Becca Raven Uminowicz
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June 4, 2025

VIA EMAIL ONLY:
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Brandon Hunzicker
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RE: Uminowicz v. Naeger (EL 25-29)
Reply to Documents Filed Late of Respondent Naeger dated April 26, 2025

Attorney Hunzicker;

Thank you once again for soliciting my reply to the materials submitted by Ms. Naeger on April 26. I do have a reply. I also do not object to the Commission considering the late documents Ms. Naeger submitted.

Richard Meili statement

With respect to the (notarized but unsworn) statement from Richard Meili, it changes very little.

Mr. Meili seeks to confirm Ms. Naeger's account that the names were drawn from a bowl rather than a hat. He also confirms that this is not what he stated earlier, and does not state why he would have given differing accounts.

He moreover states nothing to provide any further detail concerning the process. In fact, he states once that he and another person drew the names, then that he withdrew the names himself, and the actual official document supplied by Ms. Naeger lists three persons (presumably these two people and herself) who "drew out the names and witnessed the drawing." None of this is necessarily contradictory, but to the point that there has been a lack of clarity and precision in accounting for this important statutory procedure, he appears to merely underscore that point.

In the course of Mr. Meili's short statement, he states that he was recorded without his knowledge. Please keep in mind that this was at a public forum with many people present, where he was speaking publicly in front of known members of the press. He can hardly complain that he had any expectation of privacy, and the facts based on the recording are in material part undisputed anyway.

Monticello Village Board Minutes

With respect to the meeting minutes Ms. Naeger has provided from a November 2022 meeting of the Monticello Village Board, Ms. Naeger has not made the effort to point out why anything in these minutes would be deemed relevant or important here, but I can make an informed conjecture of what she intends for the Commission to find here. Presumably she is including this document for the President's Report on pages 3-4.

That section includes two bullet points (the first and the last) that discuss a "forensic audit." Ms. Naeger does not even assert that this audit is the same one that I noted in my complaint, but I assume that it is. The audit she addresses was conducted by the same accounting firm, and from the description would have covered the period when she was treasurer in Monticello. The audit I referred to is the one addressed (and included in its entirety) in an article published in 2023, available here: https://valleysentinelnews.com/2023/04/06/arena-board-hears-tenure-of-current-arena-clerk-audited-in-monticello-discrepancies-found-in-water-bills/.

The point that I intended to make in mentioning the audit was not that Ms. Naeger is some sort of career criminal who should be judged on this matter based on past allegations regarding her role as a treasurer in another municipality. Of course it would strengthen my complaint even further if it were shown that Ms. Naeger's performance Monticello was grossly negligent or corrupt, since this would intensify her motive and also could be relevant to show common design, incompetence, or a character for untruthfulness. But that was never my point.

My intention was merely to explain how our assignment of electoral candidates into groups favorable and disfavorable to her had a factual basis and was not merely my opinion. This gave Ms. Naeger a very significant motive to act intentionally to promote and to retain a certain order of listing candidates. She could promote that order by manipulating the drawing process in any number of subtle ways, and-or retain that order by not conducting the second drawing required by law.

The information contained in these minutes does not show a lack of motive but rather reinforces that motive.

The relevant assertions in the minutes are as follows: The "forensic audit" found "no egregious errors" but "some minor errors" and "no wrongdoing by former employees" according to the minutes of Monticello Village President LaBarre's report. The audit was finished at the time of these minutes and was based "on the recommendation of the former president and the board's suspicions at the time." In concluding, LaBarre recommended village committees perform "more due diligence and try to avoid situations that put people in a bad light."

This was not, in actual fact, a "forensic audit." The final report indicates that it was an extremely limited review on terms set forth by the village, performing five specific procedures. The auditors, Johnson Black and Company, noted in their report that they did not determine the procedures that were performed and could make "no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures." The report did not include any qualitative evaluations using terms like "minor" or "egregious" and determination of wrongdoing was not within the scope of the procedures, so nobody was condemned, but nor was anyone exonerated.

