

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
Township Board Workshop
Minutes
June 23, 2015

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

The workshop was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Trustee Otto at 8350 Main Street.

Trustee Otto led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor | Absent with notice |
| Kathy Braun, Treasurer | Present |
| Angela Westover, Clerk | Absent with notice |
| Janet Chick, Trustee | Present |
| Wayne Dockett, Trustee | Present |
| Jacki Otto, Trustee | Present |
| Tracy Thomas, Trustee | Present |

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent
Tim Hardesty
Members of the community

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Thomas supported, that the Otto chair the meeting.
Motion carried 5—0 on a voice vote.

ADOPT AGENDA

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Thomas supported, that the agenda for the Township Board workshop session of June 23, 2015, be adopted as presented.
Motion carried 5—0 on a voice vote.

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Sewer Rates. Myron Rollison, 175 Barker Road, asked why his sewer rate is increasing.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sewer Rates. In response to the comment by Myron Rollison, Dockett referred to Discussion Item #2. Hardesty and Fink explained how sewer rates are calculated, and Fink and Braun explained that the rate for some users will change based on a recent sewer audit.

CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fink reviewed items he had distributed at the beginning of the meeting regarding various agenda items. He also reported on the current review of Township insurance policies he is doing, and noted that liability costs may go up to cover new equipment purchased.

VOTING ITEMS

1.
Civic Event Permit
for Whitmore Lake Public Schools Carnival

Fink referred to liability insurance provided by the schools to protect the Township, and said he and Chief Wagner recommend approval without conditions. Superintendent Tom DeKeyser said the school district has been working with Wade Shows for this child-friendly event which will include a Ferris wheel, games, and movie characters on the school district's Main Street property.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Thomas supported, to approve the Civic Event Permit for the Whitmore Lake Public Schools Carnival.

Motion carried 5—0 on a voice vote.

2.
Distribution of Donation Funds

Fink noted that at least \$2,500 has been donated so far.

- ▶ **Motion:** Thomas moved, Chick supported, to split the donations equally between Fourth of July Fireworks and the Fourth of July Parade.

Dockett thanked the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau for their grant of \$2,000 for these two events, but he said he does not like accepting donations from Township vendors. He called for a roll call vote.

Motion carried 4—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1.
Changing Sewer Grace Period from 15 to 45 Days

Fink said he will probably recommend increasing the grace period for payment of sewer bills to 30 days, and he asked for administrative leeway during the changeover period. He said both Westover and Braun have asked about doing this because of the variability in delivery of bills by the Post Office. He said after some time the situation can be reviewed to see if 45 days would be more appropriate. In answer to a question from Otto, Fink said of the other area communities he surveyed Northfield Township provides the least amount of time to pay bills.

Braun said she prefers 30 days because it is a more standard time to pay bills, and she is concerned that 45 days will lead people to set aside the bills, resulting in them being paid late. Chick said she is comfortable with 30 days.

Fink said he will put this on an agenda when the ordinance has been prepared.

2.
**Appeal Procedure
for Commercial Sewer Accounts**

Fink explained that the Wastewater Treatment Plant did an audit of the system and found that a number of accounts were being billed incorrectly when compared to the ordinance. He said this resulted in a number of bills being increased, and since service is not metered, he is recommending that an appeal process be established.

He said an ordinance would include the ability to administratively grant appeals for minor issues, an appeal procedure based on the REU table (in cases such as misclassification of a business or disagreement about usage), and the option for the Board of Trustees to consider other types of scientific data to adjust billing. He noted that in some cases businesses should be allowed to install and maintain a meter to prove their claim.

There was discussion about the possibility of including a provision for administrative adjustments, by the WWTP Superintendent perhaps, short of requiring the expense of engineering reports or installation of a meter. It was agreed to schedule this for further discussion after language has been drafted.

3.
Updates on:

- **Whitmore Lake Sewer Assessment District**
- **Non-Motorized Path**

Whitmore Lake Sewer Assessment District (SAD). Fink said this project will be put out to bid after final legal review.

Barker Road Non-Motorized Path. Fink reported that property owners have indicated that they will not provide two of the four critical easements for this project. He noted there are still options available, including design changes, making good faith offers, and using the power of eminent domain.

4.
**Updates/Discussion
on Various On-going Projects**

Main Street Sidewalk. In response to a comment from Dockett, Fink said the owners of single-family houses were

notified of this project, but it was quite a long time ago. He said the project may go a little over budget, and the grant will pay for about 80% of the total cost.

Washtenaw County Lots for Sale. Fink reported Washtenaw County is offering several lots for sale to the Township. The Board discussed possible uses of each parcel. Fink said he will talk to Randy Rush of the Parks & Recreation Committee about a couple of them. He noted that the Township buying up wetland—which one of the parcels is—supports the Township's efforts for lowering FEMA flood insurance rates for Township residents.

Township Survey. Fink reported that Cobalt, the company hired to carry out a citizen survey regarding planning issues, will be discussing the survey with the Planning Commission at their meeting on July 1st. He said will also have Cobalt discuss this with the Board.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Personal Property Taxes. Braun noted she had distributed an email from Controller Yaeger about the collection of personal property taxes. She said the Township has settled the issue of outstanding personal property taxes owed by businesses, so most of the remaining cases involve small improvements in the mobile home park. Fink noted that even though businesses with under \$80,000 in personal property must still file a return in order to be exempt.

July and August Board Workshop Sessions. Dockett suggested canceling these.

County Cleanup. Fink thanked Chuck Steuer for helping remove furniture from the streets during the cleanup.

ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Braun supported, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 5—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on _____, 2015.

Angela Westover, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/