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Village of Beecher

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Jonathan Kypuros
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Frank Basile

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Jeffrey Weissgerber
Chief of Police

Harold "Bud" Cowger
Supt. of Public Works

VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I would like to thank all our commission members and their volunteers. The Fourth of July Commission and volunteers put in many hours throughout the year and during the festival; the Beautification Commission plants flowers and keeps our community beautiful; the Youth Commission organizes youth events; and the Historic Preservation Commission maintains our historic depot. The Village is proud of all of the commissions and their volunteers and thank them for donating their time. Also, the Fourth of July Commission is looking for new commission members. If you would be interested in becoming a commissioner or volunteering for any of our commissions, please contact me at the Village Hall.

Below are some of the topics which may be of interest to our residents.

Golf Course Update

The golf course opened in September. Although it was a soft opening, their grand opening should occur in the spring. Considerable work has been done on the course itself, and the club house is a work in progress. The new owners have torn down two dilapidated buildings that could be seen from the empty lot south of Buddy's. Their most recent event was the Chamber of Commerce Golf outing.

Tree Removal and Replacement

The Village is continuing to remove dead trees as time and budget allows. We usually budget \$2,000 per year for new trees in the parkway and have increased it to \$3,000 but we are removing trees faster than we can replace them. Several residents have asked to plant their own trees. Based on that request, we have modified our policy. If you are interested in planting a new parkway tree, please contact the Village Hall for more information. Regarding stump removal, once we have a number of tree stumps to be removed, we will contract a company to come back and do so.

Water Mains, Sidewalks and Streets

We are currently making plans and exploring funding options to replace all old water mains which are located mostly west of Dixie, as well as discussing ways to replace

Continued on next page

CURBSIDE LEAF COLLECTION FOR ENTIRE VILLAGE



Leaf collection is now under way. Leaves raked in rows along the curbside are picked up by a large vacuum machine used by Public Works crews on a weekly basis until the week of Thanksgiving. Residents should place leaves in a pile or row in the parkway between the sidewalk and curb as near to the street as possible. In areas without curbs, leaves should be placed on the grass or parkway at the edge of the street. The leaf machine will make at least one pass per week down each street in the Village.

Village President's Corner continued

deteriorating streets, sidewalks and also install sidewalks on vacant lots which are waiting for houses to be constructed. These sidewalks are mostly east of Dixie.

Railroad Quiet Zones

The railroad quiet zone study has been completed and it is estimated that it will cost \$250,000 to complete the project. Like sidewalks and streets, we are exploring ways to fund these types of projects. You can view the study posted on the Village website at www.villageofbeecher.org.

Local Revenue

The constant threat of taking local revenue away from local governments is making it difficult to plan and fund projects like the ones in the previous paragraphs. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, if these funds are taken away from local governments, serious cuts would have to be made. Since the first of the year, I and several other mayors from Will and Cook County have met with the Governor, State Representatives, Senators and House Leaders and have urged them to maintain those sources of revenues.

Property Tax Freeze

You have heard on the news about the Governor proposing a property tax freeze. What they are actually referring to is the tax levy which is approved by local governments every year. Beecher's current levy is and has been 0% for the past four years and would be frozen at that rate. It is still unclear if that freeze would be forever or would sunset after a period of time. What everyone needs to understand, it does not necessarily mean that your property tax bill will not go up, or will go down. There are other factors involved such as the assessed evaluation by the assessor's office.

Illiana Expressway, South Suburban Airport

You may have seen an article indicating that the Governor appropriated money for the Illiana expressway which made it sound like it still may be built. It is my understanding that money is only allocated for past due bills and litigation. Furthermore it is even less likely that it will be built with the recent decision by the federal government not to appeal a court ruling which threw out the environmental study of the project. If it were to be built, they would have to start all over again. Funds still are being allocated to purchase land for the South Suburban Airport, but we have heard very little about it. When we met with the Governor, he indicated that they were still reviewing the project.



Greg Szymanski
Village President



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BUDDY BENCHES FOSTER FRIENDSHIP

Buddy Benches have popped up around Beecher in parks and playground areas. They carry with them a message to promote kindness and encourage the fostering of new friendships.

A local resident organized a fundraising campaign and through many generous donations given, there are now 12 benches in Beecher. For information and the background story go to www.buddybench.org

MEET BEECHER'S NEWEST VILLAGE TRUSTEE: FRANK BASILE

"I ran for Trustee because it is time for me to give back to the community," stated newly-elected Village Trustee Frank Basile. "The Beecher community has given so much to me over the years, and now that I am retired it is time to return the favor."

Basile was born and raised in Chicago Heights, graduating from Bloom High School in 1969. He was then called into military service serving in the Army from 1971 to 1973. It was here that he was introduced to mail distribution, working in the base post office. When he returned home he began his career in the United States Postal Service, serving as a letter carrier in Chicago Heights from 1973 to 1978 and working his way up the ladder from Clerk to Supervisor of Delivery and Collections. It was at this time that he moved his family to Beecher in search of better schools and a safer community. In 1992 he was transferred to Park Forest as Supervisor of Retail Operations, and in 2006 he became the Postmaster in Wilmington. This stint was short-lived as he was then transferred to be Officer in Charge of New Lenox in 2006. Basile then retired in 2010. "I am kind of familiar with how government works, being in the postal service all those years, especially when it comes to employee regulations."



Frank and Valerie Basile were happily married for over 25 years, raising two daughters in a neighborhood which was then considered the "north side" of town. Frank is an active member of the Beecher Lions Club and at Faith Church here in Beecher.

Golf, bowling and "Italian" cooking are some of his hobbies, in addition to taking care of "Bella", his 3 year old Boxer. Basile would like to conclude by saying "I want to make Beecher a better community for all residents. I want to help grow the community not necessarily in size but in what Beecher has to offer its residents."



BEECHER POLICE DEPARTMENT CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY

The Beecher Police Department will be holding its second Citizen's Police Academy and will run for ten (10) weeks, starting in January. The participants will meet one night per week, on Thursday evenings, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older and must not have a criminal record. There is no cost to apply for this program. More information or applications can be obtained at the Beecher Police Department (724 Penfield Street) or by going to the Village website. For more information please contact the Beecher Police Department at (708) 946-6388.



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VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since the Spring of 2015:

- ✓ Approved a 12 month agreement with Will-Dupage F/S after a competitive bid process for the purchase of unleaded gasoline at a fixed price of \$2.18 per gallon and diesel fuel for \$2.40 per gallon. This price will also be shared with all other local taxing bodies. Even though the price of fuel fluctuates, locking in a price is easier to budget and in the past has beat variable pricing.
- ✓ Passed a resolution asking the Governor and Illinois General Assembly to not take local income tax funds to balance the State budget.
- ✓ Accepted the findings of a Railroad Quiet Zone study by HR Green which projected the cost of a quiet zone for the old downtown area to be approximately \$250,000. There was also a proposal to close the Hodges Street crossing to reduce these costs. The study was placed on the Village's website for residents to review.
- ✓ Approved an ordinance prohibiting any species of pig to be housed in the Village including those that are bred as pets. Any pet pigs in the Village before approving this ordinance were grandfathered in.
- ✓ Approved an increase in the water rate of \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons with all of the proceeds from this new rate to be deposited into the watermain replacement account for future use.
- ✓ Approved a high usage surcharge of \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons for all usage over 30,000 gallons per billing with the proceeds from this charge being used to fund operations of the water system.
- ✓ Authorized the installation of new light fixtures at the Firemen's #1 ballfield not to exceed \$22,000. A grant for \$20,000 from the State of Illinois was to pay for this project with the remaining \$2,000 from donated funds. However, the Village did not receive all of the grant funding due to the state budget crisis.
- ✓ Adopted a budget for FY 2015/2016 beginning May 1, 2015 with a 0% increase in the tax levy for 2015 collectible in 2016. This is the fourth year in a row that the Village has been able to fund a budget without a tax increase. However, it was noted at the meeting that the State budget and fiscal crisis may affect future Village budgets.
- ✓ Considered a request for a four-way stop at Penfield and Gould. After a study by the Police Department indicated that a four-way stop was not warranted, the Board authorized "slow - children playing" signs be installed on Penfield.
- ✓ Approved a site plan with conditions for an expansion of the Beecher Manor Nursing Home.
- ✓ Approved the purchase of cyber insurance to protect the Village from the liability of hackers and theft of electronic documents.

Continued on next page

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BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

- ✓ Approved a special use permit for an outdoor seating area or “beer garden” at Pin and Tonic, 643 Dixie Highway.
- ✓ Accepted the lowest bid from Tadpoles Landscaping to maintain vacant and abandoned properties which exceed the nuisance ordinance.
- ✓ Approved a bid in the amount of \$78,182.50 to Iroquois Paving for the resurfacing of a portion of Fairway Drive and patching of Cardinal Creek Boulevard.
- ✓ Denied a request from the Sierra Club to reconsider the Village’s policy position on the Illiana Expressway.
- ✓ Approved an ordinance amending the code pertaining to loud music and other noise nuisances.
- ✓ Approved a resident tree planting policy for Village parkways and rights of way.
- ✓ **Sent a letter to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) requesting no left turn signs for northbound Dixie 200 feet north of Church Road in front of the gas station.**
- ✓ Approved a contract with Baxter and Woodman in the amount of \$50,000 to conduct a Phase I alternatives report on the wastewater treatment plant for submission to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to bring the plant into compliance within 5 years with new process and testing standards.
- ✓ Approved a contract with Baxter and Woodman in the amount of \$101,000 for design, IEPA permitting and loan application, bid process and construction observation for the replacement of the Penfield Street watermain. The main will be replaced from Reed to Dixie at an estimated cost of \$995,000. A low interest loan will be applied for and the project is expected to begin in the Summer/Fall of 2016.
- ✓ Approved a new social media policy for employees.
- ✓ Authorized the acquisition of an easement along the north side of Indiana Avenue from Highlington Court to the ComEd substation where a watermain and sanitary force main are located in the amount of \$5,000 from the Preserve at Cardinal Creek Escrow Account.
- ✓ Authorized the purchase of a 10' strip of land along Cardinal Creek Boulevard from Church Road to Bald Eagle at a price not to exceed \$900.
- ✓ Approved a special use permit for the display of agricultural implements on a vacant parcel across from 380 S. Dixie Highway at the request of De Jong Equipment.
- ✓ Approved the purchase of a 2015 Chevy Tahoe for use by the Police Department.
- ✓ Approved a contract with Denler, Inc. in the amount of \$22,127.41 for crack sealing the roads in Hunter’s Chase East and Prairie Crossings South subdivisions.
- ✓ Approved a contract in the amount of \$6,435 to Tadpoles Landscaping for mulching of the playgrounds in Village parks.

The Village Board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Beecher Village Hall, 625 Dixie Highway. Residents are always invited to attend these meetings. Board meetings can also be viewed on WPAL Channel 4 or on You Tube.



VILLAGE BRUSH COLLECTION PROGRAM TO CONTINUE THROUGH NOVEMBER



Brush pick-up will be conducted every other Monday on the same day that recycling is collected. Brush pick-up will continue through November, and begin again in April, 2016. Brush will not be picked up during the winter months unless there is a storm and then the crews will go out on an as-needed basis.



BE AWARE OF SNOW REGULATIONS DURING WINTER WEATHER

With winter approaching, the Village wants to remind residents that for a period of twenty-four (24) hours after a snowfall of two inches or more, it is illegal to park on any residential Village street or in any business district public parking space commonly maintained by the Village between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. This includes curbed streets and driving lanes but does not include parkways maintained by residents.

It is also illegal to deposit snow onto public streets. When clearing your driveway, direct the snow into the yard and not the street. The Police Department may issue tickets to those that deposit their snow onto the street.



HALLOWEEN

Trick-or-Treat hours are 4-7 p.m. on Saturday, October 31st



The Lions Club Annual Weenie Roast will begin in Firemen's Park at 6 p.m. on Halloween.

In addition to the Weenie Roast, the Lions Club will be hosting a pumpkin smash & hayride in Firemen's Park (673 Penfield Street) from 6-8 p.m.

Have fun & be safe! **** Check candy before eating



BEECHER TREE FOUNDATION MEMORIAL TREES

Since the Beecher Tree Foundation's inception in 2002, some residents have decided to plant a memorial tree to remember a special person, date or occasion. These trees have been planted in one of our parks for a donation and the person's name or occasion has been engraved on a plaque in the Village Hall. A tree is a living tribute that stays green for many years to come. The following 16 donors are currently listed on our memorial tree plaque: Byron W. Hunte, by Marguerite and Pam Hunte; In memory of Ed Reiman; Brad and Christine Coats; Paul and Sandy Lohmann; F.F. Bernard F. McKay; In memory of Bob Williamson; In memory of Roger Buckner; In memory of Gary Wiggerhauser; Lee and Sally Meyers; In memory of Joan Wehling; In memory of Wayne Nelson, by wife Ruth and family; In memory of Bill Kass, by wife Barb; In memory of Bill Kass, by family and friends; In memory of Abigeal Noel Ogle, by friends and family; In memory of Valerie Basile, loving wife and mother; and In memory of T.J. Henderson by wife and family.

Please contact Ron Kuhlman at the Village Hall at 946-2261 if you would be interested in purchasing a memorial tree.

DOG TAGS GO ON SALE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

Dog tags go on sale at the Village Hall on Tuesday, December 1st. The price is \$10 per dog and the deadline for purchase is March 15, 2016. After the March 15th deadline, the price of dog tags increase to \$15 each. The dog's name, breed, color and date of last rabies vaccination will be required to purchase the tag. Dog tag fees are used to pay for the services provided by Dr. McKay and Beecher Veterinary Clinic for picking up, feeding and boarding stray animals and lost pets.



THE 2015 FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION: ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE EVER!

On the morning of June 29th, A+A Amusements rolled into Beecher with its large 21 unit carnival out of Fairbury, Illinois. The problem, however, was that Firemen's Park was too wet. It was so wet that even the carnival workers' campers could not make it into the park. This was a huge problem that had never occurred since the festival started in 1927. Was Beecher going to have a carnival this year?

The Beecher Fire District came to the rescue, but not in their "traditional" way of fighting fires and saving lives. "Put the carnival in our parking lot" offered Dave Lagesse, Fire Chief. Without any other option, all of the local taxing bodies were called together for an impromptu meeting to help save the 2015 Fourth of July celebration. The Beecher School District offered their parking lot for the carnival worker campground and staging area. The Library District and Community Hall Board agreed to be cut off for four days from the street and offered their help. The police and public works departments sketched out a plan for the closure of Maxwell and Penfield Streets, and the Beecher Post Office agreed to the inconvenience of the road closures. "All of the taxing bodies came together to make this happen in under 1/2 hour," commented Village President Greg Szymanski. "That is how you define a true sense of community effort."



After the celebration, positive public comments about the new carnival arrangements were overwhelming. It turned out that the residents loved having the carnival on the pavement. Mother nature may have thrown Beecher a curve ball for a reason. The income from the festival was also the third best since 2000, resulting in a net proceeds of \$31,672.53 from the festival itself.

The Beecher Fourth of July Commission, a 20 member volunteer board appointed by the Village, in addition to another 100 or so volunteers make this celebration happen. Before the carnival even opens, there are \$127,000 in expenses laid out for live entertainment, fireworks, parade, security, park prep, raffle car purchase and concession supplies. It is a massive undertaking, with quite a high degree of risk. A true "community" effort is needed, and this Commission manages to pull it off each year.

Where do all the net proceeds go? "All of our profits go right back into the park" stated Commission President Chuck Hoehn. "That has always been our pledge to the residents." Since 2000, over \$314,000 of proceeds from the festival have been spent improving Firemen's Park. This year, the new picnic pavilion was dedicated in the park, which cost over \$65,000. The new food stand, bingo stand and vendors building are other examples.

What's in store for the future? A new storage building is needed for park and ballfield maintenance. This \$40,000 building is scheduled for construction northeast of the picnic pavilion in 2016. Weatherproof roll-up doors are also needed for the picnic pavilion at a cost of \$16,000. "There are always projects which need to be done in the park," commented Hoehn. "We still have a good five years' of expenses moving forward and then something else will come up. Hopefully we can set up perpetual care for this jewel of our community."



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Trick or Treat hours • Saturday, October 31st from 4-7 p.m.

Lions Club Halloween Weenie Roast • Saturday, October 31st from 6-8 p.m.

**Veterans 5K Run/Walk & Chili Cook Off • Saturday, November 7th at 11 a.m.
at Cardinal Creek Golf Course**

Youth Commission Junior High School Gym Jam • November 13th

Youth Commission Fall Fun Fair at Junior High School • November 15th

Youth Commission Junior High School Gym Jam • December 4th

Holiday House Walk • Sunday, December 6th (see below)

**Breakfast with Santa • Sunday, December 6th beginning at 8 a.m.
at Cardinal Creek Golf Course (call 946-2800 for reservations)**



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHOWCASE YOUR HOME IN THE 2015 HOLIDAY HOUSE WALK?

The Beecher Women's Club is continuing the great tradition of the Holiday House Walk on December 6th but they need your help! They are still looking for houses to participate in the house walk. It is a fun event and a great way to start your holiday season and show off your holiday decorating skills! If you are interested, please call Village Hall at 946-2261.

