

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

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:02 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: 9

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

Benak stated she would like to add an e-mail she received from Chuck Stewart regarding a fire station (copies provided to all Board members). Added under Board Comments/Discussion.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

Lois MacLean, 5919 Linderleaf, stated it was brought to her attention several weeks ago that, according to township policy, employees are supposed to get an annual hourly rate increase of 3%. She stated it was also brought to the Board's attention several weeks ago. She stated no one has contacted her about getting the back pay, so she decided to come directly to the Board for resolution. She believes she has missed one annual increase completely and that the second one should be reflected in her current rate. She requests that she be paid the back pay owed to her and that her current rate be increased as addressed in the township pay rate scale.

MacLean also states she has a retirement which she contributes to for each paycheck, \$25 per paycheck. Currently, that contribution is being submitted quarterly, but it seems like it should be a monthly contribution so interest accrues on the contribution.

Vaughn Harshfield, 4404 North Broomhead Road, stated he received a supplemental part of the packet in which there is discussion of giving the titles to the Expedition and the Kubota to Rural Fire and asked if the Board is going to tell everyone what is going on; do we have to do that? Also, he states he has read the packet for tonight and stated the 7th grade class is doing very well. He stated he would award Bill Mouser and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee a gold medal for acting the way they have over the last few meetings. He stated it is time to get your acts together and focus for the people; you work for us. He stated he is tired of the crap and what he read in the packet is, quite frankly, pathetic.

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

Commissioner Larry Inman gave the following report:

- Regarding the ongoing budget issues with Grand Traverse County, they have been in budget meetings for the last six weeks with all departments. Staff has also been looking at broader issues within the County's budget. They have recently received good news from the Governor that it is his intention and the legislature's intention to restore statutory revenue sharing totally, about \$1.5 million, starting in 2015. Also, the other good news is that the 2013 audit shows that they did not spend \$700,000 as an aggregate for all departments. This money will be returned to the fund balance. Further, three of the County's bargaining units have agreed to concessions regarding paying more for benefits and higher co-pays for healthcare. They will ask the other bargaining units to do the same. Inman stated the combination of these factors will hopefully eliminate the need for major reductions in staff.
- The county jail is one of the oldest in the State of Michigan and has had five renovations. The design is inefficient when it comes to staffing. The adjacent work release facility has been temporarily mothballed due to few inmates being qualified for work release. There has been jail overcrowding for the last six months. If it continues, the County Board will meet to discuss the siting process, which usually takes about two years. It will cost \$30-35 million to build a jail of the capacity needed. They have about 10 acres left on LaFranier Road.
- Inman also wants to alert the Township Board that the Community Growth Grants program was discussed at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments meeting last week. The NWMCOG board decided that the Grand Vision should not be tied to any community monies or grant monies and that the principles of the Grand Vision should not be required to be followed because it was a community process that occurred many years ago and it may not fit today; you can use it as a resource or you can put it on the shelf or throw it away, but they should not be mandating any community development that says you have to follow those principles. The NWMCOG staff will pull all remarks regarding the Grand Vision out of the Community Growth Grants documents and from the website.

The Township Board had no questions or comments for Mr. Inman.

Fire Captain Report

Captain Arbenowske gave the following report:

- There were 5 calls in February, 1 fire and 4 rescue.
- They will be gearing up for wildfire season soon. They had in-service training with Rural, which the DNR sponsored. Everybody attended.
- Adam Shaffer is a new member. He has been approved by Rural Fire in the month of February. There is a possible lead on maybe one or two more members.
- Tim Shaffer's retirement party has been set for May 17th, but location has not been finalized.

- The Fire Department has been invited to Woodland School tomorrow for the first time for a short public education session.
- The combination to the fire station has been changed. Postal staff is still asking for the combination for the building. Moore Road combination has not been changed yet.

In response to Popp's inquiry about the No Parking signs, Arbenowske stated he is still working on that. He does not have them yet.

