

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

January 9, 2023

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, January 9, 2023.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 6:00 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:

New Business – Cemetery regulations sign

A motion was made by Ollila, seconded by Skewes to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes: A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Anderson to approve the December 12, 2022 regular and Budget Hearing meeting minutes and the December 14, 2022 and December 29, 2022 Budget meeting minutes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

Approval of the Bills:

Anderson commented that there were 3 days in penalties in the amount of \$755.81 for sewer overage.

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:

- Working on end of year stuff/adjustments
- Looks like there will be an election in May 2023, for the Houghton County Road Commission
Election committee meeting on January 12, 2023 at 1:30PM
- I will be out of the office 2/6 – 2/10

Review Treasurer's Report:

- Working on end of year and final balancing, final reconciliations; all bank accounts have had interest added into Quickbooks, so year end balances are close (perpetual care may have small changes once the Edward Jones report is received)
- Year end tax time went smoothly - only 3 in person visitors on the "in person" day at year end 12/30/22
- New deputy, Julie Knight, is working out well
Smith commented that there were not any delinquent water/sewer bills added to the tax bills this year and complimented the DPW staff and Vanessa for being on top of late water/sewer

bills and following up with billings.

Review Zoning Administrator's Report for (December 2022)

Zoning Applications:

12/12 – 37584 Tapiola Road, new pole barn, approved

Correspondence:

12/5 – Inquiry, zoning of Apostolic church on Sharon Ave., 12/7 – Inquiry, zoning regulations in Dodgeville, 12/8 – Inquiry whether permit is required for a deer blind, 12/10 – Inquiry about agricultural regulations on Naasko Road,
12/29 – Complaints about airbnb operating on Canal Road.

Correspondence: Mich. Rural Water Association – Training, Chassell Township – Comments on Master Plan, MISS DIG – Annual Meeting and Training – Bruce will sign up at least one DPW employee to attend the training

Review Fire Departments:

Hurontown Fire Dept is requesting approval to purchase new air packs for approximately \$51,000. A motion was made by Ollila to approve their request for new air packs, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

Review Assessor's Report: Attached

Trustees Reports/Updates: Bingham made a motion that the board send a correction letter to the County Commissioners and the Daily Mining gazette to clarify Fink's comments stating that the board supports and wants the Justice Center, the board had only agreed to the 425 with the City of Houghton, seconded by Skewes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: Fink.

Public Comments:

Roy Britz commented that the County purchased the Church property on Sharon Ave on December 29, 2022

Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer Project – Payment Submittal & County Pavement Agreement – Drinking Water Asset Management (DWAM) Grant Response.
A motion was made by Fink to approve the 11th draw conditional on the change orders to rural development from the USDA grant in the amount of \$229,839.46, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none
- B. 5 Year Rec. Plan Update – Manuscript out for Review.
A motion was made by Ollila to adopt the 5-year rec. plan with the proposed changes, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.
- C. Steve Karvako – Otter Lake Plowing Agreement Sent Awaiting Signature.
- D. General Council – Graybill & Mead - Amy Schultz has Agreed

Bingham has concerns that Bruce is using his home email in correspondence with attorneys. A motion was made by Ollila to accept the agreement with Amy Schultz, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

- E. Personnel Manual - Legal Comments Incorporated plus new Assessor's job description. Will get a copy before the next meeting.

New Business:

- A. Updated Vehicle Listing – PAAR Plan – Small Yearly Premium Savings.
Ollila made a motion to accept and pay for the PAR plan, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.
- B. Cemetery Regulations Sign.
A motion was made by Ollila to accept the regulations for the cemetery sign, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

Public Comment: None

Other Business: The meeting went into Closed session at 7:15 PM

The board returned to open session at 7:33PM

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:34PM

Public Attendance:


Rachel Pressley – WUPPDR

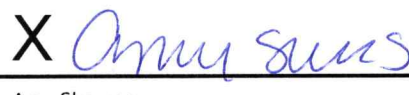
Abigail Pettit – WUPPDR

Roy Britz

Carol Sowards

Chris Holmes - UPEA

X 
Bruce Petersen
Supervisor

X 
Amy Skewes
Clerk

Assessor's Report January 2023

Was a 425 Agreement signed for the Church Building property @ 19741 W Sharon Ave, and if so, please provide me with a copy.

Personal Property Statements were mailed this week to all qualified known commercial, industrial and utility owners of personal property within the Township.

In 2019 the State passed a law authorizing the one time filing of an exemption for personal property taxes for commercial, industrial personal property owners if the total true cash value of personal property in a given jurisdiction was less than \$80,000. This ruling reduced the number of active accounts from 198 to 48.

The rules have changed for 2023. For small business owners (commercial, industrial property) who have less than \$180,000 and more than \$80,000 there is now an avenue for these businesses to also apply for exemption from personal property taxes.

In November 2022 I requested:: but hadn't heard back, and would like to re-ask::

- With budget time for next year upon us, and given that I work more than 32 hours per week, I am requesting that like the other full time employees, family medical be added to my benefits.

It would be great to have a cost of living increase, especially in light of the State's publication that the consumer price index is 7.9%. Of not to go with that is that the inflation rate multiplier for 2023 taxable value calculation is the maximum allowed by law, 5%.

Laura