

Village of Birchwood  
101 N. Main Street  
PO Box 6  
Birchwood, WI 54817



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The **Public Budget Hearing and Regular Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting** of the Village of Birchwood was held on **Thursday, November 16th, at 5:30 pm** at the **Birchwood Village Hall, 101 N Main St, Birchwood, WI 54817.**

### MINUTES

Call Meeting to Order (Meeting is recorded)

Pledge of Allegiance-Recited at Plan Commission meeting

Roll call by Clerk: Present: R. VanGilder, B. Boatman, S. Milligan, T. LeBrocq, and R. Seffinga.

Public Notice: Posted at the Birchwood Post Office, Village Hall, Gary's Grocery, Village Website and the Chronotype.

Law Enforcement Monthly Report on Police Services-October 2023-Adam assisted with locating the 4 students who were lost during a Birchwood School field trip. No incidents occurred during Halloween. The new squad is done except for the new graphics. The old 2016 squad has been sold to another municipality for \$25,000. These funds will be applied to the loan for the new squad. Milligan commented on how nice the old squad looked. There was an election alert regarding election workers receiving envelopes that contain fentanyl. It sounds like the Postal Service is trying to intervene with any suspicious mail.

Public Works Report on Sewer, Water, Streets, and Parks-October 2023-None

BFCESD Report-VanGilder read the report from Dan Wichser. The building came in under budget by \$99353, so refunds will be issued. The Village will receive \$4998.94-which will be applied back to the loan for the EMS building. EMS services is working to have certified CPR instructors. Eventually, they will be offering classes for certification/recertification through the Red Cross. There will be a meeting between the BFCESD and the Village to address concerns over the water rates/fees- which are regulated by the PSC. Dan will be resigning from his Village position in April. VanGilder asked the Board to think about ideas for his replacement.

### **AGENDA ITEMS:**

1. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Seffinga to approve current agenda. Carried 5-0
2. Open Public Hearing to Citizen comments on 2023 Budget. Linda Zillmer commented on the Public Notice on the tax levy. She questioned the levy, debt service, and capital project amounts. She asked why it appears that expenditures are going down, but the levy is going up. She is concerned that taxes are going up 34%. Beffa and VanGilder stated that the Village follows what our certified accountant provides to us and that there are a lot of factors that go into these numbers. Teresa (MSA) stated that the Village general fund does not receive the tax revenue generated by the TIDs. She also commented that the properties located within the TIDs don't pay more taxes than everyone else does. Eventually, when the TIDs are closed, this tax revenue will benefit the general fund. VanGilder said he expected more tax revenue after the property re-evaluation last year-but most of the new construction was in the TIDs. He went on to say that he is not in favor of opening another TID. Zillmer feels the Board should investigate her concerns and do a special meeting if needed, prior to sending the numbers to the Washburn County Treasurer. VanGilder asked if there were any further comments. None noted.

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3. Motion by VanGilder to Close Public Hearing to Citizen comments on 2023 Budget and open the regular BOT meeting.
4. Correspondence on the following agenda items only, if any-None
5. Request to amend and re-approve October 23, 2023, Budget Workshop meeting minutes that were approved at the Budget Workshop held on October 26, 2023.
  - a. Reason-Public safety revenue was not factored in when calculating the department's % of the budget. Request to correct Agenda item # 3 by changing percentage from 20% to 16% - Correction is as follows-Boatman and VanGilder voiced concern over the public safety department being 16% of the budget. Motion by VanGilder, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Milligan to change the above minutes to reflect 16% instead of 20%. Carried 5-0
6. Approve Meeting Minutes
  - a. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Boatman to approve the regular Board of Trustee meeting minutes from October 10, 2023. Carried 5-0
  - b. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Boatman to approve the BOR meeting minutes from October 10, 2023. Carried 5-0
  - c. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Seffinga to approve the Budget Workshop minutes from October 26, 2023, with the changes to the October 23,2023 meeting minutes- changing the Public Safety budget percentage from 20% to 16%. Carried 5-0
7. Discussion and possible action on 2024 Budget-LeBrocq voiced concern over the items Zillmer brought up. VanGilder agreed. LeBrocq asked if the Budget could be approved tonight and readjusted later after getting clarification from the auditor. Beffa will contact Brandon for clarification on the numbers. Beffa also stated that there were items that were an oversight on her part for the budget- such as FICA. Beffa found out that there are some expenses that can be allocated to the TIDs. Zillmer continued to say that a special meeting can be held to adjust the budget- if new information is brought to light. Beffa stated that the Village won't be levying any more money and that cuts have been made to most departments to balance the budget. The Budget can be approved and amended later. VanGilder asked if there were any other questions. None noted. Motion by VanGilder, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Milligan to approve the 2024 Budget for \$570,377. Carried 5-0
8. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Seffinga to approve the prior month's Treasurer's Report. Carried 5-0
9. Corrosion Control Improvements-Teresa (MSA) informed the Board that the valve was not reusable, so the cost increase is to replace it. Supply chain issues have also caused the contractor to request an extension for the completion date. VanGilder asked if there would be any interruption in service during the project. Teresa stated that the tower should be full, so it shouldn't be an issue. Tucker commented that the discovery of 2 water leaks last summer has significantly improved pumping. Teresa stated that water tower bid went to the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest bidder-the contract has been sent to Viking. Teresa said that the Village wasn't approved for principal forgiveness on the water tower funding.
  - a. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Boatman to approve the change order to include the valve replacement in the contracted price and extend completion dates for the Corrosion Control Project. Carried 5-0
10. Fee stated that the Erickson property had about 1 ½ feet of water in the basement/crawl space. The water was pumped out, so it didn't go into the sewer. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Seffinga to

