

Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held November 27, 2018

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board Members present: Treasurer Benak, Clerk Goss, Trustee Hubbell, Trustee Lawson, Popp

Board Members absent: None

Others present: Robert Hall, Kim Mangus

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

Goss suggested that the board add brief discussion of the additional zoning administrator application.

Per Popp, added as 1.5.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

None

Agenda Items as Listed in Special Meeting Notice

Zoning Administrator Interview – Robert Hall

In response to Popp's question, Hall stated he has worked both as an employee and as a contractor in several different municipalities and said he feels comfortable in either position.

He was an enforcement officer with the City of White Cloud for the last 10 years.

He has been with the Wexford Joint Planning Commission (WJPC) for the last couple years. He is their planning and zoning director.

He stated he has heard quite a bit about Whitewater Township over the last few years. He communicated with Leslie Meyers for many years on the MTA listserv. He feels comfortable in rural environments. He is not a certified planner. He likes the up-north atmosphere. Whether it is zoning administration, code enforcement, or liaison to the zoning board of appeals and the planning commission, he sees himself as an extension of the elected officials and being the face of the township.

He works in Norman Township (Manistee County) 1 day a week and at the Wexford Joint Planning Commission 1-1/2 to 2 days a week. He is contracted to Wexford County for up to 16 hours a week. He also has a partner there who works a day and a half a week.

He stated the Wexford Joint Planning Commission is not engaged in code enforcement yet. He stated 4 of the 11 townships have their individual blight ordinances or junk ordinances, and the supervisors do those independently because they are police power ordinances. He is also on call for zoning related inquiries in Onekama; they only call him in the event of a commercial site plan review or special use.

Hubbell stated 32 hours a week is what we feel comfortable it needs to be.

Hall stated, to be honest, 32 would be tough; 24, probably not an issue.

There was discussion of the number of land use permits issued annually, as well as commercial projects, zoning board of appeals, foot traffic in the building, planning commission meetings, recodification.

Hall stated he intends to keep the WJPC job. He stated he has a partner who is also a contractor who might be looking for work. His partner has completed the Citizen Planner program and the zoning certification program. He reiterated that he and his partner are strictly land use permits.

He stated he spent 10 years at the City of White Cloud and primarily did code enforcement, and described his familiarity with the municipal civil infraction process and the district court process.

He does not have any conflict with the PC and ZBA regular meeting dates.

He stated he operates as a DBA, Certified Zoning Services, and said his arrangement with Whitewater Township could be structured so that the township has access to him and his partner, if he was agreeable to it.

Prior to 2003, he spent about 20+ years in retail and listed the companies he was associated with.

He is committed right now 2-1/2 to 3 days a week. He is not opposed to some set hours each week. He is also a big fan of 21st Century technology and is responsible for generating meeting packets for the WJPC.

Hall was asked how he handles controversy, specifically related to farm animals. He explained his understanding of the Right to Farm Act and GAAMPs. With respect to conflict, he stated it happens but it is how you handle it, and he has found that most people just want somebody to listen to them.

Ben Townsend's background was detailed.

Hall stated he works with the county GIS systems and the mapping but has very little experience with ArcView GIS.

He lives in downtown Cadillac.

He offered to put the board in contact with his partner.

At 7:08 p.m., Mr. Hall left the building.

Sweppenheiser Application (added)

While reviewing the Sweppenheiser application, there was brief discussion regarding Mr. Hall.

At 7:16 p.m., Lindsey Wolf entered the building. She provided a portfolio of work she has done through the years and a letter of recommendation.

Small talk followed while awaiting the scheduled 7:30 interview time.

There was consensus that Mr. Sweppenheiser will not be interviewed.

Zoning Administrator Interview – Lindsey Wolf

Introductions were made.

Mrs. Wolf stated she is not employed at the moment, having left Blair Township for a personal reason earlier this year. She stated this opportunity is perfect timing for her and she needs something to do that she is passionate about.

She worked at PWB Marketing for 10+ years through her undergrad and graduate degrees. She also worked in that time for the Water Resources Commissioner's office and had a pet-sitting business. She described her duties at the marketing group. She no longer has any time commitment to PWB.

She grew up in Escanaba.

She worked 40 hours a week in Blair Township. She also assisted at all planning commission and zoning board of appeals meetings, and as needed at the board of trustees when they were doing rezonings and special use permits.

When asked how many hours a week she is looking for, she replied, "As many as can get me out of the house."

She said it will not be a problem for her to attend the planning commission and zoning board of appeals meetings; she enjoyed these relationships while working in Blair Township. She noted that the township's master plan will be up for review in another year, and stated she saved Blair Township a lot of money doing things herself, conducting surveys, so they did not have to hire private planning consultants on the side.

She described how surveys and visioning sessions were conducted in Blair Township.

She has done mapping with the GIS software. She had to take several courses during her undergraduate and graduate degrees for mapping but was not able to have access to the software at Blair Township, and stated it is nice to be able to do some of that in-house.

She stated that she took a 15-week course for grant writing during her graduate degree and provided details of how she was able to put that to use when she worked for the Depot Town Community Development Corporation.

In Blair Township, she helped initiate township cleanup days, and stated she volunteers at those events, too, and not on the township's time.

She put together the planning commission packets every month and guided them on what they were needing criteria-wise and what they were falling short on. She likes that Whitewater takes the extra step to do preliminary reviews.

Regarding code enforcement, she asked for a code enforcement officer to work with her at Blair because it was very busy and growing fast. She would take the most severe cases. She felt the way the ordinance was written for their code enforcement was very vague. They would do a site investigation and draft a letter. If they did not comply, they would draft a second letter. If they still were not able to comply, then a police officer would go out with a citation. She stated she has a good relationship with the magistrate, Tammy Rogers, who upheld all of her tickets and every complaint she had as being valid. She stated the majority of the violators were junk, but they were starting to make progress, especially with the township cleanup days. She stated it is very logical here on the zoning complaint form and leaves no room for misinterpretation and tells you the exact steps to follow. She likes that the township board has the final say on keeping a case open or closing it. She stated the majority of people in Blair who were angry would calm down once she talked to them and explained the rules. She stated she will not pawn off her responsibilities on the supervisor or clerk.

She does not have conflicts with the PC or ZBA regular meeting dates.

She is available to start at any point in time, whenever the board would like.

Details of the hiring process were discussed.

She was informed that the township does not have health insurance.

Her husband does drywall work and is a commercial fisherman in Alaska.

She did 12 to 30 land use permits a month at Blair. That includes all types of permits.

She has been reading the Whitewater Township Zoning Ordinance and posed a few questions about it, as well as about the township's BS&A program, the permit process, and the number of hours the township is expecting a zoning administrator to work.

At 8:18 p.m., Mrs. Wolf left the building.

Motion by Hubbell to hire Lindsey; second by Benak.

Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of this candidate.

Wording of the motion was discussed and modified as follows: **Motion to offer Wolf the position of zoning administrator.”**

It was noted that she is requesting \$26 an hour.

Discussion followed, including whether payment will be included for official township holidays.

The motion was further modified to state: **Motion to offer Lindsey Wolf the position of zoning administrator at \$26 an hour, up to 32 hours per week, with payment for holidays according to the township’s official holiday schedule.**

Hubbell agreed to this modification of his motion. Benak reaffirmed her second.

Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Motion carried.

Popp will let Wolf know tomorrow.

Goss will follow up with a call to obtain information needed for pre-employment checks.

Discussion followed regarding offering an overlap of Chris Weinzapfel’s and Mrs. Wolf’s employment to ease the transition.

Board Comments/Discussion

None

Public Comment

Kim Mangus, 1214 Cerro Drive, asked the board to be sensitive to making sure she has the support of the board and the support here, whatever that is, to get grounded and established in the job.

Brief discussion followed.

Popp will let Hall know that he has not been chosen.

Adjournment

Motion by Lawson to adjourn; second by Popp. Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk