

**Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting held January 27, 2015**

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board Members Present: Goss, Lawson, Popp

Board Members Absent: Benak, Hubbell

Others Present: County Commissioner Carol Crawford, Planning Commission Member Mickey Dean, and 2 others

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

No changes.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

- 1. Letter 01/05/2015 from Up North Prevention re: April 2015 is Social Host Awareness Month Proclamation**
- 2. Email 01/20/2015 from Lori Lynn re: Medical Control Authority Regionalization**
- 3. Email 01/21/2015 from Conservation Resource Alliance re: Boardman Dams Implementation Team Meeting Schedule**

There was no discussion of the correspondence items.

Public Hearing

None

Reports/Presentations

None

Unfinished Business**Master Plan Review**

Popp stated he has a few comments and cited the following pages of the hard copy:

- Page 2, Contributors List – Habedank is no longer with the township.
- Page 7, the statistic reporting a population of 460 in the 1930s is repeated in the same paragraph.
- Page 12, Existing Land Use map, the Grand Traverse Band may disagree with the characterization of their land as publicly owned.

- Page 13, under Water, Popp questioned the verbiage “along the west 1-plus miles of Old M-72.”
- Page 13, second paragraph under Utilities, “portect” is misspelled.
- Page 16, Figure 20 is labeled Baggs Landing but appears to be the boat launch at Whitewater Township Park.
- Page 25, talking about transportation, both pictures depict train wrecks. Popp stated he found the pictures interesting and humorous. (Goss noted that “Mable” is misspelled under both pictures and should be “Mabel.”)
- Page 29, Image Credits, “White Water” should be “Whitewater.”
- Page 29, second column, near the bottom, there appears to be a problem with the hyperlinks for Michigan Planning Act and Michigan Zoning Act.

Brief discussion followed regarding the Contributors list.

Goss apologized that she has not yet completed her review, but stated she will complete it before the Planning Commission’s next meeting on 02/04/2014 and will submit her comments in writing via email.

Dean stated he would hope that by the next Board meeting there can be a full vote on the plan. Changes will not take long to complete.

Popp stated he had some preconceived expectations of the plan, but having listened to some other conversations, which were not about master plans, he heard heartfelt comments about “home.” Looking at the survey, it says we would kind of like things to stay the same. The overall goal of the plan does kind of accomplish that.

Goss thanked Dean for getting the plan to the Board.

Popp stated he would like to have comments from the entire Board and hopefully there will be a full complement of Board members at the first meeting in February.

Audience member Vaughn Harshfield asked what is the drop-dead date for getting this to the community.

Popp stated he is personally prepared to do it tonight, but he would prefer that the entire Board have an opportunity to have verbal or written comments.

Dean stated he thinks the timing is actually pretty good if they can get it out for the 60-day review period, and then when everybody comes back in the spring, have public comment as soon as a firm date can be established.

Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Brief discussion occurred concerning the links sent by Benak for the DNR guidelines and the checklist, as well as links to other township recreation plans.

Goss stated her review was completed before the checklist was provided, but she will review the plan with the checklist to see if her comments should be updated.

Popp stated his review was also completed before the checklist was available.

Goss noted there was discussion at the last meeting concerning the Planning Commission reviewing the draft parks and recreation master plan. A text-only document has been provided in the board packets, but the Planning Commission should be provided with the entire plan.

Popp suggested an electronic copy be obtained from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee. Goss will inquire of Benak if such a copy is available.

New Business

Resolution 15-01 Alternative Starting Date for Board of Review

Goss noted that, because the assessor works for several townships, an alternative starting date is chosen each year. The Whitewater Township Board of Review is scheduled for 9 am to 3 pm on March 11th and 3 pm to 9 pm on March 17th.

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Goss, to adopt Resolution #15-01. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, absent; Goss, yes; Hubbell, absent; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Popp declared the resolution adopted.**

Review Ambulance Job Descriptions

Popp noted he would like more input from the rest of the Board, but as his memo states, review of the ambulance job descriptions is required because the pool of personnel to fill open ambulance shifts is not as abundant as represented. There was zero response to a recent ad in the Record-Eagle. The jobs start at \$12/hour, which is more than what other agencies are paying with the exception of NorthFlight, who pays about 50 cents more per hour. Options include modifying the job descriptions from the 24-hours-maximum-per-week to 36 to 48 hours per week. They are considered part-time employees. The pension plan considers full-time to be 35 hours per week and the benefit is 10% of salary/wages, 100% taxpayer funded.

