

**Whitewater Township Board  
Minutes of Regular Meeting held February 11, 2014**

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call of Board Members**

Board members present: Benak, Goss, Hubbell, Lawson, Popp

Board members absent: None

Others present: 18

**Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda**

Hubbell suggested discussion of the draft response to the ambulance complaint be added to the agenda, as well as brief discussion of the scheduling of the 02/20/2014 meeting. Popp indicated they will be added as New Business #8 and #9.

**Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

None

**Public Comment**

Rural Fire Chief Theo Weber introduced himself. He stated his family settled in the Mayfield Township area in the late 1800's and has been here ever since. He is a 3rd generation firefighter. His grandfather started the Peninsula Township Fire Department; his father served there as well. Chief Weber has served with the Frankfort City Fire Department and the last 18 years at the City of Traverse City. He is proud to be part of Rural and appreciates the support from the troops.

Chief Weber stated he would like to recognize one of Whitewater Township's firefighters who has spent over 40 years serving his community, first as a Grand Traverse County firefighter and then as a Metro (sic) firefighter. He asked Tim Shaffer to come forward.

(Applause)

Chief Weber thanked Shaffer and presented him with a plaque, which reads: Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department Certificate of Appreciation is hereby granted to Tim Shaffer for his selfless dedication to his community and to the citizens of Grand Traverse County, serving his fellow man for more than 40 years, protecting them from harm and safeguarding their property from the ravages of fire. The citizens and members of Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department are forever grateful.

(Applause)

Chief Weber stated he would welcome an opportunity to come back and answer questions and advised he would be around quarterly to visit the township. He invited Board members to call with questions at any time.

**Public Hearing**

None

**Reports/Presentations/Announcements/Comments**

**Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department Report** - No one is present from the Sheriff Department.

**County Board of Commissioner's Report** – Goss advised that she received a call stating Commissioner Inman is ill this evening.

**Fire Captain Report**

Captain Arbenowske gave the following report:

- The auxiliary is meeting Thursday night; there will be a party planned for Shaffer.
- There were 9 calls for the month, 2 fire, 7 rescue.
- There were 3 trainings. Started Rural In-Service again. Snowmobile and ice rescue training was held.
- In January 2013, there was a total of 2 calls.

**Ambulance Coordinator Report** – Popp reported that Martin called to say she is ill tonight.

**Consent Calendar**

Referring to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee minutes, Goss stated that Benak continues to be listed as a committee member of the PRAC. Goss would like the minutes to be corrected.

Benak states she has already informed MacLean but will tell her again and have her list it as Board Representative.

Popp inquired whether he needs to put it in writing to Benak.

Benak replied that she is writing it down.

**Motion by Lawson, seconded by Hubbell, to approve the Consent Calendar items as follows:**

Receive and File

1. Supervisor's Report (no report for January)
2. Clerk's Report (no report for January)
3. Zoning Administrator's Report
4. Fire Captain's January 2014 Activity Report
5. Ambulance Coordinator's January 2014 Activity Report
6. Approved 12/09/2013 Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes
7. Approved 01/08/2014 Planning Commission Minutes

Correspondence

1. Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department Statistics for January 2014

2. Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department Minutes (not received as of 02/07/2014)

Minutes

1. Recommend approval of 01/14/2014 and 01/28/2014 Township Board regular meeting minutes

Bills for Approval

1. Approval of Alden State Bank vouchers # 37818 – 37896 (voucher 37840 voided)
2. Approval of Alden State Bank Miami Beach vouchers # (none)

Budget Amendments (none)

Revenue & Expenditure Report (none)

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

**Unfinished Business**

**Discussion of On Call Proposal**

Popp stated the proposal was submitted by both Arbenowske and Martin and a copy is in the packet. Popp asked for Board comment, discussion, or thoughts.

Discussion followed concerning the 2% application, moving forward if a grant does not come through, listening to input, finding the money to fund the proposal. Popp stated the grant he wrote was for \$90,000. Popp stated no increases in revenue sharing are predicted.

Goss feels we are likelier to find money for the 12-hour proposal and feels the Board should start there.

Popp stated research shows we are missing about 30% of our calls per month. Shaffer has retired; one person moved away. Arbenowske's schedule does not allow medical responses; same with Tom Emerson. Employees who work at the casino are finding it difficult to leave for responses. Six a.m. to six p.m. is where we are missing a large percentage of calls. Popp stated the on-call proposal will not help any of our current responders; he leans more toward a duty shift.

Lengthy comments followed from Arbenowske and Emerson, including Emerson's reference to a call for which Whitewater Township has received a complaint for nonresponse. Emerson stated he was en route, NorthFlight asked for 9A to respond, so Emerson cancelled.

Doug Straughen provided information regarding the radio traffic he heard for the ambulance call in question.

Further comments were made by Emerson, including that he is not going to put up with the "monkey business on the side over there."

Popp and Hubbell agreed that the "monkey business" needs to be aired out.

Emerson's comments continued. Addressing the proposal, he stated that there is literally no one available during the day. However, there is a pool of people available who plug holes.

Doug Straughen stated he is willing to be here if it is a paid shift. At Green Lake, he gets \$12.50 an hour. He stated people have to be able to make a living.

Jeremy Jennett stated if there was a duty position, he would see about dedicating maybe 1 or 2 days a week, or more, and even on-call status in the evening. Right now, he does not know his schedule day to day or week to week.

Levi Gaskin stated he thinks a duty crew, duty shift would be good, would help out a lot, and he would fill in where he could.

Popp stated duty shift is coming up more and more, which is away from the on-call proposal more and more.

Arbenowske stated it is a proposal and is not written in stone.

Further discussion of duty crew and on-call proposal followed, including discussion of pay rates.

Samantha Tracy from Kingsley stated an EMT on-call at Elk Rapids is paid \$2 per hour. She believes the paramedic in-house is at \$15. She stated the average for the area for EMTs is \$10 to \$12 per hour.

Popp calculated that wages, payroll taxes, and Workers' Compensation for 1 person for 12 hours per day, 365 days a year, would cost the Township \$65,700.

Discussion followed concerning ambulance budget realignment, undercharging on calls, and lack of transports.

Tracy stated they charge a base rate of \$500, mileage is \$16 or \$17 per mile, oxygen is \$75, and backboarding is \$100.

Goss stated Whitewater Township charges \$420 base rate, \$12 per mile, and \$41 for oxygen; no other charges.

Rural Chief Weber stated the experiences Whitewater Township is having, everybody is having. For the last 20 years, the volunteer system has been declining. They are realizing on the fire side that they need to pay people to be there. The taxpayer must be asked what level of service they want and what level of service they are willing to pay for. He gave figures for Long Lake's fire station staffing and stated the daylight hours are the tough hours to get response. He stated we need to look at sharing resources, sharing personnel, and we have to have a broader discussion. He stated there is a phrase in the Rural agreement that says Rural cannot do ambulance services. Chief Weber believes the agreement needs to be amended to remove that restriction. He has five

stations, with four different EMS agencies in them, all doing it differently, all funding it differently. He stated we need to have a big discussion about where we can work together.

Goss clarified that, with the duty shift, the run wages would be gone, except for during on-call shifts.

Discussion followed.

Tracy stated that Kingsley's staffing is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., 2 people on a duty shift working at the station. From 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., they have on-call personnel who are paid \$4 an hour to be on call at home and it then jumps to the regular pay for the amount of time of the call. Tracy stated she gets \$10 per hour for her duty shift pay. They get paid their regular wage during the duty shift, including for calls. Their wages go from \$4 to \$10 per hour if they go on a call during their on-call shifts.

Consensus reached that this agenda item will remain as unfinished and figures will be discussed at the fire and ambulance budget work session.

### **New Business Trust**

Popp stated we have heard a lot of comments that have danced around this issue. Popp inquired of Arbenowske what he thinks Martin is talking about when she says "trust."

Arbenowske feels this is the start; have two meetings a year, have open conversations, not everybody talking behind everybody's back.

Straughen stated they have started focusing more on training and now they do not talk enough. He thinks one Monday a month is going to be where they discuss and hash out problems. He hopes that will help issues between them, even the Ambulance Coordinator.

Jennett stated he agrees with Straughen.

Goss stated she hopes that Arbenowske and Martin know that they can ask for a meeting with the Board at any time.

Popp stated he does believe there is not enough knowledge shared by Board members about the things that take place. Popp related his experience with pagers and encouraged each Board member to take one for a month.

Hubbell stated we need to hear from Martin what she meant by "trust."

### **Moore Road Building Status**

Arbenowske stated since the front of the building was rented, whoever is plowing has been doing a better job than they have in the past. Arbenowske would like Do Not Park signs in front of the doors. Arbenowske just wants to make sure the renters do not block the doors.

