

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

September 9, 2024

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, September 9, 2024.

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, John Ollila and Keith Wanhaaho as stated by roll call. Absent: Bill Fink

Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:

New business – Karki Cemetery, River Trails West

Correspondence – Mike Becia retirement

DPW Report

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

Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes: A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Anderson to approve the August 12, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.

Approval of the Bills:

A motion was made by Anderson and seconded by Wahnaho to approve the bills as audited. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.

Review Clerk's Report:

- Need to schedule a personnel meeting to discuss benefits
- Getting ready for the November election
- There are several months of backup up assessor documents that need to be filed, should the deputy clerk file them?
- The library millage was not on the ballot in precinct 4.
The Township clerk, supervisor and board do not have the authority to add or remove items from the ballot. The only filings the clerk receives are for local township offices and Portage Township millages.
We did not meet the criteria to have the paper mail ballots count. Under MCL 168.831-838

Review Treasurer's Report:

- **Summer Taxes** are in collection, 9/16 due
- **BSA Transition:** BSA training has been rescheduled to 9/26 and 9/27

- **RD accounts:** see balances below; balances have increased since last month, this does not mean that we are completely in the clear b/c it may be due to timing of water deposits as well, but things are headed in the right direction based on this report comparing it to July
- **BSA Payment issues:** these have been resolved; we anticipate that account balances will be adjusted along the way this year because everything is so new, but there are no more payment discrepancies with utility billing as previously thought

Review Zoning Administrator's Report for (August 2024)

ZONING APPLICATIONS:

8/6 – 44162 Superior Road, covered deck, approved. 8/7 – 21829 Denton Road, sauna, approved. 8/15 – 35496 Pike River Road, small storage building with covered deck, approved. 8/20 – 30560 Luoto Road, new home, approved. 8/20 – 46927 Pilgrim Road, extension to existing pole barn, approved. 8/29 – 35870 Tapiola Road, pole barn, approved.

INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

8/1 – Cost of permit for covered deck, 8/7 – Where is the dividing line between R-3 & R-1 on Canal Road, 8/12 – Inquiry about existing parking structure, turned out to be downstate Portage, 8/12 – Cost of permit for small storage shed, 8/14 – Rental rules on Canal Road, 8/19 – Permitting for solar installation in Dodgeville, 8/20 – Plans for multifamily units near Tapiola, 8/21 – Zoning of isolated house in M-1 on Pilgrim Road, 8/23 – Is it legal to build a house within a pole barn, 8/23 – County will not approve snow load for storage building built out of area, 8/29 – Rules for having a sauna along Portage Lake, 8/28 – Rules for short term rentals.

OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

Continuing conversations with MTA for guidance in correcting shortcomings in the Zoning Ordinance and other township ordinances. Numerous communications about permitting for new equipment on the tower near Paradise/Main Street junction. Met with attorney to clarify current law for raising water/sewer rates.

Correspondence:

Mike Becia retirement, Laura Erhart – Resignation Letter, Fahey Schultz Bruzych Rodes – Sick Time and Minimum Wage Requirements, Houghton County Notice – Preparing a Materials Management Plan, Charter Communications – Franchise Fee, EGLE – Drinking Water Training

Review Fire Departments: no reports

Review Assessor's Report: no report

DPW Report: Kody Maki addressed the board. The Frue street sewer line will be completed this week, the maintenance building and outside property are being cleaned. Kody will get the specs for the old air

compressor so it can be put out on bids. The old Township truck will be brought to Eds and Kody will get bids on a new snowplow for the next meeting.

Trustees Reports/Updates: Anderson asked if the notice for removal of flowers at the cemetery was in the paper yet. She commented that the Planning Commission meeting will be on 9/19/24, she also stated that there are 13 meters installed on private wells, though 2 people refused.

Ollila stated that the baseball field in Tapiola needs maintenance and we should put that on next years budget. Ollila reminded the board that he will propose at the next meeting to have a 5% automatic increase on all water/Sewer accounts every January 1.

Public Comments: a resident asked about a “no engine brake sign” on Onkala’s corner. Another resident stated that the engine brake is a safety issue and saves on the regular brakes. Bruce said he will ask the County Road Commission about signs.

A resident advised the board that there is a lot of dirt and sand on the floor at the Dodgeville ice rink, will send DPW to clean. Also, she asked to have the bathrooms open, we will get that done.

Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer Project (14) Well Owners on M-26 – Water Meter Installation & Survey Shots for Hurontown Center Ditch Cleanout and Green Acres Road Ditch Drainage? DWAM Grant, Potholing Bid should be out this week.
A motion was made by Ollila to approve the 21st draw in the amount of \$9510.17, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.
- B. Office Carpet “Plank” Replacement Scheduled - Sept. 12/13 – Thurs/Fri.
- C. Kestner Park Annexation - Resolution for the City. A motion was made by Ollila to approve the resolution for the Kestner Park Annexation, seconded by Wanhaaho. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.
- D. Justice Center Annexation - Resolution for the City. A motion was made by Ollila to approve the resolution for the annexation of the church property on Sharon Ave. for the Justice Center, seconded by Wanhaaho. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.
- E. MI Dept. of Treasury – Deficit Elimination Plan Acceptance.
- F. Renewable Energy New Permitting Process - CREO – PA 233/SB 5120. Bruce stated this basically gives the Township no say regarding large scale wind/solar projects.

New Business:

- A. Deficit Elimination Resolution for the Michigan Dept. of Treasury.
- B. Personnel Manual Changes – Ins. Payment in Lieu, Paid Sick Leave. - meeting set up for Sept 20, 2024 at 1PM
- C. Another Cemetery – Karki Cemetery, Township may pay the person who mows the site.

- D. River Trails West – Access Road & Land Act Filing with TWP. A motion was made by Ollila to grant a perpetual easement for \$1.00, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith, Wanhaaho. Nay: none.
Portage Township owns a tiny strip of land historically used to access the current river trails site.

Public Comment: Karen Timonen stated that that the library statement is wrong on the library website, Skewes advised her to contact the library and stated that the Township does not oversee the library. Timonen also wanted the library millage put on the November ballot, Skewes stated that that the deadline has already passed and reminded her that The County Clerk has already informed her of the available options.

Meetings:

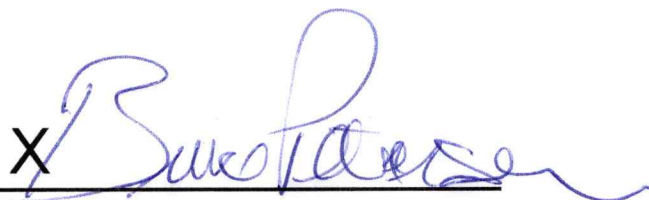
- A. Aug. 20, 2024 – Commissioners Hall – Renewable Energy Siting Permitting Policies
- B. August 14, 2024 – Cody Maki Interview.
- C. August 28, 2024 - Franklin Township Office – MTA Lical Chapter – Permitting.
- D. September 4, 2024 – Township Office – Assessor Check Out.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM

Public Attendance:

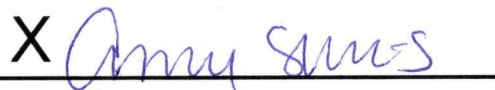
Brandon Scholie
Dale Belanger
John Paul Pietela
Karen Timonen
Chris Holmes – UPEA
Brenda Papke
Sally Moilanen
Kodi Maki
Sally Santeford
Jason Colombe

X



Bruce Petersen
Supervisor

X



Amy Skewes
Clerk