

Approved 12/16/20

WATERSMEET TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2020
6:30 PM
Community Center
www.watersmeet.us

The November 2020 meeting of the Watersmeet Township Board of Trustees was called to order by Supervisor Rogers at 6:30 pm.

Attendance roll call: Mike Rogers, yes – Paul Kemppainen, yes – Julie Mathiesen, yes – Alan Piel, yes (virtual attendance in Watersmeet Township, Gogebic County, State of Michigan).

Absent: Bill Neumann.

Also in attendance were Jim Pittsley, Fire Chief, Peter Lievense, Greg and Yvonne Clark (attending virtually) and David and Carol Mason-Sherrill (attending virtually). Zoe Coleman was present serving as the virtual meeting moderator.

Paul Kemppainen made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular meeting of October 21, 2020 meeting as presented with a second by Julie Mathiesen. Motion carried with a roll call vote. Mike, yes – Paul, yes – Julie, yes – Alan, yes.

Public Comments: Yvonne Clark asked the board to consider posting the agenda for the monthly meetings at least a week in advance. She also asked the board to consider getting cameras and smart TV if virtual meetings are to continue, in order to allow both the Board and the public to see each other, which would allow for more effective participation.

Carol Mason Sherrill – Paul read Carol’s letter into the minutes regarding the importance of women’s roll in government. She stated that she hoped women would be considered for positions on the upcoming appointments to the Planning Commission.

Appearances: None

With the additions of two items under new business, Paul Kemppainen motioned to accept the agenda, with a second by Julie Mathiesen. Roll call vote, Mike, yes – Julie, yes – Alan, yes – Paul, yes. Motion carried.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Non-collectable water/sewer bill - After some discussion on the resolution to remove the utility bill, #0226, as a non-collectable bill, a motion was made by Alan, with support from Paul, to accept this resolution. Roll call vote: Mile, yes- Alan, yes- Julie, yes – Paul, yes. Motion approved.

2. Board of Review (BOR) Meeting - Mike motioned, with a second by Paul, to set the BOR meeting date for Monday, December 14, 2020 at 9:00am. Roll call vote: Mike, yes – Paul, yes – Julie, yes – Alan, yes. Motion carried.

3. MERS Defined Contribution Addendum agreement - The Township currently participates in the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS). Clerk Mathiesen explained eligible participants are the union employees, the police chief and certain elected officials (Supervisor, Treasurer and Clerk). MERS is requesting the Township complete a Defined Contribution Addendum agreement, which lists the criteria for eligible participants from the Township. The agreement needs to be completed and submitted to MERS by the Supervisor, along with meeting minutes documenting the Board's approval of the information in the agreement.

Supervisor Rogers went through the agreement, with the Board verifying the agreement as completed describes the Township's current plan. A motion by Julie, to approve the MERS adoption agreement, as discussed, following verification that mandatory contributions need not be part of the plan. The motion was seconded by Alan Piel. Roll call vote: Alan, yes – Mike, yes – Julie, yes – Paul, yes. Motion carried.

4. The board approved a \$50.00/meeting stipend for Zoe Coleman, who has been moderating virtual meetings for the Township. This will be retroactive back to the first virtual meeting. A "thank- you" for the outstanding job that she has been doing was expressed by all. Roll call vote: Mike, yes – Julie, yes – Paul, Yes – Alan, yes. Motion carried.

5. Clerk Mathiesen petitioned the board to consider advertising 2 to 3 part-time clerical/secretary positions, creating a clerical pool from which to draw for days when the Township Secretary is out of the office. The positions would also provide administrative support to the Township Police Chief, as needed. After discussion, the board agreed to advertise for 2 to 3 positions with the compensation being \$15.50 an hour. The motion was made by Paul, with a second by Julie. Roll call vote: Paul, yes, - Mike, yes – Julie, yes – Alan, yes. Motion approved.

Approval of Bills: A motion by Paul, with a second by Julie, to approve the bills as presented. General Fund check numbers 40184 to 40202, Wastewater Fund check nos. 4273 & 4274, and Water Fund check nos. 3452 to 3456. Roll call vote: Mike, yes – Julie, yes – Paul, yes – Alan, yes. Motion carried.

Reports:

Supervisor Report:

Supervisor Rogers reported that Jim Pittsley has gotten prices on new fire trucks, and requested that he check into prices and report back on used trucks. He also reported that the Governor has approved the transfer of the Fish Hatchery property and it is just a matter now of completion of the paperwork.

Treasurer Report:

Treasurer Kemppainen reported to the board that approximately 90% of the summer taxes has been paid. The township is currently in good financial shape. There may be a need in the future to make an increase in the waste water fund.

Paul also made a public thank you to Bill Neumann for the long time of service he has made to the township in many areas. He suggested the board order a plaque to commemorate his service, which was approved. Supervisor Rogers stated that Bill will continue to be of service as the cemetery sexton.

Clerk's Report:

Clerk Mathiesen reported that the 2020 election went very smoothly with a record turnout of 892 voters. She thanked the election workers for the outstanding job that was done. She also thanked Jill Mansfield for the daily assistance in fielding questions from voters and sorting returned absentee ballots.

Clerk Mathiesen expressed concerns that emails originating from hers and other Township offices frequently land in Spam email accounts. In talking with Eric Ritter from the Computer Doctors, she said a likely cause was security certificates for the watersmeet.us domain were not being kept current. She requested the Computer Doctors provide additional information regarding possible solutions and hopes to have information for the December Board meeting.

Other:

Fire Chief Jim Pittsley reported that calls have been down this month. He again discussed the prices for replacing Engine 11, noting there was a huge price difference between new and used rigs and used rigs in good shape sold very quickly. Supervisor Rogers requesting a price and inspection by April 1st. Jim also requested the road commission be contacted on the lack of maintenance and sanding on the Thousand Island Lake Road. It has been hazardous for department vehicles to travel on, hampering response times.

Covid guidelines for the office were discussed in lieu of the current increase in cases in Michigan. It was agreed that Jill will be in the office daily to receive water/sewer payments and maintain the front desk. All other meetings with town officers will be done by appointment only. Temperatures will be taken, masks required, and hand sanitizer will be used until further notice.

Correspondence: Supervisor Rogers read a letter from the former Marenisco Township supervisor, Richard Bouvette, thanking the township for their contribution towards the efforts in saving the correctional facility in Marenisco. He stated that, though it was a lost effort the effort to help a neighboring township was greatly appreciated.

At 7:40pm a motion was made by Paul, with a second by Alan that the township meeting be adjourned. Motion approved by roll call vote: Paul, yes – Mike, yes – Alan, yes – Julie, yes. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Mathiesen, Clerk