ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW MI 49079

ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 10, 2014

The Almena Township Board met at the Township Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Van Tassel.

Roll call: Jerry Lentz, Mark Roman, Deedra Rhoa, Sheri Manning, Jim Manning, Sandra Rickli, and Bill Van Tassel.

AGENDA APPROVAL:
MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to approve the agenda as presented, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved**.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – November 12, 2014:
A correction was noted on page 2, under Supervisor report, the second sentence Jim Manning should be deleted as he did not go on the road tour.
MOTION: **Motion** by Sheri to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 12, 2014 as amended, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved**.

PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:
The Clerk presented the monthly disbursements for the period of Novermber13, 2014 through December 10, 2014 in the amount of $28,335.57
MOTION: **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of $28,335.57 **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion approved**.

REPORTS:
Road Commission: Al Svilpe in attendance. The guard rails were, again, discussed. The request of using a part of Almena funds for road reapair ($22,544) towards a portion of a County Road in Almena Township that is constantly underwater and is being closed on and off due to a large amount of water over the road. It was suggested that possibly, they might like to assist us with our largest road problem, currently, which is 30th St. Al will take it to the Road Commission and get back with us.
Commissioner: Dick Godfrey presented his monthly report to the board.
Sheriff's Department: Deputy Wilton in attendance. The new monthly activity reports are now available. Tonight's report details activity for the period of November 1-30, 2014. There were 61 dispatch calls received, 88 units were dispatched; it was explained that it is quite common for more than 1 unit to be dispatched.

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT:
Deb Hurst, Finch St. shared that there are 2 street lights that need attention in Trestle Creek Subdivision. She will write a note requesting service and submit it to the Supervisor.

REPORTS:
Clerk: Sandra Rickli reported on the following: The MTA Annual Educational Conference and Expo will be held January 27-30, 2015 at the Amway Grand Plaza and Devos Place in Grand

Rapids if any board member is interested in attending. The early bird rate deadline is December 15th. The Clerk contacted PJ's Cemetery Mapping Service to inquire about the status of the Almena cemetery project. Jeff McKenna reported that all the field work has been completed at the Almena Cemetery; he is now entering information onto spreadsheets and the next step will be the map creation. He hopes to meet with the Clerk before starting the maps.
Treasurer: Sheri Manning reported that winter tax bills are out; winter tax collecting has begun. The BS&A software tax and assessing programs were not communicating to each other, which means tax and assessing did not communicate address changes, etc…Those have now been found and resent to the residents.
ZBA: Kristen Garceau, Chairman of the ZBA, was in attendance. She wanted to inquire of the board about having a ZBA meeting to formally approve the meeting minutes from July; there has not been a meeting since then, so that they could wrap up the loose ends. She was curious as to an alternate way of dealing with a lack of meeting situation in which minutes have not been approved. She suggested that the board, possibly, consider meeting quarterly when there hasn't been any variance requests for a length of time to review, and to approve minutes that have not yet been approved. The Clerk will consult with MTA as to their recommendation. It was the consensus of the board that the ZBA may schedule a meeting to approve unapproved ZBA meeting minutes from July 2014.
Supervisor, Bill Van Tassel gave the following report: The Fire Board report was presented first. It was reported that the Board of Review met on December 9th to correct clerical errors. The WMU Engineering Department has recently been contacted in regards to a requirement of having all building laws on site in all townships. Our township only found this out via email that was copied to us. Bill Henderson of Texas Township is working on this with us, so that we are compliant with LARA. Bill Van Tassel recently went on a tour at palisades, it was very impressive.
Planning Commission: Mark Roman reported that the PC held a public hearing in December and have recommendations coming to the Township Board to vote on in January in regards to kennels and mobile home occupancy.
Parks and Recreation: Jerry Lentz presented the McKenna Associates Scope of Work and Schedule to Complete Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including Plan-view Rendering of Proposed Improvements. There was discussion. Money was budgeted for this work, which has not yet been done, also a discussion as to if anything was required to be done with the Parks and Recreation Plan at all. It was the general consensus to do the survey so that the people can decide if and what (if anything) would be done with the open space behind the township hall, in terms of a park and recreation planned area.
MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to approve the authority to proceed with McKenna Associates on their scope of work schedule for the Parks and Recreation *not to exceed $4000* – Master Plan dated December 9, 2014, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion passed ~~7~~ 6-1**.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Roads – There was a recent request of the Van Buren County Road Commission for Almena Township to consider allocating the $22,544 in the Primary Millage Bank to the road commission towards work on CR 653 between M-43 and 28th Ave. from the bridge 600' North. The total estimated programmed cost is $38,000
   There was discussion about spending the money on preparing to fix portions of 30th St. from 48th Ave to 38th Ave., which is one of the roads that is in the worst shape in our township, along with an estimate of the 1/3 mile on 46th Ave. We would like to request estimates for prep and total cost of these projects; along with a longevity/durability estimate for years before repairs for the same type of material done in Antwerp Township

on 46th Ave. We would also need a full mapped route of the area to be considered. It was the consensus of the board to obtain estimates for this 30th St. work as well as 46th Ave. with the same type of materials as used in Antwerp Township on 33rd St.

2. Fire proof file cabinet – Samples and prices for fire proof file cabinets were provided from two different stores, Staples and Costco; Staples is priced at $2,419.99 and Costco @ 1,899.99. It was discussed that it may be beneficial for the township to purchase a membership to Costco to be able to give the township the opportunity to save a large amount of money. Discussion also began about where to pay the hired person, Ronda Babik, out of for the building department project, as this was not a budgeted item and was not known about at budget time planning time last year. It was the consensus of the board to pay out of the General Administration Department, Budget for Contingencies, for both the file cabinet (2 for now, until budget time planning) and Ronda Babik to do the filing work (5 hrs/week), and to have the Treasurer look into possibly purchasing a Costco membership for the township.
   MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to purchase 2 fire proof cabinets from Costco for $3200 and labor for building department file organization for 4 months at $1200 for a total of $5000 to come out of General Administration, Department 263, line item – budget for contingencies, **second** by Deedra Rhoa. **Motion passed**.
3. Board of Review Appointments – The General Property Tax Act requires township boards to appoint members to the township's three-member board of review (BOR). BOR members serve for two years. The appointments must be made and the oath taken no later than January 10.
   MOTION: **Motion** by Bill Van Tassel to reappoint BOR members, Rich Wyrwa, Bette Zawacki, and Sue Wiegand to the BOR for a 2 year term until 2016, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion passed**.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. PC Recommendation:
   A) Ordinance amending Zoning Ordinance to revise the definition of Private Road, add a definition of Private Road, add a definition for Self-Storage Facility, and ensure proper road maintenance in condominium developments
   B) Ordinance amending the Subdivision Ordinance for Almena Township to require an escrow deposit to the Van Buren County Road Commission to ensure that new roads are completed as designed.
   MOTION: **Motion** by Sheri Manning to accept the recommendations from the PC dated May 12, 2014 for the Zoning Ordinance Amendments and Subdivision Ordinance Amendments, **second** by Bill Van Tassel. **Motion passed**.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS – were offered.

ADJOURMENT –
MOTION: **Motion** by Jim Manning to adjourn the meeting, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion passed**. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Approval date: Approved with amendments 1-14-15

ALMENA TOWNSHIP

cc:	Township Board (7)	ZBA (5)
	Planning Commission (8)	Attorney David Lewis