The report uncovered serious errors in nearly every category it examined. For example, there was an average overcharge of $39.46 on all utility bills issued by the village,

which the Valley Sentinel newspaper independently calculated would come to roughly $1.8 million for all village properties over five years. It also calculated that about a third of all gross utility billing covered by the audit represented net overcharges. The auditors noted that they were provided no documentation to explain these charges.

The audit noted that the village clerk signed her own time sheets with no additional approval. It also found that, despite the Village President's understanding that the clerk was to be paid only for time spent attending board meetings, the clerk received overtime pay in multiple instances during weeks that also included holiday hours. For example, on the 9/14/18 paycheck, the clerk was paid 3.5 hours of overtime during a week in which 8 hours of holiday pay were also included.

There were also numerous gaps in documentation.

Again, the point here is not that Ms. Naeger misperformed in her role as clerk or treasurer in Monticello. But if her point is that the audit turned up nothing damning against her in Monticello, so she has no motive to avoid one in Arena, that point is entirely misplaced.

President LaBarre's report suggested that the entire process put Ms. Naeger "in a bad light." That in itself proves a source of motive. And very substantial errors were found in Monticello's very limited audit which continued to place her in a bad light when they were reported in the local press serving Arena. Similar errors could emerge in an audit of her performance in Arena, and a more thorough audit could establish not just error but culpability. And regardless of any future findings, the experience of being audited, particularly by perceived adversaries, would probably not be a welcome one for her. Nobody likes being the subject of an audit. And this may be particularly true given the admiring mythos that has surrounded Ms. Naeger among her political allies in Arena.

I declare under penalty of false swearing under the law of Wisconsin that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed on the 4th day of JUNE [month], 2025 [year], at ARENA, WI [city or other location, and state or country].

By: Becca Raven Uminowicz
BECCA RAVEN UMINOWICZ

GEG/bru

Attached:

1 - Arena board hears tenure of current Arena clerk audited in Monticello, discrepancies found in water bills, *Valley Sentinel* (April 6, 2023)

2 - Monticello Independent Accountant's Report, Johnson Block (January 9, 2020)

JBC
JOHNSON BLOCK
CPAs

Independent Accountant's Report on Agreed Upon Procedures

Murphy Desmond, S.C.
Attorney William Morgan
33 E. Main Street Suite 500
Madison, WI 53703

We have performed the procedures enumerated below for the Village of Monticello which were agreed to by the Village's legal counsel, Murphy Desmond, S.C., for the periods outlined in the procedures below. The sufficiency of these procedures is solely the responsibility of the Village of Monticello. Consequently, we make no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures described below either for the purpose for which the report has been requested or for any other purpose.

This agreed upon procedures engagement was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We were not engaged to and did not conduct an audit or review the objective of which would be an expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively on the subject matter enumerated below. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Village of Monticello and its legal counsel and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than those specified parties.

Johnson Block and Company, Inc.

Johnson Block and Company, Inc.
January 9, 2020

Procedure 1:

Review payroll of former clerk of the Village of Monticello, Wisconsin from July 1, 2017 through 5/1/19 to determine:

a. Whether the correct authorized pay rate was made.
b. Whether the correct authorized payroll deductions including health, retirement, FICA, federal and state withholdings were made.

In discussions with the Village President, this procedure was modified as follows:

Review payroll of former clerk and the police chief of the Village of Monticello, Wisconsin from July 1, 2017 through May 1, 2019 to determine:

a. Whether the correct authorized pay rate was made.
b. Whether the correct payroll deductions for health, retirement and FICA were made.

Findings:

Village Clerk

1. Four instances where overtime was computed and paid when the total hours for the week included holiday, vacation and compensatory hours.
   a. 6/8/18 paycheck. Pay included 2.5 hours of overtime for a week which included 8 hours of holiday pay.
   b. 9/14/18 paycheck. Pay included 3.5 hours of overtime for a week which included 8 hours of holiday pay.
   c. 12/7/18 paycheck. Pay included 3.5 hours of overtime for a week which included 8 hours of holiday pay.
   d. 3/01/19 paycheck. Pay included 3.3 hours of overtime for a week which included 4 hours of compensatory time.

2. 3/15/19 paycheck. Overtime hours paid were .75 and 8.0 hours were added to compensatory time. Total overtime hours per time sheet was 6.05.

3. 3/29/19 paycheck. Nothing was withheld for health insurance.

Note: Time sheets were only signed by the Village clerk. No other approval noted anywhere.

Overtime hours for board meetings were computed using the total hours in the office for that day less one hour. The Village President is of the opinion that the clerk was only to be paid for time spent at the Board meeting. A list of board meeting hours is attached. The Village should compare these hours to what was paid on the clerk's individual time sheets to determine the dollar amount of these differences.

Police Chief

1. 10/27/17 paycheck. The authorized rate of pay changed 10/19/17. Gross pay was computed at $2,015.20. Recomputed gross pay at the new rate was $2,019.60.

2. 3/02/18 paycheck. The authorized rate of pay changed 2/18/18. Gross pay was computed at $2,078.25. Recomputed gross pay at the new rate was $2,092.50.

3. 7/06/18 paycheck. The authorized rate of pay changed 6/18/18. Gross pay was computed at $2,740.00. Recomputed gross pay at the new rate was $2,754.00.

4. 9/14/18 paycheck. Nothing was withheld for vision insurance. Should have been $9.09 withheld.

5. 2/01/19 and 2/15/19 paychecks. OT was not calculated correctly on the 2/10/19 paycheck. It was calculated at twice the regular rate of pay and should have been at 1 ½ times the regular pay. The overpayment was then deducted from the overtime computation for the 2/15/19 paycheck. Total overtime paid between the two payrolls was correct.

Procedure 2:

Review the Village of Monticello credit card payments from January 1, 2018 through May 1, 2019 to determine:

a. Whether duplicate payments were made.
b. If duplicate payments were made, were refund checks deposited and properly accounted for.
c. Whether credit card charges were for authorized Village expenditures.

Findings:

1. Documentation did not exist for these purchases:
   a. $48.00 purchase from Galls.
   b. $ 52.67 purchase from Swimoutlet.
   c. $74.76 purchase from Walmart.
   d. $1.42 purchase from USPS.
   e. Three credit card statements for the library had no documentation attached. In addition, we did not have all the credit card statements for the library for this period of time.

2. Listed vendors paid by credit card for the period. The village printed off the activity with these vendors through their accounts payable system. Reviewed individual items paid on the credit card with payments reflected on the vendor activity sheets. One item was reflected on both. This was a $38.40 payment to Galls. The company presently shows a credit balance of $38.40 for the Village. This procedure is limited in that we did not have the individual invoices that were paid to these vendors to determine what items were being paid for. A comparison of what was paid on the individual invoice and the credit card would still need to be made.

Procedure 3:

Review the Village's garbage sticker revenue for the period January 1, 2018 through May 1, 2019 to determine:

The amount of garbage receipts deposited in relation to the number of pre-numbered stickers sold.

Findings:

A)

2018

The sequence of tickets deposited for 1/1/18-12/31/18: #30815, #30390-30503, #30860-39856, #40001-41,074; #41076-41113. Total tickets per ticket register deposited is 10,224 tickets. Total expected revenue is 10,224 @ 2.50 each for a total of $ 25,560.00. Total revenue in general ledger account 100-46422 for the year ended 12/31/18 was $26,155.49. This included $319.49 of extra pick-up charges.

2019

The sequence of the tickets deposited from 1/1/19-5/1/19 was: $41075, #41114-43367; #43501-44800. Total tickets per ticket register is 3,555. Total expected revenue is 3,555 @ $2.50 for a total of $8,887.50. General ledger account 100-46422 balance from 1/1/19-5/1/19 was $9,257.50 which included $55.00 of extra pickup charges.

General ledger revenue account is reasonable in comparison to the sequence of tickets deposited per the ticket register.

B) The following tickets were not accounted for in the ticket register: #32134, 34249, 34435, 36168, 42841-42845.

C) Other discrepancies:

1) Ticket sequence #42837-42840 was written down twice on 2/27/19 and 3/8/19. It's possible the sequence could have been part of the missing sequence from #42841-42845 and written down wrong.
2) 2/7/19 ticket register totaled $190.00; General ledger revenue account reflected $180.00
3) 3/29/19 ticket register reflected 5 more tickets sold than what was collected. Also appeared to be a sequence of #43857-43865 that was used twice.
4) 4/22/19 ticket register reflected a total of $140.00 of tickets. $117.50 was posted to the general ledger revenue account. Sequence #44516-44540 should have been a total of $62.50 collected. Sheets only indicated $50.00 collected.
5) 2/2/18 ticket register reflected $202.50 of tickets sold. General ledger amount was for $190.00.

6) 2/7/18 ticket register reflected $67.50 of tickets sold. No entry in the general ledger for this amount.

D) The village purchased a sequence of garbage tickets with numbers from 030001-040000. The first sequence of these numbers was the wrong color and HHH Inc. sent the same sequence in another color. The first group was never returned. The Village is unsure if these were destroyed or not.

Procedure 4:

Verify that cash deposits were made for certificates of deposits that were cashed in.

Findings:

Village obtained documentation from the bank as to their certificate of deposit (COD) activity. They showed three COD's with the bank. One COD matured and was deposited in another Village bank account. One COD is still outstanding. The third COD matured and was deposited in the Local Government Investment Pool account.

Procedure 5:

Review a sample of 60 utility bills during 2018 to determine if rates are charged accurately.

Findings:

Randomly selected 60 utility bills in 2018. These were recomputed using authorized rates and consumption and compared to what actually got billed. See attached worksheet for differences.
We were given no supporting documentation as to how these additional charges were computed.

Village of Monticello

Attachment A

Board Meeting times:

2017

7/5	40 min
7/19	2 hr 7 min
8/2	2 hr 30 min
8/16	35 min
9/6	40 min
9/20	50 min
10/4	55 min
10/18	1 hr 25 min
11/1	1 hr 5 min
11/15	2 hr
12/6	1 hr 18 min

2019

1/2	1 hr 45 min
1/16	1 hr
2/6	45 min
2/20	1 hr 45 min
3/6	2 hr 52 min
3/20	1 hr 5 min
4/3	1 hr 50 min
4/17	45 min
5/1	??

2018

1/3	2 hr 25 min
1/17	2 hr 25 min
2/7	2 hr
2/21	2 hr 29 min
3/7	52 min
3/21	1 hr 5 min
4/4	53 min
4/18	45 min
5/2	1 hr 30 min
5/16	2 hr 6 min
6/6	1 hr 32 min
6/20	2 hr 25 min
7/5	45 min
7/18	2 hr 20 min
8/1	2 hr
8/15	2 hr 22 min
9/5	1 hr
9/19	1 hr 40 min
10/3	48 min
10/17	24 min
11/7	1 hr 33 min
11/21	45 min
12/5	1 hr 8 min
12/19	35 min

