

**MINUTES
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES
21460 LINCOLN HIGHWAY
LYNWOOD, IL. 60411
May 12TH, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

This meeting of the President and the Board of Trustees was held virtually due to the continued COVID-19 “stay at home” mandate from the State.

Pledge of Allegiance

Call to Order

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm

Roll Call

Present on the roll call were Trustees: Curry, Stephens, Dunlap, Dillingham, Sims, Lebeter

Absent: none

For the record, also present on the call were: Attorney Mike Marovich, Village Administrator Anthony Finch, Police Chief Russ Pearson, Fire Chief John Cobb

Address the Board/Public Comments

The following questions and/or comments were presented to the Clerk to be read during the Board Meeting;

- 1) Mayor Williams, instead of blaming the residents for Home Rule not passing, why don't you try working to explain why Home Rule should pass? (Call in comment from C. Johnson)

- 2) Mayor Williams, I read your letter to the residents of the Village. Referencing the last paragraph of a couple of “Church Groups who lobbied hard against Home Rule.”
 - 1) What couple of Church Groups are you referring to?
 - 2) Lobbied Hard? – Did you see any signs from these “so called Church groups”
 - a. Did you get any mail from these “so called Church groups”?

- b. Were any rallies held that you are aware of from these “Church groups” ?

If your answer is no, how do you think it’s even appropriate to mail this letter blaming “Church Groups” You lost Home Rule because your residents didn’t want it. Don’t blame Church Groups... You want to know who to blame? Go look in the mirror.

– C. Harris @ chanceforchange@yahoo.com

3)Mayor Williams, I have been a resident of Lynwood for many years. I have voted in each election in which Home Rule was on the ballot. Each time it has failed to pass. The residents of Lynwood don’t trust you. They don’t trust the power Home Rule would give you. You have proven – over the years- to be financially irresponsible. We are already in a financial mess. Why would we want to make it worse? You need to understand that as long as you hold the position of Village President, don’t count on Home Rule passing. Putting Home Rule on the ballot is a waste of your time and ours. -S. Burnett @ sburnett@ gmail.com

4)Mayor Williams, Board of Trustees, why are the Lynwood residents not being notified if/when food is being distributed until the last minute. A neighbor’s daughter saw on Face book that Lynwood Southland Sports Center yesterday was giving away food. What can you do to improve communication with your residents? We used to have a cable channel, but that’s gone, so, what are you doing or going to do so that the residents know that you’re here in time of need.

- G. Wilson- (called-in requesting info. from Mayor & Board)

5)Mayor Williams, Village Board of Trustees... This is in response to the letter we received blaming the residents of Lynwood for not getting Home Rule passed. It is noted that Mayor Williams and Village Administrator Anthony Finch has decided to lay off several Village Employees, terminate the Collector’s position, and lay off Police officers, public works employees and Village Hall Staff. He did this while bragging that he had taken a seventy thousand dollar pay cut to help the Village through hard times. Unfortunately, he failed to advise anyone that the pay cut does not take effect until April 2021. I think you will find he has taken no furlough days and I’m sure you will find he has not written a check back to the Village to do his fair share.

The Mayor of Lynwood, Mayor Gene Williams, allowed a church to be built which is now bankrupt. This Church had not paid the Village of Lynwood over \$200,000 in permits and inspection fees. The mayor stopped collections for these fees on this church, but, allowed them to continue to build. While still in construction, he allowed them to hold services with no permits, no restrooms, no occupancy etc. Then the church went bankrupt with the Village sitting with an empty building not finished.

He also allowed personal friends to open a bar and grill on Torrence Ave. in a building not fit for that use. The building was done with little or no permits to occupancy to operate. He overruled the requirement that they attach to the Villages' sanitary sewer system, but instead operate their business on a septic system which is too small resulting in the owners pumping raw sewage into the storm sewers.

In addition, the Mayor failed to participate in meetings with the Franciscan Sisters when the St. James Hospital closed in Chicago Heights. Participating communities received a multiyear grant of \$200,000 yearly for a number of years. Mayor Williams did not attend and did not send anyone in his place. The Village did not receive any of the impact funds

Mayor Williams approved and let the Building Dept. obtain approval for a new retail store on Torrence Ave. When a couple of his friends who lived in the subdivision behind the site complained, he backtracked and killed the building of the store when it was needed so badly.

Every attempt to bring retail businesses or other development to Lynwood is de-railed or ignored. Many times, with no reason, just no," I do not want it"

Mayor Williams allowed massive debt to build on the old insurance bill with the Illinois Insurance Company resulting in them filing a suit against the Village of Lynwood to collect the debt.

