

**JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP**  
24725 Jefferson Center Street  
Cassopolis, MI 49031

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
February 8, 2024

**Call to Order & Roll Call:** Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm  
Present: Bundle, Brunner, Hass, Mendenhall, Gillam

**Additional attendees:** Brian VanderWerf, Rose Kelsheimer, Mark Howie, Mary Howie (County Commissioner), Clint Roach (Cass County Under Sheriff), Jeff Locke, Willie Eltzroth, Dallas Austin, Amanda Welzy

**Pledge to the flag:** Led by Supervisor Hass

**Correspondence:** None

**Public Comment:**

Sheriff Roach gave an update on calls to Jefferson Township in 2023. He also shared there is an upcoming Rabies Vaccine clinic at the animal shelter on February 24<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This service is offered at a reduced rate.

Commissioner Howie updated the board on her efforts to work with Senator Lindsay (Appropriations Committee) to find additional funding to support the CCTA (Cass County Transit Authority) and Ambulance Services in Cass County. He is looking to see if there would be funding available for a stop-gap funding of CCTA if the millage is approved as well as additional funding supporting the CCTA and Ambulance Service to offset the increasing costs of service. The Area Agency on Aging is also looking at possibly being able to assist in funding the CCTA. Dallas Austin asked if the funding if approved would still be available if the millage passed. Commissioner Howie answered in the affirmative.

**Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Bundle, supported by Mendenhall to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023, BOT meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Mendenhall presented the treasurer's report from the tax account. Moved by Brunner, supported by Gillam to approve the report as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

**Payment of Bills:** Moved by Mendenhall, supported by Bundle to approve the payment of bills from the General Fund, Emergency Services Fund, and Roads Fund as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

**Old Business:**

1. Consideration to rescind Resolution 2024-1 (Support for Stop Gap funding for the CCTA) and to revisit adopting the resolution after the election as the CCTA has not formally requested Stop Gap funding from the County Commission. Moved by Hass, supported by Brunner to rescind the resolution. Motion approved; Bundle abstained.

## New Business:

1. Announcement of the 2024 BOT meeting dates: January 11, February 8, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 7, December 12
2. Clerk Brunner distributed Audit packets from Kruggel, Lawton for FY ending 2023. She shared that the township had received a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) from the State of Michigan because our expenditures exceeded the budgeted amount in one account. She shared the CAP response letter sent to the State.
3. Clerk Brunner proposed the following amendments to the budget for consideration.
  - a. Increase the anticipated revenue for land splits/combinations from \$1000 to \$3000 for the FY as we have already received \$1500. Moved by Bundle; Supported by Mendenhall to approve the increase in revenue. Motion passed unanimously.
  - b. Increase the budget for ZBA from \$200 to \$1000. We have two variance hearings scheduled and costs have exceeded the budgeted \$200. The hearing application fees cover the expenses incurred. Moved by Mendenhall; supported by Hass to increase the budgeted amount for ZBA as requested. Motion passed unanimously.
  - c. Compensation for elections cannot be a line item in the budget. It must be included in the Clerk's salary. Moved by Gillam, seconded by Bundle to combine the two-line items. Motion passed unanimously.
  - d. Recommend we include the land splits/combos in the Assessors Salary. Moved by Mendenhall, seconded by Bundle to include the land splits/combos with Assessor's base Salary. Motion passed unanimously.
  - e. Board of Review: Meetings should read \$25 per meeting for a total of \$75 per year instead of \$75 per meeting. Hass thinks this amount is low and should be re-considered at the next budget hearing. Moved by Bundle, seconded by Mendenhall to approve the correction.
  - f. We will consider amending the inspectors' fees by moving those line items from the Salary chart to the Expenditures chart next month.
4. Kruggel, Lawton is reducing their client load. We have worked with Mike Layher for many years and as he is no longer with the firm, they will no longer consider us clients for future audits. Brunner will be reaching out to firms to get bids for future audits.
5. Consideration to adopt Resolutions for Board of Review alternate meeting dates for July and December 2024 and the poverty exemption guidelines.
  - a. Resolution 2024-1 Alternate meeting date for July Board of Review meeting date. Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to approve. Roll Call Vote: Bundle-yes, Brunner-yes, Hass-yes, Mendenhall-yes, Gillam-yes.
  - b. Resolution 2024-2 Alternate meeting date for December Board of Review meeting date. Moved by Hass, supported by Mendenhall to approve. Roll Call Vote: Gillam-yes, Mendenhall-yes, Hass-yes, Brunner-yes, Bundle-yes.
  - c. Resolution 2024-3 Poverty Exemption Guidelines. Moved by Bundle to approve, supported by Gillam. Roll Call Vote: Brunner-yes, Bundle-yes, Hass-yes, Mendenhall-yes, Gillam-yes.
6. Treasurer Mendenhall shared with the board that Fifth Third bank offered a 3-month trial of their electronic deposit check scanner. She has found it very helpful and convenient for timely deposits of tax payments as well as other township deposits. It has greatly reduced her need to physically make deposits at a bank branch and reduced liability in transporting many payments for deposit. She has asked the board to consider approving the continued use at a \$40 monthly fee. Moved by Hass, supported by Bundle to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
7. The Cass Ambulance Authority at their January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting requested each township board to consider approving a \$1000.00 (\$250 each township) stipend to Beth Pompey, who serves as treasurer/secretary for the Ambulance Authority. Jefferson, Calvin, Penn, and LaGrange townships have been paying \$75 each per year to compensate her time to email invoices quarterly and attend quarterly meetings. Since Pride Care abandoned their contract and we have had to scramble for ambulance services, Beth has had a greater responsibility during this

