Written by Carol Pomeday
Wednesday, 24 March 2010 17:40

Board decides to turn some street lamps on again in response to complaints

Some darkened streets in the Village of Belgium will become brighter, but at a cost that will cut into the projected savings when 32 streetlights were shut off last month.

On March 8, the Village Board approved turning streetlights back on at 843 Main St. and 113 Elm St. and looking at the cost of returning lighting to 608 Main St. and 421 Park St., where the poles were removed.

Reconnect the two lights will cost about $1,000, plus the monthly $17.50 charge for each light.

The board also learned that it will have to pay $2,000 if it wants to keep the light pole that was put back up on Elm Street without the village's authorization.

Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said he asked We Energies for the cost of re-installing the light. The utility put the pole back up the next day.

"I tried to get them to reduce the price, but they said, 'That's the price.' If we don't pay it, they will take it down," Birenbaum said. "I told them it will cost them more to take it down, but they wouldn't budge."

Village Attorney Gerald Antoine said the board has little leverage.

"You don't have any obligation to pay, and they will take it down at no charge, but you want it, so I don't think you have any bargaining power. We have to pay for what we get," Antoine said.

Jeff Thiel, a candidate for trustee, questioned why the village has streetlights on Highway LL at the north end of the village where there are no buildings and why it pays for lights at the I-43 exit and entrance ramps that are in the Town of Belgium.

Birenbaum said it would cost $200 per light to disconnect the ones on Highway LL.

"Years ago, the village considered the lights at the interchange a safety issue.

People had complained it was too dark and it was considered the entrance to the village," Birenbaum said. "We asked the town to help pay for it, but they wouldn't."