

*DRAFT MINUTES – FOR 10/09/2018 CONSENT CALENDAR***Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting held September 25, 2018****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: Treasurer Benak, Clerk Goss, Trustee Hubbell, Trustee Lawson, Popp

Board members absent: None

Others present: 9

A moment of silence was observed for the passing of Zoning Administrator Dennis Habedank.

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

Goss proposed adding discussion of zoning administrator position.

Added as New Business #9.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

John Nolan, 9933 Miami Beach Road, stated he hopes the board will take into consideration the following during discussion of whether to forward the Miami Beach sewer ordinance to legal review:

- In his opinion, it would be remiss to forward the proposed ordinance without predetermining the new rate resolution and replacement costs, which are excluded.
- The new billing rate and replacement fund strategy in the proposed draft appear to be an extreme or out of the ordinary increase, especially when compared to neighboring communities. Fife Lake charges \$15 per month, which includes the debt to fund their system. Elk Rapids is \$53 per month, including \$16 toward funding of debt. At a detail level, the replacement fund does not define base cost of the original system. He stated he thinks the replacement fund cost would exclude one-time costs such as legal, bond, and design costs. In business cases he has developed in the past, CPI would be omitted when the funds were interest bearing, which is included in the proposed strategy for replacement costs. In addition, the replacement fund strategy does not factor in the existing collected funds of \$70,000.
- For reasons unknown, historic financials were only made available today at 5 o'clock. The BPW seems to have failed to provide audited historic financials, as required in the agreement between BPW and the township.
- He stated he also has concerns regarding the BPW providing funding input into the repeal ordinance when it no longer has ownership to the system. Their future involvement would be only as a service provider.

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- Lack of providing rate resolution and replacement funding does not qualify in transparency to the residents impacted by the ordinance.
- He thanked Popp and Goss for their assistance and efforts in timely addressing his concerns and issues.

Tom Slopsema, 9693 Miami Beach Road, stated he wants to make a couple comments on the proposed Miami Beach sewer ordinance.

- He forwarded some proposed changes this week to Popp. One of the things they suggested was to merge the contract payment fund into the operation and maintenance fund so we end up with two funds, operation/maintenance and replacement. This is to simplify it for them and hopefully for the township. He stated he had also proposed a modest monthly fee increase into the replacement fund. The current replacement fund should be about \$70,000. He stated he proposed a modest increase just to make sure we cover routine component replacement annually, i.e., pump replacement, electronics upgrade, or a switching valve at the field. He stated he has seen historically that BPW has spent money on that sort of stuff.
- He stated they don't see the need at this point to re-fund an entire replacement fund. However it is calculated, if we use previous new system costs from 1997 and amortize it with CPIs over X number of years and then end up with a big fund in the future, maybe \$600,000, maybe \$800,000, their proposal is we not re-fund an entire new system at this point. We replace what we need to, and if we start having problems in the future and we can see we need to do major replacement, say, of the concrete tanks or of the force main common line -- those are the big money items -- at that point, they are wondering if they could issue a new bond. That is how they funded the system 21 years ago. He stated he just got done paying last year his portion of the 20 years of the new system. He is hoping not to start funding an entire new system again today. Based on the condition assessment by Gourdie-Fraser done last year, it looks like the major dollar items are out another 30 years from now, so he was hoping to gain another 30 years before he has to re-fund another new system.
- They also included proposed wording which puts more teeth into requiring the Miami Beach Road Association to annually evaluate the individual systems for sludge and replace those filters. He stated he just spoke with Gary Koteskey yesterday, who emphasized to him that the effluent filter socks are preventing any and all solids from getting into the main system. He stated he did not ask BPW at the lift station how clean it is. He stated they routinely pump that out maybe once a year or so. He does not have data on if there is ever sludge accumulated in there. There should be zero sludge in there with the filter socks. If a homeowner allows too much sludge to accumulate in his system, the sock will plug, his pump will deadhead, and the pump tank will fill up and an alarm will go off. He stated that happened to at least one resident on their road this year. It kept the system clean, so the filter requirement should remain in there and that is keeping the common system very clean.
- He stated they also added wording clarifying that the township owns up to the service valves, and clarifies that anything toward the house from the service valve is the homeowner's responsibility for cost and maintenance.
- He stated they definitely have to keep working with the township in the future on their operation and maintenance costs. Up till now, the BPW has been charging them \$7,000 a

