



ADMINISTRATION

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Administration & Finance Committee Special Meeting Thursday, April 17, 2014 4:30 pm

Call to Order: 4:30 by Trustee Addington

Roll Call: Bruce Barker, Harold Barry, Virginia Szymiski, Dave Weiss, Mayor Gunter, Larry McIntyre, Spencer Parker, Tom Mulhearn, Steve May, Steve Nero, Cathy Casey, Jim Addington, Larry Forssberg, Ron Searl, Glen Liljeberg

Pledge of Allegiance

There are no minutes from previous meetings at this time, the audio's are still being processed. The machine error has made it difficult for the audio to be translated. Manager Searl will take roll call. Larry McIntyre states that he will take notes for this meeting. Trustee Addington asks if there are any reports from Finance or Administration? Director Parker states that there are not at this time, Manager Searl states not at this time.

Trustee Addington asks if there are any miscellaneous items at this time? No responses so Trustee Addington goes right to new business. The purpose that this special meeting was called is to discuss customer service initiatives; to determine how we pass on to all Village employees that we are here to sell the service that we bring, from the Village Board down to all the employees. The goal is to have a resident smile even if you are issuing them a ticket. We had a quickie meeting earlier and Larry has put some stuff together.

Larry McIntyre began his presentation pointing out the goals that the Village Manager gave him for the program. Initially to discuss Customer Service Initiative amongst ourselves and then put it into a document to be reviewed of goals, proposed action plan and immediate steps. Then decide on what we will actually do. Tonight we have a few things to discuss. It is not locked in, it is for discussion. We as a group need to decide between elected officials and department heads need to determine what the program will look like and then we will go to the rank and file and get their investment and involvement and ultimately create a final product.

The first goal is obviously to provide excellent customer service. This focuses on the attitude of the employee. Secondly, maybe we want to address and boost morale. If people feel good about coming to work then it will make people provide better customer service. Finally we want to create an organizational philosophy that asks everyone to strive for self-improvement and embrace best practices. Another thing that we have talked about is that maybe organizational wide we have not talked about a plan in a consistent manner; police does one thing, fire does another, and village hall does a different thing. Ultimately the goal is to try to create that consistency across the entire organization.

Maybe we should ask for feedback on these items. Does this sound like the direction we want to go in? Trustee Addington asks for anyone's thoughts. Chief Weiss comments that in every leadership class he has ever taken it is stressed that for anything to change it has to start at the top of an organization. It needs to be the same song being sung in each department. Trustee Addington states that it really needs to start with the Board. If people were to tune in and the Board was fighting all the time it would filter down. We have had a lot of good discussions but we have not slammed things around and been rude to each other. In earlier years we have had boards that are disrespectful. Our behaviour filters down to the department heads and employees. Chief Weiss states that we need to foster an atmosphere of teamwork and it will filter down.

Mayor Gunter explains that this discussion began with his desire to brand all the departments of the Village as one entity. It is not the Fire Department, it is not Public Works, it is the Village. How you are treated by a department of the Village should be the same whether it is Water or Police; it is all one. We started this with the consolidation of the offices here at Village Hall; this is a huge step towards this and the staff is doing this so we need the board members to lead by example and agree upon the way we want to move forward.

Larry McIntyre moves on to point out related items such as we need to lead by example and communicate clear expectations regarding professional behavior and customer services. Brought up in other admin/finance meetings is the idea of merit-based salary increases and bonuses, does this tie into performance? Another thing that has been brought up is relationship building between leadership and the rank and file. How much time do we have for interaction between leadership and the people on the streets? The last item does refer to a previous item, setting clear definitions of expectations as well as consequence.

A proposed action plan is in three main areas. The first one is us, Board & Department Head discussions. The next one needs to have the Mayor or maybe Cathy go out to staff level discussion, have those conversations with the rank and file. Then Department Heads need to continue these conversations during organizational branding exercise and strategic plan workshops (to be completed by August). Finally we need to complete rollout of new brand, strategic plan results, and customer service program by Late Summer/Early Fall.

Larry asks if there are any thoughts on this type of strategy?

Trustee Addington replies that the strategy is good, the first question is however what is stopping us today? What is the roadblock? This needs to be discussed first, you need to remove what is stopping the customer service from being excellent. You can't move forward without a clean path. Trustee Barker states that Larry is on the right path, having done this countless times at the church. One of the things you might do early on is an internal survey and get everyone's feedback early on so that you have information to build on and people's interest in the program. Larry Forssberg commented that at some point you might want to do an external survey with certain people that we interact with on a regular basis to get feedback. Trustee Barker comments that it is almost 2 programs. The Mayor states that it is 2 different

perspectives, how do we come across externally and how do we come across to our own staff internally, how do we build teamwork. Trustee Barker says that if he has not been paying attention for the past 20 years he has been paying close attention for the last couple of years and I really see a lot of good things. The hard part is to engage the community to ask the question and get involved.

Manager Searl related an exchange with a resident regarding the need for a permit to have a pod. Even in explaining the reason for the ordinance did not assist the residents dislike of the ordinance or the fact that the ordinance is not easy to find as we have “too many” for people to know what is required. This was a long time resident who is engaged in the community yet did not know that this ordinance has been in effect for 30 years. Trustee Barker stated that we had recently done a press release on this. Manager Searl states that press releases don’t reach everyone. Trustee Addington said this was a perfect example, so how did we help this woman? What do we do, how do we react to this? There was a time many years ago when we had people that would have said tough tomatoes, follow the rules or we write you a ticket. Manager Searl said that you have to engage the person to be able to make a judgement call that is fair to all the residents, not just the one that received a warning about a code violation.

The Mayor commented that customer service issues stem from not taking the time to respond to a query and listen to the person. Even if someone doesn’t like your answer they will appreciate being called back is half the battle. Manager Searl said that sometimes the call is difficult to make, you might get yelled at for 10 minutes but once someone calms down you can have a dialogue about the issue. Trustee Addington asked if we had a policy that allows for a department head to make decision regarding a small fee such as \$50 or \$100?

Manager Searl replied that the problem is that every time we have an issue someone wants to pass a law and the terms are usually definitive and not flexible. Not every department head is going to feel comfortable being flexible in a situation that has an ordinance that states definitively what must be done. Clerk Szymski used water billing as an example and the authority for the water billing clerk to waive a late fee if you have not paid late in the last year. That is an empowerment for the clerk and a great example of customer service. Director May said that that was a policy that was in place and everyone was familiar with in the department.

Manager Searl said that if there is an ordinance that states something definitive and the board was comfortable giving staff the power to interpret and make decisions regarding the code in certain situations than we can change the ordinance to make it more flexible. However, you can not make the decision to go against something in the code to appease one resident if the code is written in a shall/shall not manner instead of may/may not manner. Mayor Gunter commented that it is staff that has the knowledge and we have to trust the staff to make the decisions, if we don’t have the trust than we have the wrong manager.

Trustee Addington said that there are some rules we can’t get around. Manager Searl stated that one of the dangers of flexibility is being equal in your treatment. You have to have equality in the way you treat your residents. We have to have practice in place that all the staff is aware of to give them the confidence to deal with residents without fear of having officials or

department heads upset when a resident doesn't like the answer. How much discretion are you going to allow them? We have to make sure that they are using good judgement and not treating people unequally. Because that is when you are going to get in trouble, especially if it looks like you are doing favors. Chief Mulhearn discussed the issue of people asking that their tickets be voided and the officers being made to look and feel demoralized by their decisions being overruled by their department head.

Larry McIntyre stated that what he is hearing from this discussion is 2 things, and there is a balance to be struck. You want to maintain consistency and have fair and equal treatment of folks and to use common sense to identify the situation and then kick it up to someone with the authority to make a decision. Does that sound like what you are stating? The Mayor interjects with the comment that if it gets all the way up to the board level we have to be very careful not to start over-riding staff, and that's a customer service issue in itself. You have people that think that if they can get to an elected official they can get what they want no matter what the law is and staff has told them. We, all the trustees, need to be very careful in not undermining our staff. That's bad customer service.

Manager Searl commented that if it just goes up to the supervisor level or department head level, you have a conversation that this is how we are going to handle it, and everyone understands the perimeters than you have the problem solved. Trustee Barker remarked that not every issue is black and white and you might need an appeal process. Instead of one person deciding maybe two people need to be deciding the outcome. We don't want to appear indecisive. We need a protocol for situations. You have to understand when we have an issue that we haven't faced before you might hear a complaint. It could be that we are trying to set up our standards.

Larry McIntyre reviewed the goals of the plan and timeline for implementation. The immediate steps are to kick this off a note from the Manager and Mayor together announcing that we are embarking on this process for the Customer Service Plan and Policy and we want everyone to be a part of this as we set a goal for best practices. We need to tie this into morale and raising everyone's buy in. Starting the Customer Service Appreciation Program so that every single month we will identify and recognize an outstanding employee. Jim has suggested that we do this like the school's do student of the month and at the end of the year we have an overall winner. The employee of the year could be part of the awards banquet. Team development will be a part of building morale, instituting the Village Picnic so that employees can social and come together as a group is something that was discussed at the recent health & wellness committee and everyone at that table wanted that to happen if we could find the money.

Those are all initial steps and then right after that we will go into number one the initial discussions where the plan is for departments heads and administration start going down to the rank and file to soliciting their feedback to get involved in the process. Manager Searl asked if this was a two step process? Larry responded that this is just a note to let everyone know that their feedback is going to be sought and getting everyone on board and let's tackle this. Cathy Crane asked if this is to let everyone know that the internal survey is

coming and to look forward to these initiatives. Trustee Barker said let's have a spring picnic and call it an inservice. Clerk Szymiski said that we should start the picnic over lunch and let everyone come as they can. So many of them work varied hours, those that come in so very early in the morning don't always want to go somewhere after work. Manager Searl stated that we use to start tee offs at 1:00 or 2:00 for those that could make it that early and others would come later on - by 5:00pm and we have the picnic at that time. Mayor Gunter said that weekends don't always appeal to everyone. Pick a work day and give them an hour or two of flex time let them come in as they can. Trustee Nero said that an activity can work better than just a picnic. The Mayor stated that we always did municipal with the schools at Twin Lakes from 1-4 and then the picnic would start after that - Mrs. Archibald use to make 5 cakes and they would all go - we use to have 300 people.

Ruth Olsson asked what the budget for this is? Larry stated that this year we don't have one but the Health & Wellness Committee didn't spend their money last year so that is an option. Cathy Crane said that the Health & Wellness could not foot the whole bill. Larry said he needed to do some fact finding on the costs. Trustee Addington said that the Lion's Club would be willing to donate for the Village Employees based on all the help they receive during the barbeque with street closings and such.

Trustee Addington commented that there was one other thing that is an important part of this whole thing. When you walk in a Village Building is it positive or negative? Sometimes it can be the color of the walls or the signs on the wall. In this building one of the negatives is the rope at the front of the building. Director May stated that the rope was gone. It was a "no" to visitors and was taken away. Mayor said that the branding issue is to be a part of the new signage, the logo needs to be on everything. We have to be seen as one organization and not separate entities all around town.

Chief Weiss said that to talk about the material things such as picnics is fine but for our employees it is difficult to get 100% buy-in. At the Fire Dept, having 90% part time employees this not being their full-time job it is hard to get buy-in. A professional training program that includes part timers would be more helpful, so we might have employees that are here for more than just a paycheck.

Trustee Nero asked if we considered some type of reward program? Larry said we were doing a recognition program monthly with an annual winner. Trustee Nero asked what the winner would get? Larry replied that they would be invited to the annual Chamber Dinner. Trustee Nero said it needs to be more than a plaque. Trustee Nero said a bonus would be more motivating. Manager Searl said that in reviewing bonus programs through DMMC many communities are dismantling them due to public outcry, Downers Grove being one of them. Trustee Nero asked what the bonuses were? Manager Searl replied he was not sure but it was for their senior employees and public opinion held quite a backlash. Trustee Nero stated he was thinking more along the lines of gift certificates or something small for the winners not a bonus for senior staff. Manager Searl stated that having a bonus as part of compensation is being reviewed by the Village of Lombard as well. Trustee Addington remarked that bonus for compensation is what motives people in the private sector to work harder.

HR Director Crane discussed the various options for training available through our EAP. Larry asked if those were open trainings, Cathy replied that we schedule them here. Mayor Gunter wanted to point out to everyone that the perception of residents comes from what they see and what they expect to see: police in patrol cars, fireman in trucks, and the public works team on the streets working. The employees need to know that they are being watched like fish in a fishbowl so we need everyone to be engaged. Trustee Barry commented that all the passengers in the public works trucks look like they are sleeping all the time. It gives a bad appearance, they are just killing time. That's perception not reality. Discussion ensued regarding putting everyone in polo shirts, or other uniforms.

Larry McIntyre said that perception might be reality. We can't just assume everyone is doing a great job and that the perception is wrong. The attitude might be correct and the employee is not being professional. Training will help everyone be more professional in dealing with each other and the public. Trustee Barry said that we want employees to be go getters not leaners. The Mayor states that we are not saying there is something wrong, we just want to raise awareness. Trustee Barry said that now is the time to make changes, not next year. Trustee Addington would like to further discuss random surveys for residents, and asked everyone to give their feedback to Larry as this topic is important.

Motion to Adjourn by Clerk Szymski with a second by Trustee Nero.

Adjourn: 5:33pm

minutes approved: 9/19/2014