

Special Village Board Meeting – May 18, 2009 (*Amended*)

The following media were noticed relative to this meeting per the Open Meetings Law of the State of Wisconsin: The Ozaukee Press, Port Washington, WI; The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel (Ozaukee-Washington Desk), Milwaukee, WI; The Sheboygan Press, Sheboygan, WI. In addition, a copy of the agenda was also posted at the following locations within the Village of Belgium: Belgium Village Hall, Belgium Post Office, Port Washington State Bank (Belgium Office), Harris Bank (Belgium Office), and Belgium Hardware and Beverage.

Call to Order, Roll Call, Establishment of a Quorum:

President Kevin Kowalkowski called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. In attendance were Trustees Thiele, Vodicka, Weyker, Ritter, Pfeifer, and Gottsacker. A quorum was declared established. Also in attendance were Atty. Gerald Antoine, Daniel E. Birenbaum – DPW & Water Superintendent, Jeff Thiel, Mark Cecil, Jamie Cecil and Carol Pomeday – The Ozaukee Press.

Open Meeting Law Compliance Check: This meeting was in compliance.

Pledge to Flag, Moment of Silence

Announcement of Closed Session (if any):

No closed session will take place during this meeting.

Announcements/Input:

The following announcements and input will be discussed and possible action taken:
None

Action Items:

None

Miscellaneous Matters:

The following announcements and input will be discussed and possible action taken:

- **Cedar Grove-Belgium Area Schools.** Trustee Thiele presented an overview from a variety of minutes (see attached). He indicated a shift from the grade school to middle school from October to November of 2008. He would like to see an open dialog with the School Board. We have our backs against the wall. Children of the Village of Belgium should benefit from an expansion here in Belgium. We should review what other school districts have to offer – Oostburg, Northern Ozaukee and Random Lake. We could start our own grade school district with open enrollment choices. Trustee Vodicka noted that we have “lots to digest”.

Discussion took place on what it would take to create our own school district starting with a grade school. We need to look at finances and where the Village sits. Growth statistics are growing closer as the Village of Belgium grows. Our Real Estate Assessment totals are 50 million more than Cedar Grove's. This is all about our kids.

The Cedar Grove-Belgium School Board President allows items to be approved without full School Board consensus.

Trustee Ritter says he feels that we, *the Village*, may have been slighted. We need more opinions *on how people feel*. Cedar Grove parents do not want their children riding on a bus to Belgium. Trustee Gottsacker noted that this was a double standard.

Trustee Weyker noted that the Steering Committees help “sell” the referendum and was a marketing tool. It is *inappropriate* to not allow Belgium students and taxpayers to have an entity. The students have been denied a grade a school and tech center.

Les Paul ruled out having any school in Belgium. Fred Buechler approached the School Board, but to the best of our knowledge, no one had gotten back to him.

Trustee Vodicka noted that it would be fair not to support a referendum. He proposed that we think of a game plan: 1) formulate a study group for us for our own school and actual

numbers. Cost needs to be explored. Include the Town of Belgium in on this. 2) proximity of existing school district boundaries are needed and 3) send a letter to the Cedar Grove-Belgium School Board with the option of splitting up the school district.

“Trustee Ritter said he would like to know how the people in the village feel before initiating anything. I would hate to go to bat and fight for a school here and find out we’re in the minority, Ritter said. I can’t help but feel as a group we’re being skipped over and don’t count. But I don’t want to see this division between Belgium and Cedar Grove get worse. I would like to hear more opinions from people in the village. Maybe when it goes to a referendum enough people will vote no and they will have to reconsider their decision. “

After another board member brought this up, Trustee Ritter questioned the detachment legal process. Atty. Antoine noted that detachment would be done in two ways: 1) By vote of the School Boards in each district; or 2) Petition for a referendum.

Trustee Weyker noted that going on our own could be very expensive and we have spent tax dollars for the last 46 years. We were to have a partnership. Thus far it is one sided with promises for a K-4 elementary school. What is morally correct and fair? Is it fair that all our children are bussed to Cedar Grove? Is this a partnership? We need a K-4 Elementary School here. Now is the time.

How do we get the K-4 Elementary School in Belgium? Suggestion was made to look at the former Belgium Village Market. Trustee Thiele indicated that retrofitting the Belgium Village Market Building would be cheaper than the 15 million for a new one.

President Kowalkowski had prepared a News Release that may or not be used.

Trustee Thiele noted that they have no common sense.

The economy has not changed. School aid is estimated to be cut 5%.

Trustee Thiele questioned why there have not been educational resources for the Village of Belgium children. After school programs are at Cedar Grove only. No late bus is available for Village of Belgium students to properly participate.

A letter to the School Board was suggested. Concern was expressed that the School Board will not listen to us.

Trustee Weyker noted that the Village of Belgium has to be positive in their approach to minimize wedges that divide.

Concern was expressed that this is not only about financial but also for community and what is best for our kids. It’s never been really about the kids – it’s the parent’s choice. We need some type of fairness and a healthy environment.

Jeff Thiel explained that elementary is K-5 and middle school is grades 6-8. The elementary school would be demolished or retrofit to a 5 wing school and build a middle school.

If the up-coming November referendum passes without consideration for Belgium, we should seek detachment. We are going to oppose the referendum if all building is to take place in Cedar Grove. It is noted that Cedar Grove residents out vote Belgium two to one.

A survey was suggested. We need to do what is fair and the right thing. We need to be united. Trustee Vodicka noted that he would not support a referendum. He is very disappointed.

The next move was questioned. Perhaps a letter to the Village of Belgium voters would be appropriate.

Trustees Vodicka and Gottsacker wanted to further digest this topic.

Trustees Thiele and Pfeifer agree that the purchase of the 28 acres by the Cedar Grove-Belgium School Board was a correct decision to prevent them from being land locked.

Trustee Vodicka suggested a letter to the School Board noting that we're not going to support the referendum and want to see a building here period.

Trustee Vodicka out at 8:36 p.m. for an emergency call and returned at 8:39 p.m.

We will actively support rejection of any referendum that does not provide an educational facility in the Village of Belgium. We would be happy to discuss alternatives.

A motion was made by Trustee Pfeifer and seconded by Trustee Thiele that President Kowalkowski and Clerk-Treasurer Mueller are to work out the questions for a survey, in a positive tone with a return date of June 5th. The Village Board was polled: ayes – Thiele, Weyker, Kowalkowski, Ritter, Pfeifer, Gottsacker; noes – Vodicka; abstain – none. Motion carried.

When the survey results have been returned and calculated, Atty. Antoine is to be consulted.

Finances:

Approval of payment of bills: None

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m. was made by Trustee Vodicka and seconded by Trustee Gottsacker. The Village Board was polled: ayes – Thiele, Vodicka, Weyker, Kowalkowski, Ritter, Pfeifer, Gottsacker; noes – none; abstain – none. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lila M. Mueller
Village Clerk-Treasurer