

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
May 11, 2020

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, May 11, 2020 via Zoom meeting.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 1:00 PM

In attendance were Supervisor Bruce Petersen, Clerk Amy Skewes, Treasurer Betsy Smith and Trustees Peggy Anderson, Bill Bingham, Bill Fink, and John Ollila as stated by roll call

Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:

Due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus we had our regular monthly meeting via Zoom for our Township residents.

Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes: A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Bingham to approve the April 13, 2020 minutes. Motion carried by a voice vote.

Approval of the Bills: Anderson made a comment that the sewer charges for the City of Houghton went over 4 days for a total overage charge of \$1749.44. A motion was made by Anderson and seconded by Bingham to approve the bills as audited on May 7, 2020. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none

Review Clerk's Report:

- Getting ready for the Audit
- After updating the 2019 Budget, I spoke with the Auditor and the Township can NOT make any changes without board approval and any changes also must have been done by 12/31/2019
- I have billed the state for the Presidential Primary for \$4584.64.

Review Treasurer's Report:

- Working on end of year audit reports to auditor
- Accounts receivable are up to date

Review Zoning Administrator's Report (John/Bill) for (April 2020):

Zoning Report for April 2020

Permits

Bob Wuthrich Demolition & New Storage Bldg. (approved)

Paradise Rd

Kurt Aho New Home White pine lane (approved)

Communications

County Building Dept. regarding old building permits

Letter to Jeffery Haapapuro regarding junk/rental issue

Park Ave. Dakota Heights

Inquirer regarding raising chickens in a R-1 district (not allowed)
Letter to the Twp. Attorney with Rental Ordinance questions.
Discussion with John Paul Pietila regarding special use permit in a M-1 district, and process with the planning commission.
Correspondence with a Rebecca Zander (real estate) regarding deed restrictions vs zoning ordinance in the Peepsock Rd area.

Review Fire Departments:

OLFD: Fires, 1 EMS. 1

Bill Sleeman has returned to work on the new Fire Hall, it should be completed soon.

HTFD: Hurowntown is going to have a meeting to decide if they want to pursue the grant for the new rescue truck

Review Assessor's Report: Distributed. Attached.

Trustees Reports/Updates: Anderson made a comment that the Daily Mining Gazette had a notice from the Houghton County Road Commission for any homeowners wanting oiling done on their gravel driveways to contact the Road Commission by June 1, 2020. Anderson commented that the DPW was working on the lift stations by Copper Ridge Road again because of the flushing of rags plugging the system. Bruce said we are waiting for a local company to clean it out.

Bingham commented that the budget for the water/sewer and the water purchased vs. water sold needs to be analyzed.

Bingham asked when the water line is going to be repaired by the Abramson property. Bruce said he hopes in the next couple of weeks.

Trustee Reports/Updates:

Public Comments:

None

Correspondence:

2020 Insurance Premium rates, UPPCO – Street Lights, Nationwide – New on-line resource center for Ins. Assistance, Copper Ridge Road – Slow Down Signage - Kids

Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer & Infiltration R. D. – Received Email from Pat Greeley with Kendricks Bordeau, they are running into an issue due to the Courthouse being closed due to COVID-19. They are going to see if they can meet through appointments to look at deeds and other legal records.
There is also a couple of different grants which the Township may be able to apply for with Chassell and the Road Commission to get Boundary Road fixed. Chris Holmes is looking into it
- B. City of Houghton – Waster Water Treatment Contract.

Ollila commented that what the Township was told about a modification under the contract and what is actually in the contract are two totally different statements. Item 21 says "it's a requirement to negotiate 425 agreements" but, the Township was told the modification would say 'Houghton would reserve the right to negotiate.' Chris Holmes will contact Eric Waara with the City of Houghton to find out how this happened.

- C. Robert Olson – Six Point Improvement Plan – Contract (2) New street Lights.
A motion was made by Bingham, seconded by Ollila to install 2 new street lights as indicated on the map. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith.
Nay: none. Did not vote: Anderson, Fink
- D. OPUS Web – New Updated/Formatted Web-Page – BS&A Cemetery Software
Cemetery software is on the website and live for people to research
- E. Scheduling of a recreational Marihuana Meeting and spreadsheet review.
The Township will have a meeting to further discuss types, number of facilities as well as zoning issues in regards to Marihuana on May 26, 2020 at 1 P.M. via Zoom
- F. State Revenue Sharing – Last Couple Payments will be approximately 40/50% down.
The Township will see up to a 40% reduction in revenue sharing due the cuts from the state. It could be about a 9.6% shortfall on our budget. There is a survey coming out in September for units of government to report losses.
- G. Legal Council – looking to go with Pat Greeley with Kendricks Bordeaux

14. New Business:

- A. Brian Miller – Short/Long Term disability coverage & Life Insurance
Board members had the opportunity to look over the coverage. Ollila stated that his opinion is that due to cuts to our budget that now is not a good time to offer anything extra to our employees. Bingham agreed, we have budget shortfalls in the middle of the year.
Bruce noted that currently our employees do have life insurance.
- B. Election Workers Needed – Count Absentee Ballots or Staff Poling Place? Skewes commented that she spoke to the County Clerk asking if the August election might be all Absentee, the County Clerk said the chances are very high. This will be a-lot of extra work on the Clerk's office. Skewes commented that we do have workers for processing the ballots on election day.
Fink Commented that the Secretary of State is planning to send 30% of pre-addressed envelopes of a jurisdiction's voters. His hope is to get as many people on the permanent list as possible.
Anderson commented that on May 28, 2020 the County Clerk will be a speaker at our local MTA meeting and would probably be able to answer these questions
- C. Filled out WUPPDR CED Report – Put in the 1938 Waterline Replacement
- D. Vandalism at the Tapiola Ice Rink – Door kicked in and light bulbs broken.
Everything has been repaired
- E. 2019 Audit Progress – Rukkila/Negro – Debbie Bradford. – Bruce has signed the letter of intent to continue to use them for the Audit.
- F. Junk Cars – Maple Street.
Ollila has drafted a letter to be signed by the board members which will be mailed out to residents who have junk on their property.

15. Meetings:

- A. April 17, 2020 On-Line Zoom Training.
- B. April 17, 2020 MTA Local Chapter Zoom Meeting
- C. April 23, 2020 MTA Webinar – Sales Tax Impacting State Revenue Sharing
- D. April 28, 2020 Copper Country Recycling – Eagle Water Representatives
- E. April 30, 2020 MI Dept. of Treasury – Teleconference – Const. Revenue Sharing
- F. MTU/KBIC – Sand Point Study

16. Other Business:

A motion was made by Fink, seconded by Anderson to make it a requirement for the staff and public to wear a mask while in the Township building. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Peterson, Smith. Nay: None. Did not vote: Skewes

Our next public meeting will be held via Zoom at 1:00 P.M. on June 8, 2020

17. Public Comment:

Jake Swoke from TV6 had questions

1. jswope TV6: Could you briefly give me an overview on the revenue sharing decrease?
Petersen replied the Township will have about a 40% decrease in revenue sharing in the last 4 months of this year
2. jswope TV6: How would that affect the upcoming years operations? Petersen said the Township will have to look at the rainy-day fund and where cuts can be made to the Township budget
3. jswope TV6: Ok, as well what was decided regarding the Marijuana item on the agenda? We will be having a special meeting on May 26, 2020 at 1 P.M. to talk about planning details before a public meeting seeking public opinion.
4. jswope TV6: As of right now do you have an idea of what would potentially be discussed for opening? Recreational sales, grow operations etc? In regards to marijuana? Fink and Ollila replied that we will discuss the types/number of facilities, zoning locations any special restrictions

18. Adjourn: A motion was made by Petersen and seconded by Smith to adjourn at 3:05 PM. All in favor, motion carried by voice vote.

Public Attendance:

Tom Heider - Otterlake FD
Mike Bach
Chris Holmes - UPEA
Brian Miller
Jake Swope – TV6
Joni Moore

X Bruce Peterson
Bruce Petersen
Supervisor

X Amy Skewes
Amy Skewes
Clerk

Chat Box Zoom Meeting

01:04:45 Mike Bach: Thank you, Portage Twp. Board, for arranging this meeting format. I have another meeting to attend. Mike

01:08:15 Bill Fink: Time and date prepared on all of our documents avoids this kind of confusion, eh?