Regarding security, Arbenowske stated it does not look like access can be gained from the front to the back of the building.

Popp stated he spoke to Lucsy about the toilet and, as long as there is heat, it can be turned on. Popp will meet Arbenowske there when it is convenient in order to get this turned on.

Ambulance Coordinator Report

Ambulance Coordinator Martin gave the following report:

- There were a total of 20 runs in February. Four were missed during the daytime hours. There were ten Priority 1 calls with ALS on assist, four Priority 2 calls, and six Priority 3 calls (non-emergent). Martin showed the Board the call log she keeps.
- Larry Mueller will no longer be conducting training. Josh Salyer will charge \$100 per class for training. Martin inquired how often Salyer should submit an invoice. (Goss replied it should be done every time he comes.) Martin stated that training will start back up in April and listed the areas for which training will be held.
- The Med Control Meeting was held this morning. There is now a Lucas at Munson for the trauma rooms. Whitewater Township got a good report.

In response to Popp's inquiry regarding CE credits, Martin replied that 36 are needed in three years. Credits per class vary depending on what they are doing. She plans to have 10 classes per year.

Martin also stated she would be meeting with Popp again on Thursday around 4:00 p.m.

Consent Calendar

Popp inquired if there were any questions on the Consent Calendar. There was no response.

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

Receive and File

1. Supervisor's Report for February 2014
2. Clerk's Report for February 2014
3. Zoning Administrator's Report for February 2014 (no report received)
4. Fire Captain's February 2014 Activity Report
5. Ambulance Coordinator's February 2014 Activity Report
6. Treasurer's December 2013 Cash Balance Report, Bank Accounts Report, MBIA Class Investment Report, and Interest 01/31/14 Report
7. Treasurer's January 2014 Cash Balance Report

8. Approved 11/13/2013 Historical Society Minutes
9. Approved 01/13/2014 Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes
10. Approved 02/05/2014 Planning Commission Minutes

Correspondence

1. Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department Statistics for February 2014
2. Grand Traverse Rural Fire Department Minutes of 01/15/2014
3. 02/21/2014 NWMCOG announcement re: Community Growth Grants Program
4. 02/21/2014 Charter letter re: Format Changes

Minutes

1. Recommend approval of 02/11/2014 regular meeting minutes and 02/04/2014, 02/12/2014, 02/18/2014, and 02/27/2014 special meeting minutes

Bills for Approval

1. Approval of Alden State Bank vouchers # 37897 - 37987
2. Approval of Alden State Bank Miami Beach vouchers # 1145

Budget Amendments (none)

Revenue & Expenditure Report (none)

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

Unfinished Business

Discussion of On-Call Proposals (Possible Approval)

Popp supplied copies of Proposals 1, 2, and the Duty Crew. He stated he also created another proposal entitled Duty Crew with 1 Paid On Call Weekend Daytime and Nighttime Person. Popp stated we are here tonight to figure out how far in debt we are going to go to run the ambulance this year.

Benak asked Popp to explain the new duty crew.

Popp stated the new duty crew proposal is based on having 1 person on the weekend cover a 12-hour shift, which still would require someone else to respond who is not being paid to wear the pager. This proposal helps the township ease into the duty crew program with a little less money.

Popp inquired of Martin, for any of the proposals, what assurance does the Township Board have that future ambulance calls will be covered. Popp stated that the proposals put forth by Arbenowske and Martin (payment of \$40 per 12-hour shift) will not release personnel from daytime employment.

Martin stated there is no assurance on anything in life. She stated she cannot ask individuals to leave their jobs, but there are folks who have said that if it was a paid position, they would be willing to participate in runs.

Hubbell stated for the Board to put something like this together for the township, we have to be assured that there will be somebody there to answer the calls, because this is taxpayer dollars.

Benak stated Straughen commented at a meeting that he does duty crew in Interlochen and he is paid \$12.50 an hour. Emerson also said there is a pool of people who would come to our township if they were paid. Benak stated if we had a group of people to pull from, these proposals could work.

Lawson stated his concern is whether \$40 is going to make it more important for personnel to get out of work to answer the calls.

Arbenowske stated he is the only one available during the day, but it is his sleep time. He may be available Tuesday through Friday for on-call. He stated he and Straughen have been working the last couple Mondays.

Goss stated she has made a list of all the EMTs and MFRs for Whitewater Township and even though many of them are not present this evening, she would like to get an idea of how many would be available for on-call shifts during the day, and stated the focus must be on daytime response as that is when calls are being missed.

- Tim Arbenowske, EMT, stated he could probably cover 3 on-call shifts during the week.
- Tom Emerson, MFR, has a full-time job during the day. He can answer calls, but he cannot go south of M-72.
- Micaiah Foust has passed state MFR but not National Registry. He would only be available as a driver and he works during the day.
- Levi Gaskin, EMT, would not be available for any on-call shifts as he works at the casino during the day and cannot be released.
- Jeremy Jennett, EMT, works at Classic. He could work some shifts if he put in for them ahead of time.
- Doug Straughen, EMT, is not available for on-call shifts. He only wants duty crew.
- Dawn Martin, EMT, stated she would be available for 2 on-call shifts.
- Ann Riker, EMT, works full-time during the day but has some days off. Martin would have to consult Riker on availability.
- Benjamin O'Connor has passed MFR National Registry and is taking the driver's test in April. Martin will find out what his hours are at the casino.

Martin stated that Levi Martin, EMT, will be back up here in the summer after he finishes college at Grand Valley State.

Goss inquired, since there are not enough Whitewater Township personnel to have 2 people on call during the day Monday through Friday, where we will get other people to respond within 10 minutes of the station for \$40 for a 12-hour shift.

Martin stated she will have to start asking individuals if they would be willing to do that.

Popp stated the problem is that we need to determine what our budget is going to be for next year by March 20th. Popp also stated the pool seems to have evaporated, unless it's the pool that would be paid \$12 or \$12.50 an hour.

Lawson inquired if there are enough people in the pool (from outside Whitewater Township) if we were to start drawing from it.

Arbenowske states there are through Rural, and detailed what other townships do.

Popp stated the basic paramedic for NorthFlight begins at \$19.50 an hour, plus benefits. To have 1 paramedic and 1 EMT 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, the labor bill is \$350,000. We still have to supply the ambulance and the consumables.

Popp stated that simple math puts Proposals 1 and 2 out. Also, the 1 duty crew person proposal, relying on our local pool, cannot be covered. Popp is hearing it said that we need to have 2 people on the duty crew.

Popp directed the Board's attention to Page 2205 of the minutes where Benak stated we have other options, i.e, a private service.

Benak related again that she met a supervisor from the Niles area at the MTA conference. They do not pay for ambulance. They have a service that comes in to cover their area who bills directly to the consumer. Townships are finding they cannot keep up with the cost. Benak mentioned Allied because they are another service like NorthFlight.

Popp stated Kingsley has a subcontractor in place, with a budget of around \$220,000.

Goss stated that Kingsley said they get part of their funding from a millage and part from billing and they average over 500 calls a year.

Popp stated his goal here tonight was to pick one of the four proposals and ask the Board to commit to a red budget of any one of the four figures, but after hearing what he has heard tonight, he cannot even ask that because it is not going to solve our problem.

Hubbell thinks maybe this is a decision that the citizens of the township have to tell us what they really want. A millage could be put together and see if they want it.

Goss reminded the Board that Popp has advised previously that in order to address this issue, there are three options: Keep the status quo, draw down fund balance in the General Fund for one year, or utilize an off-site duty crew. Goss stated she has no confidence that either of the on-call proposals will work as we do not have enough staff in our group and it is not likely two people will come from outside the area and be here within 10 minutes. Goss feels the only thing that can be realistically discussed is the duty crew.