Also, Arbenowske found out yesterday that Jim at the Post Office knows the combination to the fire station building and now it needs to be changed again.

Goss stated Arbenowske can call her for a purchase order number to get the combination changed and would like to have a list, for insurance purposes, of everyone who has the combination.

Chief Weber stated that Rural leases the building, there are security issues with HIPAA in the building, and the combination needs to be known by every one of his 60 firefighters.

Discussion followed about biometric and numerical codes, proximity sensors, and vendors in the building.

Referring to “Security Due to Other Tenants,” Arbenowske wants to make sure the renter of the other part of the building cannot get into the fire department side of the building.

Goss stated she spoke to the building owner, who stated there is no access from the front to the back.

Discussion followed.

Arbenowske will find out if there is access.

Straughen stated they need the water turned on to use the bathroom.

### **Open Discussion for Any Member to Address the Board on an EMS-Related Issue**

Straughen stated he already voiced most of it. He stated the duty crew is going to change a lot and we will start being able to make money off the ambulance.

Popp asked if anyone else wished to comment.

(No response)

### **Discussion on New Building**

Addressing “Status with Tribal Building Proposal,” Arbenowske inquired what the status is.

Popp replied that he and the Tribe meet on a monthly basis. Benak has assembled a packet for the Board. The tribal membership has met two Board members in addition to Popp. Discussions are going to potentially sharing a building with Acme. Acme and Metro are looking for funds to build a station there. Station location might be back by the well if there would be one building for two townships.

Popp stated the plans for a proposed building sat in the township hall for two months. Tim Shaffer provided the only comment, indicating that the ladder truck would not fit. Popp stated the plan revolved around the Tribe desiring to have some type of tribal police, a court proceeding

area within the building, a holding area within the building, meeting rooms, and an emergency services wing.

Benak stated that plan was a starting point but did not meet FEMA's requirements or the needs of the township. She stated as soon as we are ready to get back to it, they will get back to it. The Tribe has the resolution and knows that we want to move forward.

Popp stated the Tribe is in the middle of an election cycle and it will be at least the middle of summer, if not fall, before they get back around to it. Popp would like to propose to the Tribe in the monthly meetings that we work on the management side of it.

Chief Weber stated he never knew these meetings were taking place; the Rural Board has not been informed that there are meetings with the Tribe about building a station that involves Rural.

Popp stated it does not involve Rural; it is an emergency services building for the township. He stated Bill (Sedlacek) did know about it at some point in time.

Benak clarified that Popp meets with the Tribe monthly, not necessarily just regarding a fire building.

Chief Weber inquired how the building would become a township building if it is on tribal land.

Popp stated it would not be a township building; he misspoke.

Chief Weber stated he wants to be at the table.

Popp stated it is by invitation and he does not write the invitation. Popp stated because we cannot get any forward movement on the physical building itself, we need to focus on the management side, what it will cost us, what are our responsibilities as a township, etc.

Addressing "Backup Plan/Ideas if Tribal Proposal Fails," Popp asked for recommendations.

Arbenowske stated there is 11 acres of township-owned property designated for a building.

Popp stated he has contacted Peninsula, who has some nice-looking steel frame buildings. They would design and build and have quoted \$150-\$180 per square foot. Other details were provided.

Benak stated all the materials the building committee put together are in a 3-ring binder, complete with estimates and design, and suggested the Board should start by reviewing that information.

Lengthy discussion followed.

Benak stated the Tribe asked for a letter of intent from the township and the township did a resolution. Benak stated all we need to ask them for is the intergovernmental agreement.

Goss stated the resolution was transmitted to the Tribe by Popp a few days after it was passed.

Popp's next meeting with the tribe is February 21st.

### **Ideas for a Public EMS Event for Spring 2014, Send Brothers Spring Event**

Arbenowske stated they are asking for permission to do fire/ambulance recruiting at the Send Brothers spring event.

Hubbell stated he would encourage it.

Jamie Gaskin inquired if it would be a family event, if they could offer a service such as fingerprinting, have pictures with Smokey the Bear. They would like to get little kids involved, educate the kids and the public about EMS.

Arbenowske stated Emerson did fingerprinting at Mill Creek. Send Brothers' Customer Appreciation Day is in May.

Popp stated he and Straughen had discussed getting the apparatus into the public eye.

