



The Beecher Bulletin

“Your Village Newsletter”



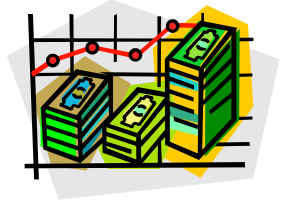
Inside this issue:

Accept Credit Cards	1,2
Annual Rate Increase	6
Board Meeting Highlights	4,5
Dates to Remember	8
Economic Crunch	1,3
Federal Stimulus Package	3
4th of July Schedule	2
Garbage /Recycling Rules	6
Maintaining Healthy Lawn	7
Memorial Trees	7
Tornado Warning Sirens	6
Yard Waste Bags/Carts	6

VILLAGE ALSO DEALING WITH ECONOMIC CRUNCH

Actions Taken In the Past Two Years Ease the Effects of Lower Revenues

In the years prior to 2008, the Village was incrementally ramping up its staffing and equipment to handle the growth which was occurring in the community. Steady increases in property tax, income tax, sales tax, and water and sewer revenues from new developments provided the funding necessary to maintain service levels even though the Village doubled in size. However, the first sign of economic change occurred in the second half of 2007; building permit applications decreased dramatically. In January of 2008, the Village Board held a workshop on the five year financial plan and decided to significantly reduce projections for all revenues that were directly or indirectly influenced by new construction. Village staff was also instructed to produce a five year plan and a budget which assumed no new building permits for housing for the next three years. Capital projects were suspended. The decision was also made at that time to cut operating expenses to allow for an increase of \$100,000 in fund balance for the General Fund, the Village’s largest operating account.



After the budget for fiscal year 2008 was approved, all of the rather dire projections made by the Village Board in the prior year were coming to fruition. Only 12 building permits were issued for new housing starts in 2008, and so far there have been none for 2009. Income and sales tax revenues remained steady but did not show any growth potential. Water and sewer revenues were also flat. As the year progressed, a public works employee resigned to take another position and a police officer retired. The decision was made not to fill these positions. These prudent actions have allowed the Village to remain solvent and provide adequate fund balances in its accounts to maintain service levels residents have grown accustomed to.

Continued on Page 3

Village of Beecher

OFFICIALS

Paul Lohmann
President

Trustees:
Scott Wehling
Ronald Kuhlman
Gayle Ahrendt
Joe Gardner
Greg Szymanski
Brian Cleary

Janett Conner
Clerk

Nelson Collins
Treasurer

Robert O. Barber
Administrator

Jeffrey Weissgerber
Chief of Police

Harold “Bud” Cowger
Supt. of Public Works

Julie Riechers
Code Enforcement Off.

VILLAGE TO BEGIN ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS IN PERSON & ONLINE

Master Card, Discover and American Express to be accepted



Within the next few months, the Village of Beecher will begin accepting credit card payments at both the Village Hall and over the internet. Residents will be able to pay their bills with MasterCard, American Express or Discover. *The Village will be unable to accept VISA payments.*

Over-the-counter credit card payments at the Village Hall can be made for any type of transaction. There will be a convenience charge added to the payment amount that will be assessed on a sliding scale. Fees will begin at approximately \$1.25 for a \$50.00 payment, but the larger the dollar amount of the transaction, the higher the convenience fee will be. (This convenience fee goes directly to the credit card company.)

Continued on Page 2

BEECHER FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION
THURSDAY, JULY 2ND THROUGH SUNDAY, JULY 5TH
Commission Adds Some New Surprises For 2009

The Beecher Fourth of July Commission started planning for this year's celebration the moment the festival closed in 2008. This year, the festival will again run on Thursday evening July 2nd beginning at 6:00 p.m., Friday evening July 3rd beginning at 4:00 p.m., Saturday, July 4th from noon to midnight, and Sunday, July 5th from noon to 10:30 p.m. The parade will be at 4:00 p.m. and fireworks at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4th. After the parade on Saturday, a special patriotic recital will occur featuring a 128 bell mobile carillon. A climbing wall will be available for the kids and a Mariachi Band will play during Family Day on Sunday. All activities occur at Firemen's Park, 675 Penfield Street. Here is a tentative schedule of events:

Thursday, July 2nd from 6 pm -12 midnight

- wristband night 6-10 pm
- "Gone Country" on main stage 7-10 pm
- \$250 early bird drawing from car raffle at 11 pm

