

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
24725 Jefferson Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2023

Call to Order & Roll Call: Clerk Brunner called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
Present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Mendenhall

Additional attendees: Kerry Barber, Bill Stohler, Rose Kelsheimer, Ron Bellaire, Jennifer Ray, Dallas Austin, Jeff Locke, Mark Howie, Mary Howie, Gerry Bundle

Pledge to the flag: Led by Clerk Brunner

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

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

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Mendenhall, supported by Bundle to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2023, BOT meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

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

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

Old Business:

1. The board discussed the idea presented by Cass Fire Chief Locke at the November 9, 2023, BOT meeting to adopt a burning ban around Diamond Lake. Clerk Brunner shared her discussion with Attorney Senica regarding a ban. The Board considered the challenge of adopting a ban targeting a specific area in the township as well as enforcement and alternatives to disposing of yard waste township wide. Moved by Gillam, seconded by Bundle to not adopt a burning ban at this time. Motion approved unanimously.

New Business:

1. Gerry Bundle representing the Cass County Public Transit presented a resolution in support of the County providing stop gap funding until they can increase revenue through a ballot measure. The CCPT is asking local municipalities to adopt the resolution in support of their efforts. Clerk Brunner asked to delay consideration of the resolution until the January BOT meeting in which time legal council may review the resolution.
2. The board discussed the appointment of three new Zoning Board of Appeals members. The board has not met since 2019 and has lost three members in the interim. Gerry Bundle was nominated and accepted the nomination as a representative from the Planning & Zoning

Commission to the board. Moved by Brunner, seconded by Mendenhall to appoint Gerry Bundle to the ZBA. Motion approved unanimously. Clerk Brunner volunteered to serve as a representative and secretary representing the BOT. Trustee Bundle volunteered to serve as an alternate member and secretary for the ZBA. Moved by Mendenhall, seconded by Gillam to appoint Brunner to the ZBA and Bundle as an alternate. Motion passed unanimously. Dallas Austin was nominated and accepted the nomination to serve as a member. Moved by Brunner, seconded by Bundle to appoint Dallas Austin to the ZBA. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Griffin Pest Control has found rodent activity during their last several monthly inspections in the fire room kitchen off the bay garage. There is an open window with a sliding wooden curtain that allows entry into the kitchen. The board discussed closing the window with drywall as the kitchen has not functioned in many years and the township no longer has a fire department. Moved by Mendenhall, seconded by Gillam to approve getting estimates and hiring a contractor to drywall the opening. Motion approved unanimously.
4. Supervisor Hass obtained a quote for removal of the two trees at the front of the township hall. The quote for \$2150.00 includes removal of both trees, grinding both stumps and removal of all debris. Moved by Gillam, seconded by Bundle to proceed with the tree removal. Motion approved 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 reported that 2023 has been his busiest year in the township. He also notified the board he will be asking Code Enforcement officer, Steve Allen, in proceeding with an issue he is having with a resident installing a solar array. Ron also shared the State of Michigan Electrical Code will have updates adopted in March 2024. This does not include Residential 1 & 2 family homes, which will be updated at the end of 2024.

Emergency Services/Utilities Reports:

1. **Cass Ambulance:** Next meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2024, at 5:30 pm at the Wayne Township Hall
2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Next meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2024
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** Auditor came and spoke with the Fire Board in February.
4. **CAUA:** No report

Township Board Reports:

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Next meeting is January 10, 2024, at 7:00 pm. This will be a public hearing on the Updated Zoning Ordinance. The next regular meeting is January 17, 2024, at 7:00 pm.
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** Two residents have requested variance hearings. The meeting will be set late January/early February.
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.
4. **Board of Review:** Hearings set for March 5th and March 12.

Public Comment:

1. Jeff Locke asked about the status of Gemstone Solar Project. The Board shared that Clenera has been granted a building permit. Work is to begin early this year.
2. Kerry Barber asked who he should speak with regarding plans for a 2nd property he owns. He wants to know what his options are allowing him a pole barn on the 2nd property. The Board advised him to speak with building inspector, Wayne Hardin, as to what his next steps may be.
3. Mark Howie spoke on concerns he has with the passage of state legislation allowing the state to control where solar farms are placed in townships.
4. Gerry Bundle spoke in response to concerns about state control of solar farm placement in townships. The legislation does provide local governments with some control.

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

With no other business before the Board at 7:35 p.m. Moved by Mendenhall, supported by Bundle to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Brunner, Clerk