HERE IS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY—Metcalf Water Works

At the March Village of Metcalf board meeting on March 7, 2016, I, John Morris, was appointed to fill a vacancy as trustee. The day before, I had been given basic information about the water works project to be discussed per the meeting agenda. This project is to replace the water mains, fire hydrants and shut-off valves in the village. To fund the project, a CDAP grant has been offered to the village **ONLY IF** the village comes up with a 20% matching funds (which they don’t have because the water works is broke). Therefore, the Village would have to **BORROW** the funds by taking out a **LOAN** in order to accept the grant money.

At the start of the discussion at the March meeting, I stated that I was not aware of the details about the water works project and asked if there had been a public hearing to discuss this project. (Public hearings are required to get any grant money). Mayor Sheryl Gill stated that there had been a public hearing. **(I just asked the question. I did not remember the meeting ,my fault. Mayor Gill later supplied me with the minutes from the meeting, thank you. By law, in small communities with no newspaper or media outlet, public meeting notices are required to be posted in three locations in the village. This was and has been done, no argument. Unfortunately, most people do not pay any attention to these notices or recall one posted almost a year ago.)**

During the meeting, I began to ask for specific financial information such as amount of the loan payment, schedule of payments and scope of the project. None of these specific figures were included in prior information I received except the loan amount of $150,000. I specifically asked for the annual payment amount at which time Mayor Gill stated she had it and went to her office to retrieve it. She then returned shortly and stated she could not locate the figure for the annual loan payment. She stated that the figure must be in the stack of papers on the table, and she was not going to take the time to find it. A representative from Milano and Grunloh (engineers assigned to the grant process) then spoke up at the meeting stating she did not have it but that she could possibly get it from another person in their engineering firm. The rep at the meeting then stated the first two year payments would be $3,188 (INTEREST ONLY). Starting the third year, the annual payment would be $4,000. **(ACTUALLY, THE ANNUAL PAYMENT AFTER TWO YEARS WILL FLUCTATE BETWEEN $5,199-$6,264).**

After a lengthy discussion about the current conditions of the water works, the ongoing need for repairs and the fact that there are no reserve funds in the water works account (It’s Broke) members of the board began to grumble that the meeting was taking too long. Therefore, **Trustee Mike Alligood made a motion NOT to take out the loan which would be required to accept this grant. His motion failed. Immediately after this vote, Trustee Elmer Snoke made a motion TO take out the loan and this motion failed (this vote has never been mentioned in any media coverage). So now what?**

Mayor Gill then asked what it would take to change our minds, and I asked for all the specific financial details of the project in print before I made a decision regarding taking out a loan to get the matching grant funds. After more grumblings about the length of the meeting, it was agreed to adjourn this meeting and continue on Wednesday, March 9. Mayor Gill said she could provide the requested information I wanted at the continued meeting.

At the start of the continued meeting on March 9, the requested information was given (thank you), and a discussion continued about the water works finances. **A motion again was made to accept the loan and start the project. This motion passed on a 3 yes 2 no vote. SO IT PASSED! THE GRANT MONEY HAS NOT BEEN THROWN IN THE TRASH! (this hasn’t been mentioned in any media coverage)**

Since the March meeting, I have been accused of having a lack of knowledge, no interest in the village where I have lived my entire life, devastating the village, attempting to trash grant funds, reaching out to community members to stop the project and having secret meetings to discuss killing the project **(have I mentioned it passed).** I have conducted no such meetings nor have I been invited to such a meeting. Perhaps Mayor Gill can provide the date, time, location and a list of those in attendance (and possible audio and video of the secret meeting) so I can see if I was there. In summary, as a village trustee I should be able to ask questions, expect answers and be able to openly discuss the matters of the village without being attacked by the mayor in the print media as well as on social media. Yes, it is embarrassing to have a mayor who will attack trustees, tell lies and half truths and use and abuse social media in order to promote her personal agenda.