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year, according to what is posted on the township website. He stated that doesn't look too bad to him, but in the original agreement it said that they want to charge 0.5% of their annual budget. Maybe in 1996 or 1997, when this was set up, that was a good way to do it. He is hoping, if there is another agreement with BPW, not to make the annual fee based on a percentage of their overall budget but based on historical what are we charged, how much work are they really doing, to maybe come to more real numbers.

Correspondence

1. 09/14/2018 E-mail Eva Lenzini re: Internet
2. 09/04/2018 Dave Milliron Update re: Rural Fire Asset Distribution

There were no comments on the items of correspondence.

Public Hearing

None

Reports/Presentations**Rebecca Koteskey, Grand Traverse Conservation District, re: Invasive Species Information**

Rebecca Koteskey is here representing the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network. She listed which counties they work in and the services they provide. She is hoping the township will adopt an invasive species ordinance for new commercial buildings in the township.

Popp asked how we enforce this.

Koteskey replied that it is usually placed under a landscaping ordinance, so if somebody is coming to get a land use permit, they would be shown the recommended planting guidelines and the ordinance that goes along with it. She added that they are primarily terrestrial. They do not have any aquatic resources at this time.

In response to a question from Hubbell, she stated Bingham Township approved all classes except Class 4.

Goss asked Koteskey what the penalty should be for violating this proposed ordinance.

Koteskey replied maybe just tear out the invasive species and dispose of it correctly, and replace it with a native species. She acknowledged that she does not want to see anyone go to jail.

Unfinished Business**Elkwood Shores Community Drain Field Project – Request to Accept or Decline Responsibility – Attorney Review**

Recent correspondence from the township attorney cited the Worth Township case, “a decision where failing septic along Lake Huron was ultimately held by the DEQ to be the responsibility of the township; the judgment entered against that township required them to build a system that cost millions of dollars.”

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Goss stated the question asked of the attorney was what the township's liability is with respect to septic systems for lake lots and whether we are able to require developers of these systems to hold the township harmless from liability. Goss noted the board has already declined responsibility for the Elkwood Shores Community Drain Field Project, but do the developers and/or the association have to provide us with something that holds the citizens of the township harmless from any liability so the township cannot be forced to come up with a lot of money in case something goes wrong.

Goss further noted that the attorney's e-mail is asking if the board wants that question answered.

Some details of the Worth Township case were discussed.

Goss stated her suggestion is that we find out whether we are able to have these developers hold the township harmless from ever having to be responsible for something, a legal opinion on how we can prevent that from ever happening to Whitewater Township.

Hubbell asked what do you do about the ones that have been in there forever and the developers are long gone; he would like to have the opinion of the attorney on that, too. Hubbell noted that all of the township's lake frontage is developed; he would like to know the answer, where we stand.

Discussion followed.

Goss would also like to know whether the township has liability with respect to private lakes in the township, i.e., Island Lake, Truax Lake.

Popp mentioned streams and asked if they would be added. Boardman River?

Hubbell stated any pond, water, or stream in the township; he wants to know the answer.

Nolan stated the DEQ might be able to give you guidance versus taking it to an attorney.

There was consensus that the attorney will be asked the above questions. Goss will contact the attorney.

