

Charter Township of Portage  
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

October 12, 2020

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, October 12, 2020 via Zoom meeting.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 11:00 AM

**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:**

Continue Virtual Township meetings, Planning Commission chronological approach

A motion was made by Ollila, seconded by Bingham to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried by a voice vote.

**Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes:** A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Fink to approve the September 14, 2020 and the September 28, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion carried by a voice vote.

**Approval of the Bills:** A motion was made by Anderson and seconded by Bingham to approve the bills as audited. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none

**Review Clerk's Report:**

- As of 10/5/2020 I mailed out 803 absentee ballots
- Pre-accuracy test scheduled for 10/20 at 11 A.M. and the accuracy test scheduled for 10/22 at 11 A.M.

**Review Treasurer's Report:**

- Final disbursements of taxes and late tax collection
- Using personal phones since September 1 since phones have not been working to answer constituents-not a best practice.
- Spent several hours on the phone with our internet service provider figuring out why phones are not working in order to help get them restored. Appointment has been moved to October 23 for new phone line restoral.

**Budget Adjustment**

A motion was made by Smith to budget \$5000.00 in account 207.669 and \$2122.00 in account 207.403 and \$3182.00 in account 206.403, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

Review Zoning Administrators' Report (John/Bill) for (Sept. 2020):

#### Permits

Clay Palosaari Marinette St. New Home (approved)  
Stephen Hadler Volin Estates Storage building (approved)  
Larry Staley Hwy 41 New garage (pending) No stakes  
Larry Staley Hwy 41 New Garage (approved)  
Claudine Metuge Tapiola Rd New Home (approved)  
Mel Lyttinen Tapiola Rd Small Livestock Bldg. (approved)  
Dave Somero Paradise Rd New Home (approved)  
Mark Zielsdorf Askel Hill Campers Shelters (approved)  
Edward Simonsen Pilgrim Rd New Garage (pending)  
Bill & John

#### Review Fire Departments:

**OLFD:** Fires, 1 EMS. 1

Completed a chimney cleaning for elderly and disabled residents

Fire at a camp which Steve Karvakko assisted in helping retrieve stuck trucks which he is not asking for any compensation. Ted noted how thankful the Fire Department is for his help.

Had a delivery of 100 smoke detectors.

**HTFD:** We purchased a set of battery powered jaws of life and battery powered cut off saw. We had new windows installed 6 total and framed in a door going to the upstairs to help with heating costs. We only had 2 runs last month both false alarms.

**Review Assessor's Report:** Granted a land division application for John Laux for three parcels. Received an official letter from the state regarding our 100% AMAR review.

**Trustees Reports/Updates:** Anderson explained that there were two notices in the newspaper regarding a planning commission meeting, one notice was poorly written and the gazette re-wrote it and the Township was not charged for the second one.

Ollila spoke with Roy Britz regarding updates on homes with junk letters, two are getting a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter.

#### Public Comments:

A resident wants an update regarding Denton Road, he said it's dangerous. Petersen suggested he speak with the Houghton County Road Commission for an update.

**Correspondence:** Correspondence: Melanie Watkins – P.C. Resignation, L-4029 Conveyed to County, MRWA – UP Expo, Dorner Valves & Automation, EGLE – Soccer Field Wetland Permit Ok'ed, Copper Country Christian School – Soccer Practice Times, FAHRNER – Asphalt Sealers, Ford F-Series Class Action Suit

#### Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer & Infiltration R. D. –Chris Holmes has a call scheduled with Pat Greeley regarding easements.
- B. Houghton County Rec. Authority – Sign Articles of Incorporation.

Ollila would like a letter from the Portage Lake homeowner's association as well as the Township board stating that they would like the trail system to remain non-motorized.

A motion was made by Ollila to have Bruce join the Rec. Authority, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

C. Boundary Road – FEMA/Millage Funded Paving – Borrowing for Spring

It was determined that the Township will not begin collecting from the road millage until the Winter tax of 2021. Discussion ensued regarding if Chassell ever paid their portion of Re-Paving of Boundary Rd from years ago. Skewes commented that she remembers a prior meeting where it was actually Portage Township who did not pitch in before to help in the paving previously, Chris Holmes agreed and suggested that Bruce contact the County to confirm.

D. Personnel Manual 2020 – Further Updates – FFCRA – Adopt.

Skewes Commented that at the recommendation of our Auditor, the elected officials job description should not be included in the handbook. We are not employees, we are elected officials and noted that the job descriptions are not MTA statutory duties and she would not vote to approve this handbook with these included. Ollila, Smith and Bingham agreed. Smith also commented that none of her changes have been made to the handbook. Ollila said he has not reviewed a handbook with any changes and would like to review Petersen's notes from the personnel committee meeting as well as Skewes and Smith's requested changes.

E. P.O. Policy – Updated – Adopt

Skewes asked why the allotted amount of a required purchase order went from \$800.00 to \$400.00? She noted that if any township employee were to need to purchase an item more than that, Petersen would have to be available to sign off on that purchase before the purchase is made. Petersen replied it was to make him more comfortable.