temporary and interim period. Moved by Gillam, supported by Brunner to approve our \$250 portion of the stipend. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Jeff Withers has asked for the board to consider approval of the Cass County Tractor Pullers resolution. Resolution 2024-4 Charitable Gaming Licenses- Cass County Tractor Pullers. Hass moved; supported by Bundle to approve. Roll Call Vote: Hass-yes, Mendenhall-yes, Gillam-yes, Brunner-yes, Bundle-yes.
9. Elections Update: Clerk Brunner shared that the township will be processing absentee ballots the day before the election as allowed by the passage of Prop 2. There is a posting on the building and on the website for the public. There will also be a May election as Edwardsburg schools has a proposed bond proposal. Mark Howie pointed out that the school district must pay to hold these special elections. They could put this bond on the August 2024 primary at no cost to the district. Rose Kelsheimer attended the special meeting about the bond proposal that the school board held last week. Feels there needs to be more transparency to the public about how the funding will be paid for.

#### **Inspectors Reports:**

1. **Zoning/Code Enforcement:** Steve Allen, code enforcement officer, submitted his monthly report.
2. **Building:** No report submitted.
3. **Plumbing/Mechanical:** No report submitted.
4. **Electrical:** No report submitted.

#### **Emergency Services/Utilities Reports:**

1. **Cass Ambulance:** Meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> at Wayne Township Hall with Cass VanBuren Ambulance Authority. SMCAS will have a 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance in service by February 18<sup>th</sup> for 12 hours a day. That will increase to 24-hour coverage by the 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The two ambulance authorities are in talks to merge at some point. They would like to keep owned properties separate under the individual ambulance authorities and merge for contractual purposes regarding SMCAS services.
2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Next meeting is scheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup>. Chief Locke informed the board that they have received approval to solicit donations to purchase a new aerial ladder. Depending on if they purchase used versus new, they are looking to raise funds up to \$2.1 million dollars.
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** Next meeting is April 2<sup>nd</sup>. They approved their annual budget in February.
4. **CAUA:** No changes decided on at the February meeting.

#### **Township Board Reports:**

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** A public hearing regarding the draft zoning ordinance was held on January 10<sup>th</sup>. There was no public comment. The draft will now be considered by the County Planning Commission, and then will be considered by the Township Board of Trustees for adoption. Next meeting is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** Organizational meeting and Variance hearings scheduled for February 12, 2024, at 6:00 pm and 6:30 pm respectively.
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.
4. **Board of Review:** Hearings are set for March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 12 for appeals.

**Public Comment:**

1. Jeff Locke asked about progress with the Gemstone Solar Project. They have begun some demolition on the Clark property and have an active building permit.
2. Rose Kelsheimer stated her support for the preservation of farmland.

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: March 14, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

With no other business before the Board at 7:46 p.m. Moved by Bundle, supported by Mendenhall to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Brunner, Clerk

APPROVED