

Approved November 20, 2019
WATERSMEET TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2019
6:30PM
COMMUNITY CENTER
www.watersmeet.us

The October 2019 meeting of the Watersmeet Township Board of Trustees was called to order by Supervisor Rogers at 6:30pm.

Members Present: Mike Rogers, Paul Kemppainen, Bill Neumann, Alan Piel.

Members Absent: Sandy Mansfield

Others in attendance: 18

A motion was made by Bill Neumann with support by Alan Piel to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 21st and the Special Meeting on October 11th. Motion carried.

Appearances: Kathy Jo Koval and Lisa Hewitt, Gogebic County Equalization Director and Gogebic County Treasurer discussed the ambulance millage. It will appear on winter tax bills this December as 1 mil for Gogebic County ambulance service. It is expected \$523K will be generated by the millage. The County Ambulance Committee is looking at contracting with several local providers, as a single provider is not able to service the entire County. The County currently contracts with Beacon Ambulance Service and has begun subsidizing the existing contract between Watersmeet Township and Aspirus Iron River. The floor was opened to questions and general discussion ensued. Commenters noted that approximately \$167K of the revenue generated by the millage will come from Watersmeet Township, significantly more than the cost of the current contract with Aspirus. The Township currently pays the wages for the EMTs and First Responders plus the cost of medical supplies and vehicle gas, oil and maintenance, which averages about \$25K/year. That won't change with the millage. It was questioned whether the increased cost will result in better service. Additional topics included ambulance response times, siting and staffing an ambulance in Watersmeet, funding construction of a garage to house an ambulance in Watersmeet, need for locally based training, contracting with and facilitating licensing for the Land O' Lakes ambulance service, need to control future costs, management of residual funds, and the County's plan for auditing the records of current and future providers.

Ms. Koval and Ms. Hewitt indicated all concerns would be relayed to the County Ambulance Committee, which was already working to address many of them. They also noted other counties facing the same challenges for providing ambulance services were levying millage rates of 1.6 – 2.1 mils; the 1 mil levied by Gogebic is below the average. The County Ambulance Committee typically meets on the last Thursday of the month and minutes are posted on the Gogebic County website.

Public Comments:

Pat Walsh noted that the cost of the new truck box did not appear on the Bills Details for this month. Supervisor Rogers indicated the cost was \$8K. Pat then questioned whether that was bid out and Mike responded it was purchased from the original vendor.

Dino Giannola commented on the gravel pit the County Road Commission is proposing to construct on Old US2 East, across from his Trout Hatchery. He feels Township officials have not shown enough interest in the proposed project and should be very concerned about impacts to local businesses and residents, including safety issues associated with current speed limits, dust and noise issues, and impacts to local water supplies. Julie Mathiesen noted the gravel pit is subject to Special Use Permitting requirements through the Planning Commission per the Township Zoning Ordinance. Mike indicated that County lawyers were looking into whether the County is subject to local zoning.

Yvonne Clarke had two comments. First, she noted the Township recently passed a resolution to work with Michigan DNR in establishing No Wake Zones on portions of the Cisco Chain and suggested a similar approach to addressing concerns about the gravel pit. Second, she wanted to thank the Board for use of the Community Center to host the Art Uncorked open house. She indicated the event was a huge success, with 17 local artists participating, including several members in the audience, and well attended. Other events are being planned.

Karrie Whictman, General Counsel for the LVD Tribe, commented on the letter from Watersmeet Township opposing the application to move tribal property into Trust Lands, specifically the Ratcliffe Subdivision. She indicated the Tribe was disappointed by the rejection, noting the Township's letter was received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on the same day as their application. They had been hoping to discuss the request and work with the Township to reach an agreement rather than fighting about the request. Ms. Whictman further indicated the Tribe plans to submit additional applications to the BIA to move the approximate 700 acres they currently own in Watersmeet Township into Trust Lands. Supervisor Rogers questioned whether any of the statements in the Township letter were untrue. Ms. Whictman responded the bases for the rejection were not valid. For example, fee-owned lands do not need to be contiguous to Trust Lands in order to be moved into the Trust. Additionally, per BIA regulations, any monies owed stemming from fee-ownership of property (such as unpaid water/sewer bills) were required to be paid prior to the movement of property into Trust Lands. She closed by again emphasizing the desire to work with the Township.

Paul Blettner commented on the current police situation, stating the LVD Tribal Police Department has been in place for 40 years, with 13 officers employed 24/7 to provide coverage for the entire Township. The creation of the Township Police Department means less coverage for the Township, as tribal officers are not allowed to work off the reservation. He referenced several incidents where Paul Runcie was not available to respond, LVD was not allowed to respond, and it took Michigan State Police 40 minutes to reach the incident site. He closed by stating the situation needed to be improved.

Agenda changes/approval: A motion to accept the agenda by Bill Neumann and supported by Alan Piel. Motion carried.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Bids for awning over rear door of Community Center - Sandy Mansfield had previously noted the need for said awning, due to runoff from the roof. A motion to purchase an awning was offered by Alan Piel and supported by Bill Neumann. Motion carried.
2. Approve new ZBA member - Supervisor Rogers explained that with her appointment to replace Sandy as Township Clerk, effective January 1, 2020, Julie Mathiesen would need to step down from the ZBA. Alternate ZBA member Cheryl Pytlarz has agreed to become a regular ZBA

member, leaving the alternate position vacant. Greg Clarke has agreed to serve as an alternate to the ZBA. Motion offered by Bill Neumann to approve, supported by Paul Kemppainen. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills: A motion was offered by Alan Piel with support by Paul Kemppainen to accept the bills as presented for payment. General Fund checks 39199 through 39223, Wastewater Fund check 4190, and Water Fund checks 3383 through 3385.

Reports:

Supervisor Report: Supervisor Rogers stated he had contacted Michigan DNR personnel regarding the resolution to develop an ordinance for No Wake Zones on the Cisco Chain of Lakes. DNR indicated they would need copies of Township minutes adopting the resolution and any other records in support of it. It was further indicated DNR would need to hold public hearings during the process of developing an ordinance, and possibly conduct some studies related to boat traffic in order to support the ordinance.

Treasurer Report: All funds are where they should be at this time of year and all accounts are balanced.

Clerk: There was no correspondence

Other: Bill Neumann questioned the status of the Draft Ordinance to regulate unattended fires and/or fires during fire ban times. It is still under review by the Township Attorney. He also asked about the status of the sewer work being performed by Coleman Engineering. It has not yet been completed. Finally, it was noted this is the time of year for people to remove items from the cemetery. No formal notice will be posted; it is expected that residents will be responsible enough without the reminder.

Fire Department: Jim Pittsley reported the fire department has made 30 runs between August 21st and October 16th, including 5 vehicle accidents and 3 fire calls. Year-to-date runs total 130, with the majority being medical calls, although he didn't have exact numbers. It was suggested the fire department start tracking the number of medical calls, if possible, as it would be useful information for the County Ambulance Committee.

Police Department: Captain Runcie reported for the months August and September, as there was no Board meeting in September. For the Month of August 2019:

Combined hours worked – 259. Runcie - 235. Leuzzo – 24

Patrol Miles: Total – 3097. Runcie – 2248, Leuzzo – 849

Felony complaints: 2

Misdemeanor Complains: 0

Non-Criminal Complaints: 0

Citations issued: 28

Other Agency Assists: 0

Felony Arrests: 0

Misdemeanor Arrests: 1

Tribal PD Assists: 0

Calls for Service: 13

For the month of September:

Combined hours worked – 259. Runcie – 182.25. Leuzzo – 26

Patrol Miles: Total – 2483. Runcie – 2253, Leuzzo – 230

Felony complaints: 3
Misdemeanor Complains: 5
Non-Criminal Complaints: 0
Citations issued: 12
Other Agency Assists: 0
Traffic Stops: 20
Arrests: 1 (Not broken down by felony/misdemeanor, or charge)
Tribal PD Assists: 0
Calls for Service: 4

Following Captain Runcie's report, Arny Domanus asked to comment, noting that Captain Runcie had attended a meeting of the Long Lake Association during which he gave a detailed and informative presentation about the Township Police Department.

As there was no further business, Bill Neumann motioned to adjourn, supported by Alan Piel. Seconding. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Mathiesen, Deputy Clerk
Watersmeet Township