

MINUTES

VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE MEETING
Village Hall Auditorium
53 South La Grange Road
La Grange, IL 60525

Monday, February 26, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Assistant Village Manager Creer called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. He explained that President Livingston appointed Marcy Larson Chairperson but that she was unable to attend this meeting. The Village President asked that he act as the Chairperson. Given the time constraints, he stated they would be rearranging the agenda to move to the presentations by Village Departments as quickly as possible. Mr. Creer called the roll as follows:

PRESENT: Chris Augustine
Cordelia Coppleson
John J. Janowski
Sally Nauss
Jeff Phillips
Kevin Sabapathy
Timothy Sheldon
Lara Taylor
Lisa Marie Thomas

ABSENT: Patrick M. Beeman
Marcy Larson
Carrie Jenke

OTHERS: Assistant Village Manager Zachery Creer
Village Manager Andrianna Peterson
Director of Public Works Ryan Gillingham
Finance Director Lou Cipparonne
Community Development Director Charity Jones
Police Chief Kurt Bluder
Fire Chief Don Gay

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 22ND

Consideration of the minutes was relocated to the end of the agenda. Assistant Village Manager Creer asked if there were any revisions to the provided minutes, and if there was

a motion for approval. Ms. Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Coppleson seconded, and the minutes passed by a voice vote.

3. BUSINESS AT HAND

A. Memo for the Village President re: Direction and Appointment of a Chair

Assistant Village Manager Creer provided a summary of the direction given by President Livingston. The memo appointed Marcy Larson as Chair of the Task Force and provided other suggested areas for the Task Force to focus on. Given the time constraints for the Task Force, the Village President asked the Commission to focus specifically on communications from the Village to residents. Areas that he would like to see explored include: Emergency Communications, Social Media, greater use of the Village's cable station, and use of Village owned property.

B. Presentation by Village Departments

Assistant Village Manager Creer started the presentation by asking each Department Head to introduce themselves. Mr. Creer provided objectives for the presentation, including focusing on external communications. Mr. Creer shared the importance of equal access, transparency, civic participation and customer service in all Village communications. Mr. Creer gave an overview of communications in the Administration Department. The Administration Department's major tools include the website, the bi-monthly newsletter, the Village's cable station, Village Board agendas, public meetings, public hearings, public documents, strategic plan and minutes. The website serves as both an active and passive tool. The active components of the website include the ability to push out notifications through email, social media, and text to all subscribed residents. The passive communications include the website acting as an archive of all Village documents featuring agendas, board reports, budgets, financial statements and minutes. These documents provide background for all Village Policy decisions. The Village also actively engages its residents through its six standing volunteer committees. Transparency and Civic Engagement are priorities of the Village. These committees provide continuous feedback and recommendations to the Village Board. Additionally, the Administration Department ensures that the Village complies with the Open Meetings Act and responds to Freedom of Information Requests. The website and the Village's partnership with the LGBA will be explored further at the next meeting.

Lou Cipparrone, Finance Director, introduced communication tools in his Department. The Finance Department concentrates on online services through the website including the new online parking permit program and online bill pay for water billing. Other tools that are used by the Finance Department include the water bill note section that is used by the Department to advertise events and the Village Budget which provides information about the Village's priorities for the next fiscal year. Upcoming projects from the Finance Department include the updating of the Village's phone system to a

Voice Over IP system which will save costs and increase reliability as one of the Village's most important communications tools.

Chief Kurt Bluder discussed the Police Department's communications tools. The Police Department uses its own Facebook page for crime alerts and public service announcements. Digital signs are used around town for safety reminders and construction notices. Similar to other Departments, the website plays an important role in the communications of the department; residents can sign up for notifications about Police Department news through "Notify Me" or go to the website to see information about ongoing police operations. The primary communication point for the Police Department is through LTACC the Village's 9-1-1 dispatch service. In terms of upcoming projects, the Police Department will be launching an online portal for overnight parking and vacation notifications. The Police Department also engages with the community through direct outreach including the Citizen Police Academy and an upcoming event called "National Night Out" which the Village of La Grange will participate in for the first time in 2018. Chief Bluder stated the need to balance the need for timely public communications with accuracy.

Chief Don Gay presented the Fire Department's communications tools. Chief Gay emphasized that his communications were more traditional, in part because of the sensitive nature of much of the Department's work including confidential medical information from EMS calls. The Fire Department does engage in outreach, however, for the purposes of public awareness and information including appearing at block parties and hosting an annual fire prevention open house. The Fire Department's major communication tool is its monthly report which provides information about the Fire Service, information about ongoing activities, and helpful fire prevention tips.

Charity Jones, Director of Community Development, presented communications tools in her department. Her department focuses on communications with businesses and potential businesses including providing information about available properties, economic demographics, events communications in conjunction with or partnership with the LGBA, and one-on-one outreach with businesses. Major communications tools include the four citizen committees staffed by her Department (Community and Economic Development Commission, Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Downtown Design Review Commission). These act as advisory boards and provide residents an opportunity to serve on a commission or provide public feedback at any of the meetings. Community Development also uses the website to provide forms, policies, zoning information, comprehensive plan information and the materials associated with the four commissions. She also presented about the upcoming Branding Study which will incorporate community and business input in creating a unique brand for Village marketing, communications, and services. Her department also maintains a number of guides for building projects, and permits.

Ryan Gillingham, Director of Public Works, presented an overview of communications tools in his department. Public Works relies on both new communication systems such as Geographic Information System (GIS) and more traditional forms of

communications such as letters and written notices. GIS allows residents to access a vast amount of information about properties in the Village and will eventually integrate information from all of the Village's departments in a single location. The website also acts as a main hub for the Public Works Department by providing information and reminders, as well as the ability to submit online service requests. Traditional communications still remain the most used and often the most effective forms of communication. Public Works still gets most of its service requests through email and by phone. Events such as water main breaks and boil orders still require the Public Works Department to knock on doors because not all residents are online or have home phones.

C. Background Resources

Staff provided requested background materials including an excerpt from LG 2020 and information regarding a previous workshop of the Village Board regarding communications.

D. Discussion, Questions and Planning

At the end of the presentation, the floor was opened for questions from the Task Force. Mr. Phillips asked timing for the implementation of the branding study. Ms. Jones stated that many of the outcomes will be rolled out through the next fiscal year. Mr. Creer stated that the branding study components will be coordinated with the anticipated new website refresh scheduled for January 2019.

Mr. Janowski asked if Code Red could be sent out to RSS Feeds. Chief Bluder stated he would look into the question and provide information to the Task Force at the next meeting.

Mr. Augustine asked if text to 9-1-1 was available. Chief Bluder stated that technology was not available yet but is an identified future initiative.

Mr. Janowski asked if the parking app could be integrated with sensors to provide a real time parking map. Mr. Cipparrone stated that this is technology available but that the Village does not currently have that capability.

Mr. Janowski asked about the Village's fiber infrastructure. Public Works Director Gillingham explained that almost all Village facilities were connected by dedicated dark fiber, at no cost to the Village as part of a right-of-way permit.

Mr. Phillips asked if there was some sort of application that merged all the Village's communications. Mr. Creer answered that the website acted as the resource. The website is planned to be updated this year to be mobile friendly and part of the optimization could advertise the different types of communication.

Mr. Augustine asked if QR codes could be added to the Spokesman. Staff responded that could be considered for future issues.

Ms. Coppleson stated the Village needs to keep seniors and residents who do not embrace technology informed. Ms. Taylor asked if there was a way to opt-out of a newsletter. Finance Director Cipparrone answered that since the letter is bulk mailed, we do not have the ability to mail only to certain addresses.

Ms. Nauss asked if all of the building department forms could be made fillable and submittable online. Community Development Director Jones responded that they are in the process of updating forms online to be fillable. That being said, the building industry is still paper focused and large plans must still be submitted in person. This also gives the applicant and staff an opportunity to discuss process and answer questions.

Ms. Taylor asked how residents find out about “Notify Me”. Staff answered that information is posted in every newsletter.

Ms. Taylor asked if any forms of communication have been discontinued. Public Works Director Ryan Gillingham answered as an example that Block Parties are now entirely handled online, and that Public Works discontinued use of its fax machine.

Mr. Augustine asked how many of the Village’s website visitors were unique visitors and what parts of the website are not getting much traffic but should. Mr. Creer stated he would provide more information at the next meeting. Public Works Director Gillingham answered that the GIS “Community Portal” is probably not fully utilized, despite the wealth of information it provides. The Task Force discussed branding and advertising the portal.

Mr. Phillips asked how often email lists were used by the Village, and if they could be integrated. Mr. Creer responded that they were not a commonly used tool by the Village; the Village website pushes out information through text messages, email, and Notify Me.

Ms. Coppleson asked if there were other tools besides water bills that could have additional notifications. Finance Director Cipparrone answered that currently the Spokesman newsletter was the only other written document that goes to each home.

Ms. Coppleson asked the Police Chief how he felt the communications with LTHS, in reference to recent incidents, were coordinated. Police Chief Bluder stated it went extremely well and that he was in contact with the school superintendent immediately to plan joint communication efforts. Information was provided on website, Facebook and community wide notifications.

Ms. Coppleson asked if information could be added to CodeRed about individual households and how that information is distributed to first responders. Chief Gay

answered that information could be added into the Computer Aided Dispatch software by residents contacting the Dispatch Center.

Ms. Taylor stated that there are a lot of tools in use by the Village, and perhaps there are ways to better advertise the them. For example, community events, or through realtors. Staff advised that the Village provides a new resident packet when residents set up new water accounts.

Mr. Augustine asked if the Village had something similar to Chicago’s 3-1-1 system. Ms. Jones answered the website functioned in that regard. Chief Bluder stated that the non-emergency police phone number provided that service along with dispatch after hours.

Ms. Coppleson asked if the Village ever considered electronic downtown kiosks or television information screens. Ms. Jones stated that the existing kiosks would need to be retrofitted. Mr. Creer stated that, if the Task Force made a recommendation, than staff could explore electronic kiosks as an option.

Mr. Janowski asked if the Board meetings were live-streamed on the website. Mr. Creer answered that they currently are not, but that meeting videos are placed on the website soon after each meeting and archived videos are available “on demand”. Meetings are videotaped through an arrangement the Village has with LTHS.

Mr. Creer ended the question session due to time constraints.

3. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

4. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for March 12th, 2018 at 6 pm.

6. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:16 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Zachery Creer, Assistant Village Manager