Just prior to the retirement of former Mayor Russell Melby, the Village Board passed an Ordinance which required the Village to pay a large sum of taxpayer's money to fund the early pensions of Mayor Melby, Village Clerk Faye Berkieser and the former building inspector. Mayor Williams was on the Village Board at this time. He voted in support of the Ordinance and was appointed Mayor immediately upon Melby's retirement. You will find this arrangement cost the Village several hundred thousand dollars that Lynwood could not afford. And you want Home Rule? (letter sent to Village Clerk to be read at Board meeting)

6) Mayor Williams show the residents that we are in this Pandemic together. Leadership by example is shared and sacrificed. You are furloughing village employees. Albeit, you nor any of your Trustees are willing to sacrifice by returning your salary. Anthony Finch gave you an out by saying according to law; elected officials cannot be furloughed. No furlough for Robinson Engineering?

Anthony Finch, Finance Manager after giving a report of the number furloughed employees for each dept. stated, "Some of the employees furloughed from Public Works, want to volunteer to cut the grass" This is an insulting statement. Mr. Finch need I remind you slavery ended 200 years ago. It was distressful and disappointing that you a Black Male would make this statement.

Mayor, you took this opportunity to send out a letter blaming the residents for Lynwood's financial woes. Let's not forget your photo ops. Forget the cameras, find equitable solutions to Lynwood's problems. Remember history, Nero Fiddled while Rome burned. Mayor, in hindsight you will be ashamed to tell your grandchildren about the financial decisions and lack of sacrifices that you have made during this unprecedented time. Contributing to the village financial woes, in 2011, Village Clerk accused and convicted of reckless homicide. Response, village insurance carrier sued the Village. In 2014, Mayor's salary increased to \$85,000 for a part time position. Possible consequence approximately \$1 Million owed to Homewood Disposal.

Questionable Leadership? On 5/2/20, Trustee Willie Sims held a party on his deck in defiance of the stay at home and stay in place order. He and the partygoers without masks put our community at risk. Lack of social distancing. Sims wants to know why a new Seafood business is not doing carryout. Village Attorney's response "you cannot make a restaurant do carryout" Duh

Questionable Leadership? Trustee McKinley Dillingham's plan to close Lynwood's financial gap. "I walks throughout the village and count the cars in driveways that are not displaying the Lynwood Village Stickers" McKinley, who is going to do this? Remember we have furloughed 6 police officers.

Mayor you blame residents for failure of passage of Home Rule. The non-passage of Home Rule lies at your feet. Accept responsibility for your failure. You state the failure of Home Rule was an effort to make the Mayor look bad. Trust me you don't need anyone to make you look bad. You do an excellent job on your own. Follow your own suggestion, do no more harm to the Village of Lynwood. Ms. O. Adams- (letter sent to Village Clerk to be read at Board meeting)

7) Dear Mayor Williams:

I hope above all things that this correspondence finds you and yours well and remaining safe during this current COVID19 pandemic that has threatened every aspect of normal life.

After reading your letter postmarked May 1st, 2020, I was inclined to compose the following thought to you and the Lynwood Village Board. My hope is that your actions and those sanctioned by the majority of the Lynwood Village Board would be altered, and/or, transformed for the betterment of the village as a whole.

My first observation stems from the date of your first mass communication about the crisis we now face. On April 2 2020, Lynwood had 20 confirmed cases of COVID 19, Lansing had 26, Glenwood had 17 and Sauk Village had 11. To date, Lynwood has 98 confirmed cases of COVID19, Lansing has 241, Glenwood has 94 and Sauk Village has 83. These increases are substantial and worthy of urgent civic communication. The letter makes no mention of any of the aforementioned confirmed cases; it lists none of any precautions being taken by the village or the encouragement of precautions to be taken by residents. This kind of civic negligence in the midst of a global pandemic not only further threatens the lives of Lynwood resident's but also severely undermines the responsibility of a Village Mayor and Board of Trustee's.

My next observation stems from the original intent of your letter postmarked May 1, 2020. This letter is identical to the internal letter written originally to village employees that circulated on social media weeks prior. The letter is clearly your attempt to call out union employees, as well as blame, divide and ridicule anyone opposed to your repeated attempt to obtain Home Rule status dating back to March of 2006. Every opportunity you've had since 2006 to place Home Rule on the ballot, you've taken. And each time you've been defeated not by "church groups" and "closed" Facebook Groups, but rather by the majority of Lynwood residents. This entire issue of Lynwood not obtaining Home Rule status via the ballot box centers on an overwhelming and sustained lack of trust for you, your leadership and that of the majority of the LVB. You've consistently provided the residents of Lynwood with clear reasons not to trust you. Here are just a few:

- In 2004, you communicated and pushed a tremendous Southland Economic Development opportunity that would benefit Lynwood in particular. As it turned out, the hope for a Lynwood Casino disguised as a "Family Entertainment Center" lacked a plan, a feasibility study and an economic impact study which ultimately caused it to fail and deem your leadership untrustworthy.
- In 2005, you and the "Progressive Party" communicated that voting for your slate meant that Lynwood would receive a new Zip Code. As it turned out, Postal Officials confirmed in writing that neither you nor your colleagues had even inquired about the process, let alone started. This was a case of blatant mendacity and hypocrisy.

- In 2011, your leadership or lack thereof was in question again after the Village Clerk at the time killed a mother of 4 while driving drunk on the wrong side of the expressway, in a Village issued vehicle. It was at this time that Lynwood residents learned that in addition to footing the bill for the village's 50+ vehicles, the residents would also essentially be liable for the village not having any policy for driving drunk while using a public vehicle. As a matter of fact, you stated that village employees should be guided by "verbal expectations" and not written policies. This lack of sound leadership and judgment cost the Lynwood taxpayers millions of dollars.
- In 2019, Lynwood residents woke up to news of the Village being sued over \$1.2M in late insurance payments. Yet, another example of negligence on your behalf that placed the liability on the shoulders of Lynwood residents.
- In 2020, during the Aug. 27th Village Board meeting you presented a motion that was subsequently supported by the majority of the Village Board to decrease the salary of the Village President (Mayor) for the next election cycle. This was done to lessen the desire for 2021 ballot competition by decreasing your current salary of \$85,000 to a figure below minimum wage while residents present questioned and challenged your egregious actions.

It is for these reasons and many others that you've given Lynwood residents every right to not trust you with the authority that Home Rule provides or give you access to "free money" as you call it. I'm proud to report that since 2006, I've been a primary public opponent against Lynwood obtaining Home Rule status under your lack of leadership.

My final observation stems from the divisive tone of your letter and your lack of sacrificial leadership. In a time of historical crisis, your letter did nothing to encourage or initiate community cohesion by rather strife and division simply because you didn't get your way. Your letter reads like that of a sophomoric autocrat who chose to throw all his political marbles because he didn't win the game of persuasion. Effective leadership Mayor Williams never begins with blame and division but always starts with accountability and collaboration, none of which was apparent in your letter. Prior to asking Village and/or union employees to take furlough days or threatening village layoffs, you should have been the one willing to give back weeks of your \$85K salary or all of your \$5K Liquor Commissioner subsidy. You did neither, nor have you offered to do one or the other. Instead, you call out union employees opposed to doing what you yourself won't do. Not once, under your leadership or lack thereof, have you initiated or created a policy for the Village Board to serve a Reserve Fund for the village precisely for such a time as this. Hence, there were a number of things you could have done to create a better "financial position" for Lynwood but you failed to do so. In closing, you make a claim for "help." The problem is, you don't want "help, "you want rubber stamps

disguised as adults. My hope is that you will introspectively consider altering your actions for the betterment of the village as a whole. Respectfully, R. Blakey. (letter sent to Village Clerk to be read at board meeting)

Minutes of April 28th 2020

Trustee Curry moved, seconded by Trustee Sims to approve the Minutes of April 28th 2020.

Roll Call was taken:

Ayes: Trustees: Curry, Stephens, Dunlap, Dillingham, Sims, Lebeter

Nays: None Absent: Motion: Carried

Public Works

Trustee Stephens had nothing to report.

Economic Development

Trustee Curry reported she wanted to share funding information for small businesses. Trustee Curry mentioned that Cook County Board President Preckwinkle released a statement that highlights the community recovery fund. Some businesses are taking advantage of it. It is geared toward small businesses in the suburban area. These are 0% interest loans up to \$20,000. For more info contact www.cookcountyiil.gov/recovery.

Community Affairs/Parks & Recreation

Trustee Dunlap had no report.

Planning & Zoning

Trustee Stephens had no report

Ordinances and Resolutions

Trustee Sims moved, seconded by Trustee Dillingham to approve Ordinance #20-10, an Ordinance amending the municipal code of the Village of Lynwood, Illinois to amend Chapter 98, "Taxation" Article XIII "Local Motor Fuel Tax."

Attorney Mike Marovich explained that we had passed this previously and we were required by the State of IL. to resubmit using the State's Ordinance form.

Roll Call was taken:

Ayes: Trustees: Curry, Stephens, Dunlap, Dillingham, Sims, Lebeter

Nays: None Absent: Motion: Carried

Finance

Trustee Dillingham moved, seconded by Trustee Sims to approve **BPM# 1392** for a total cash disbursement of \$294,261.36 of which \$103,060.47 is payroll period from 4/5-4/18 2020.

Roll Call was taken:

Ayes: Trustees: Curry, Stephens, Dunlap, Dillingham, Sims, Lebeter

Nays: None Absent: None Motion: Carried

Trustee Dillingham moved, seconded by Trustee Stephens to approve BPM #1393 for a total cash disbursement of \$162,505.85 of which \$94,549.91 was payroll from 4/19-5/2/20.

Roll Call was taken:

Ayes: Trustees: Curry, Stephens, Dunlap, Dillingham, Sims, Lebeter

Nays: None Absent: None Motion: Carried

Public Safety

Trustee Lebeter stated he had no report.

Reports & Communications

Village Clerk

Village Clerk – Wingfield -Bond wants to continue to encourage everyone to complete their census information. In addition, Village Clerk – Wingfield -Bond reminded everyone that vehicle stickers are now on sale.

The Mayor mentioned that the numbers are better than he thought but not where he would like us to be. Mayor Williams mentioned the numbers were lower than what he had expected. He also stated the census events which were supposed to take place this summer, because of COVID-19 didn't happen. The mayor mentioned that the next time we hear about the pop-up food give-a-ways, we can push the message through that source.

The Mayor mentioned that the reason our residents do not know about the food give-away sooner is because it is designed that way. The Mayor stated that he is advised an hour before it happens. They are trying not to get a lot of people outside our service area.

Village Attorney

Attorney Mike Marovich had no report.

Village Engineer

The Village Engineer was not on the call, no report was given on his behalf.

Village Manager

Village Manager Anthony Finch responded to the comment made by one of our residents concerning slavery. Anthony Finch stated that he wanted to clarify that our public works workers take pride in their work and they were the ones to offer and volunteer to cut the grass, so that it would not get out of control. Anthony Finch for the record stated that he did not tell them to volunteer, they suggested it. Mr. Finch stated that he was asked about the moral within the department that got laid off.

Anthony Finch stated that as a black man, who had this conversation with his black son who attends college in Atlanta, GA. was offended that they would assume that he did not know the meaning of slavery.

Regarding pop-ups, Anthony stated that he agrees with the Mayor that there is a small window of time to find out about the pop-up food tents. He stated that he was working with one in Joliet and found out an hour before that they were coming to Lynwood.

Anthony mentioned that he was working on a police grant that he was trying to get, however it was too many hoops that he would have to jump through. This was because of the coordinated effort among several municipalities that they would have to agree to take on the responsibility to bring on new officers. Anthony stated that they were not going forward with the grant at this time.

Anthony mentioned that he is still moving forward with the rebuild Illinois grant that he spoke about briefly. The grant is \$25M that the state is going to fund shovel – ready projects. Anthony mentioned that he is working with SSMA and with our engineers for upcoming infrastructural projects.

Anthony mentioned that everyone should have received a postcard regarding the census. He is working with a person from the census to identify the tracts that have not completed their form. He stated her department will go forth and attempt to get them counted.

Trustee Curry asked about the status of the furloughed and/or laid off employees. Anthony gave an update as to who was back, and who was still on furlough.

Police Chief Russ Pearson

Police Chief stated that two officers were off, quarantined at home pending the outcome of their test. Both accidentally came in contact with someone that tested positive for COVID-19. Both were showing no signs and are awaiting results. One of the officers was on leave for a prior injury.

Trustee Curry inquired how we were doing with the reduced manpower on the street. Chief Pearson responded that all officers are on their way back working. Some officers took furlough days, while the others that were laid off have since all returned.

Fire Chief John Cobb

Fire Chief John Cobb had no report.

Mayor

Mayor Williams had no report.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Executive Session

Adjournment

Since there was no unfinished or new business, Mayor Williams asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:47p.m. Trustee Curry moved, seconded by Trustee Lebeter.

All trustees present voted Aye.

Nays: None

Absent: none

Motion: Carried

Respectfully submitted,

/S/ Karen Wingfield-Bond

Karen Wingfield-Bond - Village Clerk