

Village of Somers
Special Board Meeting July 21, 2026

President Stoner called the meeting to order at 4:30pm

President Stoner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Stoner, Trustees Ben Harbach, Karl Ostby, Jackie Nelson, Jack Aupperle and Trustee Smith. Trustee Fredrick was excused. Also present: Administrator Jim Hurley, Assistant to the Administrator Kevin Poirier, and Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Burnette.

Citizen Comments

None

Review and discuss the financial management plan.

Administrator Hurley explained that the Board's discussion was to determine whether to submit an application to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fee and a Public Fire Protection Conversion fee. He emphasized that submitting the application would not constitute final approval, as the PSC review process would take approximately six months and the Village would have an opportunity to decide whether to proceed after reviewing the PSC's financial analysis in approximately three months.

Administrator Hurley stated that any potential revenue from the proposed fees could not be included in the upcoming budget due to the uncertainty of PSC approval. He reviewed several PILOT fee options, including the maximum allowable amount, a reduced amount, and an alternative formula based on eligible properties. He also explained the proposed Public Fire Protection Conversion, which would shift the remaining levy-supported fire protection costs to a direct utility fee, creating additional levy capacity. Estimated impacts for both water users and non-water users were presented, and questions regarding billing methods were addressed.

Board members discussed the proposed fees and expressed general support for the Public Fire Protection Conversion, noting that all property owners benefit from fire protection services. Several Trustees raised concerns about the PILOT fee, stating that it would apply only to water utility customers rather than all Village residents. Suggestions were made to consider alternative revenue sources, such as garbage or recycling fees, that would distribute costs more equitably.

President Stoner expressed concerns regarding the proposed Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fee, stating that he believed the original intent of the program was to create equity between public and private utility taxation, rather than to generate revenue for general municipal operations. He stated that he was concerned the proposed fee would shift additional costs to water utility customers, resulting in significant increases to water bills while customers were also paying for recent and future water utility infrastructure improvements. President Stoner indicated he could not support the proposed PILOT fee under those circumstances.

President Stoner stated that he was more supportive of the proposed Public Fire Protection Conversion because it would distribute the cost more broadly among property owners. He also

questioned whether properties located within the Town would be subject to the proposed fire protection fee.

Trustee Nelson stated that she did not believe the Board had overspent, but rather that the Village's limited revenue growth under levy limits has not kept pace with increasing costs such as insurance, labor, and pension expenses.

Trustee Ostby stated that he believed the Village remained in a stable financial position over the next several years despite future financial challenges. He explained that the purpose of exploring the proposed fees was to identify alternatives to the levy limits that could provide additional revenue while potentially reducing reliance on the property tax levy. He added that implementing alternative funding sources could allow the Village to lessen its reliance on the tax levy rather than simply adding new costs to taxpayers. He acknowledged President Stoner's suggestion of exploring employee insurance changes as a potential cost-saving measure but noted that the estimated savings of approximately \$20,000 to \$50,000 would not be sufficient to address the Village's long-term financial needs. He stated that while the Village should continue evaluating cost-saving opportunities, he believed it was equally important to pursue alternative revenue sources outside of the levy limits.

Possible action on the submission of the Public Services Commission (PSC) Rate Case application:

- a) Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fee**
- b) Conversion to a direct public fire protection fee**

Trustee Ostby made a motion to direct Ellers to include the Public Fire Protection Conversion fee in the Public Service Commission rate case application. The proposed fee would apply to all Village properties, including non-water customers and adjoining properties where applicable, and, if permitted, include eligible Town properties as part of the application.

Seconded by Trustee Harbach

Motion carried. 7-0 Vote

Adjourn

Trustee Harbach moved to Adjourn at 5:02 pm.

Seconded by Trustee Nelson.

Motion carried. 7-0 vote

These minutes were approved by the Village Board on August 12, 2026 and are now official.
Wendy Burnette Clerk/Treasurer