

ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
(Preliminary draft)
January 8, 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: Sheri Manning, Jerry Lentz, Mark Roman, Bill Van Tassel, Jim Manning, and Sandra Rickli.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to approve the agenda as presented, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion approved.**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL – December 11, 2013:

Mark Roman made a correction on page 3, under New Business; the first motion was made by Mark Roman but the **second** was made by Jerry Lentz, not Mark Roman.

MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to approve the meeting minutes of December 11, 2013 as amended, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion approved.**

PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Clerk Rickli presented the monthly disbursements for the period of December 12, 2013 through January 8, 2014.

MOTION: **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of \$16,360.50, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion approved.**

REPORTS:

County Commissioner: Dick Godfrey not in attendance, report was left for board review.

Road Commission: No representative in attendance.

Sheriff's Department: No representative in attendance.

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT – was offered.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Sheri Manning reported on the following: A State revenue sharing check was received in the amount of \$65,508. The Winter Tax Collection is in process, currently very slow. The Michigan Tax Tribunal has ruled in favor of a resident, so a refund will now be made. There have been 8 disabled vets that have qualified for tax ~~deferral~~ exemption; ~~all will be deferred for the summer tax~~, 2 had already paid their winter tax, so that will now be refunded to them as well.

The BS&A Building Department program has now been purchased, the training will be scheduled for the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer; we tentatively plan to go live with it in April.

Planning Commission: The January PC meeting was cancelled; thus, the public hearing was also cancelled with a reschedule date for the public hearing to be February 3, 2014, which will be noticed in the paper.

Clerk: Sandra Rickli gave the following report: Sandra spoke with Julie VanderWiere of Texas Township relaying the decision to purchase of the BS&A Building Department Program and that it has been ordered. They would like to schedule a meeting with the Treasurer and Clerk to renegotiate the contract, this will be scheduled. The operating transfers out to the Road Fund, Township Hall Capital Improvement Fund, and the Cemetery Capital Improvement Fund will now be made. The transfer from the Building Department Fund will also be made. It was the consensus of the board that the transfers be made.

Supervisor: New Supervisor Bill Van Tassel presented the following report: Bill had a conversation with Katie Venechuk, from DEQ, in regards to the Rininger situation. She indicated that the Rininger's were cooperating and confirmed that the DEQ had money for testing but not for the removal of wastes; this is why the township was asked to partner with DEQ because it is a blight situation and we have the ability to remove the waste and charge the owner if cleanup is not completed by 5/11/14, which answers the Rininger's question of why the township was involved in this when it is a DEQ matter. Bill talked to Bill Henderson in regards to 2 items; 1) The yellow burned house on M-43; update as follows. The house is currently under insurance investigation; Bill Henderson recently visited the site and is satisfied that there are no casual entrances to the building. 2) A blight situation; Dean Maxam recently visited Bill Van Tassel and told him this blight problem was brought to the attention of the Township in July along with signatures of neighbors. The home in question is a vacant double wide trailer with no axle located at 39384 Sandy Ridge Circle. It has been stripped of windows and copper and was possibly a former drug house. Mr. Paddock is currently researching this. The owners' brother is handling this, there have been 2 offers on the home. It is Bill Henderson's professional opinion that the structure has been left to the elements too long and is beyond repair. He may have to ask for board action in the near future. The township may have to do the clean-up and charge the owner. A complicating factor is that the house may have been a meth lab, which would quadruple the clean-up costs. This situation will continue to be monitored.

The commercial committee recently met, which consists of Mark Kruizenga, Steve Manning, Jerry Lentz and Bill Van Tassel. There was discussion on the following: They talked about ways to promote existing businesses, possibly forming a township business association, looking into the M-43 MDOT adopt a highway program, and possibly creating a "How-To" Sheet for a business site plan review for property improvement to make the process seem less daunting for applicants, along with the help of Bill Henderson, Building Official.

Paw Paw Fire Department Report: PPF is sending out surveys to local businesses for a list of on-sight hazardous chemicals and other hazardous materials and their locations, which would assist fire fighters and their response time to fires. As this required by MIOSHA they hope to have this completed soon. The Township Board needs to be preparing for future apparatus replacement costs, which will need to be discussed during budget time.

Parks and Recreation: Supervisor Van Tassel recently attended the Southeast Lake Michigan Initiative Meeting of NAWCA (North American Wetland Conservation Act). It was held to bring conservation groups and land owners, such as Townships, together to create partnerships that could be bundled together to create a million dollars' worth of projects for properties that DU (Ducks Unlimited) grant writer, Dane Cramer, would use to apply for a 1 to 1 million dollar matching grant effort. The township project looks to be the cornerstone of this grant proposal. Bill met with many interested parties and will keep the township board updated on any potential partnerships that will affect us.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reappointments Construction Board of Appeals:
Ken Field – Plumbing

Don Keegan- Mechanical

MOTION: Motion by Jerry Lentz to reappoint Ken Field-Plumbing and Don Keegan-Mechanical to the Construction Board of Appeals, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion approved.**

2. Appointment of new Trustee:

The Supervisor has received letters of interest from 2 people. Dave Denton and Deedra Rhoa. Supervisor Van Tassel asked each of the applicants to read their letters of interest and tell us a little bit about themselves. They then fielded questions from the board. The board has 45 days to reappoint from the date that Bill was appointed to the Supervisor position on December 11th. The board would like to reappoint tonight.

MOTION: Motion by Sheri Manning to appoint Deedra Rhoa to the vacant Trustee position of the Almena Township Board, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

Roll call vote: Jim Manning-yes, Sheri Manning-yes, Jerry Lentz-yes, Mark Roman-yes, Sandra Rickli-yes, Bill Van Tassel-yes.

Motion passed.

The newly appointed Trustee must run in the August Primary election this year, 2014, along with the November General election, to maintain their position.

3. Deputy Clerk Resignation:

The Board has received a letter of resignation from the Deputy Clerk/Deputy Treasurer, Jan Quearry, for the position of Deputy Clerk. The Deputy Treasurer, Jan Quearry, will be adding the input of all of the building department permits and inspections, along with mechanical and electrical permits and inspections, which will take up a greater amount of her time as Deputy Treasurer. The Township Clerk will now need to appoint a Deputy Clerk, which will now be a single Deputy instead of the former combined Deputy position. The Clerk is responsible for her appointment, it is not a board decision. The rate of pay is a board decision; of which the board must now determine.

MOTION: Motion by Jerry Lentz to establish the pay range of the Deputy Clerk position to be between \$11-12/hour as determined by experience, at the discretion of the Clerk, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Appointment PC position:

Bill Van Tassel recently had a meeting with Ron Marvin, at the request of Ron. It was suggested to Ron by a Trustee that possibly Mr. Marvin's discussion of the possible reappointment could have been handled differently, and that his possible misinformation could have been handled better. Sandi shared that she still has concerns, that just because the previous Supervisor has resigned and that the 2 were friends, doesn't change anything for her. Ron stated in a public meeting that he would not be scolded and told how to act and that he would not change how he acts, but now we are forgetting all those comments and the original reasons for the discussion of concerns in the first place. Sheri understands Sandi's concerns because previously she had concerns as well, but feels that Mr. Marvin does have the best interest of the township at heart, but that he was being led in the wrong direction by the previous Supervisor. Bill respects Mr. Marvin's work over the years, he feels he is helpful for the Planning Commission. Mark feels that Ron brings much knowledge to the Planning Commission.

MOTION: Motion by Jerry Lentz to reappoint Ron Marvin back to the Planning Commission, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion passed by a 5-1 vote.**

2. Appointment ZBA position (liaison): **MOTION: Motion** by Mark Roman to reappoint Ron Marvin back to the ZBA, **second** by Sheri Manning. **Motion passed.**

3. Roads update: Bill Van Tassel reported that the road committee is still in the research phase at this point, but they are still researching what needs to be done for roads. Estimate numbers are needed. There are a few things that can be sent back to the Road Commission at this point. He shared that 30% of the money we receive from the county must be spent on gravel roads; the gravel roads need serviced both in grading-brine, and more stone. Also, boom mowing is needed. The roads and money needed to maintain and repair is a continuous problem, there is no immediate fix. Almena needs to change how the road committee meets and operates. An immediate situation is 30th Street and it isn't getting any better. It was estimated that it will cost \$100,000 per mile; prep will cost more than the actual paving of the road. Bill will present Road Commission proposals at the February board meeting that he will need to go before the Board for approval.

Bill also brought up the request of a Woodfield Subdivision resident to add a light at the intersection of the entrance to their subdivision and CR 652. It was questioned if a public hearing is required since they are only adding one light to the special assessment. Sheri will check with MTA as to if an additional public hearing is required. We will need to know the proper process of adding an additional light. Consumers Energy will also be contacted for pricing and information.

4. Shooting Restrictions:
Bill wanted to clarify that the 450 ft hunting distance from a home as previously shared, that the words *with written* permission should be added, for closer than 450 ft.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:

David Rhoa, 25880 Trestle Creek Ave. urged the board to keep moving forward, he feels the township has taken a step in the right direction.

The first budget workshop should be established. It was the consensus to schedule the first budget workshop for Tuesday, February 4, 2014 at 2:00 in the conference room.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to adjourn the meeting, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion passed.**

ALMENA TOWNSHIP

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