Friday, July 3rd from 4 pm-12 midnight

- "Iron Horse" from 4-6 pm on main stage
- "Silhouettes" on main stage 7-11 pm.
- \$250 early bird drawing from car raffle at 11 pm

Saturday, July 4th from 12 noon - 12 midnight

- youth talent - 12 noon
- parade line-up - 2:00 to 3:30 pm
- parade at 4 pm
- carillon recital 5- 6:30 pm
- fireworks 10 pm
- "Five Guys Named Moe" on main stage 7-11 pm
- \$250 early bird drawing from car raffle at 11 pm

Sunday, July 5th from 12 noon to 10:30 pm

- wristbands from 2-6 pm
- petting zoo
- climbing wall noon - 6 pm
- PAKT 2-3 pm
- Mariachi Jalisco Band 3:30 pm to 6 pm
- bean bag tournament 2 pm

Sunday (continued)

- pork chop dinner 4-7 pm
- "Gone 2 Paradise" Jimmy Buffet Band 7-10 pm
- car raffle drawing at 10 pm
- park closes at 10:30 pm

Hope to see you at the festival!



Beecher Amvets float in the 2008 Fourth of July Parade

Credit Cards Continued

On-line payment of water bills or police fines will be available for residents on their home computers. There will be a link on the Village website www.villageofbeecher.org that will take the resident to the e-Pay system. By typing in the name and account/ticket number, you can pay the utility bill or police fine via credit card. ***The Village will only be able to accept MasterCard, American Express or Discover card payments.*** A convenience fee will also be charged on Internet transactions. Once payment is made online, the resident will be issued a receipt for their records, and an email will be sent to the Village so we are aware the payment has been made.



Look for an announcement on the Village website when this system becomes available.

The Village was also required to obtain a credit rating from Standard and Poors in order to sell \$1.1 million in general obligation bonds for the construction of the public works facility. In a poor economy, a good credit rating would be difficult to achieve. However, on March 18th, Standard and Poors rated the Village an “A+” with a stable economic outlook. “Stable financial health, albeit challenged by a recent rapid increase and subsequent decline in residential growth, and good management policies that have fostered responsive action to a fluctuating growth pattern” were reasons given for the positive rating in the report.

The report goes on to say that the Village needs to continue its careful monitoring of infrastructure needs, expenditures, and revenue stream changes to maintain adequate reserves.

The future of the Village’s operation in today’s economy will require fiscal prudence. Capital improvements will address only immediate and urgent needs, such as the replacing of aging watermains and the resurfacing of streets in poor condition. Hiring practices are being curtailed, and the replacement of the Village’s fleet of police cars and public works equipment is being placed on a longer life cycle schedule. However, the Village should be able to survive this economic crisis due to actions which the Village Board set into place long before the crisis reached its peak.

HOW THE FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE WILL AFFECT BEECHER

There is no “free money”

There have been many questions raised as to how the federal stimulus package will affect the Village. Will there be local funding for capital improvements? The answer is “yes. . . , and no.” The truth is that there are no handouts, and that each stimulus project or program has strings attached.



For example, in early March the Village was notified that it was eligible to receive up to \$100,000 (and no more) for resurfacing streets as part of the Federal Aid to Urban Highways (FAU) Surface Transportation Program. The catch, however, is that the Village was only eligible to resurface what was classified as an FAU route. The only FAU route in the Village is Church Road from Dixie to Racine, since it is the only designated Class III Truck Route in the Village that is connected to a state highway. So, the Village was faced with the decision of accepting the \$100,000 to resurface certain sections of a street that is in better shape than many of our residential streets which are not eligible for funding. The Village Board authorized the acceptance of the grant, knowing full well that it will be hard for residents to understand why Church Road would be getting all of the attention.

Also in early March, the Village was notified that it was also eligible to apply for a grant/loan combination to replace aging watermains and sanitary sewer pipes. The federal stimulus package was going to provide the U.S.E.P.A. with funds to distribute to the states for drinking water and wastewater improvements. The State of Illinois decided that these funds would be placed in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) low interest loan program, under the same rules and conditions which the program has been operating for the last 25 years. Municipalities and utility districts were then being asked to apply for drinking water and wastewater treatment improvement projects, but projects which were already on the list would receive the highest priority. Beecher does have one such project on this list: the expansion of the sewer treatment plant in the amount of \$6 million. However, the Village is not in a position to begin this project and guarantee repayment of \$4.5 million since there are seven years of repayment remaining on the 1996 sewer plant expansion loan.

