Mettawa Friends and Neighbors,

Although it has been a while since you have received a formal Village communication, you can be certain that your Village Board has been working hard on shaping things in the Village that ultimately will help you and Mettawa. We are committed to make Mettawa an even better place in which to live.

Today, we want to brief you on some changes we have made in the structure and administration of the Village, plus two other important items that I need to discuss with you. Here is what is included in this mailing:

1. The Mayor’s letter with updates on Board level administrative changes
2. A flyer on a new speed limit that will be initiated soon, with information about taxes
3. A questionnaire for you to give your feedback to the Board on your experiences and expectations.

The Mayor’s Update

It has been a busy 45 days since I was elected to be your Mayor and to lead the Village Board. On May 19th the Village was officially turned over to me and the new Board. So that we could give good guidance and make appropriate decisions going forward, the newly elected Board members had to quickly become experts on the following items we inherited:

- A budget deficit of nearly $800,000 for fiscal year ending April 30, 2009
- Two law suits against the Village
- An outstanding legal order to pay $1,060,000 to the County for sewer service for the Millineum development off Bradley Rd.
- A sales contract with Costco awaiting closing
- Several property and building permit issues
- Unfinished issues with sound walls
- Village roads needing repair
- 3-Failed road culverts
- Village files in four different locations with only one under fire protection
- No village office equipment or supplies
- A Clerk who was part-time Village clerk and secretary to ex-Mayor
- Meeting announcements in a Waukegan paper not delivered in the Village
- Many resident calls for various reasons
- Several infrastructure improvements/changes to be managed
- Cutting weeds along our roadways

On Tuesday, June 16, Mettawa’s new Village Board held its first full meeting chaired by me as your new Mayor. Your Board has been working hard since before the “swear-in” to manage a number of organizational, structural, and procedural issues. By making some adjustments, we are positioning ourselves to operate in a strategic and well-organized manner as we serve you, the residents of the Village. There are many more actions we must take; but we are feeling encouraged about the early improvements we are making to your government.

Here are some of the areas in which we have focused our time:
Established the following commissions and committees; then I nominated people to fill the Chairperson position as well as adding members to the committees.

- **Parks and Recreation Committee**, Larry Falbe, ([lfalbe@mettawa.org](mailto:lfalbe@mettawa.org)) Chairperson; Bill Armstrong, and Jack Tindall, members: Have suspended the activities of the Oasis Park committee work. This committee is not currently active on any park development, but rather the committee and our legal counsel have given us advice on how best to protect the Village by having our own Parks & Rec. committee.

- **Finance Committee** (new name change), John Maier ([jmaier@mettawa.org](mailto:jmaier@mettawa.org)), Chairperson; Bill Nicholson and Tom Lys members (Dr. Lys is an ex-officio member to this committee). *Dr. Lys was also nominated by me to be our new Village Treasurer. Tom is Professor and Chair of Accounting Department at Northwestern University.* This committee, Chaired by Trustee Maier, will bring tighter and more streamlined controls/procedures over Village financial matters and expedite completion of the past-due audits. They were charged with managing the selection of our auditor after we bid out the work. They were asked by me to file for exemption for real estate tax payments the Village has been paying for the land the Village owns. They will ask for a refund for the last three years of taxes we have paid unnecessarily in the amount of $20,000-50,000+.  

- **Roads and Trails Committee** (new name change), Bill Armstrong ([barmstrong@mettawa.org](mailto:barmstrong@mettawa.org)), Chairperson; Mary Brennan and Jack Tindall members will manage road/trail issues. Four separate culvert repair jobs were approved in our first board meeting to get these road issues finally fixed. Unauthorized sign removal was managed without incident. Trustee Armstrong has been interfacing with IDOT, DOT to better understand the impact these organization’s projects can have on the Village residents. So far this committee has been supervising these projects:

  - Getting agreement to repair and repave the Bradley Rd. Bridge
  - Interfacing with IDOT on Rt. 60 resurfacing
  - Letting a contract to fix three failed under-road culverts
  - Removing temporary signs not allowed
  - Surveying and marking Village roads for patching repair
  - Removing fallen trees from recent storms
  - Blacking out turn restriction at Old School and St. Marys due to Bradley Road Bridge construction
  - Weed cutting along the Village roadways

- A new **Safety and Security Commission** was approved by the board at our last meeting. There will be more on this commission later after I make nominations to fill the commission with volunteer residents. Let me know if you have interest. The work this commission will do and recommend to the board could well become our best defense against a number of potential emergency situations.

The board recently took the action of reducing the speed limits of Old School and Bradley Roads from 30mph to 25mph in an effort to increase the safety of our streets and make these “cut-through” routes less desirable for transient drivers. *Ordinarily, we would have elicited response from residents on this issue before taking action. However, the Board felt it imperative to act quickly on this change due to the upcoming construction project on Route 60. This construction will no doubt*
result in increased traffic flow on Mettawa roads as motorists seek ways to avoid Route 60 delays. By lowering the speed limit, we are hoping to discourage construction-avoidance traffic initially but longer-term discourage cut-through traffic in the Village. This change will take effect July 8th. Please help us maintain speeds in the Village. It is for the safety of us all.

- The Village does not have a Village Hall, as you know. So we have taken steps to make the Village more “real” through improving the Village web-site and using the Hilton Hotel as our pseudo-Village Hall, until such time as it is financially appropriate for us to have some sort of Village Hall. To that end we have taken these steps:
  - We negotiated a new location for Board and other Village meetings (Hilton Hotel in Mettawa on Riverwoods) which include the use of microphone equipment and video projectors so that Village residents will be better able to participate and follow along in Board meetings. We hope this move makes it easier for you to attend your Village Board meetings. Come along and participate…
  - Established a Mettawa mailing address for Village correspondence (Village of Mettawa, 26225 N. Riverwoods Blvd., Box M; Mettawa, IL 60045. (We have been using a non-Mettawa address for the past 14 years.)
  - Established the DAILY HERALD newspaper as our means of communicating Board meeting dates and other Village notices. At the same time, we negotiated with the newspaper Publisher to offer delivery to our entire Village (previously 60045 zip code residents could not get paper delivered.) You can call the newspaper directly to subscribe. Their number is: (847)427-4333.

- Cathy Nelson was approved by the Board to be our new Village Clerk. In this role she will handle day-to-day Village administration duties, (clerk@mettawa.org or 847-573-1460). Cathy has strong project management and administrative skills and has hit the ground running in transferring the Village office from Mundelein back to Mettawa where it belongs. Cathy has completed a long list of administrative actions already, including making arrangements for an answering system to be installed so residents can easily contact her for Village business. Please contact Cathy during normal weekly business hours from 9-5. Projects that Cathy has already supervised:
  - Established new telephone number and answering system installation
  - Purchase and set up a first ever Village computer to store electronic files for the Village
  - Updated Village Ordinances files and distributed to Board members
  - Filed numerous Village documents with various County offices
  - Established a new agenda creation and posting system for meetings
  - Negotiated a fire-protected storage space contract in order to consolidate all paper Village files from 1959 to present.(58 boxes so far) These files were being kept in four separate locations with only one protected by fire protection systems. This move is to protect our files and archives.

- As your new Mayor, I have been engaged in a number of areas:
  - Engaged an outside Lawyer to give the Board and me an independent opinion of the Millineum court order and the Costco land sale agreement to help us better understand our commitments.
    - The Millineum agreed sewer court order has resulted in the Village having to pay $1.06 million to the County as our share of this court order. If/when
Costco closes on their land purchase they will refund this amount to the Village for use of the sewer.

- Costco – getting familiar with the sales agreement which Costco negotiated with the previous board to determine our next action. After my election Costco petitioned the court to intervene on both legal cases against the Village.

- Assigned each Village official to a specific section of Mettawa as their “District”. Each official is responsible for his/her District in terms of getting resident input on key issues and being vigilant about necessary road repairs, neighborhood clean-up, etc.

- Attorney fees: Reduced the fees The Village charges residents and commercial developers; (was) $355/hr (now) $250/hr and from $355/hr to $350/hr respectively

- Instituted a Monthly Activity report for each Board member on their Village activities

- Developing ways to showcase “METTAWA’S PRIDE”…things residents do to help improve the appearance of our Village

  o As a Village resident, you can find the minutes of the Board meetings as well as general Village updates (more work to occur here) on our web-site (www.mettawa.org). We realize that some residents do not use websites, so we will continue to send quarterly status letters as well. One of our main priorities is to determine the best way to be transparent and communicate with residents, particularly on key Village issues. (please see survey included so you can give us your input)

  o As always, we want to hear from you. You can email me at jray@mettawa.org or you can contact any of the trustees (first name initiallastname@mettawa.org).

  o One more thing, I again invite you to request to be on my mailing list.

    All you have to do is send me an email, tell me your family’s name and members, address and phone number and email address. So far a number of residents have decided to get Village information via email rather than a letter. This is great as it allows me to send around notices, quickly and inexpensively, without the cost of doing a letter mailing.

    So far I have sent out several email construction notices, charity events scheduled to be held within the Village and severe weather notices. Please add your name to the list. You can always opt out and I never show the list of names to ensure your email doesn’t get broadcast around for others to use.

    This is an easy way for you to help keep the Village’s operating costs down while getting useful information in a timely fashion.

    As this is our first communication to you, your comments are welcome to this format and depth of information.

    Kind regards,

Mayor Jess D. Ray
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