Consumers Energy Franchise Renewal – Attorney Review – Set Public Hearing Date Motion by Benak to schedule the Consumers Energy Franchise Renewal Ordinance for public hearing at the 10/23/2018 regular meeting date, as revised by the attorney; second by Hubbell. There was no further discussion. On voice vote, all those present voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Proposed Miami Beach Sewer Ordinance – Discuss Updates/Approval to Send to Attorney

Popp stated he is looking for approval to send the ordinance he has revised to Patterson, and noted that he has a couple questions from the public that he will send along. Addressing the earlier public comment, he stated the rate resolution really has very little to do with the actual ordinance itself.

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Benak stated she would like to ask the attorney if we can turn this over to the association.

Popp stated yes, we can do that (ask the attorney), but he does not know that there is a lot of support from the Miami Beach Association members to run their own sewer system.

Benak stated she just wants to know the answer if it can legally be done, if it is an option or not.

Popp stated that is the first question he would ask, before the attorney reviews the ordinance.

Hubbell stated he wants to add to the question: Can we? And what all is involved in doing that?

Benak pointed out that it also hinges on the first question we are asking about being held harmless.

Referring to Popp's mention of the township's fixed asset disposal policy in the board packet, Goss pointed out that this would not be disposal of a fixed asset. If it was done, it would be the turning over of a sewer system to a private entity.

Popp restated the questions: Can we sell the system back to the association? And how can we be held not responsible?

Turning to the ordinance document created by Popp, Goss stated she thinks some things are being assumed in the document that she is not sure the township board is okay with:

- For instance, that the township board wants to be responsible for operation and maintenance of the system. She stated she does not see the township board wanting to be responsible for that. There is currently a contract with the DPW, which will continue unless 6 months' notice of intent to terminate is given by either party.
- In section 4, where it says Rates and Usage, Goss noted that it sounds like there is an intent to control the usage of each individual property owner, which she is not sure can be done.

Popp noted that section 4 was added consistent with Divozzo's recommendation that if the quality of the effluent drops to a certain level, they want to be able to increase the rate because of additional treatments that are required or shut the user off.

Benak noted that none of the systems have meters.

It was stated that if a user is shut off, the waste would back up in their house.

Juanita Pierce stated that then people will start putting in their own drain fields again, which is not a good idea.

Goss quoted section 4, "Some fees will be flat rate whether or not your assigned riser is active and are meant to offset those known costs, while other fees may be use based and are computed on volume or capacity of the system used, either by actual measurement or estimated volumes,

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ensuring a proportional bill with proportional use,” and noted that it is not proper legal language, as well as it is extremely confusing as to the intent. Goss also stated that rates need to be standardized. Proportional rates will be a billing nightmare.

Popp stated that a water meter would be installed and that is how you get the use-based information. That is meant to protect those people who are gone in the winter and those people who are here year-round. It is meant to defer or amortize those costs equally to the use of the system.

In response to Hubbell’s question, Popp stated the water meter would be installed at the well head.

Hubbell asked what about those with irrigation; there has to be a way to back that out.

Popp stated Elk Rapids charges more for sprinklers.

Benak asked about people who rent their homes on a weekly basis with 10 people in the house and more toilet flushing.

Popp stated that is why this is built to have flexibility.

Benak inquired if there are current systems where this type of fluctuation is billed, to which Popp responded yes, around the south end of Lake Cadillac.

The BPW, the county septage facility, and the situation in Elk Rapids was briefly discussed.

Benak said that we should not put the wording in there if we have no way to track it through a metered system. It can be added later, when the users want to have it tracked, but meanwhile keeping this clear and straightforward. Benak stated if we pass an ordinance, she wants it to pertain to what is happening today. If meters are added later, we would amend the ordinance to add this type of information.

Goss noted there are a number of mistakes in the document, and stated that at the point it is sent to Patterson, he should be provided with the original document as well.

Benak pointed out that Patterson also needs some guidance on what it is we are doing, because the original ordinance was put in place when we had bonds out and we had to have contracts. That’s not there anymore. The bonds are done. It is a different situation.