Village of Monticello

Attachment B

Utility Bill Testing

					Difference due to:					
Name	Month	Billed	Computed	Difference	Additional Sewer Fixed Charge	Additional Sewer Charge	Additional Refuse Fixed Charge	Additional Refuse Charge	Additional Water Charge	
Christenson, Shawn	March	103.87	107.94	(4.07)						Final Bill was pro-rated.
TLC-Nanetter Hilliard	April	242.25	133.33	108.92	57.75		7.50	43.67		
Family Fresh Pack	May	709.51	317.01	392.50	385.00		7.50			
Greenwoods State Bank	June	155.47	147.97	7.50			7.50			
Marks Chemical Sales	July	83.45	75.95	7.50			7.50			
Eagle Pass Salon	August	376.54	175.42	201.12	121.29		7.50	72.33		
The Kooler	September	305.01	121.34	183.67	141.51		7.50	34.67		
Boars Nest	November	218.31	106.73	111.58	101.08		7.50	3.00		
Gempler's Market	Dec.2017	960.44	390.44	570.00	423.50		7.50	139.00		
T-n-D's	January	690.57	388.90	301.67	192.50		7.50	101.67		
Upmann, Jim	February	353.46	200.45	153.01	115.50		7.50	30.00		
Casey's Store	March	1208.61	854.61	354.00	346.50		7.50			
Zuber, Jeff	April	290.29	550.41	(260.12)	38.50	(309.12)	7.50	3.00		
Risley Pellet Solutions	May	80.65	61.00	19.65			7.50	9.00	3.15	
Little Learners Child Care	June	211.62	184.12	27.50			7.50	20.00		
Monticello High School	July	398.13	281.34	116.79	121.29		(4.50)			
Monticello School Gym	August	333.03	256.67	76.36	80.86		(4.50)			

Arena board hears tenure of current Arena clerk audited in Monticello, discrepancies found in water bills

BY VALLEY SENTINEL | APRIL 5, 2022

Audit reached no conclusions, but shows potentially large errors in water bills

Nicole Armona, Editor-in-Chief

The Composite Illustration is representative of a Village of Arena water bill with an unmarked meter. At February and March meetings, the Arena Board of Trustees heard the results of an audit of water billing practices. The audit found that 20% of water billing statements were in error, with the majority of errors favoring the Village. Illustration above is based on data from actual bills, but not from any particular billing period.

During public comment at last month's regular meeting of the Village of Arena Board of Trustees on March 3, board members heard from former Arena Village President Paul Postma. Those papers contained an "Independent Accountant's Report" covering current Arena Village Clerk/Treasurer DeAnna Naeger's tenure in Monticello. The report was prepared by the auditing firm of Monticello Village Board minutes refer to as a forensic audit. Arena officials have stayed quiet since the meeting, but the current Monticello village president seems to see evidence of wrongdoing.

Arena Village Hall (File photo)

Naeger was clerk/treasurer for the Village of Monticello, in Green county, from November 4, 2013 to May 1, 2019, when the village board then voted to "separate employment" with Naeger. The date range for the audit was completed at a November 16, 2020 board meeting. The next month, on June 14, the board formalized that decision by directing their village attorney, William Morgan, to contract with certified public accounting firm Johnson Block to conduct that same forensic audit of Naeger's time with/Clerk/treasurer.

Former Monticello Village President Lenora Miller, under whose tenure the audit was started, did not respond to questions for this story. Monticello officials previously provided to Valley Sentinel show that the Monticello Village Board had concerns including, but not limited to: financial controls, paperwork security, failure to back up official emails to and from the clerk as dues for those of all board members, and the "inappropriate" use of personal email accounts for conducted official village budget and tax payment discrepancies as well as some full disclosure issues.

Valley Sentinel has not yet received any records or responses that definitively indicate whether the village officials' concerns at the time were substantiated.

Read the forensic audit here:

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The report also notes that the procedures used were those agreed to by the Village's legal counsel and are the responsibility of the Village. The accounting firm stated that it would not stand by those procedures as having been adequate "for the purpose for which they were put to, *been requested or* for any other purpose." Despite this disclaimer, the publicly-ordered and funded report does contain findings that form the financial dealings of the Village while Naeger was clerk.

The report lists a release date of January 6, 2020, nearly seven months after Johnson Block was directed to conduct the audit. It's not clear when or if the full village Board in Monticello was presented the audit, with public records indicating a village trustee and a community member both asking if the audit was complete at a November 16, 2020 board meeting. Valley Sentinel spoke with an editor at a newspaper that covers Monticello who stated they had requested the audit when it was first completed and were never received it until Valley Sentinel shared it with them, despite it being a public record.

In the cover letter of the seven page report, Johnson Block makes it clear they were not contracted to make a conclusion based on their investigation.

"We were not engaged to and did not conduct an audit or review the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively, on the accounts. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you."

The report outlines several findings, including a review of the payroll of Naeger as clerk and the police chief from July 1, 2017 through May 1, 2019. The audit aimed to determine whether the correct authorized pay rate was made and whether the correct authorized payroll deductions. Johnson Block found that Naeger was paid at the correct rate, but there were a few instances of overtime being computed and paid when the total hours for the week included holiday, vacation, and compensatory hours. The audit also found that there were potentially small discrepancies in overtime hours for board meetings. The audit states the village president, Miller, believed the clerk was only to be paid for time spent at the Board meeting, but that overtime hours were computed using the total hours in the office for that day for one hour.

In addition, there was one instance where nothing was withheld for health insurance. The report noted that these sheets were only signed by the village clerk, with no other approval noted anywhere.

The police chief's payroll had issues as well, with three instances of authorized pay rate changes resulting in incorrect gross pay computation. In each case, the error resulted in the chief receiving slightly less than full pay.

Procedure 5:

Review a sample of 60 utility bills during 2019 to determine if rates are charged accurately.

Findings:

Randomly selected 60 utility bills in 2018. These were recomputed using authorized rates and consumption and compared to what actually got billed. See attached worksheet for differences. We were given no supporting documentation as to how additional charges were computed.

Differences due to

Name	Month	Water Meter Reading	Water Rate Charged	Additional Charge	Additional Meter Charge	Additional Charges
Chickpeas, Shawn	March	34.07	37.34	38.07		Proof #2 was pro-rated.
Cleveland, Richard J	May	34.15	37.34	38.15	7.50	15.47
Family Food Pack	May	19.72	22.50	20.72	7.50	
Greenwoods State Bank	June	19.47	19.97	7.50	7.50	
Hoffman, Jennifer	July	19.72	22.50	20.72	7.50	
Eagle Rock Salon	August	176.25	175.97	7.50	7.50	15.35
Bank Mutual	September	19.72	22.50	20.72	7.50	15.47
Bank Mutual	November	118.01	106.75	111.58	103.08	7.50	1.98
Bank Mutual	December	118.01	106.75	111.58	103.08	7.50	1.98
T.J.O.'s	January	488.17	488.17	488.17	488.17	7.50	30.00
Uptown, Jim	February	19.46	28.05	19.55	12.50	7.50	30.00
Uptown, Jim	March	19.46	28.05	19.55	12.50	7.50	
Cohen, Jeff	April	28.10	50.61	30.10	22.50	7.50	199.10
Valley Sentinel	May	19.72	22.50	20.72	7.50	7.50	5.22
Valley Sentinel CHW Care	June	22.22	288.22	22.50		7.50	30.00
Valley Sentinel CHW Care	July	19.72	22.50	20.72	22.50	7.50	30.00
Mammoth Mutual Bank	August	109.43	106.87	76.36	94.86	34.50	

Excerpt from the water bill discrepancies sheet, combined with regular in-town utility bills in Monticello, as well as differences between what was charged to Naeger and what their household using authorized rates and consumption, with an overall difference totaling $2,387.36 of total over billing.

In public records reviewed, community members and business owners in Monticello express concerns about their water/utility bills. The auditors reviewed a sample of 60 randomly selected water/utility bills from 2018 to determine if rates were charged accurately. The formula audit found that 20% of water billing statements were in error, with the majority of errors favoring the village, which actually got billed. Seventeen of those utility bills had discrepancies, ranging from under-billing by $.98 cents, to over-billing by $176. The discrepancies, including under-billing, add up to a net $2,387.36 of total over-billing.

Legal Analysis: This represents roughly a 20% average overcharge, and would *not* explain in roughly $1.8 million over a five-year period if these discrepancies were typical over that time.