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approve Hilda Erickson request to adjust the sewer charge to \$38.70 for October 5, 2023, utility bill due to a water leak in the basement. Carried 5-0.

11. Approve Contract(s)

- a. IT contract for the Village. Per Beffa, Lenbom will help with the change to the .gov email for the Village. Lenbom also backs up all the Village records and supplies remote support. Motion by Boatman 2<sup>nd</sup> by Milligan to approve Lenbom Consulting Services. Carried 5-0.
- b. Beffa stated that an annual audit is completed to make sure the Village isn't paying for equipment and services that it no longer has. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Boatman to approve Spectrum/League of Wisconsin Municipal Insurance policy. Carried 5-0.
- c. All agreed Brandon does a great job for the Village. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Boatman to approve Two Rivers Accounting for 2024. Carried 5-0

12. Village Industrial Park-The Village rents approximately 7.8 acres to Paul Borofka for farming. Beffa asked about putting additional verbiage in the contract to allow for the possible sale of the property. Boatman added that dates should be included to specify lease time frame. VanGilder felt the Village would probably have to buy him out if it sold prior to the harvesting of the crops. VanGilder asked for this item to be put on February agenda. The Village may have a clearer picture of the sale status at that time.

13. Inflatable Snowman

- a. Birchwood Chamber of Commerce requesting to purchase and place 20' inflatable snowman in Village Rest Park. VanGilder suggested putting it by the Bluegill Fish for people to see when coming into town. Beffa will contact the Chamber.

14. Ordinance Amendment 20-2023 Election Officials [Added]

- a. Beffa stated that most of the election workers work all day. At times, something comes up that a worker may need to work a partial shift. Motion by VanGilder 2<sup>nd</sup> by Seffinga to amend Ordinance 20-2023 Election Officials -to allow the appointment of alternate officials and the selection for two or more sets of election officials to work at different times on election day and permits the Clerk/Treasurer to establish different working hours for different officials assigned to the same polling place. Carried 5-0

15. Ordinance Amendment 21-2023 Short Term Rentals- Beffa found several typos that needed to be corrected.

- a. Motion by 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanGilder, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Milligan to update and amend Ordinance Amendment 12-2023-Article III Short Term Home Rentals correcting typos of new ordinance. Carried 5-0

16. BFCESD Response to Correspondence Letter

- a. BFCESD requested a meeting to air questions and hear explanations. VanGilder feels that the Village needs to sit down with them to hear their concerns. He reiterated that the Village can't change the water fees- because they are regulated by the PSC. The Village suggested they recoup their expenses for water used outside of the Village from the homeowners or municipalities. LeBrocq commented that by doing this, it would lower the contractual costs to all the municipalities. VanGilder also stated that most insurance companies will reimburse for this. VanGilder stated there will be a meeting with the BFCESD within the next 2 weeks. Beffa warned against the forming of a quorum if any other Board members attend. Beffa also suggested the BFCESD apply an administrative fee to their bill to recoup expenses

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in the suggested process. Beffa went over the PSC requirements for water rates-which is determined by what source (meter) the water is taken from. She also suggested they remove their private hydrant- if they are unable to use it. VanGilder will attend the meeting.

17. Motion by LeBrocq 2<sup>nd</sup> by Milligan to adjourn. Carried 5-0

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