Straughen stated they are just asking permission to take the ambulances there. They will do the planning, such as offering free blood pressure and glucose monitoring. They would like to get water bottles with "Whitewater EMS" printed on them. They would like to make people aware of the ambulance and project a community service, friendly image.

Discussion followed concerning advertising in the township newsletter, utilizing the township website, and other locations in the township that fire/EMS could promote their services.

### **Personal Cell Phone Used for Job-Related EMS**

In Martin's absence, Arbenowske stated he believes Martin wanted to address the fact that she does not have a township-paid cell phone.

Goss stated there is a township-paid cell phone assigned to Ambulance, but it is not being used.

Straughen stated that cell phone is in the ambulance.

Goss stated the cell phone assigned to Ambulance should be used by Martin and inquired whether the ambulances need cell phones.

Arbenowske stated there are times when there is information for the emergency room that cannot be given over the radio.

Lawson suggested that a cell phone allowance could be instituted for those who use their personal cell phones for township business.



Chief Weber stated Rural uses Verizon phones on a special government discount and they do not get billed unless they use them. They have them in every apparatus, in addition to the radio. He stated there are times you have to use cell phones.

(At 9:35 p.m. Captain Arbenowske left the township hall.)

### **Discuss Expense Account/Credit Card for EMS**

Popp stated this was discussed awhile back.

Goss stated she had previously brought up the issue of providing a petty cash fund to Fire/Ambulance. Goss believes Fire/Ambulance wants a credit card to sign up for things, renew things, and asked what the Board would like to do.

Straughen stated it could be used for situations on the weekends where they need bolts, batteries, a part breaks, etc.

Popp stated there is an open charge account at the local hardware store. Popp feels we should have a township credit card as it would be easier to register for things.

Goss stated if there is going to be a township credit card, she is going to have possession of it and have everything go through her. She stated the prior credit card the township had was in the former clerk's name and the township's name. Goss stated as far as bolts and batteries, perhaps Fire/Ambulance should have a petty cash fund.

Hubbell suggested that Ace Hardware be given a list of authorized users' names.

Goss stated Ace requires a purchase order number; she is not always around to issue one.

Lawson believes they can do a dollar minimum.

Discussion followed.

Straughen's EMT license renewal is coming due and he turned the form in to Martin. He would like to get it done.

Goss inquired if the Board would like to issue \$100 of petty cash to Fire/Ambulance.

Popp stated Fire and Ambulance should each have a petty cash fund.

Consensus was reached that the Clerk will supply Fire and Ambulance with separate \$100 petty cash funds.

Goss will investigate whether the Financial Administration policy requires amendment.

**Response to EMS Complaint (added)**

Popp provided a copy of the proposed response prepared by Martin. Popp will follow up on Emerson's earlier assertion that he was waved off of this ambulance call. If that information is verified, it should be included in the letter.

Goss feels the proposed response letter is not adequate in that it does not address why we did not respond on that date, and proposed that the letter be revised after verification that Emerson was en route.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding chain of command, service areas, box alarms.

Popp will investigate, provide the data to Dawn, and help generate a second draft.

Goss noted the response is due 02/22/2014.

**Review Schedule for 02/20/2014 Meeting (added)**

Hubbell stated he will be out of town on February 20th. Consensus reached to move the February 20th meeting to February 18th.

**Tabled Items**

None

**Board Comments/Discussion**

Lawson stated we should look at the billing for ambulance, there should be more communication, perhaps a monthly meeting, and also define jobs for a duty shift.

Discussion followed.

Goss inquired of Benak if she had recently filed a complaint against Julie Dunham of Rural Fire.

Rural Chief Weber replied that the Rural Board had directed him to meet with Julie. She is a county employee. Benak did not file a complaint; there was a misunderstanding. There was a complaint about Dunham speaking out of turn. She received a verbal reprimand.

Benak stated she filled in at Rural on June 13 and July 13, questioned Dunham's role with Rural Fire, and sent an e-mail looking for clarification.

Weber stated he has copies of everything. They had a counseling session with her about her role. It was initiated by Bill Sedlacek and HR. Her title is Administrative Assistant.

Weber stated any issues could be brought to him.

**Announcements**

Popp announced that upcoming meeting dates are February 12th and February 18th. The regular meeting date on February 25th has been cancelled due to it being Election Day.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss

Whitewater Township Clerk