

**RANTOUL VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR STUDY SESSION
FEBRUARY 3, 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 6:15 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; Henry Gamel, Deputy Police Chief; Kenneth Beth, Attorney; Scot Brandon, Comptroller; William Clayton, Aviation; Mitch Suits, Assistant 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.

Items from Trustees

(A) Trustee Fogal inquired as to the Village's procedures for collecting unpaid utility bills, suggesting that it might be worthwhile to consider tying utility bills directly to the property and making landlords responsible for such payments if their tenants fail to meet those financial obligations. Mr. Brandon responded that the general practice had been to turn the debtors over to a collection agency, with somewhat limited success in recouping funds from delinquent customers. He also noted that the Village could file a lien against the property for non-payment for water service; however, it lacked the authority to do so for electric service. Mr. Beth suggested that it might be possible for the Village to deny turn-on requests from new tenants at rental properties with outstanding bills from previous occupants, but it was unlikely that the same method could be applied in cases of property sales.

(B) Trustee Smith readdressed the issue of new signage at the major entrances to the community, noting that he had acquired a catalog with various examples of signage that Village officials might want to consider. He also reported that he had been contacted by several residents interested in getting information about the enforcement of the Village's new noise ordinance (Ordinance No. 2156). He requested that the Police Department provide a report detailing the number of violation notices issued since the ordinance was implemented in August 2008.

Items from the Administrator

(A) Mr. Sandahl reported that, in light of the ongoing issues surrounding the Village's animal control facility, staff had been reviewing the costs and benefits of continuing the operation of its pound versus outsourcing those duties by contract to Champaign County. Basing the comparison on a three-year average of 160 animals impounded, Mr. Sandahl estimated that the annual cost of operating the Village's pound was \$15,977.00 while the projected yearly cost of a contract arrangement with the county animal control department would be approximately \$15,400.00. More importantly, he noted that the care provided to animals would be greatly enhanced by using the county's facilities. As such, he recommended that the Board enter into an agreement with Champaign County for animal impoundment services, with the Village's pound facility to be used for occasional temporary impoundments only. He noted that this arrangement would not affect

the duties and responsibilities of the Village Animal Control Officer, who would continue to respond to the needs of local pets and pet owners. While recommending that current operations at the Village pound be discontinued, Mr. Sandahl also defended the work of Village employees who had been responsible for maintaining the facility. As evidence of the Village's efforts to maintain an acceptable animal control facility, he produced copies of annual inspection reports from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. In each of the reports from 2002 to 2008, inspectors had found conditions in the facility to be acceptable and all impounded animals in good health and appearance.

Following Mr. Sandahl's presentation, Trustee Bolser read a statement regarding what he considered excessive media coverage of the issues at the Village pound. He agreed with the recommendation to contract with the county for impoundment services and expressed his hope that the Village leaders could put this issue behind them and focus on the more serious economic issues facing the community. Each of the trustees who subsequently spoke on the issue favored the recommendation as presented. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

(B) Mr. Sandahl distributed to the Board members a series of examples of signage that might be considered for the replacement of existing welcome signs at the major entrances to Rantoul. Village leaders would continue to discuss the available options, while welcoming any suggestions that trustees or the public might have with respect to the signage. Trustee Carter suggested that any future signage should not contain population figures, as those numbers were subject to change and would likely require additional costs to maintain currency.

Monthly Department Reports

1) Police

Deputy Chief Gamel discussed a recent string of vehicle burglaries that had resulted in the arrest of a 17-year-old resident during the previous weekend. He used this example to stress to all citizens the importance of locking the doors and windows of all vehicles, as many of the burglarized cars had been accessed through unsecured doors. He also reported that he had met with representatives from the "A Child is Missing" organization during the previous week. This not-for-profit organization funded primarily by grants and charitable contributions was looking at Rantoul as a possible training site for the expansion of its Midwest operations. He promised to keep the Board informed of further developments regarding this project.

2) Aviation

Mr. Clayton reported a total of 971 gallons of fuel sold during the month of January, speculating that inclement weather might have contributed to the low sales figures. Winter weather had interrupted operations at the airport, requiring the temporary closure of the field from January 10 through January 12 due to accumulation of ice. In addition to the NOTAMs he had issued for weather-related incidents, Mr. Clayton added that he had also been required to issue a NOTAM after discovering that the lights along Runway 1836 were not operational. This runway had been out of service for a period of ten days as crews worked to remedy the situation. He also reported that he had coordinated with officials at Lincoln's Challenge Academy to have cadets assist in foreign object debris removal walks around the airport property. These walks were scheduled to take place in April and May. Finally, he noted that the lighting improvement project at Runway 927 was scheduled to begin in the near future.

3) Fire

Assistant Chief Suits reported a total of 29 calls during the month of January, including: two mutual aid calls; a kitchen fire at a residence on Pinecrest Drive resulting in approximately \$8,000.00 in damages; and a minor dryer fire at Country Tyme Lanes. He stated that firefighters had participated in a training seminar with NICOR, and would begin EVOC (emergency vehicle

operator course) training in February. Finally, he reported a total of 12 carbon monoxide-related calls during the previous month, with eight cases resulting in the detection of high levels of the gas.

4) Recreation

Mr. Thomas reported that the Forum Fitness Center had experienced high usage during the winter months, noting that the facility had hosted a racquetball tournament during the previous weekend. He also remarked that several groups had been using the Youth Center facility, including the Boy Scouts and local PTO. The Youth Center had begun hosting its Junior High nights on Friday evenings, with attendance typically being around 80 to 90 children. He reported that the department had also been busy during the winter season with snow and ice removal and that fleet maintenance had worked to address a few minor problems with Village vehicles and equipment related to the winter weather and cold temperatures.

5) Human Resources

Mr. Coffey reported that the informal meetings between Village employees and Mr. Sandahl were continuing, with a great deal of positive feedback having thus far been received from the participants. He noted that several employees had expressed a desire to see these meetings continue in the future and he informed the Board that he and Mr. Sandahl would be discussing the possibility of additional opportunities for employee communications after the current series of meetings has concluded.

6) Public Works

Mr. Hazel reported that Eater Junior High School had hosted a successful "live line" electric safety demonstration during the previous week. He added that officials hoped to bring the program to the school every three years so students at all grade levels would have the opportunity to participate. He also reported that employees from the Street Department had been busy with snow removal during the month of January, while also lending their assistance to the Inspection Department in the demolition of the abandoned apartment complex at 405-409 S. Steffler. Finally, he provided an update to the Board on the status of major improvement projects at the Water and Wastewater treatment plants. The reconstruction of the water treatment plant was expected to be completed by April or May, with a similar timeline anticipated for the completion of the improvements at the wastewater plant.

7) Community Development

Mr. Loschen reported that a draft of the department's annual action plan would be available for public review until February 11, accessible either from the department office or the Village's website. He stated that the Citizen's Advisory Board would be meeting on February 19 at 6:30 P.M. to discuss budget recommendations regarding the allocation of the Village's CDBG grant funds for the upcoming year. He also reported that the department had awarded a contract for a full home rehabilitation project during the previous week, and would be soliciting bids for two emergency roofing projects.

8) Inspection

Mr. Culkin thanked the employees of the Public Works department for their assistance in the demolition of the apartment complex at 405-409 S. Steffler. He also reported that Village officials had succeeded in obtaining a court order requiring the owner of the house located at 420 S. Chanute Street to demolish the structure. If no action was taken by the property owner before February 27, 2009, the Village would have the ability to take action and initiate the demolition of the house. Finally, he informed the trustees that his department had been working with representative from HDC on the engineering design for the proposed Stone Bridge Center development.

9)Comptroller

Mr. Brandon reported that the preparation of the 2009-2010 annual budget proposal was well underway, with some additional changes being finalized before a draft is forwarded to the Board. He asked the trustees to consider setting an appropriate date in March to call a special meeting for the review of the budget proposal, with March 16, 2009 being suggested as the tentative date. He assured the Board that staff would provide each of the members with a copy of the budget proposal in advance of that special meeting. Mr. Brandon also briefly addressed the IMRF financial situation, explaining that the Village would likely be given the option of either absorbing the full employer-contribution increase at once or having the increase phased in over a multi-year period. More information would be provided at a later date. He also told the Board that the Village's VoIP phone conversion project was underway and should be completed by the end of the month. Finally, he reported that the Village had received notice that insurance would pay \$220,000.00 on a claim for the repair of failed transformer units.

Items from Aviation

(A) Mr. Clayton presented a request for the approval of various technical amendments to the language of the rules and regulations adopted for Frank Elliott Field under Ordinance No. 1752 in 2000. The proposed changes largely reflected the shifting of airport-related duties from the former position of Aviation & Economic Development Director to the current position of Airport Manager. 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 request from the Soap Box Derby Committee regarding the temporary closure of North Maplewood Drive on May 30, 2009 and June 6, 2009 for the annual derby event, with June 13, 2009 reserved as a rain date if necessary. Since that particular stretch of road was maintained by the Champaign County highway department, a resolution requesting the temporary closures of the road was needed from the Village Board. Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place this item upon the formal agenda for its regular meeting.

Adjournment

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

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy A. Reale
Clerk of the Village of Rantoul

APPROVED MARCH 10, 2009

ATTEST:

Neal Williams
Village President

Jeremy A. Reale
Village Clerk