

Village withholds some licenses

Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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Overdue utility, liquor bills prompt action; unpaid room taxes also discussed

The Belgium Village Board learned Monday it has the right to withhold liquor licenses until utilities bills and other fees owed to the village are paid. Village Attorney Gerald Antoine said the board already has an ordinance that allows that.

The business owner must be notified in writing prior to June 30 that the liquor license will be withheld until the bills are paid, Antoine said. All liquor licenses expire June 30.

The board approved but withheld liquor licenses for the Belgium House and Belgium Community Center until outstanding bills are paid.

The Belgium House owes \$2,000 for utilities. Manager Grant Smith told Olsen he has not received any bills or correspondence from the village since December. Smith will check with his landlord and plans to pay the bill, Olsen said.

The Belgium Community Center owes \$939 for utilities and has \$1,000 in unpaid liquor bills. The Department of Revenue notified Olsen on Monday that the center's liquor license cannot be renewed until the liquor bills are paid. Village officials said utility bills must also be paid.

The owner of the building where Main Alibi is located owes \$300 for utilities. The liquor license was issued to Main Alibi because the owner not the tenant is in arrears.

"I think there are businesses other than those applying for liquor licenses that have unpaid utility bills," Trustee Vickie Boehnlein said. "To me, it seems like unfair targeting of businesses. Wouldn't it be easier to shut off the water?"

Collecting quarterly room taxes from the Regency Inn continues to be a problem, Treasurer Kelly Brinkman said. Payments are hit-and-miss and often do not include a copy of the motel's sales tax report as required.

Antoine said the village can assess penalties and interest.

How-Dea's Truck Stop also did not pay its quarterly room tax in March.

Boehnlein, who is the office manager for How-Dea, said letters should be sent to both businesses stating penalties and interest will be assessed if not the tax is not paid within 30 days and that the state tax report must accompany the payment.

"Otherwise, you don't know if they're paying the right amount," she said, adding How-Dea's room tax will be paid.

In other business, Trustee Ken Hirschmann said the first joint village and town electronics

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recycling effort held May 18 was a huge success with 15,000 to 16,000 pounds of electronics collected.

Volunteers and Advanced Disposal crews were quick to unload residents' vehicles and place the items in the dumpsters, he said, noting the dumpsters were filled to the top.

Another electronics recycling and possibly a clean sweep will be held in the fall, Hirschmann said.