

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

May 11, 2016

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, Linda Howell,
Ed Stielstra, Gary Dewey

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Doug Den Bleyker – 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 April 13, 2016 meeting. **A motion was made by Dewey and seconded by Stielstra 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 April 2016. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Van Huis and seconded by Dewey 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 – No report.

B. COUNTY COMMISSIONER KAPENGA – KAPENGA

Commissioner Kapenga reported on the central dispatch radio project giving credit to Fire Chief Den Bleyker for uniting all area fire chiefs to support the project which is unprecedented. On May 23 there will be an update meeting and Meshkin will attend. Also, the Equalization Director Blaine Mc Leod gave his final report for 2016 values reflecting a 3.6% increase overall when compared to 2015. The project is over \$5 billion for the county and Laketown Township has the highest equalized values in the county. Kapenga shared a flyer showing the symbol for the Community Action initiatives creating awareness this month for the good work they do to help the underserved, those in poverty, transportation, Head Start, financial literacy, job and life skill classes and mentors.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION – LINDA HOWELL

Howell reported that the Planning Commission met on May 4, 2016 and began discussions regarding review of the Master Plan which will be an ongoing project for several months.

D. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – No report.

E. PARKS COMMISSION – No report.

F. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD – CHIEF DEN BLEYKER

Chief Den Bleyker reported the response calls for the month of April were as follows: 39 calls total, 30 calls from Laketown, consisting of 26 rescue and 4 fire, 6 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 4 rescue calls and 2 fire calls. There were 3 assists to the Holland Department consisting of 1 fire call and 2 rescue calls. Chief Den Bleyker announced the Annual Awards Banquet is scheduled for June 9 at 6:30pm and asked that the Board members respond to their invitation to allow for an accurate headcount for the event.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Tadd De Graaf of Lighthouse Realty expressed concern regarding a pending sale of a home on 136th Avenue, south of Otis Road wherein the seller worked to meet the needs of a potential buyer who happens to be a veteran using the option of a VA loan for financing. The property is within the district for municipal water and sewer but also within the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority which does not currently have a service agreement with Laketown Township. Without the service agreement in place the sale cannot proceed and the veteran will be homeless within the next week. De Graaf is asking that the Township Board settle whatever is needed to move forward with a service agreement as soon as possible. Meshkin said negotiations with KLSWA have been completed and the board has reviewed an operations contract before them and will discuss it for a vote tonight.

ARTICLE VIII. OLD BUSINESS – None

ARTICLE IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2016 ROAD RESURFACING BIDS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed communication from Allegan County Road Commission for bids to resurface several roads in the Township, those being, 61st Street south of 144th Avenue to 147th Avenue; Forest Lane; Castle Avenue; Castle Court; Kingsway Court and Pine Drive. The recommended low bid received from Michigan Paving & Materials is \$323,564.00. **A motion was made by Dewey and seconded by Stielstra to approve the 2016 Road Resurfacing bid from Michigan Paving & Materials. Howell and Meshkin explained that the roads are selected based on a rating system. Meshkin added that the bids came in \$20,000 lower than estimated. Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion to approve UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

B. KLSWA SEWER SYSTEM OPERATIONS CONTRACT

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the KLSWA Sewer System Operations Contract. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Howell and seconded by Van Huis to approve the KLSWA Sewer System Operations Contract.** Meshkin stated that the negotiations were underway for more than 18 months. **Supervisor Hofmeyer asked for a vote on the motion approving the KLSWA Sewer System Operations Contract. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED.**

ARTICLE X. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Tom Crum of 6295 144th Avenue on expressed concern regarding the \$18,000 that was spent on the Fiber Optic Project asking where that money was coming from and why did that happen 3 weeks before it there was a vote for the project. Hofmeyer responded that the monies come out of the General Fund. Crum asked that all board members resign.

Tadd De Graaf asked that Meshkin forward a copy of the approved service agreement to KLSWA as soon as possible in order to expedite the sales agreement for his seller and buyer. Meshkin responded that the attorneys involved are already aware and will be prepared to take necessary action.

Mitra Delaney of 6298 144th Avenue expressed concern about the number of trees marked with an X that Consumers Energy is planning to remove. She and neighbors in the area are not in agreement that all of the trees should be removed, maybe trimmed but not removed. The supervisor in charge of the project is willing to have further discussion and she asked for support from the township.

Matthew Gebben of Laketown asked if there are other options to move forward with the fiber optic since the millage was not passed. He noted that there is a federal grant program, Community Connect suggesting it be an option for the project. A number of people are very interested in the project but there is also concern regarding the cost.

Bob Genetski introduced himself and congratulated the township on having the on highest equalized value in the county. Genetski announced that he is running for Allegan County Clerk, a seat that will be open for the first time in 28 years due to the pending retirement of the current clerk. He offers hard work and experience with a vision for the county that includes more outreach. He sees opportunities for improvement including educating the public on the duties of the clerk and register of deeds. He would like to make improvements that would include more on-line options such as the ability to print deeds and other legal documents from the website to avoid having to make a trip to the county office. He would also like to review the 596 different statutes that currently exist to remove or amend those that are antiquated and no longer apply. Genetski would be a voice for this side of the county.

Abigail Noble introduced herself as a candidate running for the State House of Representatives. She is a third generation Allegan County resident, has had a lifetime career as a nurse, supports decision-making for patients and clinicians and not healthcare bureaucrats. She supports right to life and is a member of the NRA. More information can be found on her website: www.abbyforallegan.com

Marilyn Passmore, State Director for Charter in Michigan reviewed statistics regarding service areas and internet capabilities in the township noting that broadband upgrades continue to be made across the entire state offering expanded to service. She stated that Charter access runs past 72% of the homes in the township but not all choose to connect. Some areas not served are those that are more rural and larger lots with longer driveway are more of a challenge. Charter is interested in having a conversation with Laketown to discuss a potential partnership including the launch of a low cost option based on income.

Ryan Bosscher of 967 Laketown Drive asked questions of expenditures to pursue the fiber optic again. Hofmeyer acknowledged that he received a copy of Bosscher's letter with questions that are premature at this point. Bosscher noted the 1% contingency and Meshkin agreed it is lower than normal but there are contingencies in other categories of the proposal and felt they didn't need more. Bosscher asked if the project would be competitively bid and Meshkin responded that it could be but the current proposal is at fair market value. Bosscher asked why the total is different than the project from the bond cost and Meshkin advised it is due to the issuance cost for the bond council. Bosscher asked for a report regarding the preliminary work done for the \$6,000 expenditure and Meshkin agreed to email it to Bosscher. Bosscher asked what would happen if the project exceeded the proposed \$8.8 million and Meshkin responded that if necessary, adjustments would be made to the project. Bosscher noted that the budget and bond proposal did not seem to have the insurance or interest. Meshkin said the payment schedule includes interest; the \$8.6 million principal using the 15-16 year timeframe at an interest rate of 4.75% with a growth rate of 3% in the township to equate the levied mils proposed, however, the interest rate could certainly change. Bosscher stated that it

was mentioned that the project could require an additional township employee and where what would the cost be to fund the position and how would it be funded. Meshkin stated that he was only responding to a question and no further discussion has occurred but noted that activity in the township has increased similar to the level of the 1990's. Bosscher asked why a millage was proposed and not a flat fee assessment. Meshkin likened the project to that of the road funding, basic municipal services subject to the same infrastructure funding spread across the taxable value of property. The Fiber to the Home Council has documented research to prove that fiber run past a home adds 3.1% to the value, thus a property tax is a very fair way of funding this infrastructure improvement.

John Hoover of 2291 Crescent Walk stated the fiber project would cost him \$350 x 15 years and he is already serviced by Charter. For many of us it is an additional tax that we do not need.

Crum stated that looking back on this Internet thing, you were out in front of everybody how come we weren't in on it until it reaches the paper. Meshkin said there is misinformation in the paper.

Delaney said it would be great if we were better informed.

Dick Bekker of 2382 Valley stated that he is proud to be a "no supporter" and questioned why the board would consider looking further into it if the voters turned it down. Hofmeyer responded that it was voted down by 110 votes and since the election we have had a number of people expressing a need for high speed Internet in the township. Hofmeyer stated that his personal goal would be to provide the option of service to every parcel in the township. If there is a group of interested citizens to work on it, we could be supportive of that as it is just as important as good roads and fire service, particularly in the age of technology in education. Bekker responded that in 16 years the technology could change again.

Rebecca Bruns stated that she was President of the Fiber Optic Yes Committee and in 2005 when she moved to 66th Street near 140th she knew there was bad phone service but had been promised many times by Charter and Comcast that access to the Internet would be coming soon. She compared it to having a super highway or a dirt road. People and families in the township need the Internet. Parents are parking in the Burger King parking lot for hours so their children can have access to do homework and families live apart due to the inability to work remotely in the township. It is not fair and is a community problem. She welcomes the opportunity to further discuss the hardship this continues to create for those who do not have access and will continue to support work toward a solution.

Delaney said one of the board members said if after it went through many people would need IT support to help them. Bruns said that is a very good question. Our committee was not part of the township board initiatives. We were volunteers that put the signs up as the township board cannot do that, it was volunteers and invited anyone who wants to be part of the committee to see her after the meeting.

Marilyn Passmore of Charter asked for input from anyone currently having issues with their service. She reiterated that Charter is willing to work with the township to provide Internet access at an affordable solution.

Crum asked Bruns if she was in on the financial part of the project and Bruns responded that she is a volunteer on the citizens' committee and not working for the township.

Barb Kuiper of 62nd Street stated that when they built a new home in the township they had no idea they would not have Internet access. While she appreciates what those who object have brought to the table, this is something that is necessary for the young families and those wanting to work from home in the township.

John Anderson of 2422 Maksaba Trail, also in objection to the project stated that they have terrible cellular service in the dunes and there has been no offer to put up a tower to improve it. Anderson also referred to the on-going water issue stating it was determined to be a health issue but no one is willing to support paying for that.

Gebben stated that everyone is paying for services that everyone else is using which is a civic duty.

ARTICLE XI. ADJOURN

**A motion was made by Van Huis and seconded by Stielstra to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 P.M.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTON APPROVED**

Wendy Van Huis, Township Clerk

Diane Ybarra, Recording Secretary