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508 Second Street, P.O. Box 277, Pepin, WI, 54759, Phone 715-442-2461

Emails: clerk@pepinwisconsin.org and treasurer@pepinwisconsin.org

VILLAGE OF PEPIN PUBLIC HEARING AND BOARD MEETING

Village of Pepin Municipal Building

Monday December 8th, 2025, at 6:30pm

MINUTES

1. **Call Meeting to Order**- Randy called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.
2. **Roll Call**-Randy Kallstrom, John Hurtley, Kelsey Gilmore, Vicki Kosok, & Pat Sandstrom were all present. Mike Michaud & Shannon VanAllen joined late. Others present were Julie Wheeler, Tracy Rundquist, Jon Seifert, Jeff Heit, Jesse Van Alstine, Fire Dept Staff & members of the public.
3. **Public Hearing**-Randy opened the meeting to the public regarding the proposed vacation of the platted alley lying in Block K of the Village of Pepin, Pepin County, Wisconsin, and running north to south between 6th Street and 7th Street. Leslie Stewart of 603 Dunn St. was unaware that there was even an alley there. Steve Seipel said he wouldn't want an alley going through the middle of his yard. Matt Bertelson of 611 Dunn St. asked if the board had any questions. He stated that he also was unaware of an alley being there. When he purchased his property there was a shed located where the alley is and lots of trees located in the area. There were no other comments from the public.
4. **Discussion/Action** – Randy initiated a discussion among board members regarding the proposed vacation of the alley located in Block K of the Village of Pepin. During the discussion, Jon raised an important consideration for the board: Xcel Energy currently holds a utility easement within the alley right-of-way to maintain its facilities. Vacating the alley would not alter this easement, meaning that any property owner who acquires the vacated alley would do so subject to the existing utility easements. As a result, their use of the former alley land would be limited by these constraints. Mike also brought up the need for the board to consider the financial implications of developing the alley. Additionally, there was a question about whether vacating this alley could set a precedent for future decisions regarding other alleys in the village. Jon clarified for the board that approving the vacation of this particular alley does not obligate the village to vacate all alleys in the future; each case can be considered individually.

The **motion** was made by Randy to Vacate the alley in block K between 6th and 7th Street. **Seconded** by John. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was approved.

5. **Clerk's Report-** Approval of 11.10.2025 meeting minutes. Mike pointed out a typo in item number 9. The date of fire training should be 11.15.2025 not 10.15.2025. Mike made a **motion** to approve the 11.10.2025 meeting minutes with the change to the date in item 9. **Seconded** by Vicki. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was approved.
6. **Treasurer's Report-** Approval of Treasurer's Report. Shannon made a **motion** to approve the treasurer's report as presented. **Seconded** by Vicki. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was approved.
7. **Planning Commission-** Discussion/Action regarding a variance request at 607 Dunn St.-Tim Fetzer. Jeff Heit presented information to the board regarding Tim Fetzer's application for a Variance to construct a car port at 607 Dunn Street. The Planning Commission had reviewed the application and recommended that the variance be granted, contingent upon the vacation of the adjoining alley. If the alley was not vacated, the property owner would have needed to address setback requirements. Following discussion among board members, Vicki made a **motion** to approve the variance request for 607 Dunn Street, with the stipulation that the shed on the property be removed. John **seconded** the motion. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was approved.
8. **Police Report-** The report was provided in the packet. Jesse reminded people to shovel their sidewalks and move your cars off the streets when "Nixle" weather alerts go out.
9. **Ambulance Report-** The report was provided in the packet. No one was available for questions.
10. **Fire Department Report-** Thomas Paelak reported that the Fire Dept. held their annual meeting to vote on leadership for the year 2026. Chief Baader has stepped down as fire chief. Jesse Muenkel will be the new fire chief. Adam will be first assistant chief, Preston will be second assistant chief, and Thomas will be captain. They are still working through some issues with getting a title for the new tender truck. Jesse Muenkel introduced himself. He grew up in Pepin and has been a part of the Fire dept and First responders for more than a year now and loves every minute of it. He is looking forward to doing the best he can as Fire chief. Jesse will also be taking his Officer training in January. The fire department is setting up a hazmat class to coincide with the Fire one training and State testing will be in the spring.
11. **Attorney's Report-** This last month Jon had discussions with the personnel Chair on some issues, discussions with various board members and the clerk regarding public

service commission (PSC) issues and investigations regarding water bills. There were more discussions with the clerk about water bills and complaints and how to handle them.

12. **Zoning Administrator-** Jeff went over his report presented in the packet.
13. **WWTP-** Discussion/Action on continuation of Wastewater Treatment Plant Certified Laboratory License.
 - * Mike explained that Dave Vosen, our operator and Chief for the wastewater treatment plant and water system, has been conducting investigations to identify issues that require attention. One area Dave is examining is the facility's certified testing laboratory, which was included in the original construction of the plant. As a result, the plant has a physical space that could potentially perform the certified laboratory tests required for operation.
 - * Operating a certified laboratory involves certain costs, so Dave compiled a list of expenses associated with maintaining certification. During the discussion, it was noted that there are trade-offs to be considered. They are looking for the board's assistance in determining whether it is necessary for the plant to continue functioning as a certified testing lab.
 - * Mike invited Dave to elaborate on the cost breakdown. Dave reviewed the expenses and highlighted areas where the facility could save both time and money by opting not to maintain certification, particularly given that the Village will ultimately have only one operator responsible for the plant.
 - * Mike observed a trend among small facilities similar to ours, with many moving away from maintaining certified laboratory status. He emphasized that it is always possible to regain certification in the future if needed. The board engaged in a discussion regarding these points and the implications for the facility.
 - * Following the discussion, Mike made a **motion** to discontinue the certified laboratory function at the wastewater treatment plant and to utilize the services of a commercial testing lab for all necessary tests moving forward. The motion was **seconded** by Pat. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was approved.
14. **Verizon-** Randy reported that approximately 12 years ago the Village had made an agreement with Verizon to put a tower here in Pepin. They have now reached out wanting to move forward with the project. The board was provided with a site location map. This tower will be fenced in, and Verizon will pay the village annual rent. Construction is scheduled to start in the spring.
15. **Dollar General-** Randy reported to the board and public that Mid America Real Estate has reached out to him about bringing a Dollar General to Pepin. There was some discussion and Jon advised that the response to them should be to develop their plan and when they are ready to, they can present it to the village board.
16. **Public Comments-** Matt Bertelson thanked the board for helping him out & vacating the alley. There were no other comments.
17. **Set Caucus date-** The Caucus will be held on January 12th at 6:00PM

18. **Set next meeting date-** The next regular board meeting will be January 12th at 7:00PM
19. **Closed Session-**Pat made the **motion** to go into closed session as per State Statute 19.85(1)(c) "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility."

And Per §§ 19.85 (1)(e) Deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session.
Seconded by Shannon. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting went into closed session.
20. **Reconvene into Open Session-** for Discussion/Action on closed session item. Shannon made the **motion** to end the closed session and reconvened into open session.
Second by Pat. The board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting was reconvened. There was no discussion or action.
21. **Adjourn-** Shannon made the **motion** to adjourn. **Seconded** by John. The board voted unanimously in favor, the meeting adjourned.

Julie Wheeler-Clerk