

Negaunee Township Board Meeting – October 20, 2011

Call to Order

William Carlson, Township Supervisor, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Other Board members present included John Ennett, Carl Nurmi, Rachel Sertich & Duane Soine

Absent: None

Agenda

Board members reviewed the revised agenda. Upon motion of Duane Soine, seconded by Carl Nurmi, the agenda as presented was approved. Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes

Board members reviewed draft minutes for the Regular Board Meeting held on September 7, 2011. Upon motion of Carl Nurmi, seconded by John Ennett, the minutes as presented were approved. Motion Carried.

Public Comment

None

Reports

Community Center Board Duane Soine and Dave Rice provided an update for the Community Center Board meeting held on October 6, 2011. The minutes for the Special Community Center Board meeting held on September 28, 2011 had not yet been received. Items highlighted for 10/6/11 included: 1) work had been to done to prepare the grounds and fields for winter, 2) an appraisal would be forthcoming for the property to be acquired if the MDNR grant was approved, and 3) Enright Construction will be doing the work to replace the septic tank.

Fire Department Report A written Fire Department report dated October 20, 2011 was provided by Fire Chief, Jeff Kontio. Jim Elenbaas also assisted with the report. Items highlighted included: 1) 12 runs for the month of September and 92 runs through 9/30/11, 2) training consisted of touring the Shunk Furniture store, and 3) the annual Spaghetti Dinner will be held on October 22, 2011 beginning at 4 p.m. at the Negaunee Elks.

Water Report A written Water Report dated October, 2011 from the Water Department Supervisor, Mike Adams, was reviewed. The report noted: 1) updated proposed costs for residential water installations, 2) hydrant flushing / pumping was in process, and 3) training for the new remote water meter reader will take place on October 27th with the new meters to start being installed eventually on Pine Run.

Residential Water Installation Fee Board members discussed the need to increase the residential water installation fee in order to cover the costs incurred by the Water Department. Upon motion of Carl Nurmi, seconded by Duane Soine, approval was given to increase the residential water installation fee to \$2,750 effective immediately. However, the motion was rescinded and tabled until November, 2011 when it was determined additional fee information was necessary.

Clerk Report(Bills, Claims)

Water fund checks #6339 through #6349 totaling \$8,557.97 were reviewed. Upon motion of Carl Nurmi, seconded by Duane Soine, the Water fund checks as presented were approved. Motion Carried.

General Fund checks #20182 through #20284 (total \$102,489.65) and ACH items from August 1 through September 30th (total \$15,196.48) with a grand total of \$117,686.13 were reviewed. Upon motion of Carl Nurmi, seconded by Duane Soine, the General fund items presented were approved. Motion Carried.

Planning Report Al Reynolds, Planning Chairperson, provided an update for the Planning Commission meeting held on October 11, 2011. Items highlighted included: 1) the Zoning Administrator had attended an MDOT meeting and it was recommended the Township look for public support and input for the proposed Co. Rd. 510 extension, 2) MDOT will be posting “No Parking” signs in those locations where vehicles for sale are parked near the highway, and 3) due to the large number of zoning variances being requested due to the size of buildings, and ZBA had requested the Planning Commission review this section of the Zoning Ordinance.

Co. Rd. 510 Extension Board members discussed the need for the Township to be proactive with the potential extension of Co. Rd. 510 to US 41. Upon motion of John Ennett, seconded by Rachel Sertich, the Planning Commission was authorized to work with the Marquette County Road Commission on the proposed Co. Rd. 510 extension. Motion Carried.

Assessor's Report Kelly Laakso's written monthly Assessor's report for September 2011 was reviewed. Items highlighted included: 1) New Tribunal Appeal, 2) New Construction, and 3) Uncappings and Miscellaneous Problems.

Treasurer's Report John Ennett, Township Treasurer, provided an update on his Department.

Part-Time Treasurer's Assistant In a letter to the Board dated October 5, 2011, requested two options again be reviewed for additional staffing in the Treasurer's office including Plan A – Hire a part-time assistant, or Plan B – Utilize the assistance of the Water Clerk. A lengthy discussion was held regarding water Board Members felt were the pros and cons of each plan. Duane Soine made a motion a part-time assistant be hired for the Treasurer's Department, but the motion died for lack of support.

Continued discussion was held about using the Water Clerk to assist the Treasurer's office for a one tax period trial period. Upon motion of Carl Nurmi, seconded by Rachel Sertich, approval was given for the Water Clerk to assist the Treasurer's office with tax work for a trial period ending March 1, 2012, with the Water Clerk to diligently track the hours spent assisting the Treasurer's Department. Motion Carried *with John Ennett casting a negative vote.*

Enright Taxes It was noted Enright has made arrangements to catch up on taxes via a monthly payment plan thru April, 2012.

Hardwood Road / Grimes Road Special Assessment Payoff Board members were informed the Hardwood Road and Grimes Road Special Assessments had been paid in full. With a \$4,500 credit balance, the Treasurer's area was working on a formula to divide up the monies to be paid back to property owners.

State of Michigan – Personal Property Taxes The Treasurer informed Board members the State of Michigan is working to possibly eliminate Personal Property Taxes. If this would occur, the Township would lose approximately \$35,000 from the budget on an annual basis.

Supervisor's Report William Carlson, Township Supervisor, provided an update on Township activities since the last Board meeting. He noted he had 1) discussions regarding the need to fence the old landfill, which could cost the Township approximately \$10,000, 2) worked on plans for both Jarvi Road and the CR 595 project, 3) prepared a letter to the Marquette County Board about costs to litigate the Miller-Bradford tax issue, 4) dealt with residents on local zoning issues on Co.Rd. 510, 5) attending various MCTA and Township Supervisor meetings, 6) reviewed the 3/31/11 Negaunee Township audit report, and 7) been compiling material to provide to CUPPAD regarding construction projects.

Brownfield Authority Joe Scanlan, Brownfield Director, indicated he was trying to come up with the mechanics to develop a revolving loan fund for the Brownfield Authority. He was waiting to receive input from both the Township auditor and the Township attorney.

Wellhead Protection Committee No update.

Advisory Trial Committee Al Reynolds provided updates to the Board. He noted damage incurred due to the recent storm, including downed trees, had been fixed. The group was also working to replace a bridge which had burned with a temporary, portable bridge.

Personnel Committee Rachel Sertich, Chairperson, noted a meeting had been held on September 26, 2011 to: 1) review the Committee Center's Custodian / Groundskeeper job description, along with who oversees the position on a daily basis, and 2) discuss a Drug and Alcohol Policy. The next meeting of the Committee will be on Monday, November 6, 2011, to go over a draft the Drug & Alcohol Policy.

Emergency Management Report Mr. Carlson noted he had updated both the manuals and maps as required. He also noted Cliffs Natural Resources (formerly CCI) had been requested to provide the Township with a copy of their Emergency Management Policy / Manual.

Old Business

Utility Billing Board members discussed the current Water and Sanitation utility billing systems and what benefit versus cost might be garnered from acquiring new software and merging the systems. The cost to the Township to merge the two databases would be between \$4,000 and \$5,000. Upon motion of Duane Soine, seconded by Rachel Sertich, approval was given to maintain the current individual billing systems for Water and Sanitation at this time. Motion Carried *with John Ennett casting a negative vote.*

Zoning Map Proposal Thyra Karlstrom, Marquette County Planner, was on hand to discuss with Board members a proposed Zoning Map Partnership Contract which would put the Township's zoning data in a digital format. The contract would cost the Township \$500, with an additional \$30 per hour fee for updates and additional expenses for printing services. The goal of the partnership is to allow for more communication and more accurate data. In addition, Township personnel would receive a copy of the map software. Should the Township desire, a parcel layer component could be purchased for an additional \$650. Joe Scanlan, Zoning Administrator, noted the Zoning maps are in need of updating, and ultimately working with the County would be more cost effective than the manner the Township had previously used. Upon motion of Duane Soine, seconded by Carl Nurmi, approval was given for the Township to enter into a Zoning Map Partnership Contract with the County of Marquette at an initial cost of \$500, with additional hourly and printing costs to be incurred if the services are used. Motion Carried *with John Ennett casting a negative vote.*

New Business

Michigan Senate Bill 7 (SB 7) – Public Employee Health Care Cap Board members reviewed information on SB 7 approved by the Michigan Legislature which would cap the amount of funds local governments could pay towards employee insurance benefits. If the cap was put in place for Negaunee Township, the 4 employees currently covered by medical insurance would have to pay nearly \$30,000 in additional insurance coverage expenses. Effective January 1, 2012, the Township has the ability to annually opt out of the requirement.

ZBA Opening The Township Supervisor noted no applications had yet been received for the current opening on the Zoning Board of Appeals. He asked the Board members and audience to make him aware of anyone who might have an interest in filling the position.

Plat Book Ad Board members discussed a fee of \$273 to place an ad in the Marquette County plat book. Upon motion of Rachel Sertich, seconded by Carl Nurmi, approval was given to decline the ad for 2012 based on budget constraints. Motion Carried.

Correspondence

- None

Additional Public Comment

Gary Wommer, 64 Co. Rd . 510, addressed the Board regarding the WE Energy Plant in Marquette and the part-time Treasurer's assistant. He noted various federal environmental requirements could make it difficult for the power plant to continue operation past 2017. He also noted he wished the Board would reconsider hiring a separate individual for the Treasurer's Department versus having the Water Clerk allocate a portion of her time to that Department, which could be spreading the position too thin.

Rita Laitinen, 25 Midway Drive, addressed the Board. She noted the BSA software currently being used could be implemented for billing if a sewer system was developed in the Township. She also noted the hiring of an individual to work part-time in the Treasurer's Department would be most welcomed if it helped to make for a more peaceful work environment.

Informational Items

- CUPPAD Grant Support Request
- Township Relations Committee Info
- MetroAct Permit Extension
- GIS Software Licensing Info
- Totem Pole Road Info
- MTA Publication
- Letter to Marquette County Board for Miller Bradford (financial assistance request)
- Dunn's Ditch Update

Board Member Comment

Duane Soine noted he was disappointed the Treasurer had not supported his motion of a part-time assistant in the office – even if it only would have been to allow for additional discussion on the item.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled Township Board Meeting will be held on Monday, November 7, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. at the Negaunee Township Hall. *** NOTE DATE CHANGE ***

Adjournment

No further business appearing, the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Sertich
Clerk