

HOMESTEAD TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING
October 6, 2014

A regular meeting of the Homestead Township Board was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair, Jessica Wooten.

The entire audience participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present by Roll Call: Mary Geetings, Beverly Holbrook, Dan Moore, Shelley Rosa, Jessica Wooten.

Also present: Tim Markey, Fire Department Representative, Frank Walterhouse, Benzie County Commissioner, Karen Mallon, Recording Secretary. Residents attending: Sherry Taylor, Beulah, Paul Mallon, Beulah.

PUBLIC INPUT – None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion by Wooten to approve the agenda as presented. Support Rosa. All Ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Minutes – Motion by Moore, support by Holbrook to approve the Regular Minutes of the September 2, 2014 meeting as presented with corrections as suggested. All Ayes. Motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion by Wooten to pay current township bills as presented to the Board. Support Holbrook. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. All Ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

Motion by Wooten to accept the Treasurer's, Clerk's, and Zoning Administrator's reports as presented. Support Moore. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – As submitted

Clerk's Report – As submitted with the addition of discussion regarding budgeted monies in the amount of \$45,031.02 for road repairs.

Wooten proposed moving monies in the amount of \$10,000 to pay a current road bill in the amount of \$8572 and to discuss moving the remaining \$35,031.02 at a later date. Rosa added the monies, \$45,031.02, are budgeted and should be moved in their entirety. Geetings suggested that the entire amount should be moved thereby avoiding continual segmented amounts being transferred. Wooten proposed only moving \$10,000. Further discussion continued with a

motion called by Rosa to move monies in the amount of \$45,031.02 to Road Improvements. Support Holbrook. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Zoning Administrator – As submitted.

JPC Report – Dan Moore presented information regarding a Township resident issue with the Smoke House on Goose Road. The resident presented information to the JPC regarding concerns for safety and the use of a smoker in such close proximity to other residential properties. Moore informed the Board that Roger Williams, Zoning, is to find the safe distance for such an operation.

It was brought before the Board that Roger Williams should be made aware of complaints Monday through Friday. There was discussion regarding the timeliness in responses to complaints that are filed on the weekends, as was the case with the Smoke House. Rosa reminded the Board that Mr. Williams is under contract and should be notified of a complaint as the matter is occurring regardless of the day of the week.

A sketch plan of a subdivision was presented to the JPC by an owner of paving company who recently purchased the property in the township. The proposed subdivision could potentially have 9 apartments which would house employees of the business. Awaiting zoning approval.

Fire Department – Tim Markey represented the Fire Department and presented the following statistics for the month of September. 21 runs including a structure fire in Benzonia in which the fire department assisted.

Bush, Zirkel, and Markey will attend fire officer classes through mid February. This course is held in Manistee and is free by virtue of a grant. Fireman 1 and Fireman 2 courses will be held in Benzonia. These courses are expected to rotate throughout the fire departments in the county.

Ron Stachnik has submitted his resignation from the fire department after 20 years of service. He stated his schedule is too busy and he will submit the resignation in writing.

Aaron Schafer is no longer working for the department due to non-compliance of mandatory fireman procedures and responsibilities.

The HebB shots have been postponed for one week.

Parks and Recreation – Frank Walterhouse, Ball Park Manager. Walterhouse presented an update to the Board on park improvements. 100 tons of diamond dust was donated to the park for ball field improvements. Chip Johnston has organized two “worker bee” sessions to finish the fence around the ball field.

The park will close for the season at the end of the month.

Walterhouse requested consideration of the Board for next year's budget to approve monies to repair the "parking" area located in the back of the ball field. Walterhouse stated that an unusual amount of "wash out" of the ground has occurred creating a potential danger not only to the land but to the attendees of the ball games. No dollar amount or estimation was offered to the Board for repairs necessary.

Walterhouse presented a bid for repairs on currently owned mowers and a bid for a new mower. Holbrook requested clarification on the repairs of the mower and inquired if other bids were obtained for repairs. Geetings advised that the bid came from the company in which the mowers were purchased 12 years prior. Holbrook wondered if the Township could gain more than the suggested \$2,000 trade-in offered if the Township sold the mowers outright. Rosa suggested consideration to mow under contract as roughly \$1500 alone was spent in fuel to mow. Rosa offered that it is the Board's responsibility to act diligently with tax payer's money to ensure that funds are being used in the best manner available in this matter, Holbrook agreed. Walterhouse stated only minor breakdowns have occurred which coincide with the age of the mowers. Wooten suggests that only up keep on the mowers be made at this time and in the future look for bids on newer mowers. Moore is in agreements and suggests that the mowers be repaired and maintained and that the Board table the bid for a new mower.

Motion by Holbrook to repair the 2002 mower in the amount of \$889.44 and repair the 1997 mower in the amount of \$468.88. Support Wooten. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Placement of the new playground equipment was discussed. Bob Rosa is to begin work on the equipment in October. Bob Rosa was not present during the discussion in which Wooten suggested the need for Bob Rosa to double check the spacing of the area. Geetings requested clarification as to why Bob Rosa was to be consulted on this matter. Wooten offered she would like more spacing in the area for future endeavors such as tress and other development such as a volleyball court. Geetings and Moore suggested keeping the layout as is. Rosa requested clarification on the type of sand required for this project. Wooten offered the Board has approved the use of clean beach sand to improve the sight.

A motion by Wooten to move ahead with the sketch of the play area and have Bob Rosa begin work on the site. Support Moore. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Walterhouse advised the Board of a situation in which the man who "took the metal" from the old equipment, attempted to take the slide by driving his truck into the slide to forcefully remove it. In doing so, the slide has been damaged, rendering it possibly unsafe for use. Walterhouse suggested that this man be contacted and required to repair the damages made by this inappropriate action. Wooten suggested that the Board cannot ask him to repair the damages he caused as he donated his "time and effort" to remove the equipment. Wooten further suggested that a welder be contracted to make the necessary repairs. It was suggested that perhaps Bob Rosa could repair the damages while on sight. No further discussion and no resolution to this matter was made.

Motion by Wooten to approve JPC, Fire Department and Parks and Recreation reports as presented. Support Rosa. All Ayes. Motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPORT

Frank Walterhouse, County Commissioner, presented information on County matters to the Board.

Tire Grant – The Recycling Center has obtained 3 grants from the DEQ for the recycling of tires within the county.

TNT Officer Millage – Walterhouse encouraged the Board and all present to support the upcoming TNT Officer Millage on the November 4, 2014 ballot of the General Election. Walterhouse offered information on the growing countywide concern of the increase of use of controlled substances in the county as well as the increase in overdose deaths. This TNT millage would provide monies to the Sheriff's Office to have a Traverse Narcotics Team deputy representing Benzie County if an effort to eradicate the illegal use of drugs in the Benzie county area.

Discussion was held on a program utilizing Benzie County Veterans as contractor in the area.

The Maples - \$11.5 million in improvements have been made to the Maples facility which is now open to the public. Walterhouse offered that it is a beautiful new building which can house 78 patients compared to 59 in the past.

Prosecuting Attorney's Office – Walterhouse informed the Board that the Benzie County Prosecuting Attorney and her staff will be moving to a new location that will offer her and her staff a better layout providing much needed safety in the form of an emergency exit. Bids will be requested and monies in the amount of \$80,000 - \$100,000 will be borrowed from tax payer accounts to complete this. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office has done a great job in the recent high profile cases of the People vs. Morales and the People vs. Stapleton.

Walterhouse informed the Board that Blarney Castle will no longer be expanding in Honor. Schumkel Oil will be using the site in Honor to expand their Shell station.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was read from the Honor Congregational Church thanking AJ Zirkel for his great service to the community.

ACTION ITEMS

Lease Agreement – A lease agreement between Benzie Central Schools and Homestead Township that allows township residents to use facilities at the Platte River Elementary School location during non-school time periods was discussed. In particular, the basket ball courts and tennis courts were discussed. Holbrook requested insurance clarification as to what liabilities the

Township has to the use of facilities by township residents. It was stated that the Township's insurance covers any accident or incident that may arise while township residents use the facilities during non-school time periods. It was further stated that a lease agreement has been in place since 1981 and the current lease agreement has an addendum allowing for the use the basketball courts and tennis courts. Wooten offered that this lease agreement is an effort to use facilities that we (sic) have and not build new. Walterhouse expounded that in the event that the school takes property back, they (sic) must reimburse the Township. It was suggested that the Township purchase nets for the tennis court and basketball court.

Wooten moved for a Resolution to enter into a lease agreement with Platte River Elementary School to use playground equipment. Support Holbrook. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. All Ayes. Resolution carried.

A 3-minute break took place at 7:12 pm, reconvening at 7:15 pm.

Snow Plow Bids

Geetings opened Bids received for Snow Plowing. A bid was received by Paul Beechraft to plow/shovel in the amount of \$65 per time plowed with an addition of \$50 per time salted for sidewalks and driveway/parking lot. A bid was received by AJ's Excavating for the removal of snow of 3-inches or more in the amount of \$65 (no salting was included in this bid). Salt only on request. A bid was received by AJ's Excavating for Loader Work in the amount of \$200 per time required to remove mounds of snow. A bid from Honor Excavation was received for removal of snow in the amount of \$90 per hour on site as needed to remove snow. Wooten reminded the Board that consideration should be made for township residents offering bids to the township.

Motion by Holbrook to extend contracts for snow removal to AJ Excavating for Snow Plowing and to Honor Excavation for Snow Load Removal. Support Wooten. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Abstain; Wooten, Aye. 4 Ayes. Motion carried.

BCRC Recommended Work – Valley Road

Monies in the amount of \$6500 are needed for proposed work on Valley Road. Discussion was held regarding roads within Homestead Township which are the full responsibility of Homestead Township for repair work. Valley Road, Haze Road and Brownell road are considered Township roads in that no funds for repair or maintenance will come from County, State or Federal Funds.

The funds required to make culvert repairs on Valley Road will come from the monies remaining from the \$45,000 budgeted road repair fund.

Discussion regarding the road millage passed by Homestead residents was held. Wooten informed the Board that the millage only covers local roads. The Road Commission will not use funds from this millage to repair roads deemed Township roads (Valley, Haze and Brownell). Concerns were made regarding what the recent road millage then covers in Homestead Township and that tax payers are now required to pay additional tax dollars for roads above and beyond

monies collected through the millage. Wooten offered that that the millage collects monies to pay for plowing and maintenance of Benzie County local roads. She furthered advised the three township roads in questions are not rated roads as they were originally logging roads and therefore not covered under the Benzie County Road Commission millage. The \$480,000 collected through the millage goes to the county for local road work only.

Motion by Wooten to pay for repairs on Valley Road not to exceed \$6,500 and to hold payment until repair work completed. Support Holbrook. Roll Call: Geetings, Nay; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. 4 Ayes. Motion carried.

After the discussion and motion to make repairs on Valley Road, Wooten advised all present that no further public comment would be allowed on budgetary items. In an effort to move the meeting along residents will not be allowed input except at the annual Budgetary Meeting.

Providence for Fire Department Volunteers

Rosa suggested this matter is well suited for the Budgetary meeting. Discussion tabled.

Fire Department Mutual Aid

Discussion was held in the matter of mutual aid among fire departments in Benzie County. Wooten offered that Frankfort receives funds for mutual aid, but does not reciprocate on mutual aid. Homestead works with Inland, Benzonia, and Lake and both townships in turn work with Homestead.

The Board recommends further discussions of Mutual Aid with Frankfort Fire Department to be tabled.

A motion by Wooten to approve the renewal of a Mutual Aid contract with Benzonia, Inland, Almira, Lake and Thompsonville townships for four (4) years beginning 2014 and to be renegotiated every four (4) years. Support Holbrook. Roll Call: Geetings, Aye; Holbrook, Aye; Moore, Aye; Rosa, Aye; Wooten, Aye. All Ayes. Motion carried.

A brief rebuttal was made by Walterhouse in this matter. Walterhouse suggests that if there is no agreement with Frankfort, no refusal of payment should be made upon those Homestead fire fighters who respond to fires in Frankfort. He offers that it is the nature of a fireman to respond to a need.

NEW BUSINESS

Office Equipment – Bulletin Board: It was requested that quotes be gathered for a new larger outdoor bulletin board. Holbrook would like more letters for the kiosk.

Homestead Township Hall Use – Discussion on this matter was tabled.

Cemetery/Park Signs – Discussion on this matter was tabled to Spring 2015.

Spring Projects/Walking Paths – Discussion on this matter was tabled.

Ice Rink – Improvements/Operations – Short discussion was held on the matter of the ice rink. Moore offered that Jack Rineer was contracted for this project and the removal of the well to change its location was discussed with him. \$4,000 in needed for a new well pump. Further discussion was tabled by Wooten until such a time as Mr. Rineer can be present.

Discussion continued suggesting that with a new well pump, the Fire Department could fill tanks as well as pump water on the ice rink. Again the matter was tabled with closing statement that perhaps township residents would be willing to donate funds for future use of the ice rink.

OLD BUSINESS

Fire Department Policy Review – Workshop to be held after budgetary meeting. Information on a cadet program slated for the November meeting.

Township Materials for Disposal – Desk and Credenza. Per Township policy, materials listed as assets cannot be “donated” unless there is a historical purpose on said items. Bids for purchase are required for the desk and credenza. These items will be listed for sale on the Township website.

OPEN FORUM

Sherry Taylor, Beulah, offered information obtained via the Sheriff’s Office that suggests most “drug deals” in Benzie county occur at area parks namely skate, basketball and baseball parks. It was suggested that the Township take measures to insure safety of its residents regarding the possibility of this activity at township parks.

Information was shared that according to the MTA, the township’s liability insurance would cover any accidents occurring at the school facilities during non-school time periods.

Basketball nets and other playground equipment if damaged or stolen will be replaced at the discretion of the Board.

Adjourn: Motion by Rosa to adjourn. Support Wooten. Adjourned 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Mallon
Recording Secretary