

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
24725 Jefferson Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2024

Call to Order & Roll Call: Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Hass, Mendenhall

Additional attendees: Ron Bellaire, Dallas Austin, Mark Howie, Mary Howie, Gerry Bundle

Pledge to the flag: Led by Supervisor Hass

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

Approval of Agenda: Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to approve the agenda with the addition of the proposed Road Contract for the upcoming Fiscal Year. Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Bundle, supported by Gillam to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2024, BOT meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Moved by Brunner, supported by Hass to approve the treasurer's report of the 2023 Summer and Winter Tax collection and settlements as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

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

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. The board discussed the recommendation by the planning and zoning committee to adopt the newly revised township zoning ordinance following their January 10, 2024, public hearing. The ordinance was reviewed by the County Planning Commission at their February 28, 2024, regular meeting. They had positive comments and no recommendations for revisions. Brunner read aloud Resolution 2024-5 – Approval of New Jefferson Township Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance 01-24). With no issues or concerns raised by any Board of Trustees member, Moved by Bundle, supported by Gillam to adopt the revised zoning ordinance draft, dated January 10, 2024, as the final ordinance. Roll Call Vote: Gillam-Yes, Mendenhall-Yes, Hass-Yes, Brunner-Yes, Bundle-Yes. Motion approved unanimously.
2. Brunner requested the board consider hiring Mike Layher, accountant to assist the clerk and treasurer better understand fiduciary processes and reporting to address the audit report's material weakness that township officials have more independence from the auditor. She requested the board approve 10 hours at a rate of \$100 per hour. Moved by Hass, supported by Mendenhall to approve the request. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Brunner requests approval to get bids for cleaning service for the township hall. Jerrell and Nina Roberson have resigned, and Bundle and Brunner have been addressing custodial needs. The board agrees we need to have someone regularly clean the township hall and approve soliciting bids.
4. Brunner gave Elections Update. Overall, the February 27th Presidential Primary went smoothly. Early Voting in the County was low, but it went well. The County Clerk reported to local clerks that Early Voting is a large undertaking and will be working to improve the process. Election Day saw a much larger turnout compared to the 2020 Presidential Primary. Both ballot proposals passed.
5. Central Cass Ambulance Authority has requested that the member townships consider setting up an escrow account to allow the Authority to pay for necessary repairs and unexpected costs associated with the ambulance barn without having to get each townships approval. Chairman Carter requests each township fund the account with a \$500 share. Moved by Hass, supported by Brunner to approve. Motion approved unanimously.
6. The board discussed when the Roads Millage Renewal should be placed on the ballot. It has always been on the May Special Election ballot. With the Edwardsburg School Millage renewal being passed in February as a 3-year renewal, there won't be a May 2025 special election unless the township wants to pay for one. Brunner recommended placing the proposal on the November 2024 ballot as it is the closest election to the actual renewal without it expiring. Moved by Mendenhall, supported by Bundle to place the proposal on the November 2024 ballot. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Emergency Services Special Assessment. Brunner recommended to table until April when we have more information about long term ambulance services.
8. Hass presented the recommended roads project for FY 24-25. He and Joe Bellina from the Cass County Road Commission reviewed several roads and determined that Library Road is a top priority. The board reviewed the proposed contracts and costs. Moved by Brunner, supported by Mendenhall to approve the contracts. Roll Call Vote: Bundle-yes, Gillam-yes, Hass-yes, Mendenhall-yes, Brunner-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

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:** Ron Bellaire gave an update on the newly approved Residential Electrical Code.

Emergency Services/Utilities Reports:

1. **Cass Ambulance:** Supervisor Hass is part of a committee to discuss options for merging the two ambulance authorities contracting with SMCAS and to establish who will be responsible for bookkeeping. We are still waiting for a 2nd 24-hour ambulance for the coverage area. Currently the 2nd ambulance is a BLS rig covering 12 hours/day. The goal is a full time ALS rig.

2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Next meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2024, at 6:30 pm. The auditor's report recommends that the Jefferson Township, LaGrange Township and Cass Fire boards meet collectively to establish clearer written language regarding coverage area and how the department is funded. Clerk Brunner will facilitate scheduling that meeting.
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** The next meeting is scheduled for April 2nd.
4. **CAUA:** Supervisor Hass reported that the main line running between Dowagiac and Cass has suffered 2 breaks within a matter of weeks.

Township Board Reports:

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Next meeting is scheduled for April 17th at 7:00 pm
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** No business.
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.
4. **Board of Review:** 1st board of review hearing held on March 11th. 2nd hearing scheduled for March 19th 3:00-9:00 pm.

Public Comment: None

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: April 11, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

With no other business before the Board at 7:18 p.m. Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Brunner, Clerk