A motion was made by Fink to adopt this purchase order policy with the change of requiring a signed purchase order by the Township Supervisor before any purchase over \$800.00 can be made, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

F. Enterprise Funds – Rate Review with UPEA for USDA – RD Response.

Chris Holmes from UPEA updated the board with his recommendations on rate increases, after looking at the audit and the restricted funds. For Portage Sewer he recommends an increase of \$3.00 to the base fee and \$1.50 increase per 1000 gallons usage. This would be a payback plan of 5 years. Bingham would like to pay this back in 4-4.5 years, Ollila agreed. Petersen and Anderson would like to stick to the 5 year pay back plan.

- A motion was made by Bingham to increase the base fee for Portage Sewer by \$3.00 and \$2.00 per 1000 gallons of usage effective 10/1/2020, seconded by Ollila. Motion passed by a roll call vote. Aye: Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Skewes, Smith. Nay: Anderson, Peterson
- A motion was made by Bingham to increase the base fee for Portage Water by \$1.00 effective 10/1/2020, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None
- A motion was made by Bingham to increase the base fee for Dakota Water by \$2.00 effective 10/1/2020, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None
- Dakota Sewer – will review at a later date.



G. Cemetery Rates – UPEA Supplied Comparisons

Petersen supplied a suggested rate increase, Ollila would like to see the rates supplied by UPEA and have the Cemetery Committee have a meeting to discuss rates.

**14. New Business:**

A. Spectrum Business – Internet/Phone Bundle – Challenge to get hooked up.

There was an issue with the lines and the new scheduled date for hook-up is 10/23/2020 at 10 A.M.

B. Matt Kelly (CCSA) – Gating of Soccer Fields

Bruce is looking into possibility of getting gates at the Township fields.

C. COVID Exposures – Negatives – Tested and Quarantine for 14 days

2 Employees were exposed and both have tested negative and returned to work

D. Water Line Break on Green Acres Road – Service Line Repair by Aire Care.

Aire Care repaired a service line to a private home and in the process broke a main water line. We received a bill from Portage Lake Construction for \$3300.00 and unknown to Petersen the bill was paid, Skewes replied that she called him for verbal approval when he was not in the office last week and he approved payment of the bill. Petersen will draft a letter and submit the bill to Aire Care for reimbursement

E. DPW Office – Internet/Computerization – EGLE and MISS Dig Notifications

Petersen wants to get a computer installed at the DPW office so those employees are able to process MISS dig and EGLE water testing requirements. He would like to work with Shorewaves to hook up internet and phone for a swap with the tower rental.

Smith asked who is going to do the computer training. Petersen suggested Up and Running doing the installation and training.

F. Sleeman Construction Bid – Tapiola Ice Rink Warming House Eaves.

Petersen received a bid for \$1600.00 from Sleeman construction for the warming house bid to be paid out of the recreation fund. A motion was made by Ollila to accept the bid and go ahead with the construction, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

G. Remote Meetings – Continue until further notice.

A motion was made by Fink to declare a local state of emergency in the Township and to keep the Township office closed to the public, also to continue having virtual meetings via zoom until an effective vaccine is widely available to the public - also to ratify all past decisions made in previous meetings which were done remotely, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

H. Planning Commission Review – Review Zoning chronological approach.

Ollila would like to review the document and discuss at the next meeting.

**15. Meetings:**

A. September 30, 2020 - Meet With UPEA to Formulate a Response to USDA-RD.

B. September 21, 2020 - WUPPDR – Full Commission Annual Meeting.

C. September 24, 2020 – MTA Copper Country Local Chapter.

D. October 15, 2020 - P.C. Meeting – Soccer Fields Review.

E. October 19, 2020 – Sp. Twp. Meeting – Adult Marijuana Usage Ordinance.

F. October 29, 2020 – EGLE Meeting – 3 Year On-Site Review.

**16. Other Business:**

Our next regular meeting will be held on November 9, 2020 at 11:00 A.M. Via Zoom

**17. Public Comment:**

None

**18. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Bingham and seconded by Anderson to adjourn at 1:00 PM. All in favor, motion carried by voice vote.

**Public Attendance:**

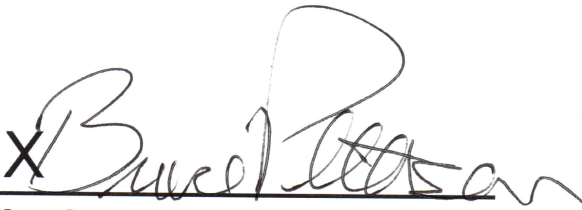
Chris Holmes - UPEA

Jeff Toorongian

Roy Britz

Ted Soldan - OLFD

Laura Erhart – Township Assessor

X 

Bruce Petersen  
Supervisor

X 

Amy Skewes  
Clerk