

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW MI 49079

TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 14, 2012

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 Stiles.

Roll call: Mark Roman, Jim Rickli, Doug Stiles, Jerry Lentz, Diane Triquet, and Sandra Rickli. Jim Manning requested to be excused from the meeting.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

MOTION: Motion by Doug Stiles to approve the agenda as presented, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion passed.**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

MOTION: Motion by Jim Rickli to approve the meeting minutes of October 10, 2012 as presented, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion approved.**

PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Clerk Rickli presented the monthly disbursements for board approval.

MOTION: Motion by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of \$36,559.85, **second** by Diane Triquet. **Motion approved.**

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Clerk Rickli presented an MTA conference, New Officials Training is Wednesday, December 19, 2012 at the Fetzer Center at WMU from 8:30-4:00 for all new officials that are interested, please see the clerk for registration. Early bird deadline rate is December 12th.

Also, the annual MTA conference, will be held in Detroit January 22-25, please see the Clerk for details. Early bird rate for annual conference is due by December 18th.

REPORTS:

Road Commission: Al Svilpe in attendance, here to address any questions/concerns.

Commissioner: Dick Godfrey, in attendance, presented his report. The Drug Court grant was received from Federal and State Government, a very worthwhile program. The “weekend work alternative program” continues to grow and provide free services to many entities within the county; Almena will look into utilizing this program, possibly for the cemeteries, or other things.

Sheriff’s Department: Deputy Wilton in attendance to give the following report: There were 84 calls for service for Almena for the month of October. He encouraged the township to utilize the weekend work program, which is beneficial to all. The 2013 citizens police academy date for 2013 is approaching, must be 18 years of age.

LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT: Was offered.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Diane Triquet questioned the status of Championship Construction as she has not received any monies. Attorney Kelly Page will check into this. Diane reported of winter tax balancing issues, a lot of it is a result of new legislation coming down. Equalization will be

coming into the office to hopefully get this resolved. Tax bills will be in the mail by December 1st. Diane shared her thoughts, as she ends her final days of her four year term, and thanked the Board and the community as she has enjoyed her term of office. We thanked her for her dedication and hard work, which has been a huge asset to the community.

Trustee: Jim Rickli, Trustee, shared the fire department report. Paw Paw Fire Dept. has added money for new equipment. They will need an additional \$30,000 over two years, which will be over and above the \$10,000 for equipment paid to them annually.

Jim also shared that this meeting date was changed, back to the original date, from the changed November 8th, because of the 3 day notice protocol, of which, he is responsible for questions as to why this had been done.

He questioned why Manning Enterprises has not submitted a site plan after the rezoning was approved on their land; Sheri Manning (in the audience) answered that it was a long process, after which, they cannot afford to build at this time, due to the economy; had it been approved at an earlier time, and the process not taken so long, the building would be built by now.

He also shared, due to this being his last meeting, that it has been interesting. He would like to commend Diane and Sandra for the very large savings to the township over the last 4 years for utilizing a shared deputy, of which, he thought would never work; it has been a very good thing with much savings. Also, the cemetery management pay, forgone by the incoming Clerk, has also been a significant savings. He thanked the board and the community. The board then thanked him for his dedication and good public service; he has been a positive force on this board.

Also added, Jim will not be continuing on as a representative of Almena on the Paw Paw Fire Board, as his term is ending on the board. The board will need to appoint a new fire board member next month, which can be a township resident; board membership is not required.

Planning Commission: Mark Roman, PC liaison, reported that the PC did hold their monthly meeting, finally, on November 5th, of which Mark gave his report.

Attorney Kelly Page: Kelly will call with the status of Championship Construction.

Clerk: Sandra Rickli reported the following: Lantz Excavating has submitted a bid for snow plowing; the cost per plow will be \$120.00 which is the same amount as last year. It was the consensus of the board to stay with Lantz Excavating for the 2012-2013 snow plow season.

Election update: the General Election held November 6th was a success. Almena had an excellent turnout, at 70%, making Almena the largest percentage turnout in Van Buren County. It was a continuous flow of people the entire day, with no major problems and no equipment failures.

Thank you to the excellent election inspectors that worked and the patience of the community.

Supervisor: Doug Stiles reported of a successful clean-up day; (6) 20 yard dumpsters were filled; good work to our dedicated helpers!

Doug recently attended the annual Van Buren County Road Commission meeting.

December 12, 2012 will be our next board meeting which will be followed by the annual **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE** immediately following, all the community is welcome, come all.

Our new board members, Treasurer: Sheri Manning and Trustee: Bill Van Tassel will attend our next meeting, joining the board; Doug will have nameplates made for them.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Wage Compensation Advisory Committee: Diane, Jim and Sandra presented the suggestion as recommended by MTA. It is suggested that the board establish a wage compensation advisory committee consisting of one board member, and two members of the public, one of the two, hopefully being a Human Resources (HR) person. This committee would have a minimum of two meetings prior to February 1st. This committee

would review the salaries of the elected officials and appointed representatives of the board, this would be an advisory committee. This committee would need to meet prior to February 1st, because the salaries of elected officials must be established before February 1st of that year.

MOTION: Motion by Diane Triquet that a three person wage compensation advisory committee be established consisting of 1 board member, and 2 residents(1 resident, and 1 HR resident), **second** by Jim Rickli. **Motion passed.**

2. New member appointment to the PC: Carol Himes:

The Supervisor explained that Carol Himes is a neighbor of the PC Chair, Ron Marvin. She is a 30 year resident of Almena Township, and came in to the November PC meeting to meet the commission.

MOTION: Motion by Jerry Lentz to appoint Carol Himes to the Planning Commission to complete the term of Bill Van Tassel first, then to begin her own term, **second** by Jim Rickli. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Hunting allowed as always/signs to be made after survey is completed:

Supervisor Stiles updated the board regarding the Insurance Company interpretation of not allowing hunting on township property. The Township cannot prohibit hunting on public property/state owned property. So the hunting continues to be allowed at the Almena Woods property, with hunting being at your own risk. The survey will be done in November/December after the foliage is on the ground, but hopefully before snow. The PC and Township Board would like to see permanent and visual markers on the property line showing the boundaries.

2. Texas Township Building Department Agreement: Diane Triquet presented a copy of the Texas Township Agreement, which has been mirrored from their language. The changes from the meetings with Texas Township are as follows: The Plumbing inspections will: be done by the state, Andy Newman, Inspector. Land divisions are not done by Bill, they are done by Assessors. We have inquired of this service with our current Assessors, of which, they are not comfortable doing. We will await recommendations from Texas Township. They will not be able to do summary reviews for variance requests, rezoning, etc., but they will do Blight Enforcement. We will again, wait for their recommendation for someone that offers this service. It was suggested by a few to possibly consider Bruce Dean for summary reviews if he would consider doing this as an independent, separate from AGS; Doug will inquire of Bruce Dean.

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to accept the finalized draft from Texas Township (Building Enforcement), with the exceptions of the summary (land) reviews and land divisions; and to have this in-place by Friday, November 16th or Monday, November 19th, **second** by Jerry Lentz. **Motion approved.**

The contract with AGS ends on November 16, 2012, but they will follow-through with any applications or permits they have started. We will receive a final billing from them for the month of November.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adam from the office of John Proos gave a legislative update.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: **Motion** by Jerry Lentz to adjourn the meeting, **second** by Diane Triquet. **Motion approved.** The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m

ALMENA TOWNSHIP

Sandra B. Rickli
Almena Township Clerk

cc: Township Board (7)
Planning Commission (8)
ZBA (5)
Attorney Kelly Page
Attorney Gary Stewart
AGS