01:22:06 Charter Portage Township: Yes, versioning in the footer or header help with this, Bruce let me know the next time you are doing this and I can show you or talk you through how to get it in there to help avoid this confusion...QB reports show date printed so that is our versioning there

01:28:54 Charter Portage Township: no

01:35:43 Charter Portage Township: 1pm 26th

01:35:51 Charter Portage Township: Special marihuana meeting

01:40:43 Ted Soldan: Might be prudent to cut township spending in anticipation of the reduction of revenue sharing

01:42:40 Charter Portage Township: Thanks Amy!

02:02:53 Charter Portage Township: do we need to vote?

02:09:12 Charter Portage Township: Face are required by all entering the building. If you have an extenuating medical circumstances

02:09:28 Charter Portage Township: yes please

02:15:35 jswope TV6: Yes

02:15:49 jswope TV6: Computer at work does not

02:16:09 jswope TV6: No just the information.

02:16:28 jswope TV6: Would it be possible to ask a couple questions as well

02:16:42 jswope TV6: just due to the length of the meeting and editing

02:16:46 jswope TV6: awesome thank you

02:17:08 jswope TV6: Could you briefly give me an overview on the revenue sharing decrease?

02:18:16 jswope TV6: How would that affect the upcoming years operations?

02:19:18 jswope TV6: Ok, as well what was decided regarding the Marijuana item on the agenda

02:20:39 jswope TV6: As of right now do you have an idea of what would potentially be discussed for opening? Recreational sales, grow operations etc?

02:21:02 jswope TV6: In regards to marijuana

02:21:48 jswope TV6: Great that's everything I have to ask!

02:22:07 jswope TV6: Thank you so much! Have a great rest of your day!

May 2020 Assessor's Report

If the Stay home order hasn't been lifted by the beginning of June, and with Summer Taxes coming up, I will be in on June 3rd to provide Betsy with the 2020 final Assessment Database and the 2021 new Assessment Database so she can begin work on setting up summer tax bills.

The final report that I submit to the County Equalization Department is the L-4025 "Report of Taxable Valuations, Losses and Additions". It is organized by classification and School District. The values reported on the L-4025 represent new value to the roll, which results in increase in tax revenue.

	taxable value added by School District	
Class	Baraga Area	Houghton/Portage
Agricultural	\$66,244	\$0
Commercial	\$0	\$496,587
Industrial	\$0	\$0
Residential	\$155,568	\$1,090,508
Timber Cut-Over	\$0	\$0
total	\$221,812	\$1,587,095
Personal	losses(871,776) additions \$18,262	losses (658,135) additions \$765,367

The personal property losses are due in large part to the Small Business Personal Property Exemption. Annually (in May) the County calculates the Taxable Value change from 2013 to the current year and submits a report to the State. Other Counties have provided this report to their Assessors, however, we have not received the report from Houghton County. It is important to review this report since it impacts a tax revenue loss reimbursement program from the State for personal property.

I have requested a copy of the County L-4023 – report of assessed value totals, for our records, and the County has been unresponsive. This is a document that was due to the State by April 20th.

Vanessa has been forwarding my mail to me, Thank You Vanessa. The County Register of Deeds sent me copies of the deeds registered since the stay home order went into effect. All of this has allowed me to stay current with assessing information and better respond to questions from the public.

AMAR – 2 we are scheduled to have an Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements (AMAR) this year. I am compiling the paperwork we will need to present to the auditor. I will need the following information (please put these in my inbox, and don't mail them, I will be by to get them):

- Signed minutes for the January 14, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting
- Copies (signed) of the six resolutions adopted at the meeting
- Poverty Exemption application with asset test
- A copy of the County L-4037 –due to the Township upon finalization of County Equalization (by the first Monday in May). Has the L-4037 been received at the Township? It is an important document that must be 'attached' to the 2020 Assessment Roll and will be requested by the AMAR.

As I continue to put together our AMAR binder, if I find any other documents needed I will let you know.

I haven't received notice from the State as to when the AMAR review will be conducted. In the past the State often notified the Supervisor only. If the Township receives any correspondence from the State (or the County) relative to Assessing, *please provide a copy to me*; it might be the only copy I get. (Bruce has been very good at making sure I get a copy of any correspondence he receives, thank you.)

Since field work is outside, and restrictions outdoor activities (COVID-19) have been eased. I will begin my field work reviews in June so that I can stay on track to accomplish my annual reviews.

~Laura