

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW MI 49079

**ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 11, 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: Jim Manning, Deedra Rhoa, Jerry Lentz, Sheri Manning, Sandra Rickli, Mark Roman, and Bill Van Tassel.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

One addition was made under new business, 27th St. Culvert discussion.

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to approve the meeting minutes of May 14, 2014 as presented, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved.**

PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:

The Clerk presented the monthly disbursements for the period of May 5, 2014 through June 11, 2014 in the amount of \$48,279.25.

It was noted that Tapper Pest Management is listed twice for the same amount of 76.08, one invoice should be deleted.

MOTION: **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of \$48,279.25, **second** by Sheri Manning. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS:

Road Commission: Al Svilpe in attendance, answered questions and participated in discussion.

Sheriff's Department: Deputy Graham presented the monthly report for Almena. There were 27 calls for service for the month of May. He also encouraged the residents of Almena to utilize and get registered on the Smart 911 system, it is saving lives.

Commissioner: Dick Godfrey in attendance to distribute his report for June.

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT:

Debbie Hurst, Finch St., questioned why the minutes were not on the website; it was explained that the web provider has updated the township with a new version which is not accepting passwords to place or edit items on the website. This is being dealt with and should be remedied in the immediate future. The Township offers their apologies.

Brian DeVries, Emerald Circle, commented on the very large amount of loose stone that remains on the roads in Trestle Creek. He lives at the end of a cul-de-sac and it continues to be a very big issue and problem.

Charlie Porn, Stone Bridge, reported that he is becoming very educated with road construction and repairs; in essence, the makeup of the Road Commission and the process. He feels that the quality of work being done in Van Buren County is not very good. He will continue to learn and understand the process. He will attend the upcoming monthly VBC Road Commission meeting.

REPORTS:

Clerk: Sandra Rickli reported on the following. The annual township audit will be conducted June 19-20 here at the township hall. We have received a letter indicating a price increase of \$1.25 effective July 1st. We have received a thank you letter from the Office of Remonumentation for giving Paul DeYoung and Don Gilchrist the opportunity to attend our meeting in May to talk about the Remonumentation Program which will help improve the county's infrastructure. A policy committee meeting needs to be scheduled, as there are updates and changes that need to be addressed.

Supervisor: Bill Van Tassel gave the following report: The Santora ZBA appeal was denied at the Circuit Court level, he has until June 12th to appeal the court ruling. The Texas Township contract is complete, the signed copy has been returned to Almena. Mark Jenke has reported that the tree marking is complete in the Almena Woods. Brine has been placed on the roads. The Farmers Market has begun and will run every Saturday through September 9 am – 1 pm.

Fire Board: A new truck purchase remains on hold while the feasibility study is going on.

Planning Commission: Mark Roman reported that there was no meeting this month due to lack of business.

Parks & Recreation: Jerry Lentz reported that there is a large amount of moisture in the basement of the historic hall, which must be addressed. Eaves trough's are needed at the historic hall, along with block sealing.

It was shared that people were appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee a few years back and should be contacted at this time; two of the couples remembered to have interest are the Courters and the Klans.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Partial permit refund:

Jason Lutz is requesting a refund on his building permit because he has a non-buildable site. The perk test was done in December, which was not the best time, but in order to cover building department costs, it is recommended by the Treasurer that the resident only be granted a partial refund.

MOTION: **Motion** by Sheri Manning to refund to Jason Lutz the entire amount (\$633) less \$150 to cover building department costs for a total of \$483, **second** by Bill Van Tassel. **Motion passed.**

2. Blight Enforcement:

Information was distributed in regards to having a sworn in officer of the township to serve as our blight enforcement officer. We will check with the attorney in regards to any potential liabilities, as well as Michigan Township Association. We will also consult the red ordinance book, which contains our blight ordinance. This will be reviewed at the next board meeting.

3. Building Department – Texas Township:

Sheri brought up a few items of concern. The process that has been set up with Texas Township is not being followed on the part of Texas Township. We are not getting inspection reports from Texas Township. The inspectors are not stopping in to sign the applications, and the involvement of the administration staff of Texas Township in this process has not stopped and still needs to be addressed. Also, if Bill Henderson is not available, we would prefer that a replacement is not sent, as others do not seem as knowledgeable. Sheri will be calling Texas Township to address these issues.

4. Tax Seizure Property Sale:

We have received communication from the Van Buren County Treasurer regarding six parcels of property located in Almena Township that have been seized by the County for failure to pay real property taxes and are being offered for sale. Each of the parcels is very small in size and the locations are not conducive to any other property owned by the township. They would hold no value as a public use property.

MOTION: **Motion** by Mark Roman to decline the purchase of the real property available for sale due to failure to pay real property taxes, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Roads – 27th St. (Removed existing Culvert and replace with new pipe supplied by the Road Commission:

The estimate was presented to the board for consideration. The current pipe is rotting and needs to be replaced. We have received a memo from The DEQ/DNR with the size recommended. This will be considered at a future date.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:

Brian Devries, Trestle Creek, questioned how long the process of physically sweeping the roads will take to have it completed? He is doing the sweeping at the end of his cul-de-sac and it never seems to end. Also, he questioned the term limit of the Road Commissioners?

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: **Motion** by Jim Manning to adjourn, **second** by Bill Van Tassel. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Approval date: Unapproved

ALMENA TOWNSHIP

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