

VILLAGE OF WRIGHTSTOWN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES

The regular bi-monthly meeting of the Committee of the Whole, of the Village of Wrightstown, was held at Wrightstown Village Hall, 352 High St., Wrightstown, WI, on **Tuesday, June 6, 2023**, and was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Village President Dean Erickson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – Village President Dean Erickson; Trustees Sue Byers, Mark Leonard, Andy Lundt, Terry Schaeuble, Dan Segerstrom and Julie Sigmund

Also present: Brian Roebke (Wrightstown Spirit); Administrator Travis Coenen; Public Works Director Andy Vickman; Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Seidl; Assistant Fire Chief Ben Vosters; Fire Inspector Nathan Helbing; Police Chief Greg Deike; Attorney Randy Nesbitt from Conway, Olejniczak & Jerry S.C.; Residents Tony Decker, Kathryn Lich, Dalton Rupiper and Julia VanLaanen

Motion made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee J Sigmund to open the Tuesday, June 6, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting. **Motion carried.**

Motion made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee J Sigmund to approve the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, May 16, 2023. **Motion carried.**

Wrightstown School District Initiative to Prepay Debt

Trustee Sue Byers was invited to meet with School Superintendent Carla Buboltz, Business Manager Dan Storch and School Board President Nicole Gerend regarding her questions on the School Board’s initiative to prepay the 2020 referendum debt. When asked if 2-3 additional citizens could attend the meeting, or if the meeting could be recorded, her requests were denied. Due to this, Trustee Byers declined the offer.

Trustee Andy Lundt stated that it would be advantageous for the Village and School Board to meet and discuss both entities projected needs. These joint meetings would help with timeframe planning and help each better understand why decisions are being made as they are. He is wondering why there is such a reluctance on the part of the School Board to participate.

Trustee Byers shared that there is discussion on social media regarding the need for facility expansion, due to anticipated enrollment growth, as the reason for the prepayment of existing debt. However, in review of the pre referendum video presentation, Applied Populations growth study noted that enrollment going forward was projected to remain relatively flat. However, in a second study ordered as a result of planning for future facility needs, MD Roffers projected student enrollment to be 160 students higher than it currently is for 2023. If the purpose of prepaying present debt is due to anticipated growth, current enrollment numbers do not support the need to expand. If growth is not the reason for debt prepayment, the community needs to be provided the correct reasoning.

Because the Village Board of Trustees allowed the School Board to use a Village Board Meeting as a referendum forum, President Dean J. Erickson feels that it is now the responsibility of the Village Board to help find a resolution to the tax increase/debt pre-payment issue. He feels that the School Board misused the community's trust by not sharing their actual plans.

Trustee Dan Segerstrom noted that no motion of support was approved during the referendum presentation held at Village Hall and the Board of Trustees have not asked that information obtained about debt prepayment be reported back. He does not want it to appear that the Village Board as a whole is pursuing answers.

Trustee Andy Lundt asked if the Board of Trustees would be in support of having Administrator Coenen again request a meeting between the Village and the School Board, now that the new School Superintendent is coming onboard effective July 1st.

Administrator Coenen fears that because one on one meeting invites to residents and Village Board Members, received from Superintendent Carla Buboltz and Business Manager Dan Storch, have been rejected a joint meeting may not be agreed to. He also feels that the controversy about the school budget and the prepayment of debt is tearing the community apart.

Trustee Andy Lundt reiterated, as stated during prior meetings, that the tax increase/prepayment of debt is not a Village Board vs. School Board issue, but since Trustees are so involved in Village finances, they have enough knowledge to question what does not make sense. However, since both the Village and School District are taxing entities, there are times when both must work together for the betterment of the community.

Administrator Coenen stated that the Wrightstown School Board has to want to work in collaboration. Until that happens, there will be no progress made on any issues.

Village President Dean Erickson does not believe that the prepayment of debt, which is detrimental to tax payers, cannot continue to go unchecked. He is hoping that new school district leadership will rectify the situation.

Trustee Sue Byers noted that additional debt service payments were made for the last three years without knowledge by, or feedback from, the public until the Clerk from the Town of Kaukauna noted the adjusted bond payoff date and began inquiring. If the pay down is so advantageous, why is it being done so quietly?

When Trustee Terry Schaeuble asked if this item will be on the agenda of every meeting going forward, President Dean J. Erickson responded with a resounding "yes".

Unfortunately, the information that the community is looking for is not available to the Village Board to provide.

Trustee Andy Lundt would like to understand what the long term plan of the School Board is so the Village Board is able to plan as well, while protecting taxpayers from huge payment hikes.

Motion made by Trustee S Byers with a second made by Trustee T Schaeuble to close the Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:21 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Michelle Seidl

Clerk/Treasurer

Posted: 06/21/2023 MS