

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

ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 8, 2017

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

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

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Hofmeyer, Wendy Van Huis, Ed Stielstra,
Gary Dewey, Linda Howell
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Kathy Stoike – Administrative Assistant/Finance
Charlene Fields – Deputy Treasurer
Staci Veldt – Event Coordinator
Paul Smith – Township Assessor
Doug Den Bleyker – Fire Chief
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary
Dan Williams – Township Maintenance

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF 2016 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES –
Clerk Wendy Van Huis

Clerk Wendy Van Huis reviewed the minutes of the March 9, 2016 annual meeting. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Udelis Kuipers and seconded by Phil Bohlander to approve the minutes as submitted. Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. OPENING COMMENTS – SUPERVISOR TERRY HOFMEYER

Supervisor Hofmeyer recognized the Township employees, board members and Al Meshkin who leads the team for their fine service and stated we are looking forward to another good year. Hofmeyer stated we are still wrestling with the problem of providing Internet service to the entire township. Many residents have asked if we are meeting with Charter and we have received a firm proposal on how to construct a system. The water project in Macatawa Hills remains in litigation. The township has had a very busy year and the representatives will now share reports after which residents will have an opportunity for comments and questions.

ARTICLE V. REPORT OF OFFICERS

- a. State Representative – Mary Whiteford

Representative Whiteford reported she has been in office one year. Whiteford serves on the Policy Committee, Natural Resources, Veterans and Agriculture Committees. Whiteford is the Chair of Environmental Quality and Vice Chair of Agriculture Committee. Whiteford is serves on the DHHS

Committee adding that the issues are foster care, Medicare, Medicaid and prescription drug abuse. Whiteford also serves on the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. Whiteford's priorities include rural broadband initiatives through the special assessment district bill.

b. State Senator – Tonya Schuitmaker

Senator Schuitmaker reported she represents the 26th District and said it is great to see so many people tonight. Schuitmaker serves the constituents of three counties and she is at the service of the taxpayers for state agency facilitation and legislation to make lives better. Currently she is supporting a bill in regards to the automated prescription system, particularly to target the opiate abuse. The current system is outdated and does not check for repeated purchases through multiple providers. These drugs are becoming easily accessible resulting in addiction with increasing issues with young adult population. The State has invested in a system to integrate medical records which should be up and running on April 15. Ohio implemented this system and saw a 75% reduction in opiate abuse. Schuitmaker is also working on a bill to address tracking rape kits used in sexual assault cases. There were 11,000 rape kits not addressed in the State of Michigan. The new system would be similar to a UPS tracking system. Schuitmaker is supporting a truancy package to create statewide consistency. The governor submitted the budget which demonstrated a slight uptick in revenue resulting in increased funds that could be returned to tax payers or used for infrastructure. Schuitmaker asked residents for feedback and offered contact information for her website which includes a monthly legislative update.

c. County Commissioner – Dean Kapenga

Commissioner Dean Kapenga was not present for the meeting but provided a written report available to residents.

d. Library Representative – Gary Dewey

Gary Dewey reported that we are one of the largest libraries in the state and fourth largest in terms of distribution which speaks to the interest of learning and education in the community. Dewey thanked residents for approving the 14-year millage which was passed by an 80 to 20 vote. The Library Board is developing concepts for moving forward to make the best use of the funds. One thought is to improve then north side location to reach more residents in that area. The small café in the basement of the library has closed so a new vendor is being sought along with reviewing an option to move the café to the main floor. The library is now open on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 6:00pm and it is the busiest day of the week. Dewey invited residents to visit the library to see what a great resource it is.

e. Pool Authority – Jack Huisingsh

Jack Huisingsh thanked the residents for the millage toward pool authority. It is a \$30mil asset to the community running on a \$3mil annual budget with debt due to be paid off in the next two years. Huisingsh happily reported that after 8 years of running at a loss, it is in its third year of growth. The tax payer support has been reduced from 80% to 54% with support gained from outside funding and other partnerships. Over 60,000 lessons were taught last year. Huisingsh stated that he receives calls nationwide asking how the pool operates providing two weeks of swimming lessons for all school districts; 250,000 visitors with every lane in every pool full from the hours of 3:00 to 8:00pm every day. The Pool Authority continues to look at ways to grow while offering lesson, competitive swim and partnerships with a number of organizations. A current initiative underway is from the standpoint of water safety outside of the pools. The Pool Authority is partnering with local the Coast Guard, Holland Police and Fire and local EMT on a video entitled Red Flag Red Tide. The video demonstrates the danger involved when swimming in unsafe waters. The video will be on U Tube and other media. In closing, the Authority will begin to strategize for 2019 and next steps to accommodate large events and community attendance at this great facility. Currently, over 30% of the visitors are from outside of the Holland Public School District. Huisingsh invited residents to visit the pool and share their ideas with him.

f. Zoning Board of Appeals – David Weishaar

David Weishaar reported one that the Board had three meetings this year with just four items; one of which was denied and three that are still in process. There are not a lot of requests for variances, which is good as it gives credit to the rules we have in place but also allow for progress in the township.

g. Planning Commission – Linda Howell

Linda Howell provided the update for Bob Slikkers stating that the Planning Commission meets on the first Wednesday of each month to deal primarily with new or add-on constructions. There were 8 special use requests; 3 site plan reviews; 5 recommendations for rezoning requests; 2 P.U.D. amendments; 1 P.U.D. pending now that is on 147th Avenue and 62nd Streets. There has been a trend in residential housing and small to mid-sized condominium associations. The Commission is also working on updating the Master Plan. All residents within 300 feet of a development are issued a notice for public hearing when one is necessary and the Commissioners take resident comments into consideration.

h. Parks Commission – Michelle Sall

Chairperson Michelle Sall thanked the township staff for their support and recognized Parks Commission members who were present. Sall reported that it has been a busy year. A resident survey was conducted and identified the top three parks for attendance are Laketown Beach, Sanctuary Woods and Wolters Woods. Residents would like to have a fenced dog park, more beach access and more parking at the current beach. The survey results will be used for the 5-year park plan. Other accomplishments this year were paving areas of the Township Hall Recreation Park; programming with ODC; improvements at Shore Acres Park; Holland Christian High School Seniors volunteered in the parks for their service project; United Way Day of Volunteering provided 50 volunteers working in a number of the parks; blueberry expert Brad Moore worked to improve the blueberry field at Huyser Farm; controlled deer hunt during bow season at Huyser Farm; continued success with sand removal from the beach stairs; promotion of the Adopt-A-Park program and an updated pathways map depicting all township parks and areas of interest. The trifold map will be included in the next newsletter.

i. Felt Mansion Project Manager – Pat Meyer

Pat Meyer reported there were many events and opportunities for spring and summer tours in May; summer concerts; fall darkness tours for Halloween and Christmas events all of which were very well attended. One major accomplishment to note in 2016 was the mansion being selected by the Michigan Cares for Tourism organization which brought 200 volunteers with materials to the mansion for one day to work on a major project. The project focused on the Shore Acres buildings, Carriage House, pump house restoration and a new trail. It was a gift of approximately \$70,000. There are so many things happening at the estate and Meyer invited residents to come out for a visit.

j. Graafschap Fire Department – Doug Den Bleyker

Chief Den Bleyker reported there were 466 calls for service in 2016, a 2.87% increase over 2015, a trend over the last seven years. There were 314 calls in Laketown; 84 calls in Fillmore and 53 calls where we assisted neighboring departments. There were 67 responses to traffic accidents, which was a 34.3% increase over 2015, with the leading cause of distracted driving. Fire losses for 2016 were \$313,000. There is one person going through Fire Academy and potentially adding a full-time person to support the increased demands from the State and Federal. The chassis for the new engine is nearly complete and it will then have the remaining body and components added with delivery expected in late spring, early summer. Lighting at the station was changed to more cost efficient LED. The last payment on the fire station will be made this coming fiscal year.

ARTICLE VI. DE MULL AWARD PRESENTATION

Terry Hofmeyer explained that the volunteers in the township really make things happen. The De

Mull Award is presented to an outstanding volunteer each year to recognize efforts made above and beyond the call of duty. This year that award will be given to Bob Cook who served the township for 26 years in various board roles. Unfortunately, Bob Cook was not available to accept the award in person.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Bill Gilmore of 6421 Sand Castle Drive spoke in support of bringing fiber optic to the township and was pleased to hear that some progress being made, also pleased to hear that Mary Whiteford is sympathetic to the cause. Gilmore expressed frustration that this has been discussed for a very long time but at this point there is no solution and asked how much is in the 2017 budget to promote it. Hofmeyer said the one thing that drives most of us is Internet service whether it is a business need or for school work. The township is working hard with Charter but one thing being wrestled with is that not everyone is in support of it. We need help in state statute language and the state representative is working on it. As for money in the 2017 budget, there is some for research purposes but not to build an infrastructure for it.

Phil Bohlander of 4625 Forest Lane objected to the fiber optic because it is based on taxes and wants to know how it will be structured when new people come into the system.

Matthew Gebben of 3963 64th Street addressed the state senator asking that revenue surplus be spent on road infrastructure.

Udelis Kuipers 6104 142nd Avenue commented on giving awards to former township representatives such as John Kruid, Sam Greydanus and Al Achterhof.

Dick Becker of 2382 Valley Drive stated the township has a lot of work to do before trying to put the fiber optic project back on the ballot. Last time it was done prematurely without enough facts on the real costs and costs of the tax bond in mils versus real dollars. It was confusing and a lot of smoke and mirrors. The board has to stay on top of the state legislation to the S.A.D. added. The Internet and technology are changing daily with providers such as A T & T coming out with a new system they are trying in rural areas. Some providers are experimenting with units on trees or existing power poles. Maybe Charter and Comcast should run cable to the underserved areas that way those who already have it do not get hit twice. \$58,000 of real money has already been spent on the issue with no resolution. The township does not need to be in the Internet business.

John Fulenwider of 4764 Wildwood Road read a letter and submitted a copy to the board. He asked that the board prepare a document outlining their duties and that a job description be made available to the public for the Township Manager position. He does not feel the township should be seeking new ventures and should let the cable companies handle the Internet so they have more skin in the game. He also feels the board should put this project on hold until the City of Holland completes their plan for fiber optics.

Marilyn Passmore, government affairs representative for Charter stated that several meetings have been held with the township and a formal proposal has been submitted to extend services to the underserved areas of the township.

Hofmeyer said there is a promising future to work with Charter, but unfortunately not workable if we are going to parcel that piece off we need to levy a special assessment. The cost is \$2.8mil of which Charter is willing to pick up 20% of it. It must be declared a necessary utility by the state. Passmore responded that the Charter attorneys do not feel a special assessment is needed. Meshkin commented on the April 30 date for the Charter response and Passmore responded that the date could be extended.

Andy Squires of 6570 145th Avenue encouraged the board to pursue the broad band as a necessary component of the infrastructure.

David Johnson 4208 66th Street stated that he is new to the area with four children in school that

need the Internet. He and his wife work from home and cannot function without it. Having moved from the east side of the state, he did not know it would be an issue. The options present today are not adequate and it is a basic necessity. He would be willing to pay more in taxes to have something sustainable, let's get into the 21st century.

Tom Hoekman of 4174 62nd Street spoke in opposition of the township putting in fiber optics. He stated that he has two children in middle school and they use a hot spot from the cell phone that works fine. There are areas of the township without gas, electric and paved roads, why should this be different.

Patty Meyer amended her report on the Felt Mansion to recognize the Friends of the Felt Board, Ken Freestone, Lucia Rios and others and expressed gratitude for all of the staff. There were 60 different events held at the mansion last year which takes a lot of coordination and could not be done without staff. Meyer also spoke in support of fiber optic stating she is unable to do webinars at the mansion due to the lack of strong Internet connection.

Tom Hoekman asked if the township is also talking to Comcast regarding the Internet and Hofmeyer responded that there has been no formal communication with Comcast.

John Fulenwider asked about the solar array at the Felt Mansion. Meshkin explained that a lease purchase agreement was used to obtain it and it is now generating enough energy that can be sold back to Consumers. He estimates a net profit of almost \$6,000 annually after energy expenses are paid to support the Felt Estate. The life span of the unit is 25-40 years and zero dollars were invested to start the project.

Hofmeyer said we can do partnerships with other people for the Internet but no one has been mentioned directly. Any state or federal monies that might be available for the Internet and that is still a maybe, Mary Whiteford is looking into that. The City of Holland BPW project is being piloted in four buildings and being expanded. If all goes well we may consider looking into their system and understand if they are willing to bring it out into the townships. At this point, it appears that it will not be offered outside of their service district. There are still many questions and we are not rushing into anything.

ARTICLE VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor Hofmeyer adjourned the meeting at 8:23pm.