

MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
4338 BEELINE ROAD
ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND, MI 49423

REGULAR MEETING
February 12, 2014

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Township Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer called the regular monthly Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Hofmeyer, Wendy Van Huis, Gary Dewey, Ed Stielstra
MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Scanlan
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Cal Haverdink – Graafschap Fire Chief
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer opened the meeting with prayer and led the pledge of allegiance.

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the January 8, 2014 meeting, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the minutes as submitted. Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. FINANCIAL REPORT / REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer reviewed the bills for the month of January 2014. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve and pay the bills as submitted. Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. CORRESPONDENCE – None

ARTICLE VI. REPORT OF OFFICERS

- A. STATE REPRESENTATIVE GENETSKI – No report.
- B. COUNTY COMMISSIONER KAPENGA – No report.
- C. PLANNING COMMISSION – Ed Stielstra

Ed Stielstra reported that the Planning Commission met on February 5, 2014 and the following items were discussed: a Special Use Permit Amendment Request from RB Land Holdings LLC to permit outdoor events for which Attorney Ron Bultje will draft a report of the conditions of the amendment to be reviewed at the next meeting; Genzink/Ultra Properties Request for a Planned Unit Development

which was tabled pending an updated plan to include all conditions discussed and a public hearing will be held next month in regards to the Bee Keeping Ordinance.

D. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – No report.

E. PARKS COMMISSION – Linda Howell

Linda Howell reported that the Parks Commission is working on the Township Hall Recreation development. We are reviewing the bids and hope to see dirt being moved this spring.

F. DEPUTY SHERIFF – No report.

G. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD – Chief Cal Haverdink

Chief Haverdink reported the response calls for the month of January were as follows: 55 calls total, 39 calls from Laketown, consisting of 32 rescue and 7 fire, 12 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 9 rescue calls and 3 fire calls. There were 4 fire assists to Saugatuck Fire Department, all of which were mutual aid calls. A few weeks ago on a Friday night the department was out all night trying to help people that were stuck due to the snow storm. Many people were stranded on the roads and they would call 911 for assistance. Firefighters used their personal four wheel drive trucks to rescue the stranded motorists and one firefighter borrowed a front loader from where he worked to be able to access motorists extremely stranded. They helped many people trying to get out of the snow and fortunately there were no injuries.

H. DDA – No report.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE IX. OLD BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE X. NEW BUSINESS

A. LAW ENFORCEMENT S.A.D. PUBLIC HEARING RESOLUTION

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed Resolution 2014-06 Police Services Resolution #1. The resolution calls for a special assessment for all property in Laketown Township to fund the addition of one full-time deputy. The estimated cost per parcel is \$70.00 per year which may be divided between two tax bills. The special levy would raise just under \$200,000.00 and the cost to fund two full-time deputies would be approximately \$194,000.00. A public hearing would be scheduled for Wednesday, April 9 at 7:00pm. Unfortunately, we are not shielded from the increase in criminal activity in the township and the presence of two full-time deputies would allow for police coverage every day, but not 24/7.

Wendy Van Huis stated that it would also help support the general fund by relieving it of the current expense of the one deputy. Terry stated that the general fund monies are being requested for numerous cooperative regional efforts such as Project Clarity, signature assets such as the Holland Public Museum, Windmill Island, Felt Mansion and other projects we have been invited to participate in. We have been funding the township deputy from the general fund for a very long time and the .565 operating levy can no longer support the need. Other cities and townships levy 5 to 16 mills for their general fund so we have been on the lower end of millage rates for a long time.

Ed Stielstra stated that a special assessment district is usually developed in one area where a special need is present. This would levy a uniform tax for each property owner and not be based on the value of the parcel. This is a philosophical shift in theory where each property owner would be taxed the same amount. Ed supports having a public hearing so residents have an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Gary Dewey stated that the one thing we have that is a uniform assessment is a \$25.00 assessment for street lights, so \$70.00 to fund an additional deputy does not seem like much but he agrees it deserves a public hearing.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the Law Enforcement S.A.D. Resolution 2014-06 public hearing to be set for April 9, 2014. Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS VOTE - MOTION APPROVED**

B. SUPPORT OF ALLEGAN COUNTY M-40 RESOLUTION

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the request for support of the Allegan County M-40 Resolution. Commissioners of Allegan County have adopted a resolution requesting the broadest possible safety reconstruction of the M-40 / I-196 intersection. The county is asking the support of each township and the City of Holland along with copies being sent to the legislators. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the Support of the Allegan County M-40 Resolution. Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE X. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS - None

Keith Becksvoort of 4468 64th Street commented on the decreasing balance in the general fund. He does not support the funding of an additional deputy in the township when Allegan County is reducing staff. He feels the township will pick up the cost of the deputy but the county will use the additional staff for back-up calls on a regular basis but not have to pay for the wages. He agrees a public hearing is necessary. Keith asked if after the public hearing, will there be a citizen vote or a board vote only. Terry Hofmeyer responded that it would be a board vote only. Terry also noted that we provide back-up to the county today and they also provide it to the township when necessary. Terry also stated that most townships with the exception of Saugatuck are adding deputies at this time to make up for the reductions in the county.

Randy Becksvoort of 3930 Beeline asked if the M-40 location for the reconstruction is near the truck stop. Al Meshkin responded that it is. Terry said there have not been any determinations made to add a traffic light but the county is asking MDOT to pursue the broadest possible safety reconstruction for this site making reference to the most recent fatal accident that has occurred.

Ed Stielstra stated that the request is to address that area and the interchange further down at I-196. Al Meshkin stated the reconstruction of exit #49 that most people take to Grand Rapids currently requires a left turn. The change will be a right turn onto the exit that will loop around to avoid the left turn lane congestion.

Randy Becksvoort asked how much revenue the \$70.00 per parcel would raise and would it cover the deputy's car as well as the wage? Terry Hofmeyer responded that it would raise approximately \$200,000/year and would cover the deputies and all necessary equipment and supplies for the positions. Randy asked if the crime rate has increased over the years since we have reduced to one officer. Terry said looking over the last six months we have seen a considerable uptick in the issues and the daily presence of an officer would make a difference. Terry said in the past when we had three deputies, they were funded by 3-yr grants. Now with less coverage coming out of the county, there are more demands on the townships. Terry said the township general fund has been very healthy for a long time and we will continue to need funds to carry us through emergency times and in between tax collections but we cannot continue to fund the law enforcement expenses from the operating millage. We shouldn't gamble with our welfare, we need to stand up and say this is needed and necessary. This is a procedure, it is new and we haven't done it before.

Wendy Van Huis said the cost is not that great at \$35 twice a year when you think of what you spend that kind of money on for other things.

Keith Becksvoort said the \$70.00 to me, is not a lot of money but the since the time we built out here and you ride around now, the township has gone downhill with regards to the upkeep of houses in certain places. It has to do with the economy and jobs available and the economy does not look good yet so \$70.00 may be a lot to some people.

Al Meshkin agreed with what Keith said, Michigan has gone through 8 years of recession and we have experienced sheriff's deeds from foreclosures which we had not seen before 2008. But \$70.00 it is less than \$6.00 per month. How many homes have cable or satellite dishes costing much more than \$70.00 per month? What is more important? Keith said West Michigan has done good compared to the rest of the state. Al said and as a township we weathered it quite well, too not having to cut back on services with the exception of the deputies.

Ed Stielstra said regarding Keith's comments about low income earners having trouble with the \$70.00 per year; a millage has a lesser effect on those with lower property values wherein the special assessment affects everyone. This approach hits everyone in the same way instead of where a millage hits those who can better afford it.

Linda Howell of 6443 Kingsway Court stated that she works with counties daily and sees the cutbacks coming out of Lansing. We are not going to get help from Lansing and Allegan County does not have funds for us either. She supports the S.A.D. and feels we should protect the place we choose to live in. We have to do what we have to do to take care of ourselves.

ARTICLE XII. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Ed Stielstra and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 P.M. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTON APPROVED

Wendy Van Huis, Township Clerk

Diane Ybarra, Recording Secretary