Village of New Milford – Special Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15th, 2026

1. Call to Order – Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Timothy H. Owens

IN ATTENDANCE: Timothy H. Owens, Wendy Roop, Deanna Rodgers, Eileen Owens, Ron Colvin, Theresa Merriman, Loraine Humphries, and Jessica Lang. Attorney Jim Stevens and Engineer Adam Bunge are absent.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adoption of Agenda

Eileen Owens requested to add Victory Park Rental discussion be added to the agenda. Loraine Humphries initiated the motion to accept the evening's agenda, seconded by Wendy Roop. Motion passed unanimously.

A. Special Presentation by Attorney Dennis Stefanowicz Regarding Potential Environmental Protections against the development of Data Centers and Landfill Expansion

President Owens told the board that community members had raised concerns about the Village's need for additional legal representation on environmental issues related to the current landfill, the proposed Orchard Hills landfill expansion, and potential data center development in neighboring municipalities. Although satisfied with Attorney Jim Strevens's handling of the Village's municipal matters, President Owens suggested consulting Attorney Dennis Stefanowicz, who has 20 years of landfill litigation experience, for his assessment of the Village's position.

Mr. Stefanowicz said the 2013 landfill agreement, which secured $0.20 per ton through Winnebago County, did not provide the Village with sufficient benefit. Because the County receives $2.47 per ton and has obtained increases every five years, he believed the Village may have been discounted as a smaller community without adequate consideration of the landfill's local impact. President Owens noted that Winnebago County initially opposed paying the Village host fees because the agreement lacked signatures; after signatures from President Bonnie Beard were found, the Village received the fees. Mr. Stefanowicz said that, if renegotiation became possible, a strategy could be developed, although no outcome could be guaranteed. He explained that the Orchard Hills landfill

expansion is more complicated because it is in Ogle County. The Village would likely need to work through Winnebago County, potentially under an intergovernmental agreement, to pursue a community benefit agreement and participate in negotiations. Regarding the data center, Mr. Stefanowicz agreed that it could have substantial environmental and community impacts. He recommended pursuing a Community Benefit Agreement by identifying its effects on the community and infrastructure, opposing the project legislatively, and contacting local and state representatives. He believed his firm could assist but would need time and research to determine the first steps. President Owens said he had heard that Orchard Hills was waiting for Ogle County and Davis Junction to decide how to divide host fees. He felt the Village had not been included in these discussions and had simply received what Winnebago County considered appropriate. Although advised to send a letter opposing the landfill expansion, he was unsure when to do so. Mr. Stefanowicz said the appropriate time might be near and recommended submitting FOIA requests to the relevant board for more information. He added that his firm charges hourly with a small retainer, although the hourly rate had not yet been determined. If retained, the firm would provide its rates and a proposal addressing the Village's concerns and potential benefits. Theresa Merriman asked whether there was evidence that the Winnebago County landfill was considering expansion. President Owens could not confirm any evidence but had heard of a possible agreement between Winnebago and Ogle counties to expand south. Ms. Merriman also noted that, to her knowledge, no end user had been identified for the data center project. Mr. Stefanowicz said that, if no permit had been issued, the Village could press the board for EPA and community impact studies and ask local and state representatives about their positions on another data center in Illinois. Ron Colvin asked whether the current agreement protects the community from forever chemicals. Mr. Stefanowicz said he found no such protection; the only stated benefit was the payment based on waste tonnage. President Owens said that earlier landfill expansion decisions appeared not to have considered environmental effects or air and water pollution, with many concerns raised only afterward. Mr. Stefanowicz said the Winnebago County agreement did not require ongoing EPA studies. Although applicable regulations must be followed, he found no such requirement in the agreement. President Owens emphasized that the Village wanted to ensure compliance with EPA guidelines and protections for community members.

Following Mr. Stefanowicz's presentation, the board discussed the information and the Village's goals. Members agreed that legal counsel specializing in environmental law could benefit the Village but decided that additional planning was needed before hiring new representation.

Eileen Owens presented plans submitted by Samantha Mendez of Samantha's Stand for a small business fair at Victory Park. The event, originally planned as a block party at Ms. Mendez's home, was moved after Mrs. Owens advised that a residential neighborhood would be inappropriate and suggested renting Victory Park. Ms. Mendez requested use of the park on September 27th from 2 p.m. to 6

p.m. for 20–30 vendors, two food trucks, a DJ, and additional parking along the right side of Meeker and Morris. The board discussed the need for street-parking guidelines and signage, as well as concerns about food trucks and vendors parking on the grass and potentially damaging the grounds or walking paths. Members recognized the event as a valuable community opportunity but noted that it was larger than expected, differed substantially from a typical pavilion rental, and would use most of the park. Additional concerns included restroom facilities, garbage containers and removal, traffic, and potential insurance liability. The board agreed that more information was needed before approval and that the proposed timeline was insufficient. Members recommended either reducing the event's size or coordinating with the fire department's October 10th fire prevention event.

B. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board, Wendy Roop initiated the motion for adjournment, seconded by Deanna Rodgers. All present voted unanimously; motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.
Transcribed 09/17/2026 by Jessica Lang, Clerk.