If the current list is exhausted, the IEPA would then assess each of the new projects, and determine if the project was eligible for a grant of 25% of the project cost. The remaining 75% would be loaned to the community at 0% interest for 20 years. For example, a \$500,000 watermain replacement project would be eligible for \$125,000 in grant funds and \$375,000 would be repaid at the rate of \$18,750 per year over the next 20 years. However, the grant applicant has to pay for cost of engineering and permitting without reimbursement prior to applying for the funds, and the loan has to be secured by pledged revenue which may include general obligation bond pre-authorization. Obtaining these funds is not as simple or cost-effective as it may seem.

The Village Board has submitted an application to replace watermains on Penfield and Maxwell Streets, but there is no guarantee that the funding will be secured. There is also a need to repay 75% of the project cost, and future revenue would have to be committed and set aside for this purpose. The only realization is that this project needs to be completed regardless of the loan or grant, so this funding will be pursued.



VILLAGE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were taken by the Beecher Village Board since the Fall of 2008:

Approved a resolution requesting that the State of Illinois extend the period of time which IDOT has to pay property taxes on lease-hold land within the airport footprint from December 2010 to December 2020.

Received a report from Chief Weissgerber of the Beecher Police Department that it had received a grant from IDOT in the amount \$14,307 for a selective speed enforcement program.

Denied a variance for an automatic pool cover in lieu of a fence at 361 Fairway Drive. This variance was later granted upon the advice of the Village Attorney.

Granted a variance for a fence in the front yard setback of a corner lot at 263 Woodbridge Lane.

Passed a motion authorizing final lift of asphalt to be placed on all streets in Prairie Crossings South and Hunter's Chase West by June 21, 2009.

Accepted a report from Baxter and Woodman Engineers on the status of the Village's bridge decks on Miller and Penfield Streets. The report indicated several maintenance items which had to be completed to preserve the structural integrity of the bridges. However, the bridges appeared to be in satisfactory condition.

Accepted the improvements to Prairie Park in the amount of \$75,000. This park was installed at the expense of Castletown Homes, the developer.

Approved an amendment to the planned development for Prairie Pointe Centre, 1111 Dixie Highway, to permit the expansion of Walt's Food Center to the north, adding approximately 8,000 square feet of floor space. However, these plans have been put on hold by the petitioner.

Passed a motion directing each department to initiate five cost-effective measures for their departments. These measures are then recorded in an action plan for the Village in the event short-term revenues drop below expenditures.

Approved a lease agreement with Airbaud, Inc. in the amount of \$250 per month plus free internet service for Village facilities for a period of five years in exchange for the installation of an antenna on the Village's water tower.

Approved the installation of twelve sunset maples on Village parkways and an additional twelve sunset maples in Prairie Park Subdivision as part of the 2008 tree planting program.

Approved an application and received the award as a Tree City USA for 2008.

Received the OSLAD grant for the Firemen's Park project in the amount of \$190,000, and escrowed this funding for future debt payment on Firemen's Park.

Approved the installation of a gazebo in Depot Park by the Beecher Beautification Commission. This gazebo is being constructed with donated funds in the amount of \$18,000 and is exclusive of other Beecher Beautification Commission efforts such as flower planting throughout the community.

Heard a presentation by Tim Smith of Element Markets, Inc. for the possible construction of a windfarm to the south and east of Beecher.

Approved a tax levy for 2008 collectible in 2009 which included an increase in the levy of approximately 19% all of which would be paid for by new construction added to the assessor's books in 2008. The property tax levy increase is limited to 0.1% for all construction and property on the books prior to 2008.

Continued on next page

Board meeting highlights continued

Approved a motion continuing the yardwaste bag distribution program for areas outside of the leaf collection zone and east of Dixie Highway and to relocate the distribution point to the Beecher Junior High School. Those not receiving leaf collection service by the Village would receive ten free yardwaste bags in October, 2009.

Granted the Buchmeiers, owners of the Myrick building at 752 Penfield Street, one additional year to make restorations to the structure. Mr. Buchmeier is to appear before the Village Board on June 8th to discuss the progress on the building. Trustees Ahrendt and Cleary are to visit the building every six weeks to determine progress being made.

Approved prepaid legal services as a voluntary post-tax employee deduction of wages. This is an option being offered to the employees at no cost to the Village.

Approved a policy regarding requests for regulatory street signage on Village streets. This policy states that a written application must be made to the Police Department and that a traffic study be conducted before the Board considers any changes to regulatory signage.

Approved an ordinance adding wind turbines and wind farms as special uses in certain zoning districts in the Village.

Approved a resolution authorizing the use of credit cards as payment for Village services beginning Spring 2009.

Approved a bid from Heritage FS for the purchase of fuel in the amount of \$2.073 for 87 octane and \$2.298 for diesel fuel for calendar year 2009. These fuel prices are locked for the term of the contract for the benefit of the Village, the Village's Public Works and Police Departments, the School District, Washington Township Highway Department and the Beecher Fire Protection District.

Approved an ordinance establishing a new professional services agreement requiring up-front payment by developers for all engineering and planning services required by the Village prior to approval of a project.

Approved an ordinance providing for the issuance of \$1,100,000 general obligation bonds series 2009 to be used for the construction of a new Public Works facility.

Approved an agreement with the Beecher School District to provide a school resource officer for the 2009/2010 academic year in exchange for full reimbursement of the officer in the amount of \$31,592.

Learned that the School District intends to change the direction of high school drive from one way southbound to one way northbound, between Hodges and Miller.

Approved an MFT Resolution authorizing \$9,000 for design engineering for the resurfacing of Church Road from Dixie Highway to the Union Pacific railroad tracks and approved an application in the amount of \$100,000 for STP funds from the Federal Stimulus Program for the resurfacing of Church Road.

Approved a policy authorizing the delayed payment of water and sewer tap-in fees to the time of certificate of occupancy in lieu of at the time of building permit application for 2009 or for a period of 12 months, whichever occurs first. This policy is being implemented to encourage some residential development to occur in 2009.

Approved a resolution opposing a U.S. Department of Energy plan to design, build and operate advanced fuel cycle research facilities in certain sites in the Chicago area close to Will County.

The Village Board regularly meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington Township Center, located at 30200 Town Center Road, Beecher, IL. These meetings are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend. Meetings are also televised on Comcast Cable, Channel 4, WPAL, on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Check the cable channel line-up for the exact times of the broadcasts.



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW.....

YARD WASTE BAGS

Collection of yard waste bags by Star Disposal resumed April 6th. Yard waste bags may be placed at the curb for regular Monday pick-up until the end of November. Residents must use bags with the Star Disposal logo on them. The cost of the bag includes the fee for disposal of the yard waste. Bags can be purchased at various local businesses and at the Village Hall. Yard waste bags without the Star Disposal logo will not be picked up.



YARD WASTE CARTS

If you have a lot of yard waste (grass clippings, leaves, trimmings, etc.) or just don't want the hassle of having to buy yard waste bags, you may want to consider renting a yard waste cart from Star Disposal. Yard waste carts are rented by the year. For rates or further information contact Star Disposal at 748-8381.

GARBAGE PICK-UP RULES



Residential garbage collection in the Village is conducted by Star Disposal every Monday (unless a major holiday falls on Monday then collection is on Tuesday). Garbage should be placed at the curb by 6:30 a.m. on collection day. Garbage should not be placed at the curb for pick-up any earlier than the evening before collection day and cans should be removed from the curb and put away by the end of collection day. Garbage should be placed in a container with a close-fitting cover so trash cannot blow around. Recycling, brush and yard waste bags are also collected on Mondays.

RECYCLING COLLECTION

Recyclables are picked up in the Village every other Monday by Star Disposal (unless a major holiday falls on Monday then collection is on Tuesday). Residents must use the recycling bin provided free of charge by Star Disposal and place at the curb by 6:30 a.m. on collection day with the handle of the container facing the house. For a list of items that may be recycled or for a collection schedule, contact the Village Hall or go to <http://www.stardisposal.com/Residential/beecheer.html>.



TORNADO WARNING SIRENS



The Village's warning sirens are tested on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. If the sirens are activated at any other time, this means a severe weather emergency, (such as a confirmed tornado or funnel cloud) has been detected in close proximity to the Village and residents should seek cover immediately. The sirens will make a high-pitched tone for a period of three minutes and the warning shall be in effect for a period of one hour. (The Village does not sound an "all clear" siren.) Warning sirens are located on the water tower on Gould Street, on top of the police station on Penfield Street and behind Beecher Manor Nursing Home near Dixie Highway and Church Road. If the weather looks threatening, stay indoors and monitor local television and radio stations for watches and warnings!

ANNUAL WATER & SEWER RATE INCREASE ON MAY WATER BILLING



The annual water and sewer rate increase will be reflected on the May 2009 water bill. Water rates will be increased by 10 cents per thousand gallons and sewer rates by 10 cents per thousand gallons effective March 1st. These annual increases were previously implemented to keep up with rising costs for chemicals, testing supplies, electric, natural gas and other things needed for keeping the water and sewer systems running. The overall increase for a resident who uses 8,000 gallons or less of water will only be \$1.60 per billing period.

If you live in one of the newer subdivisions and pay a Lift Station (LS) charge on your water bill, the lift station charge will also increase by 2 cents per thousand gallons of water used.

Steps for Maintaining Healthy Lawns and Quality Waters



Spring is finally here, and with spring comes yard work! Did you know that many common yard care activities can affect the quality of the water in our local ponds and streams? Lawn care, over a widespread area, can have a significant impact on nearby ponds and streams. For those who value the traditional green lawn but want to help protect water quality, here are a few tips:

Soil Tests

Before buying fertilizer, have your soil tested. Test results will tell you exactly what nutrients are needed in what amounts for a healthy lawn. Recently, 15 lakeside lawns in four lake watersheds in Northwestern Wisconsin were randomly tested. Every lawn contained adequate soil phosphorus, yet almost all commercial lawn fertilizers contain phosphorus. That's important to know, because phosphorus is the main cause of excess weed and algae growth in ponds and streams.

Zero Phosphorus Fertilizer

Consider using a nonphosphorus fertilizer this year. Why buy something you don't need? Some local merchants carry fertilizer with little or no phosphorus. Every bag or bottle of fertilizer has three numbers (such as 20-3-10) displayed on the label. The numbers refer to the percentage, by weight, of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). The middle number always refers to phosphorus, so look for a zero in the middle (such as 20-0-10) or the lowest available number for phosphorus.



(Source – University of Wisconsin Extension)

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
-Margaret Mead**

HONOR A LOVED ONE WITH A MEMORIAL TREE

We have a unique opportunity in our Village. We have a memorial tree program in which we are able to pay a special tribute to loved ones, special occasions or as a living memorial. There are many occasions in which to do this:

- *A graduation
- *The birth of a child
- *To acknowledge club members or businesses
- *In loving memory of a family member
- *Anniversaries

The program includes planting a tree (Burr Oak, American Sweetgum or Tulip Tree) approximately 2 1/2" in diameter in one of our Village parks. You will have your name engraved on a plaque in the Village Hall and will receive recognition at the annual Arbor Day festivities. The cost is only \$300 and shows your commitment to the Beecher Community and also contributes to clean air and the environment. For more information contact the Village Hall.



Past Arbor Day Ceremony



Village of Beecher

724 Penfield Street/P.O. Box 1154
Beecher, IL 60401

Village Hall Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Wednesday:
8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Village Hall
946-2261

Emergency Police & Fire
9-1-1

Police Non Emergency:
946-2341

Fire Non Emergency:
946-6585

Web Site: www.villageofbeecher.org
E-Mail: clerk@villageofbeecher.org

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2009 DATES TO REMEMBER

Chamber of Commerce Outdoor Market

-Every Wednesday beginning May 20th in
Striker's Bowling Alley parking lot

Chamber of Commerce Car Cruise Nights

-1st and 3rd Wednesdays beginning May 20th in
grassy area south of Buddy's Drive In

Bicycle Rodeo • Saturday, June 6th in Firemen's Park

Garage Sale Days • June 19-20

Drivin' the Dixie & Annual Street Dance on Reed Street (at the Depot) • June 20

4th of July Celebration • July 2 - July 5 in Firemen's Park

Lions Club Annual Beef Roast/Craft Show • August 1 in Firemen's Park