"This was for sixty bills for just one month apiece, or roughly the cumulative overcharge that a single bill would bear over five years, if this error pr*ior* remained typical. For a sense of what this rate of error would mean if it held continuously valid, the Green County Property Database lists 754 properties in Monticello. If each were continuously exposed to this rate of overcharge over 5 years, it would appear that the total overcharge would be more than 2x on the order of $1.8 million."

—Larry Ernest Grace, esq., *Legal Editor*

The auditors state they were given no supporting documentation as to how the additional charges were computed.

When asked about the water/utility bill differences the audit reports and whether the money ended up, current Monticello Village President Robert LaBorn told Valley Sentinel "the records show that any over-billing did go into the village accounts even though we never found out why those bills were being generated. There were no repercussions."

Read the public records here:

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Postma, who served in Arena village government as a trustee or village president from 2007 to 2018 and again from 2020 to 2022, was unsuccessfully against Arena Village President Kate Remmann in the Spring General Election as a registered write-in. Postma made water bills a central part of his campaign.

At the time Postma handed the board the forensic audit report in March, the Village of Arena reported that 82% of the utility's water bills (333 out of 404 total meters) had been estimated reads for at least the months of February and March rather than measured reads, due to what Naeger called an extensive technical issue.

Naeger stated the Village had to purchase a new Galaxy reading antenna and that, as of March six, the new antenna had arrived and was up and working. Valley Sentinel asked if there was a process in place for correcting the previous readings and Naeger stated that the software automatically corrects.

How widespread were the water/utility bill discrepancies in Monticello during Naeger's tenure? Based on public records Valley Sentinel reviewed, the Monticello Village Board voted on July 3, 2019 to conduct a forensic audit covering all water bills from November 2014 to 2018. This was after, on June 19, 2019, the village attorney directed Johnson Block to start a "review of water billing. Only a year's worth of water bills are included in the forensic audit report, dated January 9, 2020.

It's not clear the full water bill audit was ever done.

"I am not aware of any other forensic audits produced as a result of DeAnna Naeger's tenure," said current Monticello Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Adams when asked.

Valley Sentinel has not been able to verify if or when the decision was made to not continue with the full water bill audit and if our decision was made properly with a vote of the board. A request for public records that indicate where the decision was made is not more forward with the full water bill audit was solidified as of press time.

Another request seeking to clarify if Naeger's emails were retrieved after they were purportedly not being backed up, or if Monticello is missing public records, is also outstanding as of press time.

Valley Sentinel asked current Monticello Village President LaBorn if Monticello had made any changes or taken any action based on the forensic audit's findings.

"Because the forensic audit showed insufficient evidence, our village attorney advised not to pursue any action," stated LaBorn.

In Monticello's November 16, 2020 board meeting minutes, LaBorn characterizes the decision to do the forensic audit as being based simply upon previous officials' suspicious.

"His suggestion is for the committees to be more due diligence and try to avoid situations that put people in a bad light," the minutes state.

Naeger and Remmann did not respond to questions about the audit by press time.

Editors' Note: *Valley Sentinel has no information that suggests there are financial discrepancies in the Village of Arena currently, or that the Village of Monticello took any actions as a result of any forensic audit findings. No information in this story has been construed as of press time suggests any deliberate impropriety on behalf of anyone named in the story.*

Q&A: Valley Sentinel and Postma a list of questions about the forensic audit and his reasons for bringing it to the Arena Village Board's attention

Valley Sentinel: Why did you share the Monticello audit report with the board?

Paul Postma: The Board depends upon the Clerk to do quite a bit of work that I think they could be doing themselves. No one is above making mistakes and when much of the day-to-day responsibilities fall on one person, the Board is putting the Village in a potentially bad situation. If mistakes are made that cost the Village, then the final blame go on the Clerk even though the Clerk may have been the person who made the mistake/ No in my opinion. It goes on the Village Board and the Village, as in the end, both are responsible. An audit is not an out of the ordinary practice in private and municipal business settings.

VS: Why is the audit relevant now?

