

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW MI 49079

**ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
(Approved 5-14-14)
APRIL 16, 2014**

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

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

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Delete, under New Business, item #2 as it is also under Unfinished Business. Add under New Business, SW MI PC Traffic Count.

MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to approve the agenda as amended, **second** by Sheri Manning. **Motion approved.**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

There were 2 corrections noted, both on page 2. The first is under Planning Commission, sixth line down, Commercial Rezoning application, should be Commercial Site Plan application. On the same page, under New Business, 3) Cemetery Board (b) The appointment of Jan Quearry was seconded by Bill Van Tassel and the motion passed.

MOTION: **Motion** by Bill Van Tassel to approve the meeting minutes of March 17, 2014 as amended, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved.**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2014 as presented, **second** by Sheri Manning. Jim Manning abstained from voting as he was not present for the meeting. **Motion approved.**

PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Sandra Rickli presented the monthly disbursements for the period of March 13, 2014 to April 16, 2014 in the amount of \$25,637.03.

MOTION: **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of \$25,637.03, **second** by Bill Van Tassel. **Motion approved.**

REPORTS:

Road Commission: Al Svilpe was in attendance. The VBCC received \$337,000 to help compensate for the difficult past winter.

Commissioner: Dick Godfrey in attendance to present his report from April 9th, which was distributed. Items of interest included the following: Jennifer Carver asked the County Commissioners to consider placing a county-wide millage on the ballot designated to be used by the non-profit group "Senior Services" rather than having each governmental unit with their own ballot language. Commissioners also approved placing the 911 surcharge question on the ballot as requested by the 911 Board. It was the consensus of the Almena Township Board to keep Senior Services funds under the control of the township; Almena decides.

The 911 Authority Board asked that up to 75 cents be requested as a surcharge to be effective July 1, 2015. The renewal millage for the County ambulance service providers will also be on the ballot, requesting a .9402 mill renewal for 4 years.

Sheriff's Department: Deputy Wilton presented his report, which is a new format; graphic and tabular. There were 32 calls for service for Almena for the month of March 2014. He warned the public to be aware of any bottles or cans alongside the road, which may be potential handmade bombs or contain drugs or chemicals; please do not touch!

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT – offered.

REPORTS:

Clerk: Sandra Rickli reported that her new deputy, Ronda Babik, began work on Monday, April 14th. Things are going well. The adopted 2014-2015 Fiscal Year Budget Report was distributed to the board, please verify you have received it and review for completeness. There are 3 upcoming MTA workshops being offered, the closest will be in Battle Creek on May 20; What is your Investment IQ? Legal Matters, and ABC's of ZBA, which can be taken all in one day or just an individual workshop. Please contact the Clerk if interested in attending.

Treasurer: Sheri Manning had no report.

Supervisor: Bill Van Tassel reported on the following: Township Cleanup day will be Saturday, April 19th from 8am – 2 pm. He gave an update on the grant application process for the Almena Woods property and updates; the Almena Woods property was selected from 43 other wetland protection projects, to be a partner in the NAWCA Grant Application. The property scored very high for its importance to the Paw Paw River systems. The southern half of this CR 375 Township property has been identified as an area that the US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to re-establish as a native prairie and grasslands.

Paw Paw Fire Dept. Report: The new squad 6 is now on hold while they look and potentially visit other departments and develop a plan and a needs list.

Planning Commission: Mark Roman reported that there will be a public hearing on May 12, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. regarding subdivision amendments. The PC had election of officers at the May 12th meeting; Ron Marvin is the Chair again, Steve Manning remains Vice-Chair, and Mark Roman remains Secretary.

Parks and Recreation: Jerry Lentz distributed a new report to the board. He hopes to have a plan for the board to review soon. He invites everyone in the community to participate in this process.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Paw Paw Quick Response Renewal: The contract renewal for 2014-15 was presented for review and renewal. Mark Roman inquired about the township(s) receiving quarterly reports on runs that have been made.

MOTION: Motion by Jim Manning to accept the new contract as presented, second by Mark Roman. Motion approved.

2. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Contributions:

MOTION: Motion by Jim Manning to deny contributions to the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study from Almena; as we do not benefit from contributions but will remain 3rd party recipients, second by Bill Van Tassel. Motion approved.

3. Van Buren Conservation District River Rescue: It was shared that the township did contribute to the cleanup back in 2011.

MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to approve support for the Van Buren Conservation District River Rescue for the August clean-up for dumpster assistance for \$300, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved.**

4. Mark Kruizena Resignation from PC:

MOTION: **Motion** by Jim Manning to accept the resignation of Mark Kruizena from the Planning Commission, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion approved.**

Please contact the Supervisor with the name of anyone that is interested. Mark Roman offered that his neighbor, who also helped at the cleanup day, is interested. He is very knowledgeable from a ~~business owner perspective~~ *the perspective of working for a utility provider.*

5. Computer Services and Potential New Server:

The Township has been using the services of township resident, Jim Horton, for a few years now. He was never interested in receiving much money for his assistance, he only wanted to give back to his community, which he has done wonderfully. He has been extremely helpful to the township and has been exactly what the township needed, as we never seemed to have too many issues, and it didn't take up much of his time. Jim has a full time position as an IT coordinator at another company, and now the township has more pressing issues and has become much more needy, we have possibly outgrown the services now needed for computer support. We wish to thank Jim for his dedication and knowledge. Another company has been discovered, a computer assisted company, which is what the township seems to now need. Advantage Computer Services recently visited the township and has provided an estimate for services.

MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to approve the work for hire agreement with Advantage Computer Services for hourly work at \$99.95/hour, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved.**

In regards to the price breakdown for a new server, which is something that may be needed at this time, Mark Roman feels that this estimate is for a much more complex system, a system that is not needed for an office of this size. Mark will research the potential equipment needed. There was no decision on a new server at this time.

6. Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Traffic Count Request:

The SWMPC is again offering traffic counts as a free service to local jurisdictions, including those in Van Buren County. Counts are usually taken between May and November. The board should consider if we have any areas in our township in which traffic counts are needed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Texas Township Building Department Agreement:

Sheri shared one other option, which is KVBA-Kalamazoo Valley Building Authority, which is made up of 4 townships/cities. It would be a hands-off approach to township involvement, we would not receive any payments, schedule any inspections, nor issue any permits. The cost would be significantly higher for residents and we would not see any of the money. Also the response times are much slower. An all-inclusive type of system similar to what Almena previously had. There are currently no other options that we can find.

pay 60% for building permits, 75% for mechanical permits, and 75% for electrical permits. A few other changes would be Texas Township taking back the scheduling of inspections. Almena will also do the billing, and it will be figured and paid monthly, instead of the quarterly bill prepared by Texas Township. An additional change will be the contract will last for 2 years (reviewing every 2 years) instead of 1 (with an annual review).

MOTION: Motion by Jerry Lentz to accept the new building department agreement as proposed with Texas Township for 2 years, **second** by Bill Van Tassel. **Motion passed.**

2. **Woodfield Subdivision Street Light:** Contact was made with Midwest Energy Cooperative and a quote has been received to install a security light at the corner of Prairie Ave and CR 652. The monthly charge for the light is approximately \$10, total order amount is \$1300. Not all the houses are serviced by Midwest Energy, the last 2 houses have Consumers Energy. There was a brief discussion as to how many residents want this placed at the intersection of the subdivision off of CR 652. Should there potentially be a petition? We need to determine the desires of the subdivision in regards to this.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:

Deb Hurst, Finch St., had concerns as to the timely updates on the website, including the calendar of meetings.

Bob Parshall, 6800 Calhoun Road (owns property in Almena also). Questioned what is going on with the Santora appeal; Also what is going on with the cease and desist order because Bob feels that Santora is still doing business out of the building at this time. He also offered pictures. He feels there are also blight issues, and potential waste oil contamination. He feels DEQ should be contacted. When Mr. Parshall files a formal complaint this will be looked into by ordinance enforcement.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion by Bill Van Tassel to adjourn, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

ALMENA TOWNSHIP

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