Popp inquired of County Commissioner Carol Crawford what the county pays.

Crawford replied that, going forward, employees contribute 3% and the county contributes 6%.

Popp stated another option would be to raise the maximum numbers of hours on a short-term basis, perhaps 6 months. Popp stated that no set standard is followed in the industry for requirements of personnel, other than licensure. Some agencies only do a driver check and a drug test. Are we willing to accept some concessions, such as in background check, number of points on a driver's license, somebody who has a card for medical marijuana, misdemeanor on record, speeding tickets, high points, DUI? Are we willing to look at full-time staff with benefits or reduce the number of hours the station is staffed so we can pay more per hour? Popp is asking where the Board wants him to look next.

Lawson stated there is a lot to think through.

Popp stated, in his opinion, the items discussed in paragraph B of his memo, concessions to the quality or background of the personnel, are not open for discussion. That leaves increasing the number of hours they can work and looking at some type of benefit to attract a different or additional crowd of people.

Goss stated she could agree to allow up to 36 hours a week, but at 48 you're paying overtime, which was not calculated as a cost for purposes of the millage. At 36, the pension ordinance comes into play. Goss also reported on some information she obtained from NorthFlight and Chief Weber regarding their driving policies. Additionally, ambulances are a \$200,000 piece of equipment by the time they are fully outfitted. Regarding full-time benefitted staff, Goss stated she is not opposed to it, but where is the money going to come from and stay within the budget?

Popp stated the plan agreed upon kept the township's General Fund contribution at its historical level, which is \$50,000. This could be increased to cover overtime.

Goss inquired what type of benefits other ambulance services offer.

Popp stated some services that he has been exposed to bring their people in at around \$8/hour and then provide an 80/20 medical plan. Some even go as far as vision and dental, but all of the wages are at minimum wage. That is the offset. Popp stated he would like to find out what a medical plan costs and find out what the retirement benefit would cost. He stated the Ordinance 22 pension plan would be right around \$40,000. A medical plan could be between \$500 and \$1800 per month, per person.

Goss stated she does not see where those kinds of costs can be covered, with any budget.

Popp inquired if he should get preliminary numbers and report back, and inquired of Lawson what he thought of paragraph B.

Lawson stated he did not see much that could be pulled out of B; we cannot drop the quality of our hiring standards. He also stated we could increase the number of hours worked, but we may not want to go to 36.

Goss stated the Monday through Friday shifts are beginning to be covered, but there are still weekend shifts not covered. Goss stated she does not think we can do anything about increasing hours without also addressing the weekend and holiday issue.

Popp stated Martin is still using a volunteer sign-up program (for shifts). Popp stated he has let her know that, by February 9th or the pay period after, either the shifts are filled or we are going to start assigning them.

Discussion followed regarding the number of ambulance employees available, the 24/7/365 nature of the healthcare industry, the possibility of paying more for holiday/weekend hours, whether employees would be looking for a higher dollar amount per hour, insurance or retirement benefits, career-minded or take what you can get now and hope something better

comes along, as well as minimum wage paid by Allied EMS and the high cost of health insurance.

Popp summarized the discussion by saying we look at some additional hours, we kind of stay on the track of more money per hour rather than benefits, possibly more money for holiday pay.

Brief discussion followed regarding ALS services outside of this region working 24-hour shifts with payment for 20 to 22 hours, provision of sleeping quarters with fire protection, three missed calls in December, plus one transport by NorthFlight because we only had one person, the regular occurrence of back-to-back 12-hour shifts, with some personnel working 36-hour shifts.

Ambulance Training Policy

Regarding ambulance personnel who only work one shift a month, should the township pay for continuing education? Some services offer continuing education credits as a perk. Popp's memo lists several options.

Discussion followed.

Audience member Kim Halstead suggested that if there is a two-shift-per-week requirement, that one of them be a weekend shift.

Consensus was reached to pursue this issue further with a spreadsheet showing how it might work.

Review Ordinance 22 Pension Plan

Popp reviewed details of the pension plan. Popp stated he proposes eliminating it at the end of the term but is open to reducing the contribution percentage to a small amount provided the eligible person also makes an equal commitment.

Discussion followed.

Consensus was reached to seek legal review and bring this agenda item back at the next meeting.

Goss also pointed out that Section 4.B was amended four times and questioned whether the wording of the last amendment of that section was intentional.

