



# THE BEECHER BULLETIN

"Your Village Newsletter"

Fall 2019

## Inside this issue:

Board Meeting Highlights	5,6
Brush Collection	8
Capital Improvements	1,2
Dog Tags on Sale	8
Fourth of July Wrap Up	9
Halloween	8
Leaf Pick-up	9
President's Corner	3
Storm Drains/Clean Water	7
Survey on Rec Cannabis	3
Upcoming Events	10
Water Bill Options	4
Winter Weather Parking	8

## Village of Beecher

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*President*

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*Administrator*

Greg Smith  
*Chief of Police*

Matt Conner  
*Supt. of Public Works*

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

Although not always visible, there are many capital improvement projects in progress around town. Here is an update on each of them:

### New Storage Building at 533 Reed Street

The Village purchased this Quonset hut and 3/4 acre of land for \$90,000 behind the Hallmark store. This building will be used for storing Police, EMA and Public Works vehicles and equipment. When Penfield Street is reconstructed, a new downtown parking lot will be installed around this building to provide additional parking for those visiting downtown businesses.



### Penfield Street Reconstruction

This project, expected to cost \$5 million with \$4 million coming from federal grants, is now not expected to begin until 2021. The cause of the delay is the very slow review process being conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Budget cuts at the State level have seriously reduced staffing levels so there is a tremendous backlog of projects not making it through the pipeline.

### Installing New Sidewalks to Fill in Gaps to Schools

The Village applied for a \$250,000 Safe Routes to Schools Grant in early 2019 to install new sidewalks filling in the gaps in residential subdivisions. Competition was fierce for funding and the Village was unsuccessful. With the new capital bill and the popularity of this program (which did pay for the school crossing lights on Penfield, Dixie and Church Road in 2017) we anticipate a new grant program coming out soon and we will re-apply.

*Continued on Page 2*

### **Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation**

This \$10 million project began in 2018 and we expect it to be completed around December of 2019. This project involved a total replacement of the equipment at the sewer plant which was installed in 1996. New equipment, such as a sludge belt press, UV lighting for disinfection, and additional clarifier capacity were also added as recommended by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in order to discharge unpolluted water into Trim Creek as required by law. Due to the financing for this project and a ½% sales tax increase approved by voters in 2017 the Village did not have to raise rates to complete this project. An open house is being planned for the new wastewater treatment plant in the Spring.



### **Gould Street Watermain Replacement**

This project was designed and went to bid in the Spring of 2019. At the same time, the Village learned that this project was included in the State's capital bill. This has required the Village to not award the bid until we receive a grant agreement and abide by the terms of this agreement. This agreement will not be released until the State of Illinois sells bonds for the capital bill and has the funding available for the project. We have been told that this funding will be made available by June 15, 2020. We are in a holding pattern on this project as well, but are ready to go once we get the green light.

### **Dixie Highway Watermain Replacement**

There are several sections of watermain running along Dixie Highway that are very old and subject to breaks. These sections are on the west side of Dixie from Miller to Chestnut and on the east side of Dixie south of Pasadena Avenue. As of this printing the Village Board is authorizing the design phase of this work to be completed with a Spring, 2020 bid letting scheduled. The Village has cash in its watermain replacement account for this project.



Pipe from watermain break



Repaired watermain



## VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It's hard to believe fall is already here. Unfortunately, shoveling snow is just around the corner.



### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you recall, in the last newsletter, I made a plea for residents to become involved in our community and join one of our commissions. The Beecher Youth Commission, 4th of July Commission, Beautification Commission and Historic Preservation Commission are looking for volunteers. Without volunteers, these organizations cannot continue to provide the programs we all take for granted. I had also asked if there was any interest in creating a holiday commission to bring back activities like a holiday house walk, cookie exchange or holiday decorating contest to name a few. There have also been resident suggestions for a fall festival. These are all great ideas, some of which have been tried in the past, but in order to hold these types of activities or create new ones, volunteers are needed to step up to the plate. Volunteering and becoming involved in the community can be extremely rewarding. Once again, I ask if you have any interest of volunteering for any one of these commissions or have ideas for new events, please contact the Village Hall. We'd love to meet with you and see what ideas you may have!



### RAILROAD QUIET ZONE UPDATE

To give you an update on the railroad quiet zone, we have applied for all permits with the railroad and are waiting for their approval. Due to Federal regulations we have to widen some roads, move a driveway and create a cement barrier protecting railroad gates. Completion of the project will not be until spring - just in time for us to open our windows! The Village Board has approved an amount not to exceed \$170,000.00. The signs and barriers required to complete the project have been ordered.

### RECREATIONAL CANNABIS SURVEY

I encourage you to respond to the survey below about the sale of recreational marijuana in Beecher. Your input is important!

*Greg Szymanski*  
Village President

## **PLEASE COMPLETE SURVEY BELOW ON THE SALE OF RECREATIONAL CANNABIS & RETURN TO VILLAGE HALL BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH**

The Illinois General Assembly has approved the sale, possession and use of recreational cannabis statewide. The law that was approved provides for municipalities and counties that do not want to have recreational cannabis for sale in their communities to adopt a prohibition on sales, but not possession and use. This is what is being called the "opt-out" clause. The Village Board and the Planning and Zoning Commission are currently considering their options as it pertains to cannabis and would like to hear from the community as to what your opinion may be on this issue. Under this new law, municipalities may prohibit sale of recreational cannabis but cannot prohibit or regulate the sale of medical cannabis. Please complete the one-question survey below, cut off bottom portion and either mail or drop off at the Beecher Village Hall, 625 Dixie Highway, P.O. Box 1154, Beecher, IL 60401 by Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!



*Complete survey, cut below section off & return to Village Hall*

**SHOULD THE VILLAGE OF BEECHER PERMIT THE SALE OF RECREATIONAL CANNABIS  
IN SPECIFIC COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS IN THE VILLAGE?**

YES

☐

NO

☐

NO OPINION

☐

## THE VILLAGE OFFERS CONVENIENT OPTIONS FOR RECEIVING AND PAYING YOUR WATER BILL



**BILLING OPTIONS:** You can continue to have your water bill mailed or you can choose to go paperless and have your bill emailed to you. To go paperless, simply email Donna at [drooney@villageofbeecher.org](mailto:drooney@villageofbeecher.org) and request to have your bill emailed. Please include your name, service address, account number and email address.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS:** We have the option of auto-draft which would automatically deduct your water bill directly from your checking account **on the due date**. You would still receive a bill but no longer have to worry about getting it paid on time. There are no convenience fees with auto-draft and you never have to worry about writing a check again! Other payment options include mailing your payment; putting it in the drop box located at the Village Hall to the left of the outside glass doors; pay in person by check or credit card (don't forget we have a drive thru!); or by paying online with your credit card or e-check by clicking on the [EPAY](#) link on our website. Did you know that if you pay online with an e-check, the convenience fee is only .50 cents?? Otherwise there is a small convenience fee on all credit card payments.



Choose both emailing and auto-draft and you never have to worry about lost bills or running around to get your bill paid at the last minute!

Go to the Village website at [www.villageofbeecher.org](http://www.villageofbeecher.org) or stop by the Village Hall for forms and further information.



# We are PSC!

Registration is open for the spring 2020 semester.  
**Enroll today at [prairiestate.edu/findwhatfits](http://prairiestate.edu/findwhatfits).**

*#wearepsc*



## Prairie State College

202 South Halsted Street, Chicago Heights, IL 60411

## VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

*The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since the Spring of 2019:*

- ✓ Learned that the Village's property tax rate dropped from 0.7399 to 0.7097 since the EAV in the Village grew by 3.95%. The Board has not increased the levy since 2011.
- ✓ Annexed 25 acres of property owned by the school district at the northeast corner of Miller and Racine.
- ✓ Approved the conversion of 16 duplex townhome lots to 22 single family lots in Prairie Park subdivision.
- ✓ Approved an agreement with the Beecher Fire Protection District for enforcement of the Fire Prevention Code on all commercial and industrial building permits and periodic inspections of existing commercial and multi-family buildings.
- ✓ Learned that due to changes at the Illinois Department of Transportation and the backlog of projects, the reconstruction of Penfield Street from Dixie to Reed using federal funds may not begin until 2021.
- ✓ Approved the appointment of Phil Salmen and Bridget Goedke to the Beecher Fourth of July Commission.
- ✓ Approved \$52,322 in building improvement contracts for the rehab of the storage building at 533 Reed Street.
- ✓ Approved the appointment of Catherine Gonzales and Sarah Murphy to the Beecher Youth Commission.
- ✓ Approved a resolution supporting the Greenest Region Compact of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.
- ✓ Approved a contract from Superior Road Striping in the amount of \$33,659.21 for the thermoplastic paint marking of all Village streets. This material is expected to last 5 years.
- ✓ Approved the purchase of a mini-excavator for Public Works in the amount of \$49,344.46. The primary role of this equipment is to dig in hard to reach places and will be used primarily for watermain and sewer line repairs.
- ✓ Approved the creation of a TIF District consisting of the old downtown area and vacant land to the north in the Village limits.
- ✓ Approved a contract with Baxter and Woodman in the amount of \$308,000 for the detailed design of the Penfield Street reconstruction from Dixie to Reed.

*Continued on next page*



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Lance Saller

Doug Saller



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*Board Meeting Highlights Continued*

- ✓ Approved contracts in the amount of \$4,940 to Affordable Concrete Raising and \$32,025 to Perino Brothers Concrete for sidewalk and curb replacement throughout the Village.
- ✓ Approved a contract in the amount of \$55,000 from Robinson Engineering to conduct a lead line replacement program using IEPA loan funds.
- ✓ Approved a proposal from Custom Brick and Stone for the replacement of metal doors and tuckpointing on the stage in Firemen's Park.
- ✓ Learned of the passing of Bill Merritt, former Public Works Superintendent.
- ✓ Approved an intergovernmental agreement through the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus for the joint purchase of solar energy credits on the open market reducing the Village's electric bills by about 7%.
- ✓ Authorized the purchase of a 2019 Dodge Ram 1500 SSV for use by the Police Department.
- ✓ Tabled a bid from Brandt Excavating of Morris, IL in the amount of \$880,719.41 for the replacement of the Gould Street watermain, pending receipt of capital bill funding.
- ✓ Approved a proposal for a laser light show in the amount of \$12,000 to be held in Firemen's Park on Saturday, August 1, 2020 during the Sesquicentennial celebration.
- ✓ Approved a TIF incentive agreement for Dutch American Foods for the construction of an 18,000 square foot building in the Trim Creek Industrial Park.
- ✓ Approved an agreement for continued participation in the State and Federal Surplus property program.
- ✓ Approved a new agreement with Safebuilt, Inc. for plan review and inspection services. All new residential construction will pay a \$1,500 fee per dwelling unit with the remainder of the fees for other permits being based on square footage or value of work.
- ✓ Referred a proposed zoning ordinance pertaining to the sale of recreational cannabis as a special use permit in certain zoning districts to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- ✓ Extended the completion date of the Beecher Wastewater Treatment Plant rehabilitation to December 27, 2019 due to wet weather delays.
- ✓ Authorized the purchase of a 2020 John Deere 310SL combination loader backhoe in the amount of \$78,000 to replace the 2003 John Deere backhoe.

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 the [Village's YouTube Channel](#) and are posted on the Village of Beecher Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/beecher.illinois/>.



## HELP KEEP STORM DRAINS CLEAR AND CLEAN



When rain falls or when the snow melts only some soaks into the ground. The rest of the water flows over the land, heading downhill to the nearest stream. This is called storm water runoff. Areas

with a lot of pavement, such as driveways, streets and sidewalks, have more storm water runoff because the ground can't absorb the water. Water flows toward the streets into a storm drain. Many people believe that storm drains are connected to a sewage treatment plant; they aren't. Anything that goes down the storm drain goes untreated into local area streams and lakes. Never put anything into a storm drain, and keep debris from entering the drain. Help us keep our water clean!

## HEALTHY HOUSEHOLD HABITS FOR CLEAN WATER

### Vehicle and Garage

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to **minimize** the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up **spilled fluids** with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain. Remember to properly dispose of the absorbent material.
- **Recycle** used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

***Storm drains connect to waterbodies!  
Remember: Only rain down the drain!***

For more info: visit [www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater)  
or [www.epa.gov/nps](http://www.epa.gov/nps)

To report possible illegal discharges to the storm drain system, call the Village of Beecher at 708-946-2261.



**Plan. Invest. Retire.** 😎  
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## BRUSH COLLECTION PROGRAM TO CONTINUE THROUGH NOVEMBER

Brush pick-up will continue every Tuesday through November, and begin again in April, 2020. Please remember to follow brush pick-up rules which can be found on the Village website to ensure your brush is collected. 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.

## DOG TAGS GO ON SALE MONDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

Dog tags go on sale Monday, December 3rd. The price is \$10 per dog and the deadline for purchase is March 15, 2020. After the March 15th deadline, the price of dog tags increase to \$15 each. Tags may be purchased at the Village Hall or online by clicking on the "EPay" option on the Village website. 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 the Beecher Veterinary Clinic for picking up, feeding and boarding stray animals and lost pets.



## BE AWARE OF SNOW PARKING 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. Remember, the snow will end up back in your driveway anyway when the plow comes back by! 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 Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup>

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!



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President  
Dave Miramontes

Mon-Fri 7:30-5:00  
Sat 7:30-3:00



## 2019 BEECHER FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVAL WRAP-UP

The weather did cooperate a little more this year and we had only one very hot day. Surprise storms on the afternoon of Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup> also dampened spirits and lessened the crowds. As of this printing, the celebration provided \$141,239.58 in revenue and \$137,436.03 in expenses, for a net profit of only \$3,803.55. The account balance in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fund is \$43,628.65. This amount, combined with sponsorship donations and early sales of car tickets, should be sufficient to pay the costs of opening the celebration next year.

One word about our sponsors. Without them, this festival would not be possible. In fact, the sponsorship donations of \$33,545 exceed the cost of the fireworks. Thank you to these sponsors and to all who participate in our Fourth of July celebration!



### CURBSIDE LEAF COLLECTION

It's leaf raking season again! 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 end of November (depending on the weather).

Residents should place leaves in a pile or row in the parkway, between the sidewalk and curb as near to the street as possible. Leaves should not be placed in the streets because it will clog storm drains when it rains, potentially causing flooding. In areas

without curbs, leaves should be placed in long rows on the grass or parkway at the edge of the street. Do not mix leaves with branches or grass clippings. These things will damage the leaf machine. The leaf machine will make at least one pass per week down each street in the Village depending on the weather.

### AVOIDING SCAMS

\*You get a text, call, or email from someone who says they're with the government and you owe some money. In other cases, they might say you won a prize or are eligible for free Medicare help. In both cases, they demand payment or personal information.

\*If someone calls, texts, or emails saying they're with the government – **STOP**. No government agency will threaten you or demand personal information like this over the phone.

\*To avoid these scams: • **Never send money**, especially by gift cards or money transfer. • **Don't give out personal or financial information** to anyone who calls, texts, or emails. • If you sent money to an imposter, contact the company you used (credit card company, etc.) and tell them it was a scam. Ask to reverse the transaction, if possible.

\*If you're unsure, hang up and contact the agency on your own. Stay safe and avoid scams!



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## Village of Beecher

625 Dixie Highway / P.O. Box 1154  
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### Village Hall Hours

Monday thru Friday:  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Village Hall Phone

946-2261

Emergency Police & Fire  
9-1-1

Police Non Emergency:  
946-2341

Fire Non Emergency:  
946-6585

Web Site: [www.villageofbeecher.org](http://www.villageofbeecher.org)

E-Mail: [clerk@villageofbeecher.org](mailto:clerk@villageofbeecher.org)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



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

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

**Lions Club Breakfast with Santa at Amvet Hall • Sunday, December 8th**

**Beecher Youth Commission Haunted Hallway - November 1 & 2**

**Beecher Youth Commission Nerf Wars - November 17**

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## VILLAGE MEETINGS

**Village Board - 2nd and 4th Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at Village Hall**

**Planning and Zoning Commission - 4th Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Village Hall**

**Historic Preservation Commission - 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. at Beecher Depot**

**Beautification Commission - 2nd Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at Village Hall**

**Youth Commission - 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Village Hall**