

# NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

## Township Board

### Minutes

#### November 24, 2015

#### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by Supervisor Engstrom at 8350 Main Street.

#### PLEDGE

Supervisor Engstrom led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ROLL CALL

Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor	Present
Angela Westover, Clerk	Absent with notice
Kathy Braun, Treasurer	Present
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  
Township Attorney Brad Maynes  
Township Engineer Brian Rubel, Tetra Tech  
Members of the community

#### ADOPT AGENDA

- **Motion:** Chick move, Thomas supported, that the agenda be adopted with the addition of a request from Living Water Church for a civic event permit.  
**Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

#### FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ed Wojtys, 6235 Hellner Road, commented on the Whitmore Lake Road sewer extension and on a plan for the Township to borrow money. Udo Huff, 6431 Whitmore Lake Road, commented on the Whitmore Lake Road sewer extension. Craig Warburton, 450 W. Joy Road, commented on recent Board and Planning Commission changes (to minutes, by-laws, etc.) affecting transparency. Jim Mulcrone, 466 Glenmor Drive, commented on past community survey results and the need for and structure of the one being planned.

#### CORRESPONDANCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board and Fink:

- announced upcoming community holiday events.
- explained that the Board has been made aware by a member of the community that a Township bonded indebtedness ordinance requires mailing of a postcard to all Township taxpayers prior to borrowing amounts in excess of \$250,000, and a mailing is being prepared inviting public comment at the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting on a proposal to borrow funds regarding the Whitmore Lake Road sewer extension.

#### AGENDA ITEMS

#### 1. Audit Presentation from Pfeffer, Hanniford & Palka

John Pfeffer of Pfeffer, Hanniford, & Palka, summarized the audit report for the period through June 30, 2015, noting that improvements were observed in Township office practices. He said tax payments are handled timely and safely, very few suggestions were necessary for the work done by the controller, and Township practices have improved considerably in the last two years. He said they are issuing the highest opinion possible—an unqualified opinion—and said the financial condition of the Township is excellent, with the fund balances in the general, fire, and police funds being maintained.

- **Motion:** Braun moved, Otto supported, that the Report on Audit of Financial Statements for the Year ended June 30, 2015, be approved.  
**Motion carried 6—0 on a voice vote.**

#### 2. Sewer Billing Process

Dockett commented on the handling of sewer billing mistakes after they were discovered.

#### 3. Sewer Capacity Policy Analysis

Fink said this is the most critical policy issue currently facing the Township, and the questions are whether new connections should be allowed, and if so, according to what criteria. Brian Rubel, Tetra Tech, provided information about Genoa Township's sewer policy and practices.

Comments included:

- How areas that have been planned for growth will be provided with sewer service has not been mapped out.
- Serving MDR areas would involve "leapfrogging" and would require easements across private property.
- A capacity evaluation was completed recently.
- If all connections along North Territorial and in Green Oak Township were made the current plant capacity would be exceeded, so should connections in other areas be offered even though there is currently significant plant capacity available?
- The existing sewer plant has a capacity of about 1.1 million gallons, and that could be increased to about 1.3 million gallons with a storage tank. The current flow is about 650,000 gallons, and about 400,000 gallons would be required for the North Territorial area and 200,000 for Green Oak Township, so if those areas were completely built out the capacity of the plant would be met or exceed.
- Most communities do not establish moratoriums under similar scenarios; rather they expand capacity as demand increases.
- Given current expectations for development the need for a plant expansion is many years away.
- When developers consider development in the Township, the Township engineers cannot tell them

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what the cost of providing sewer service will be or even whether sewer service would be provided.

- The Township needs to develop a policy that provides information about how connections will be made, what number of connections will be allowed, and whether those plans will include an equalization basin/tank.
- The existing Master Plan can be used as a place to start an analysis.
- Historically the policy has been to allow properties next to a sewer line to connect, but there has been no policy about how many connections may be made.
- The agreement with Green Oak Township specifies both the service area and capacity.
- Many, but not most, communities have a sewer master plan that is updated periodically, and Northfield Township to have such a plan and to call for it to be updated regularly, or a resolution or motion regarding this could be made.
- The issue of whether existing buildings in new sewer districts should be required to connect should be placed on the next workshop agenda for discussion.
- Allowing development of at least one area designated in the Master Plan for dense development (MDR) would violate the Township's ordinance against leapfrogging (depending on how that is defined), and that should be addressed.
- There would be value in an analysis of what the required capacity and cost of it would be if all of the areas designated for development in the Master Plan occurred, what the variations would be based on different density levels, and possibly what a system development charge would be.
- Putting Rubel on retainer would allow the Board and staff to have access to his professional engineering expertise as needed during the process of developing a policy or ordinance.

► **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, to approve the Sewer Planning and Wastewater Treatment Plant Cost Opinion Study by Tetra Tech and Brian Rubel for a total of \$17,900. **Motion carried 5—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

► **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Braun supported, to approve sewer system as-needed support by Tetra Tech and Brian Rubel for a total of \$6,000. **Motion carried 5—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

#### **4. Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

Fink referred to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan which had been distributed to the Board for their review, noting that the public comment period is currently on-going and a public hearing will be scheduled.

#### **5. US-23 Project: 8 Mile Bridge Lighting**

Fink referred to information about decorative gateway lighting being proposed by MDOT to be installed at their

cost with the maintenance and electricity cost to be borne by the Township. It was agreed to add this to the next Board agenda.

#### **6. US-23 Project: North Territorial Bridge Design**

Fink explained that this bridge is scheduled to have widened shoulders, and questioned whether part of that width should be used for a raised sidewalk. He noted that sidewalks are currently part of the Six Mile and Eight Mile bridge plans. The consensus was to use the full width for shoulder.

There was consensus not to request quotes for having sidewalks extended from the bridges on Six Mile and Eight Mile Roads.

#### **7. Board Goals for Last Year of Current Term**

Board members listed projects of interest to them, including:

- Installing sidewalks or bike paths around the lake for safety.
- Extending Seven Mile Road to Donna Lane.
- Completing the sewer capacity study.
- Complete the Barker Road non-motorized pathway.

The Board asked Fink to prepare a list of workshop topics discussed to see what might be followed up on.

#### **8. Living Water Church Caroling**

Fink said this will take place at the Kiwanis Christmas Tree Sale. It was agreed there would be covered by the civic event permit previously issued to Kiwanis.

#### **SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Udo Huff commented again on the Whitmore Lake sewer assessment district.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dockett noted he would not be at the December 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, so commented that he does not feel someone with a working septic field should be forced to hook up to sewer in a new district, although they should be required to pay their sewer district assessment. Chick commented on an earlier statement made by Craig Warburton about the Planning Commission.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Engstrom adjourned the meeting at 9:13 P.M.

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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/](http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/)

## Managers Report, December 2015

### Parks and Recreation

In January, we will be holding a public hearing on the Proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Next steps for the Parks and Recreation Commission have been to identify upcoming projects. The BMX Park, Community Garden, River Walk are all projects that seem to be the focus of the Commissions Efforts. Additionally, I will be working simultaneously on a grant for the Preserve behind the Public Safety Building (identified in the Plan as the Seven Mile Preserve Park). The Parks and Recreation Commission is currently in the process of debating what type of organizational structure and authority they wish to have and eventually will be making a presentation to the board to that effect. I will continue to be a regular participant with this group, and to further Parks and Recreation efforts in Northfield Township.

### Whitmore Lake SAD

As you know, a postcard was delivered informing all tax payers of the Townships intent to borrow for the Whitmore Lake SAD. I anticipate a number of people at Tuesdays meeting. At the meeting, we are voting on a resolution to authorize the selling of the bonds. Following that, we will then vote on awarding the contract for construction.

### Board Room Construction

The Board Room Construction has slowed a bit, as I am trying to get some of the HVAC issues addressed and have final choices on carpet. It seems I provided to many options last time, so I will be picking three carpet choices for the board to choose from. Once the carpet is chosen, we can then choose paint colors.

### Code Enforcement

There are a few code enforcement cases that, if not resolved, will be on the agenda shortly. I will be requesting the board to authorize litigation, as the issues have been long outstanding. Also, a few of the outstanding issues will be addressed in District Court, which does not require board authorization. Please let me know if you have any questions.

### Switching Phone Companies

The Township is in the process of switching out phone companies from At&t to Charter / Spectrum. The migration has had a number of issues, but they seem to now be worked out between the two companies and hopefully, we will be complete with switch next week. Also, Charter is paying for the infrastructure construction for the Sewer Treatment Plan to have high speed internet access, as part of the migration. We anticipate thousands of dollars in savings yearly with this change.

### Natural Gas

As I have mentioned on number of occasions, we evaluate many of our administrative in nature contracts on a regular basis. I have locked in a natural gas price of 3.09 for the next 12 months. I will continue to monitor the prices to see if it is prudent to extend that

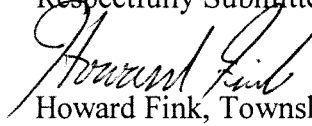
rate into 2017. This represents a savings on what we are currently paying and a savings if you compare it to DTE current prices.

Sewer Capacity

The Sewer Capacity policy work is ongoing. I commend the board for taking a proactive stance at dealing with this issue. One suggestion that was brought up by Supervisor Marilyn is to pass a resolution that any subsequent boards address sewer planning issues at least once every 5 years. This is a very good suggestion, and I will be instructing Mr. Burns's office to draft a resolution to that effect.

Enjoy your holidays.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Howard Fink, Township Manager