Popp stated that Nolan brought up whether Public Act 94 still applied, and stated the reason why it was left in is because we may want a bond for a future replacement. If it is the board’s opinion that we just focus on what is in front of us today, then likely the 94 language can be dropped. But it is an attorney question.

Goss asked that Patterson be provided with the contract between the township and the DPW.

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Popp asked the clerk to provide him with a certified copy of Ordinance 28.

Goss stated the attorney should be asked how it should be spelled out that the township board is not responsible for the day-to-day maintenance. It is spelled out in the original ordinance, but it has been struck out.

Discussion ensued with respect to the owner of the system choosing which entity will operate and maintain it.

Referring to section 3, Benak stated she would like to take “person or persons” completely out and have it just be “entities” because she does not think anybody in this township is qualified to operate, manage, or maintain the system. It needs to be a professional service that does it, and we should be able to pick who it is. So far, she has not heard that they are unhappy with the DPW.

Goss agreed that supervision and control of the system needs to be contracted out.

Goss stated she will send Patterson these minutes when they are done so he has the benefit of the discussion.

Goss then asked: Does this agreement infer that the township is going to do the billing? Goss stated her office is not going to do it, and unless the treasurer volunteers to do it, the township is not going to be doing billing.

Benak stated no.

Popp noted this is an ordinance, not an agreement, and stated the current agreement does not cover billing either.

Nolan noted that it states the BPW is responsible for billing at the township’s request.

Goss stated that, especially due to the events of yesterday, her time to review the proposed ordinance was less than she wanted it to be and she only got to section 5.

Nancy Letherby, 10037 Miami Beach Road, referring to section 5B, stated discussions at previous meetings have acknowledged that the filter socks are a great thing to have and have kept the system running well, but it was also discussed that private tanks should not be required to be pumped every 3 years. A lot of the property owners have just had their pump tank measured for the amount of sludge in it. She stated theirs was zero for the rating and less than 5" in the septic tank. The whole idea is to leave some of that in there for the bacteria to grow. She said they asked the people who did their inspections yesterday and they said there is no point in pumping your tank; it is a waste of money; it is just a few inches and it is not necessary or healthy, but that requirement is still in there in section 5, no less than every 3 years.

Popp replied that this document is unaltered, and perhaps what Ms. Letherby does not have is the short synopsis of written comments he received and how he interpreted them.

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Nolan commented that Slopsema forwarded some, but they are not in the summary.

Popp acknowledged he has not looked at those and has moved into budget. Popp noted the county's depreciation schedule uses a 1.5% rate of inflation. Popp's data came back at 2.14% as noted by the department of bureau and statistics. He stated he is trying to get with county administration and their finance people to see if municipalities qualify for a different rate. He stated they are bringing in the county finance director to get advice on replacement schedules.

Slopsema stated that the flat rate wording in section 4, as mentioned earlier by Goss, is lined out in the version he got from Popp. He asked that they be able to access the copy that goes to the attorney.

Popp stated he wants to leave the document as the board sees it and then supply comments to Patterson from the public.

Nolan stated there is a meter at the pumping station which measures how many gallons per day the station processes, and there is an average per household calculated on that, not to exceed 10,000. That is part of the reason the flat rate went across all the residents. He stated he agrees with Goss; he doesn't think anybody wants a usage basis. What they had in the past worked really well for 21 years, is what they said, and they just want it to be competitive.

Popp stated that is fine, but we also have three people who do not use any, and you're asking them to pay the same amount as you. That is not equitable.

Goss and Benak both replied that they (the people not using any) are part of the system. Goss added that their ownership could change tomorrow and they could become the highest user. It has to be standardized so everybody pays the same thing.

Hubbell agreed.

Goss commented that otherwise it is too much work to figure out all the usage; it will be a nightmare.

Benak asked Popp if he knows what the cost is going to be to put a per-user meter in.

Goss asked who is going to read them.

Benak stated if the filter socks and tanks are checked every year, why would it be mandatory to have tanks pumped every three years.

Popp stated this is in lieu of; they are saying that we want somebody to track that lot 33 has 12" of sludge in their septic tank, but lot 21 only has 4".

An audience member stated they will check that every year themselves.

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Benak stated it does not need to be in our ordinance.

Popp stated to track it, it does, because that sets the pumping schedule.

Nolan stated we asked that we would provide a report every year to the DPW or to the township showing compliance that the tanks are being maintained.

Goss asked if that has been done previously.

Nolan replied that it has been done on an every-two-year basis. Every two years, they measure the sludge, come up with a report, tell the homeowners it is good, bad. Gary Kotesky measures.

Slopsema noted that Kotesky gives the report to the owners.

Ron Bertul stated they have the responsibility to pump.

Goss clarified that the owners act on Kotesky's report indicating how much sludge is in their tank and whether a tank needs to be pumped.

Nolan stated that they want to do that because if the sludge builds up, your pump is going to burn up and you are going to end up with about an \$800 repair. They also have alarms on the system; as soon as it doesn't work, it lights up. Your neighbor knows, you know you have issues, and you don't want it backing up into your house.

Bertul stated the only one it hurts is the homeowner himself. If he doesn't pump, he has the problem.

Benak inquired if this rule of thumb is in the Miami Beach homeowner association bylaws.

Slopsema replied that it is not in the bylaws. They propose to put it in this new ordinance, to put some teeth into it.

Goss inquired who is going to enforce it.

Nolan replied: The association.

Slopsema stated they propose that they will check everybody's system every year, replace the filter every year, evaluate the sludge level every year, and then provide the township with the report. He stated they are asking the township to allow them to pump as required based on that report, and get rid of this pump every three years.

Hubbell asked who will enforce that.

Slopsema stated the association contracts Kotesky and he goes down the road and does every one. The cost comes out of their association fees.

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There was discussion of what should be included in the ordinance, or not, with respect to individual owner requirements and the report.

After some discussion, there was agreement that the report should go to the service provider, whoever is taking care of the system.

There was discussion of the next step in the process. Goss stated Popp can send the proposed ordinance to the attorney and she can continue her review and send her questions directly to the attorney.

Hubbell and Lawson agreed with that course of action.

Popp stated the only changes he has not reviewed is what Slopsema and Nolan submitted Wednesday night.

Benak said this is the document that we are saying go ahead and send, so don't make any changes to this. Just send their correspondence if you want.

Nolan stated it is proposed in the ordinance that their current fee go from \$25 to \$100 a month. The 5% for BPW is going to be about \$33. The amortization of a replacement fund would equate to somewhere between \$50 and \$60 per month to every home, and then there is the added cost that was originally in there for a 3-year pumping, which is about \$1,000 each pumping time. The board, until they realize how much burden is going to be put on the homeowners, the added burden of the new fees, he thinks it needs to be part of the board's decision.

Fees and monies to be set aside for replacement were briefly discussed, as well as the next steps.

Nolan stated he found Fife Lake and Elk Rapids to have a very simple version. If it would help the board, he would volunteer to look at 4 or 5 communities for simpler versions of ordinances that other communities have.

Board members welcomed the offer.

It was noted that the ordinance will not be sent to the attorney at this time.

Popp stated he would need the information from Nolan by 11/7 or 11/8.

New Business**Review/Approve L-4029 Tax Rate Request**

Popp provided a draft form. Goss noted some corrections.

Motion by Goss to approve the 2018 Tax Rate Request form, with changes as noted; second by Lawson. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Motion carried.**

Goss will modify the form and put it in the supervisor's box tomorrow.

Elections Department Capital Expenditure

Motion by Lawson to approve the purchase of an ExpressVote device and kiosk at a cost of \$3,700; second by Hubbell. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes. Motion carried.**

Motion by Popp to approve moving \$2500 from General Fund Capital Expenditure and \$1200 from General Fund Contingency to Election Department Capital Expenditure; second by Benak. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

Discuss Wireless ISPs/Repeater Locations at Whitewater Township Park re: Service to Skegemog Point Road

Popp described that people on the west side of Skegemog Point Road have been struggling with Internet services, and pointed out that Cherry Capital Connection sits on the park property and supplies Internet service to Whitewater Township Park. He proposed that if Cherry Capital is not capable of providing bandwidth to people on the point, what about another company by the name of COLI Communication, now 186.

After discussion, there was consensus that the vendors will not be invited in.

Halloween Party Event Contract

Motion by Hubbell to approve the Event Contract for the 43rd Annual Community Halloween Party; second by Lawson. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes. Motion carried.**

Review Proposed Miami Beach Sewer System Budget – Rough Draft

Popp stated there is no budget to produce at this point.

Grand Traverse County Request to Create/Name Private Road / Zoning Administrator Staff Report – Request for Private Road Name

In addition to the documents in the packet, Goss provided information obtained from Mike Steffes at County GIS about how the process works when a street is named.

Brief discussion followed.

Motion by Hubbell to name the unimproved 66' wide easement south of Miami Beach Road as Gardner Road; second by Lawson. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Lawson, yes; Hubbell, yes. Motion carried.**

Goss stated she will notify Mike Steffes tomorrow.

Attorney Question re: Zoning Ordinance Amendments

This agenda item involves a request by the township attorney for clarification on how to proceed after receiving an e-mail from the planning commission chairperson in which additional

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information was requested to be provided with the attorney's review of zoning ordinance amendments.

Goss stated the question is: Is the board going to authorize the attorney's office to do this additional work on zoning ordinance amendments? The attorney's office has said, yes, they can do that, but it is going to cost more.

Popp stated he has a different view of what was sent, and read aloud his reply to the attorney's e-mail.

Lengthy discussion followed.

The culmination of the discussion was that planning commission communication intended for the attorney must go through a board member or the zoning administrator, preferably the zoning administrator. It does not go from the planning commission chair directly to the attorney.

It was clarified that Mangus's e-mail to the attorney was referring to Articles 6, 7, and 14.

Goss stated that she will forward to everyone what she sent to the attorney regarding the proposed amendments of Articles 6, 7, and 14.

Further, Goss will respond to the attorney's e-mail confirming that it is about Articles 6, 7, and 14, and ask him to provide his commentary and a brief rationale on his changes.

Access to Attorney

There was consensus of the board that the planning commission will not have direct access to the attorney.

Brief discussion followed.

There was no disagreement with Mangus's request for clarification that she will send any questions for the attorney to the zoning administrator or Lawson.

Discussion of Zoning Administrator Position (added)

There was consensus that the position will be posted with the existing job description. Ads will be placed at MTA, Record-Eagle, Antrim Review, Michigan Association of Planning.

Goss stated she has put out some feelers for an interim ZA and asked everyone to do the same.

Brief discussion followed.

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

This agenda item will remain tabled.

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Review Ordinance 22 Pension Plan (tabled 10/25/2016)

This agenda item will remain tabled.

Review Whitewater Township Planning & Zoning Fees (tabled 02/28/2017)

This agenda item will remain tabled.

Board Comments/Discussion

None

Announcements

Next regular township board meeting 10/09/2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment

Kim Mangus, 1214 Cerro Drive, thanked the board for providing some clarity and stated there was no intent on her or the PC's part to circumvent anyone.

Benak stated if the PC has something formal they want to come to the board, do it through Lawson.

Mangus replied that the PC will be sending a formal letter to the board through Lawson. Also, regarding cable internet access within Whitewater Township, Verizon's 5G network is going to be fully operational this December.

Tom Czerwienski, 7021 Cook Road, stated the event barn was the one that triggered their involvement here, and after coming to the meetings here, he would like to compliment all the board members here and even the planning commission. Just listening to all of the things going on here and the complications that they all involve, he appreciates what all of the board members are taking the time to do.

Adjournment

Motion by Hubbell to adjourn; second by Popp. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk