Williams, Mr. Sandahl assured the Board that any proposal containing such limits would also incorporate a grandfather clause to exempt any pets currently owned by Village residents that would exceed the limit.

(B) Mr. Sandahl also provided the Board with an update on the status of several ongoing property maintenance and demolition cases. He reported staff would be meeting on January 7 to schedule the demolition of the vacant apartment buildings at 405-409 S. Steffler Street. He also told the trustees that the Village had requested a written schedule of demolition from the owner of the house located at 425 ½ Wabash Avenue, as part of the Village's ongoing effort to establish timetables for the removal of derelict properties. Village officials had also requested a timetable for the completion of code-related upgrades from the owner of Building No. 16 on the former base property.

(C) Mr. Sandahl reminded the Board of the upcoming tour of the Taylor Studios facility scheduled for January 20, 2009 from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Monthly Department Reports

1) Police

Chief Farber reported that the Village continued to make progress toward meeting its requirements under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). At the present time, various employees and Village officials were undergoing mandated NIMS training programs with the anticipation that all training requirements should be completed before the end of the year. He also reported that police department staff had been working on the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) project.

2) Economic Development

Mr. Bruce reported that the department had hosted three business prospects during the month of December. He had also represented the Village of Rantoul at the meetings of several area boards and organizations including: the Rantoul Economic Development Commission, Regional Planning Commission, Champaign County Economic Development Commission, and the Rantoul Area Chamber of Commerce. He informed the Board that the demolition of Building No. 54 was near completion and also stated that the Village's Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) application continued its progress through federal agency review.

3) Comptroller

Mr. Brandon reported that the installation of the new VoIP phone system was expected to be completed within the next month. He also stated that Village officials had met with representatives from First Bank of Rantoul who had expressed an interest in bidding on the Village's investments. Staff would be preparing necessary documentation for the next phase of the process. Finally, Mr. Brandon mentioned that the Village's lease for its copy machines was approaching its expiration. In light of this fact, he reported that staff was researching the various options for a new lease or the initiation of a bid process for these services, with the ultimate goal of streamlining the Village's printing operations.

4) Inspection

Mr. Culkin reported that the Plan Commission had conducted a hearing concerning the aforementioned property at 425 ½ Wabash Avenue, issuing a final recommendation for demolition of the property by its owner. He added that the Village had submitted a letter to the property owner directing that demolition begin by January 16, 2009. Continuing on the subject of property issues, he told the trustees that the Village had also issued notices for demolition to the owners and mortgage companies involved with the properties located at 11-12 Charles Drive and the corner of Steffler Street and Urbana Avenue. Mr. Culkin cited ongoing issues with the Autumn Glen apartment complex, as staff had been trying to get the complex owners to clean up the area and address several serious property maintenance deficiencies. Finally, he mentioned that the final plat for the Stone Bridge subdivision had been recommended for approval by the Plan Commission and would be brought forward for the Board's consideration during the current meeting.

5) Community Development

Mr. Loschen reported that Jenell Hardy had begun employment with the department as its new Community Development Specialist on January 5. He also told the Board that he had been reviewing applications for the various property rehabilitation programs and would most likely begin soliciting bids within the next week. He stated that January 6 had marked the closing date for applications for assistance through the annual social service grants, with the Citizens Advisory Board scheduled to meet on January 8 to review the applications and prepare a recommendation for social service budget appropriations for the upcoming year.

6) Public Works

Mr. Hazel reported that the department had been busy cleaning up after recent winter storms had brought high winds and ice to the area in December. With several limbs down and trees damaged throughout the community, he announced that street crews would continue brush collection for the next couple of weeks. He also announced that the Village's membership in the Illinois Municipal Utilities Association (IMUA) presented an opportunity for Rantoul Township High School students to participate in the IMUA scholarship program, which awards \$500.00 scholarships in early March. He also reported that the Village was sponsoring a "live-line" electric safety demonstration at Eater Junior High School on January 26, 2009. Finally, Mr. Hazel noted that winter weather conditions had already contributed to the development of potholes on streets and roadways in the community. The street department was working to address these potholes with temporary patching and filling during the winter months.

7) Human Resources

Mr. Coffey reported that he continued to be involved in the various employee group meetings with Mr. Sandahl. These informal sessions included groups of four employees from various departments and had been designed to give employees an opportunity to share their experiences, ideas, and priorities with the administrative team. The meetings also gave Mr. Sandahl an opportunity to share and discuss the Village's Strategic Plan with staff and solicit their feedback. The meetings would continue for the next couple of months.

8) Recreation

Mr. Thomas reported on the progress of the department's winter sports programs for youth and adults. He also noted that the Village had hosted a "Breakfast with Santa" program in December, with approximately 300 attending the event. Echoing the statements made by Mr. Hazel with respect to winter weather damages, he informed the Board that property maintenance employees had also been working to cleanup brush and other materials from Village properties and parks. He added that employees in the vehicle maintenance division had caught up with all outstanding and seasonal fleet maintenance projects.

9) Fire

Chief Waters reported a total of fifty-four (54) calls during the month of December, including: two mutual aid calls; a house fire on Rockland Drive with approximately \$20,000.00 in damages; two crawl space fires; a small explosion on Congress Avenue; and seventeen (17) carbon monoxide-related calls. In total, the department had responded to 361 calls during the 2008 year, representing an increase of more than 100 calls from the 2007 annual total.

10) Aviation

Mr. Clayton reported that advertising for proposals for the next Fixed Base Operator (FBO) contract had begun in December, with online tracking showing that the RFP document had been viewed over 300 times. He noted that the deadline for proposals was January 23, 2009 at 3:00 P.M. In his assessment of operations for the 2008 year, Mr. Clayton reported significantly less activity, which would most likely be attributed to the rising cost of aviation fuel. He reported 1,989 take-offs/landings for 2008, compared to a total of 3,110 for 2007. Annual fuel sales at the airport had also fallen from 46,657 gallons in 2007 to 29,837 gallons in 2008.

11) Additional Item for Inspection

Before the closure of the monthly department reports, Trustee Bolser expressed his dissatisfaction with the continuing property maintenance issues at the Autumn Glen apartment complex, noting that several changes in ownership and management had failed to address the issues. He asked what the Village could possibly do to better enforce its codes in this and other chronic problem areas. Mr. Sandahl responded that the Village needed to apply pressure to property owners where the greatest benefit could be derived. He assured the Board that staff was developing a plan of

action to address these chronic issues and that officials would be meeting with the new owners of Autumn Glen. Mr. Culkin stressed that the Village was in fact enforcing its codes and had consistently issued notices and citations against violations. He added that the Village had also penalized the property owners by forcing them to make accommodations for the tenants who had inhabited apartments with violations and potential safety issues.

Items from the Comptroller

(A) Mr. Brandon presented a proposal for the renewal of a contract with Crowe Horwath (formerly Crowe Chizek) for professional auditing services. With the current four-year contract having expired, Mr. Brandon had secured a proposal for a two-year renewal with no price increase for FY 2009 and a 3% increase for FY 2010. He reported that the Village had been satisfied with the firm's service, noting that the Village had continued to receive the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) during each year in which Crowe Horwath had conducted its audit. Given the positive past experiences with Crowe Horwath and the fact that entering into an agreement with another firm would present a significant learning curve, Mr. Brandon recommended approval of the proposed renewal contract. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

Items from Public Works

(A) Mr. Hazel presented a proposed resolution designating parade routes for the 2009 calendar year. He noted that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) required municipalities to submit an annual resolution to cover all parade routes that would necessitate the temporary closure of a state route. Three parades – Fourth of July, RTHS Homecoming, and Chamber of Commerce Christmas – would require the temporary closure of either Route 45 or Route 136. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

Items from Inspection

(A) Mr. Culkin presented a proposed ordinance approving the final plat for the Stone Bridge Center Subdivision No. 1, as recommended by the Plan Commission. The proposed subdivision was located primarily west and south of the present Wal-Mart Supercenter store and was planned to eventually house interstate commercial developments along an extension of Broadmeadow Drive and three new roadways (Stone Bridge Drive, Center Street, and Baker Street). Mr. Culkin also presented a proposed ordinance that would provide for a change of zoning for the property from Agricultural (Ag) to Interstate Commercial (C-3). As part of the annexation development agreement between the Village and developer Joe Warner, it had been stipulated that the zoning change would occur once the property was platted. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place these items upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

Items from Counsel

(A) Mr. Beth presented a revision of the community design standards proposal that had been postponed for further consideration by the Board at its December meeting. Per the request of the Board, the revised proposal included a new variance procedure with respect to building material coverage requirements for the various zoning districts. Builders would be able to go through an expedited process for obtaining approval for these "variances" through the Plan Commission up to a maximum of 10% deviation from the particular coverage requirement. Requests that exceeded the 10% deviation would still be required to go through the formal waiver process, as originally outlined in the proposed ordinance. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

Closed Session

Trustee Bolser moved to enter into Closed Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (C) 21, for the purpose of discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, whether for the purpose of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. Trustee Fogal seconded the motion.

The Clerk called the roll:

YEAS: Bolser, Smith, Stubblefield, Fogal, White, and Carter – 6.

NAYS: None – 0.

ABSENT: None – 0.

The motion carried by roll call vote.

The Board entered into Closed Session at 7:06 P.M. With the consent of the Board, the following individuals were permitted to remain present: Bruce Sandahl, Kenneth Beth, and Jeremy Reale.

Trustee Fogal moved to adjourn the Closed Session and return to open session. Trustee White seconded the motion.

The Clerk called the roll:

YEAS: Fogal, White, Carter, Bolser, Smith, and Stubblefield – 6.

NAYS: None – 0.

ABSENT: None – 0.

The motion carried by roll call vote.

The Board reconvened in open session at 7:18 P.M.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Williams declared the proceeding adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy A. Reale
Clerk of the Village of Rantoul

APPROVED FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Neal Williams
Village President

ATTEST:

Jeremy A. Reale
Village Clerk