PP: I feel it is relevant now due to what happened with the previous Arena Village Clerk. The Board was presented with the audit in March, but it was also discussed at a Closed Session held by the Board where it was voted to do an audit? If so, why didn't it happen? Monticello did its due diligence when ending the Clerk's employment with them. They did what should have been done in terms of an audit. An audit either clears up basic concerns/questions. Which an Arena audit would have done, or brings to light discrepancies/deficiencies. Which the Monticello audit did. I believe there are questions to be answered regarding the water/sewer billing and the Referendum mix up.

VS: A main concern of the audit is utility/water bills, 85% of water bills in Arena were estimated over the past two months. do you have concerns about the water bills in Arena? Why?

PP: When I got back on the Board in 2020, I pushed for a Financial and Water/Sewer audit. It was voted down. Have water bills been estimated for only two months? More. has stayed pretty much the same for the last couple of years until I received my March 2022 bill. It was down by about $26.00 compared to all of my previous bills. In 2019, there were users in the Top 10 who were on the list in 2017, 2018 and 2020, but were not on the list in 2019. The top 10 list doesn't change that drastically from year to year. What happened?

VS: You've said you hope the audit leads people to ask questions, what questions should residents of Arena be asking?

PP: 1. Who really is in charge of the Village? 2. Was the Village really only estimating about 56% for two months? 3. Why aren't meeting being recorded? 4. What is the Village's IT Structure? Are all Village emails/files being backed up properly? As one result of the Monticello audit, it was stated that the Clerk was backing up Board emails, but not her own.

VS: What do you believe are the top 3-5 issues facing Arena right now? Why?

PP: 1. Transparency. The Board voted down video and audio recording of meetings and doing audits. The Village is audited each year and the audits I asked for would have gone deeper. 2. Inclusion. I personally know of two people who contacted the Village to be considered for a Committee seat or Board seat. One did not even receive a response and the other was asked to provide a letter of intent. After several email exchanges asking for clarification, the person gave up. The open seat went to Mr. Remmann's brother. The Village needs to be open to all. I'm not saying that Remmann's brother wanting to be on the Board. I'm indicated that he did not. He heard there was a seat open, so he called in and said he was interested in being considered and here he was. That's not his fault. He had no control over how he ended up getting on the Board. 3. Planning. Ever since 2015, I feel there has been a lack of really going through and thoroughly planning projects. Examples, over spending on the Village Shop construction, the recent Well #2 and Lift Station and Village Edge projects and the lack of planning for the Referendum projects. Planning is extremely important. It can make a huge increase in cost of the projects. Why is there no work being done on bringing business development to Arena?

VS: What actions should the village take with respect to the 5 issues you raise?

PP: 1. Start recording all meetings. 2. Quit picking and choosing because of who a person is/isn't affiliated with, or votes for. I had a conversation with a Village resident and was told that they were discouraged from regarding their interest in being on the Board. They indicated the first question they were asked by the Village President was who they voted for. 3. Begin thorough planning and not just planning to get something done. There is a difference.

VS: What actions should the village take with respect to any concerns raised by the audit?

PP: I feel there should be a Personnel meeting. Not only to clear the air regarding questions on why the previous Clerk was let go, but to address findings in the Monticello audit. It's called covering the bases. What is wrong with that when taxpayer money is being spent? Also, I feel that the Village Board should be involved since the current Clerk's employment. Not only by the Clerk, but the Board itself.

VS: Please feel free to share anything else.

PP: Audits cost money. I know that personally. During my first term as Village President, we conducted an audit due to the release of a Clerk. But, questions are answered, the air is cleared and it is much easier to move ahead with a clean slate. With an audit or a budget as there is currently, is there may be no room at all for banking an audit, but it should be looked at. The Village needs to reach out to New County, the SW WI Regional Planning Commission and developers in order to let people know that Arena wants business development. The Village President has stated publicly that Arena wants business development, but in that arena. Why not? You can't expect to be in contact with people who can help you move forward. Even if it's just a phone call or email check in.

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