

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
24725 Jefferson Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2023

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

Present: Gillam, Mendenhall, Hass, Brunner, Bundle

Additional attendees: Jennifer Ray, Jeff Locke, Willie Eltzroth, Rose Kelsheimer, Mary Howie, Mark Howie, Jeff Nelson, Aaron Mendenhall, Gerry Bundle

Pledge to the flag: led by Trustee Bundle

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

Approval of Agenda: Brunner moved, seconded by Bundle to approve agenda. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: Gillam moved, seconded by Mendenhall to approve the September 14, 2023, BOT meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report: Mendenhall presented reports. Bundle moved, seconded by Hass to approve the treasurer's reports. Motion approved.

Payment of Bills: Brunner presented payment of bills from the General, Emergency Services and Diamond Lake Water Debt Funds. Hass moved, seconded by Bundle to approve the payment of bills. Motion approved.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Aaron Mendenhall requested a 60-day site plan extension for the Gemstone Solar project. He cited unforeseen delays caused by the upgrade to the Kenzie Substation and with PJM completing their facility study and interconnection service agreement. They are in the fast lane for the study to be completed but they cannot secure financing without it. Discussion among board members and agreement that these issues meet the criteria for a site plan extension. Moved by Brunner, seconded by Mendenhall to approve the extension which will expire December 13, 2023. Motion approved.
2. Bundle shared information about the Land Bank/MI Hope program opportunities. The county is encouraging residents to apply as they have had a low response rate. There are more projects that qualify now than under the original program requirements. We will have information at the township hall for residents and ask Steve Allen to help identify properties.
3. At our last meeting Jeff Nelson asked the Board to consider addressing concerns regarding explosive targets, such as Tana Rite. Brunner spoke with Attorney Senica for legal guidance. She said it is legal for people to purchase the components and use them on their property. She said we could enact an ordinance addressing noise and/or noise and set requirements such as property size minimum and must be so far from property lines. She said this may be difficult to enforce because it is hard to prove it meets a decibel threshold or where it was set off after the fact. The Board discussed options and Hass recommended we address this in the winter newsletter and ask residents to be considerate of neighbors when using these devices, seconded by Brunner. Motion approved.
4. Mendenhall would like to remind residents that tax payments are only accepted at her office by mail, in person or online through credit card payment. Payments should not be mailed to the township P.O. Box or dropped off at the township hall.
5. Brunner shared that the County Clerk, Monica McMichael, held a meeting in September to discuss Early Voting as approved with the passage of Prop-2 2022. Cass County municipalities have the option of holding early voting either singularly, combined with other municipalities or enter a contract with the county to administer. All local clerks voted to enter into a contract with the county clerk's office. Brunner asked the Board to consider supporting this decision as the benefits include reduced costs versus the township holding early voting at the township hall as well as a consolidated county early voting place simplifies things for voters. Hass moved, seconded by Bundle to approve entering into a contract with the county to administer early voting for State and Federal elections. Motion approved.
6. Brunner requested an amendment to the budget to reduce the administrative assistant approved monthly hours from 30 to 25 and to increase the deputy clerk's monthly hours from 15 to 20. This would be a slight decrease to overall expected wages paid for fiscal year 2023-2024. Moved by Gillam, seconded by Hass to approve the request. Motion approved.
7. Hass reported that the township is offering winter storage to residents only. Anyone interested in renting space should contact the Supervisor to inquire about availability.
8. The annual spring clean up date is set for Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 8 am to noon. There will be dumpsters available for residents to use. A list of items not allowed can be found on the township website prior to that date.

Inspectors Reports:

1. **Zoning/Code Enforcement:** Steve Allend, 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:** October 2nd meeting at Wayne Township Hall. Short term contract signed between SMCAS and Central Cass Ambulance Authority and Cass/VanBuren Emergency Authority. They are working on getting a second ambulance staffed by November. Next meeting is set for November.
2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Hass shared that with the Fire Grant monies, the fire department was able to purchase 2 new turnout gear and 4 new boots.
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** Mr. Eltzroth provided the October meeting minutes and financial reports as well as their annual audit report. 300 calls reported for 2022 calendar year.
4. **CAUA:** Next meeting is set for October 16th.

Township Board Reports:

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Next meeting is set for October 18th.
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** No business.
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.

Public Comment:

Mary Howie, County Commissioner, shared that the county commissioners passed a resolution opposing Michigan legislation aimed at taking control of large Solar and Wind energy projects from local control to State control.

Hass shared there is a county leader's meeting scheduled for October 18th at 6:00 pm to discuss ambulance service and potential for a county millage for emergency services.

Hass also announced the resignation of Sandy Randle from the Board of Review. We will post a notice on the website seeking candidates to replace her. The board is appreciative of her years of service to the township.

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: November 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

With no other business before the Board at 7:13 p.m. Moved by Mendenhall, supported by Bundle to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Brunner, Clerk

APPROVED