Hubbell wants to see how many people are willing to commit to the duty crew for one year before any commitment is made.

Discussion followed regarding the average hourly rate for EMTs in the area.

Benak inquired whether a combination of duty crew and on-call could be used.

Popp feels no matter what we do, it will be a blend. Popp stated we could still come up with a magic bullet, i.e, a group of business people who are a private entity that we subcontract out to.

Lengthy discussion followed.

Tim Shaffer pointed out that some of the people on duty crew would also be fire. The township has a fire millage which could handle part of the duty crew, or put in for additional millage, to take some of the financial burden off the General Fund.

Popp stated that very idea, modified a little bit, was said to be illegal by the township attorney.

Shaffer suggested the public be made aware that we need an emergency services millage.

Popp is willing to entertain a motion based on a dollar amount and not necessarily the wording of any of the four proposals.

Benak would like some assurance tonight from Martin and Arbenowske that they will be working on finding us who we need.

Goss inquired if Popp is asking that we vote to put some money aside so we can finalize the budget, agree to spend down fund balance in a particular amount, and the details of how the money will be spent will be worked out later.

Hubbell stated he will agree to that scenario only when everything is concrete. He wants to support the EMS personnel but also wants to support the community.

Goss stated there are a lot of details to work out.

Popp stated if we agree to set money aside, it does not have to be implemented on April 1st. It gives us time to work the details out, but the Board has to agree that the money to be set aside works for the community.

Hubbell states we have to find a way to get the calls answered right away; we cannot afford to continue to miss calls.

Lawson stated the first thing we have to do is have the people to implement it.

Martin stated she needs to know whether they will be paid hourly, \$40 per 12- hour shift, \$10-12 hour per hour, so she can take the information out to a handful of people.

Discussion followed.

Popp inquired which proposal the Board wants: 1, 2, 3, or 4?

Benak stated 4.

Lawson agreed.

Popp stated this is just a dollar amount, with duty crew expected to be \$10-12 an hour and between 10- and 12-hour shifts for on-call and duty crew, Monday through Friday.

Discussion followed, mainly clarifying some of the details for Proposal 4.

Hubbell stated we need to put the money aside and work on the details later.

Popp stated the cost of Proposal 4 is about \$80,000; the cost of Proposal 3 is \$99,000.

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Benak, to set aside \$80,000 for additional ambulance staffing in the 2014/2015 fiscal year budget. Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes.

Goss inquired who will do what next to move this along.

Popp stated he will be in touch with the ambulance director on Thursday and a platform will be laid out for a signup sheet or some type of schedule. The goal will be to supply the Board with a roster.

New Business

Open Discussion for Any Member to Address the Board on an EMS-Related Issue (Submitted by Arbenowske)

Popp stated this agenda item has already been covered.

Resolution #14-03 Elk Rapids Schools Summer Tax Collection

Benak stated this is our standard collection resolution to collect the taxes for Elk Rapids Schools.

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to adopt Resolution #14-03. Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes.

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Goss stated Resolution #14-04, as originally prepared, was not needed as TCAPS signed a 2-year tax collection agreement last year. Resolution #14-04 is now for TBAISD and there is no longer a Resolution #14-05.

Resolution #14-04 TBAISD Summer Tax Collection

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to adopt Resolution #14-04. Roll call vote: Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes.

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Tabled Items

None

Board Comments/Discussion (Email from Chuck Stewart added)

Lawson inquired whether everyone had received their copy of the Master Plan and stated that the Planning Commission would encourage everyone to read it and have feedback from the Board for the PC's April meeting.

Discussion followed regarding a timeline.

Popp stated the PC should plan on having input for their June meeting and advised that the PC could schedule a special meeting.

Benak stated she has received an email from Chuck Stewart and read from it as follows: "I think things are steaming ahead! I received a Council Directive and EDC approval to proceed with review and moving the Tribe's building project forward. I have a number of items to our legal department to begin reviewing and editing, and our architect is working on the construction prints for the Tribal building that would be made available through any potential agreement. I'm working on O&M cost estimates and items and what I would like to do is place Whitewater's existing expenditures for their F&R building(s), including utility cost, next to the present actuals of the same facility built elsewhere as a comparison. Are you able to provide me the expenditure budgets for the last two years (plus current) of WW F&R Dept?"

Benak stated this is good news. She stated she forwarded him budget information for 2012/2013.

Popp inquired whether that was done without Board or supervisor approval.

Benak replied yes, it is a public document; he could have gotten it from the State of Michigan website.

Popp stated that is not her job; she should not be doing it.

Discussion followed as to whose responsibility it is to give out budget information, discussions of this nature going through the supervisor, the official spokesperson for the township.

Hubbell stated this is all of our jobs, it is great news for the township, and it is not just up to one person to make the decisions for the township and talking to other people.

Lawson inquired whether a summary or synopsis should be made of what is going on with ambulance to put on the website.

Popp stated he will do that through the blog he is working on.

Benak stated she would like to give a quick update on last night's Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee meeting and gave the following report:

- Went over sections of the Petobego Management Plan, making a list of what the requirements were. In the spring, they are planning on a field trip to see what has been done and will give the Board a list of what has to be done. Everyone is welcome on the field trip.
- Acme and Whitewater have shared the cost of water testing for streams for many years. Bill Mouser contacted Acme and got a report. Benak will scan it and provide a copy to the Board.
- Part of the Petobego Management Plan is cutting of the hay. Agreement was formerly with Ray Korson. Luke Korson will be taking it over. Someone needs to contact him to see if he still wants to do it.
- PRAC asked when the Board will look at the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- The PRAC urges the Board to allocate funds to their annual budget for capital improvements. They would like consideration in the budget process.
- Benak reminded the PRAC that they are not to discuss the Battle Creek Natural Area plug, bridge, or dams.
- Benak also distributed to the PRAC an invitation for the 3rd Annual Local Government Elk Rapids Chain of Lakes Watershed Committee meeting being held March 19th.

Also, Benak stated if the township is planning on putting out a newsletter in April, the deadline will be coming up shortly.

Discussion followed.

Consensus reached that April 18th will be the deadline for submission of material for the spring newsletter.

Announcements

Discussion held regarding whether the budget work session scheduled for March 12th is needed. Consensus reached that the meeting should be held.

Public Comment

Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Road, stated a synopsis of the ambulance situation with needing additional personnel and funding should be put in the newsletter, also an update on what is happening regarding trying to get a fire station. He thanked Benak for providing the information tonight.

Benak inquired whether Popp would care to write an article about the ambulance situation.

Popp stated it is an article that should be written, but with the complexity of trying to figure out what we are going to do, he will not make April 18th.

Discussion followed.

Consensus reached that there should be something concerning ambulance in the newsletter, likely in the supervisor section.

Adam Shaffer, 5309 Moore Road, stated the Board needs a lot more public input. Before this meeting, he knew there were issues, but he had no idea what the problem was. He stated he could not support himself on a \$40 shift. He also stated the problem with finding people is that it is almost impossible to find employers who will give their workers training time.

Kurt Horton, 2181 North Broomhead Road, stated he appreciates the efforts of all the community volunteers and servants; we are fortunate to have them and should try to do everything we can to accommodate them. Regarding a private sector ambulance service, that information could be made available in the newsletter or on the website. He wonders if the community would feel more welcome if more information was made available. He does appreciate the Board's efforts and stated it is important that all the community servants are recognized and their efforts and contributions are recognized.

Popp stated the new website can accommodate a blog. It will be released to the public eventually and will be another form of communication to the public.

Adjournment

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Hubbell, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk