

**Whitewater Township Board  
Minutes of Regular Meeting held April 13, 2021**

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.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 in person: Treasurer Benak, Clerk Goss, Trustee Hubbell, Popp

Board Members present via Zoom: Benak, Popp, Trustee Vollmuth (Hartselle AL)

Board Members absent: None

Others present in person: 5

Others present via Zoom: County Commissioner Darryl Nelson, Fire Chief Brandon Flynn, and 10 others

**Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda**

Goss sought to add a request from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee to discuss a revised quote for the Hi Pray Park dugouts.

Added as #10 New Business.

**Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

None

**Public Comment (6:33)**

Glenn Savage, 9833 Pineneedle Lane, spoke on the topic of marijuana.

Chris Hubbell, 8055 Angell Road, spoke on the topic of marijuana.

Rod Rebant, 648 Island View Drive, spoke on the topic of marijuana.

Linda Slopsema spoke on the topic of marijuana, masks, and Zoom.

Mike Corcoran, attorney representing North Point Farms, spoke on the topic of marijuana.

Vern Gutknecht spoke on the topic of ethical and professional conduct, PC appointment, Goss and Hubbell comments, and the township park.

**Public Hearing (36:42)**

None

**Reports/Presentations/Announcements/Comments (36:50)**

**County Commissioner Report**

Darryl Nelson gave the following report:

- Encourages questions and contacts from board or residents.

- Explained why there is not a county emergency and noted it could change at any time. Concerning threats and rude comments to the health department, law enforcement and board are working on a solution and will not stand for illegal or threatening or rude behavior that goes beyond normal bounds.
- As of last week, they are having in-person meetings; members can also zoom in.
- They voted in body-worn cameras for all sheriff deputies.
- The board will discuss an Animal Control millage next week. The millage does not cover all expenses. It is possible they will go with no millage and have it be a part of the budget.
- Counties and townships are getting CARES Act money. They do not know the rules yet for how it can be spent. He welcomes ideas of good ways to handle that.
- County is ending on a positive on the budget. Hats off to county administration for their handling of that.

There were no questions.

#### **Fire Department Report (45:38)**

Brandon Flynn gave the following report:

- Run-wise, it was a pretty slow month, which allowed opportunity to catch up on training requirements. The State of Michigan rewriting Public Act 291 on how they train and what they train is going to require all firefighters to complete continuing education credits. He and Assistant Chief Carpenter rewrote their training for the entire year to mimic the requirements.
- They are getting ready for wildfire season.

There were no questions.

#### **Planning Commission Report (47:25)**

No report.

#### **Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Report (47:33)**

Cheryl Goss gave the following report:

- The committee met last night; 3 members present in person, 1 via Zoom, 1 absent.
- March 8 minutes were approved.
- Big issue was huge price increase on the Perfect Fence quote for Hi Pray Park dugouts.
- Project updates were provided.
- Melton has scheduled a batting cage grand opening for May 8 in coordination with the Elk Rapids Youth Baseball Association. Diamond dust will be ordered.
- The committee is still working on the Recreation Plan. New accessibility assessments are not needed as there have been no changes.
- Next meeting is May 10.

There were no questions.

**Mike Jantz - Facility Study Presentation ((49:47)**

Mike Jantz, present in person, works for the consulting firm C2AE. Based on discussions with Popp about potential new sewer/water utilities for certain areas and regions of the township, as well as potentially taking a look at all of the assets owned by the township (parks, trails, fire hall, township hall, roads), they have provided some recommendations, the first of which is that the township put water and sewer higher on the priority list in order to react to funding opportunities. They recommend the township do a go/no-go evaluation to see if that makes sense. Other options include for the township to build and operate their own, to partner with surrounding townships like Acme, or to work with the Tribe, Acme Township and Whitewater Township to collaborate on efforts. They recommend the township look at a qualification-based selection (QBS) process and explained the process. Examples of timing, schedule, and potential costs associated specifically to the water and sewer were provided.

It was noted that Jantz colleague Larry Fox is present on Zoom, as well as Erica Marshall, who has development interests along the M-72 corridor that require water and sewer.

Other information provided by Jantz:

- “Clean water” is what the state refers to as sanitary sewer. “Drinking water” is just that.
- They have been asked to evaluate for clean water and drinking water in specific areas of the township largely along the M-72 corridor, from the casino east to the Cook Road region, north and south to the first local streets, Old 72 to the north, and on the south side of 72 to address failing septic systems associated with Williamsburg Creek and Mill Pond.
- Popp indicated fire protection would include Moore Road to Crisp to Williamsburg area.
- The overall scope would be phased. Initial discussion was maybe 250 properties to be connected, with the capability of growing to 1,200. The 250 is largely near the M-72 corridor and catching some of the septic systems failing along Williamsburg Creek, and then some of the interest in development of high density residential and growth in the industrial park.
- The \$20,500 cost is for a project evaluation and feasibility study.
- Their firm writes grants. The MEDC is a source of funding.
- The QBS process is about choosing a consultant who is eligible to go after federal funding and positioning the township to react quickly. The township would handle the QBS process.

Discussion followed.

**Consent Calendar (1:17:40)**

Receive and File

1. Supervisor’s Report for March 2021
2. Clerk/Parks & Recreation Administrator’s Report for March 2021
3. Zoning Administrator Staff Report April 2021
4. Mobile Medical Response March 2021 Activity Reports
5. Fire Department March 2021 Report
6. Historical Society Report for March 2021

7. Treasurer Bank Account and Interest Reports
8. Approved 01/11/2021 Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes
9. Approved 02/03/2021 Planning Commission Minutes
10. Approved 02/08/2021 Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes

#### Correspondence

1. Grand Traverse County Sheriff Department Statistics for March 2021 (not available)
2. Letter 03/22/2021 Northwest Education Services re: Name Change
3. E-mail 03/25/2021 Michele Mueller re: Marijuana
4. EGLE Public Notice re: Boat Ramp Project
5. Skymint Request
6. EGLE Recycle Grants
7. Grand Traverse County Recycle Smart Newsletter
8. EGLE Classroom Newsletter
9. Networks Northwest Newsletter
10. MTA All Members Community Distribution of Marijuana Funds
11. Trustee Vollmuth E-mail 2021.03.31
12. Habitat for Humanity Home Repairs Information
13. Mask Mandate E-mail from Gregg Bird 2021.03.31

#### Minutes

1. Recommend approval of 03/09/2021 regular meeting minutes, 03/02/2021, 03/16/2021, and 03/23/2021 special meeting minutes, and 03/09/2021 closed session minutes

#### Bills for Approval

1. Approval of Alden State Bank vouchers # 46417 through 46490

#### Budget Amendments (none)

#### Revenue & Expenditure Report (none)

**Motion by Goss to approve the Consent Calendar as presented; second by Benak. Roll call vote: Vollmuth, yes; Benak, yes; Popp, yes; Hubbell, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

Goss raised the issue of the Open Meetings Act requirement beginning March 31 that “members of a public body may participate electronically in an in-person meeting if they are absent due to” one of three exceptions, and Vollmuth has not indicated why she is not here in person.

Vollmuth stated the MDHHS order goes until April 19.

Discussion followed.

Vollmuth stated she is under one of the three exemptions.

#### **Unfinished Business (1:35:30)**

None

**New Business (1:35:40)****Fire Department Snowmobile Purchase**

**Motion by Hubbell to allow Chief Flynn to purchase two Polaris snowmobiles as outlined on the Classic Power Equipment quotation with funds from the Fire Capital account; second by Benak.**

Goss noted that during the budget process this expenditure was not planned to come out of the Fire Capital Improvement account and will bring a budget amendment and budgeted transfer to the May meeting.

Discussion followed.

**Hubbell amended the motion to add the total cost of \$26,554.00. Benak agreed with the amendment.**

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

**Let the People Direct - A Ballot Question (1:44:18)**

**Motion by Popp to create and place upon a ballot for the earliest possible election cycle language prohibiting Adult Use Marihuana Establishments as allowed by Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act MCL 333.27 in Whitewater Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan; second by Vollmuth.**

Discussion followed.

Popp stated he will leave his motion out there but offered to Vollmuth that she can withdraw her second.

Further discussion ensued.

**Vollmuth recalled her second of the motion.**

**Elk Rapids Youth Baseball Request to Advertise (2:03:55)**

**Motion by Goss to approve Elk Rapids Youth Baseball Association's request to install no more than 20 (twenty) 5' x 3' advertising banners at Hi Pray Park for the 2021 Baseball Season; second by Hubbell.**

Discussion followed.

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

**Meeting Configuration - Continue Zoom (2:06:41)**

**Motion by Popp for the township to continue the use of Zoom meeting format until 12/31/2021 as allowed by current State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services orders; second by Benak.**

Brief discussion followed.

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

**Park Ranger Wage Approval (2:09:14)**

**Motion by Goss to approve 2021 wages for Dan Belanger, Peggy Quast, Robert Daniels, Trenton Kooistra, and Kinzie Gallo as recommended by the clerk; second by Benak.**

Discussion followed.

**Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Popp --**

Popp interrupted the roll call vote to ask for the motion to be repeated.

Goss repeated the motion.

**-- yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Vollmuth, yes. Motion carried.**

**Brine Agreement Preapproval (2:16:06)**

**Motion by Popp to authorize the supervisor to execute the annual County Road Improvement Agreement (brine agreement) between Whitewater Township and the Grand Traverse County Road Commission for the 2021/2022 fiscal year capped at three (3) applications or \$22,000 total expenditure, whichever is less; second by Hubbell.**

Discussion followed.

**Popp amended his motion to read “authorize the supervisor and clerk to execute.”**

**Hubbell agreed to the amendment.**

More discussion followed.

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

**Whitewater Township Park Playground Project (2:26:20)**

**Motion by Goss to approve an expenditure of \$18,265 to Jahr Contractors for the listed renovations to the campground playground area and adjacent road work; second by Benak.**

Popp raised the issue of following MCL 339.2011 requiring an architect or engineer, does not see an excavation plan, asked if a site plan and soil erosion permit needed.

**Goss commented on the issues raised by Popp and withdrew the motion.**

Discussion followed.

Goss requested a 5-minute recess to make an urgent phone call.

At 11:28 a.m., meeting recessed.

At 11:37 a.m., meeting reconvened.

Goss will bring the playground project back at a future meeting.

**2021 Lawn Maintenance Specifications (2:40:34)**

**Motion by Benak to approve the 2021 Specifications for Lawn Maintenance and Cleanups form; second by Vollmuth.**

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

**Board Discussion Preliminary Engineering/Facility Study (2:41:44)**

Popp asked if the board sees value in the information provided about putting water and sewer questions ahead of our facility, or does the board want to maintain the facility study first, and then if we do a facility study, do we also want to perform the qualified selection service.

Discussion followed.

Popp said he will develop it and bring it back, and noted some requests from the MEDC for letters of support for expansions in the township for the next agenda.

**Hi Pray Park Dugouts (added) (2:51:06)**

Goss provided a revised quote from Perfect Fence and relayed the history of communications with Perfect Fence over specifications for the dugout once the engineered drawing was provided. The original quote for \$9,235 was approved by the board in July 2020. The revised quote is for \$29,000+, although they have offered to deduct \$2,000. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee will seek other quotes but has requested the board approve an additional \$15,000 for the dugout project, to be reallocated from a different Recreation Fund project.

Discussion followed.

Goss will ask Bartosik to revisit his quote.

Chris Hubbell provided information about shipping container boxes at AIS that might work for this application.

Goss will check into it.

**Tabled Items (3:05:37)**

None

**Board Comments/Discussion (3:05:37)**

Benak provided an update on the spring newsletter and reported that the COVID plans have been printed and distributed. She reminded everyone about Cleanup Day on 6/12 from 8 to 12, invited volunteers, and reported on a successful scrap tire grant for \$2,000 from EGLE; citizens will not be charged for tires this year.

Discussion followed.

**Announcements**

Next regular township board meeting May 11, 2021 @ 9:00 a.m.

**Public Comment (3:13:25)**

Chris Hubbell, 8055 Angell Road, spoke on the topic of reimbursing the township for marijuana expenses and community appreciation of Goss and her help.

Brandon Flynn volunteered to man the tire service on 6/12 and will keep track of the tire count.

Linda Slopsema spoke on the topic of marijuana, Zoom, and non-mask-wearing.

Rod Rebant spoke on the topic of board votes, citizen advisory groups, and using parks to host forums on community issues.

Vern Gutknecht spoke on the topic of board behavior and professional conduct, Washington politicians, and special interest groups in the township.

**Adjournment (3:23:58)**

**Motion by Hubbell to adjourn; second by Popp. Roll call vote: Vollmuth, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Benak, yes; Popp, yes.** Meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss  
Whitewater Township Clerk