President Christopher McCann called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Council Members Present:
President McCann Trustees: Gale, Cavendish, Cook, Ager, Harper and Conley
Absent Members: None
Staff Present: Clerk-Joni Scott, Village Manager/Zoning Administrator- Jim Dyer, DPW Superintendent- Chris Holton, Bill Rosemurgy- Harbor Master, Diana Simons- Treasurer

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Trustee Gale **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Cavendish to approve the September 12, 2024, Regular meeting minutes as presented. **Motion Carried.**

Approval of Agenda (amendments/additions):

Trustee Conley **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Gale to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion Carried.**

Correspondence:

None

Public Comment:

Mike McMillan praised handling the Leelanau Uncaged event and suggested future involvement of the township.

Anne Harper supported the 15 mph speed limit on Bay and Rose Streets, emphasizing the need for pedestrian safety and the area's lack of sidewalks.

Staff Reports:

The Council received written reports from the Clerk, Treasurer, Harbor Master, and DPW Superintendent.

A. **Village Manager/Zoning Administrator -**

Village Manager/Zoning Administrator:

Village Manager James Dyer provided an extensive written update on staff activities for review. He discussed a meeting with Kathy Firestone and her family regarding the replacement of the plaque on the flagpole, confirming their intention to fund the cost of the new plaque. Additionally, Dyer shared a map of the social district, indicating that once the district is fully approved, the village will publish comprehensive information about it on the website to educate the public.

1. Committee Reports:

None

2. Ex-Officio Board Reports:

A. Planning Commission:

Trustee Gale reported that the Planning Commission conducted a thorough review of the entire list of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects in a single meeting, applying the established three criteria to rate each project. The zoning administrator has compiled the results of this evaluation, which will be presented at a later date as specific project needs arise and budget availability allows.

3. Discussion Items:

A. Village Halloween Hotdog event:

The village council discussed the upcoming Halloween Hotdog event scheduled for October 31st, confirming that it will run from 4:30 PM to 7 PM, with setup starting around 4 PM. Trustee Harper will provide the grills for the event. The decision to adjust the timing from the previous 4 PM to 7 PM was made to accommodate the impact of school dismissal times on attendance. Volunteers are needed to assist with the setup.

B. Social District: Discussion Concerning Map Revisions:

The discussion on the Social District focused on several key aspects, including a proposed revision to the district map that clarifies it includes only the sidewalk area, excluding residential structures. Council members stressed the need for better signage and public education to address confusion experienced during the Uncaged event. Concerns were raised about the ambiguous rules regarding the consumption of drinks in closed containers outside the designated area, highlighting the necessity for clearer regulations. The council also agreed to review and tighten the management agreement for the Social District to enhance clarity.

C. Discussion of 15 MPH Speed Limit on Bay/Rose Streets between Main and 6th:

The discussion regarding the 15 mph speed limit on Bay and Rose Streets involved differing opinions among Council members. Trustee Cook proposed increasing the limit back to 25 mph, arguing that the recent installation of a 4-way stop has enhanced safety and that compliance with the 15 mph limit appears low. In contrast, other council members advocated for maintaining the lower limit, citing the absence of sidewalks and the importance of prioritizing pedestrian safety. The council also considered the psychological impact of lower speed limits and noted studies indicating that drivers often exceed posted limits. Ultimately, they decided to revisit the issue and potentially take action at the next meeting, with plans to gather feedback from constituents in the interim.

4. New Business:

A. Action Concerning NLTUA Loan Documentation:

The discussion on the NLTUA loan documentation focused on formally recording the agreement regarding funds borrowed by NLTUA from the village. Village Manager James Dyer clarified that the council was not approving anything new, but rather documenting a past agreement to defer NLTUA's payments owed to the village for debt service. The village earns 2% interest on these deferred payments, which are due in 2028 the year of the final sewer bond payment. This documentation was requested by auditors from both NLTUA and the village. The Village Council ratified the loan documentation.

Trustee Gale **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Ager that the Northport Village Council approved the Capital Improvement advance agreement and authorize the village manager to sign on behalf of the village. **Roll Call Vote:** Yeas (7) Nays (0) **Motion Carried.**

B. Action Concerning Paving Contract at the South Shore Culvert:

The discussion on the paving contract for South Shore highlighted the urgency of completing the work before asphalt contractors become unavailable later in the month, as noted by Chris Holton, the DPW Superintendent. He emphasized that timely paving is essential to avoid complications with plowing in that area. The council recognized the need for prompt action to ensure the project was completed efficiently.

Trustee Ager **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Gale that the Northport village council accept the proposal for Team Elmer's for the scope of work located in area three of the South Shore culvert described the proposal dated 9/24 for $6,300, authorized the village manager to sign all contracts necessary to complete the project on behalf of the village and approve a transfer of $6,300 from fund balance of the General fund to Capital projects in the Local street fund.
Discussion: Trustee Cavendish inquired whether the $6,300 cost reflected the full scope of work initially proposed or just the specific tasks the village intended to carry out. The DPW Superintendent and Village Manager clarified that the $6,300 amount was solely for the targeted scope of work requested by the village, not the entire original proposal. The discussion then focused on ensuring that this amount was appropriate and in compliance with the village's purchasing policy, despite being a sole source proposal.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas (7) Nays (0) Abstained (0) Absent (0) **Motion Carried.**

C. Ratify Staff Signatures for Huntington Tree Committee CD Resolution:

Trustee Gale, representing the Tree Committee, noted that they had requested staff to invest unused funds in the tree fund into a certificate of deposit (CD) to generate additional interest, as there would be no tree planting for several months.

Trustee Gale **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Cook that the Village Council ratify the signatures and actions taken by staff to implement the banking resolution to fund a certificate of deposit dated September 18, 2024, for the tree fund **Roll Call Vote:** Yeas (7) Nays (0) Abstained (0) Absent (0) **Motion Carried.**

D. Action Concerning E-Dock Sidewalk Project:

Village Manager James Dyer explained the E-Dock Sidewalk Project, which involves the removal and replacement of approximately 130 linear feet of a 10-foot-wide sidewalk at the Village Marina, which has deteriorated due to wave action and groundwater seepage undermining its support. Previous estimates for third-party repairs exceeded $50,000, but the DPW staff has developed a plan to perform most of the work in-house, with a local contractor providing the concrete work for no more than $11,000. Other project costs will be covered by the existing budget. Staff recommends completing the work this fall to prevent further deterioration and potentially higher repair costs in the future.

Trustee Conley **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Harper that the Northport Village Council authorize the Village Manager to proceed with the construction of the E-dock sidewalk project, and to enter into a contract with a third-party concrete vendor in an amount not to exceed $11,000, and to take all actions and sign all documents necessary to complete the project.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas (7) Nays (0) Abstained (0) Absent (0) **Motion Carried.**

E. Action Concerning Water Rate Study Recommendation:

Village Manager James Dyer presented the recommendations from the Water Rate Study, conducted by Dawn Lund from Utility Financial Services, LLC. The study outlined revenue requirements and financial projections, culminating in a proposal for phased rate increases of 20% per year starting in fiscal 2024-2025. This represents the Village's first effort to apply objective criteria for setting water rates. The proposed increases would raise the base rate for residential customers from $36.00 to $43.20 per quarter and the usage fee from $1.40 to $1.82 per 1,000 gallons, resulting in an estimated annual revenue increase of $18,742.16. Dyer emphasized that while the study recommends continued 20% increases over the next four to five years, this motion only addresses rates for the upcoming fiscal year, with future adjustments based on actual revenue. Additionally, Dyer highlighted the urgent need for a new SCADA system for the water distribution network, estimating the cost at around $10,000, and proposed a budget amendment to allow up to $12,000 for this project to ensure timely completion before the leaves return in the fall. He requested the Village Council approve the motion to implement the rate increases and the necessary budget amendments.

Trustee Gale **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Harper that the Northport Village Council adopt the recommendation of the Water Rate Study, increase the water system base rates and usage rates by 20% effective with the October 2024 billing, increase the water fund revenue budget by $19,000, increase the water fund capital expense budget by $12,000, increase the water fund balance by $7,000, and authorize the Village Manager to enter into a contract for the replacement of the SCADA system for an amount not to exceed $12,000 and to take all actions and sign all documents to necessary to complete the project.
Discussion:
Trustee Gale acknowledged that it was a difficult but necessary decision to sustain the Village's water infrastructure.

Trustee Ager asked if the village had heard any feedback or comments from constituents about the proposed rate increases. James Dyer responded that while there were some general comments that the increases were too much, the village had not received any formal or direct feedback. He emphasized the rates are still very low compared to other communities.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas (7) Nays (0) Abstained (0) Absent (0) **Motion Carried.**

Payment of Bills:

President McCann **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Harper to pay the bills for September for $116,494.23 when funds become available. **Roll Call Vote:** Yeas (7) Nays (0) Absent: (0) **Motion Carried.**

Public Comments:

Karl Wizinski, representing Three Rivers Properties, expressed frustration during public comment regarding the village's failure to fulfill commitments made in an agreement from December concerning the Mitten property. He noted that the village was supposed to complete three actions: providing a quitclaim deed for the brewery property to Three Rivers, a quitclaim deed for his adjacent property, and relocating the road. Wizinski highlighted that none of these actions have been taken and conveyed disappointment that the village has not followed through on the agreement established in February. He aimed to ensure that the council was aware of the village's unfulfilled commitments regarding the property line on Park Drive.

Anne Harper, during her public comment at the meeting, expressed her continued support for the 15 mph speed limit on Bay and Rose Streets, citing the importance of pedestrian safety due to the absence of sidewalks in the area. She inquired whether the capital improvement plan had considered the addition of a sidewalk on Rose Street between 2nd and 3rd streets. Additionally, Harper proposed that the village explore the possibility of providing public WiFi in the downtown area, highlighting its potential benefits for residents, tourists, and businesses. She pointed out that while the library offers free public WiFi, it is not available 24/7, and having village-provided WiFi could serve the community well. Harper encouraged the village to investigate the feasibility and costs associated with implementing public WiFi as a new amenity.

Council Comments:

Trustee Ager raised the issue of the promised trash pickup for the year, stating the council owes it to the public to discuss the status of that. Village Manager, James Dyer, responded that he had mentioned this the previous week, and they were planning on doing something about it. However, Ager noted she had been absent from that previous discussion.

Trustee Harper expressed confusion about the need for central WiFi in Northport, pointing out that residents already have excellent 5G coverage from three carriers and can use their phones as hotspots. He suggested that advancements in technology may make public WiFi less necessary in the future. Additionally, concerning the Village Manager's report on Park Street, he supported the proposed actions but emphasized that any work undertaken should address all related issues. Harper underscored the importance of resolving legal encroachments on village property, including a locked gate and unauthorized plantings, and called for retroactive approval of landscaping in the creek bed. He stressed the need for proper maintenance of village property following the law and urged the village to take decisive action on these matters, independent of disputes between private landowners.

President McCann concurred with Trustee Harper's comments, emphasizing the need to address issues on Park Drive, particularly regarding property owners and the situation with Karl. He reflected on the progress made over the past two years under the current village manager, noting that the village has become more effectively managed. While acknowledging that some matters may have been overlooked, McCann stressed the importance of not allowing issues to persist simply because of the village's remote location. He called for prompt action to resolve the ongoing concerns on Park Drive and ensure proper management of village property.

Trustee Conley made two comments at the end of the meeting. First, she followed up on concerns raised last month about stones being placed in the creek around 2nd Street, stating that it appears this has occurred and that the village is assessing potential actions to address the situation. Secondly, she inquired about the village's efforts to explore utility assistance administration. Village Manager James Dyer replied that they had not yet made decisions on either issue, as their focus had been primarily on preparing for the upcoming audit which is now completed.

Adjournment:

Trustee Harper **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Cook to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 pm. **Motion Carried.**

Several Citizens attended via Zoom.

Joni l. Scott, Village of Northport Clerk

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