Village personnel may face residency rules

Written by Carol Pomeday
Wednesday, 10 November 2010 18:50

Village of Belgium officials are considering changing the residency requirement for employees and appointed officials.

Village President Kevin Kowalkowski recommended the change to increase the number of qualified candidates for municipal jobs.

Kowalkowski suggested employees be allowed to live within 30 minutes of the village.

“I think a half-hour away might be a little long if somebody’s basement is flooding,” Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said. “I think 10 to 15 minutes is the longest.”

Trustee Vickie Boehnlein said Neil Anderson, wastewater plant superintendent, was allowed 60 days to move into the village. Now his family is part of the community and pays village taxes, she said.

“That’s a little hard to do in this economy, especially if the person has a house that must be sold,” Trustee Eric Wilkowski said.

Kowalkowski added, “I don’t think you can expect people who are unable to sell their homes to move here.”
Rather than eliminate the residency requirement, Boehnlein suggested employees be given one year to move to the village. That timeline could be extended if necessary, she said.

“As far as public works and office assistants, I think those jobs should be for village residents,” Boehnlein said. “Obviously, we’re going to get more applicants (if the requirement is removed), but is it enough of a plus to give up having that person be part of the community. That’s what you want.”

If the residency requirement is removed, Boehnlein recommended 15 miles be the limit.

In other matters, the board approved a request from Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Jamie Cecil to use her remaining vacation days next year. Cecil said she is too busy doing her job and that of former clerk Lila Mueller to take time off now.

However, the board balked at changing the policy to allow all employees to do that.

“I’m a firm believer in ‘use it or lose it,’” Boehnlein said. “That’s the same for sick days. But we should consider special circumstances like this when the employee could not foresee the circumstances.”