Additionally, Popp noted that his research shows that Public Act 27 of 1960, the public act cited in the plan, was repealed in 1989. At the very least, it needs review to make sure there is reference to the proper public acts.

Lawson will conduct some research on the issue.

Popp also asked the Board if they believe personnel should be eligible or vested on the first day.

Lawson and Goss stated no. Very brief discussion followed.

Providing Ambulance Services to Special Events

Popp stated he recalls a time when the ambulance service came to the Board and asked permission to attend special events. Iceman pays some money to offset expenses; VASA does not pay anything. Popp asked the following questions: How is the VASA promoting our community? Are these legal expenditures for taxpayer dollars? If we do not help, how does that make us look in the community?

Discussion followed.

Goss stated the ambulance coordinator should seek approval from the Board before she schedules any employees to work at these events. An estimated budget should be provided regarding wages, fuel cost. Bills should be sent to any event which does not voluntarily contribute. Goss also does not agree with the ambulance being outside of the township for special events because the ambulance is being paid for by the taxpayers to be in Whitewater Township.

Kim Halstead posed questions regarding other ambulance services and the VASA, and stated he agrees that the taxpayers are paying to have the ambulance in the township. Before, it was volunteer; it has changed now. He suggested one ambulance and a crew be sent to the VASA and that VASA be charged for the crew that is there. The other ambulance would cover the township.

Lawson said finding out what you can spend money on may change the situation. You might have to bill them in order to be there.

Popp stated we have a duty to the taxpayer first. Volunteer personnel could perhaps use the spare ambulance.

Brief discussion followed concerning the location of the VASA trail in Whitewater Township.

Consensus was reached that the ambulance coordinator will put together the items discussed. Goss agreed to help Popp review the legality of the expenditure.

Resolution #15-02 Updated Schedule of Emergency Services Charges

Goss stated that Chief Weber provided a resolution which updates Rural Fire's charges for emergency services. Exhibit A lists the charges and will be part of the resolution. These are costs billed to insurance companies.

Popp observed that under almost every section there is an Itemized Response list and a description of how incidents will be billed. Where it says "billed, itemized per trained rescue person," who determines the number of people who will actually be paid or be billed? Who determines the number of team leaders? What collection measures are in place? What in the resolution stops Rural Fire from taking our citizens, who are paying the millage, to collections? It is an open-ended blank check. Does this apply between townships, and is that where we are going? If our truck goes to another Rural Fire township, are we charging them \$650? Nothing in the resolution indicates either way. Lastly, Popp questioned the dual charges to set up

command listed in Level 1 Basic Response and Chief Response. Engine is billed at \$500 an hour, but a truck is billed at \$650 an hour.

Popp stated he is personally not in favor of putting the township residents on the hook for charges over and above what they are already paying in taxation. He stated he will not give Rural the authority to take our people to court.

Goss noted that Chief Weber said if a resident does not have insurance, they will not bill them.

Popp stated Rural Fire would not bill the guy who caused a fuel spill at the boat launch.

Consensus was reached to have Popp ask Chief Weber for more information on this resolution.

Schedule Budget Work Sessions

Popp stated he had a conversation with Hubbell, who said Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays work well for him.

Discussion followed concerning dates on which the hall is available.

Consensus was reached to schedule budget work sessions on the following dates and times:

Wednesday, February 11, at 6:00 p.m.

Monday, February 16, at 6:00 p.m.

Goss noted she will be out of the office the week of March 15th through 20th and that she had previously spoken to Popp concerning the possibility of turning the regular meeting on March 24th into the budget public hearing. Goss stated she would like to see the proposed budget finalized by the end of the first week of March.

Brief discussion followed concerning some expenditures which Popp will be proposing.

Clerk's Memo re: Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee

Goss noted that she prepared a memo concerning the "controversy" that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee is concerned about. With the absence of two Board members this evening, perhaps it can be placed on the next Township Board agenda.

Brief discussion followed. This agenda item will be brought back on February 10th so the other Board members can comment.

Tabled Items

Review Administrative Policy Section 5 (tabled 10/14/2014)

There was agreement to leave this item tabled.

Board Comments/Discussion

Goss stated the blue notebook over on the table is a compilation of documents and pictures detailing Michael Wyers' Eagle Scout project in Williamsburg Cedar Rapids Cemetery from

start to finish. It is a copy for the public given to the township by Michael a few weeks ago. Michael also indicated that Boy Scout Troop 115 is available for projects.

Announcements

The next Township Board meeting is February 10, with budget work sessions on February 11 and February 16.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Popp, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk