

Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held May 26, 2011

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Township Board members present: Benak, Boyd, Hockin, Hubbell and Lake.

Township Board members absent: None

Others attending: Fire Chief/Ambulance Coordinator Stites and 15 others

The Agenda as Written in Special Meeting Notice:

1. Rural Fire Department Dispute Resolution Consideration
2. Temporary Sign Request (Leslie Meyers)

Add:

3. Park Capital Expenditure

The agenda was set as amended.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Hockin stated she is a board member of the Williamsburg United Methodist Church that is requesting temporary signs for the Strawberry Social. It was the consensus that Hockin does not have a conflict of interest.

Public Comment

Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Rd

- Asked if public can ask questions or make comments during the board discussions.

Rural Fire Department Dispute Resolution

- Lake read an excerpt from the Rural Fire minutes of 4/20/11.
- Boyd feels Rural's response is vague.
- Lake stated he will make decision based on Whitewater's best interest.
- Boyd, money assessed does not equate to returns. Has concerns regarding management of our battalion if we get out of Rural Fire.
- Hubbell wants out of Rural Fire.
- Benak wants out of Rural Fire; it is time for Township to take responsibility.
- Hockin feels township can make it without Rural Fire.
- Letter of withdrawal needs to be sent to Rural Fire representatives and clerks from each township.
- Lake, cost of study proposed by Rural is excessive and they will not be funding a study.
- Hockin, Whitewater already has the fire based EMS even though the funding is separate. What Rural has proposed will take a while to implement.
- Lake, we need to look at equipment cost. Also need to look at storage of the equipment for the long term.
- Lake, what about proposals that may come from our neighbors, i.e. Tribe and Acme Twp.
- Hubbell, we already have storage for the equipment we have. The ladder truck may have to go back if we cannot store it.

- Stites, 2 ambulances and 2 fire trucks can be housed at the current fire station.
- Ladder truck was given to Whitewater Township, titled to Rural Fire to be placed in Whitewater Township.
- Hubbell if we leave Rural, I believe that the Tribe will step up and assist with a building so ladder truck can be housed in Whitewater Township.
- Additional discussion of how to house the ladder truck.
- Lake asked the board about their thoughts on other proposals that may be forthcoming.
- Hockin, we need to wait until those proposals are presented and then make a decision. Benak agrees.
- Lake can make decision about Rural if he knows that the Board will consider other proposals.
- Boyd feels it is our township and building needs to be on our property; mutual aid would be welcomed.
- Benak, Fire Advisory Board needs to be established to gather information and get back to us.
- Boyd read a statement (a copy was not provided to board members) regarding dissolving the current fire and ambulance command structure and to have the current ambulance persons apply for command of that department and to not have a single person in charge of both fire and ambulance. If Whitewater Township leaves Rural Fire a new command structure including an advisory group to discuss and recommend to the Whitewater Township Board the names of interested and qualified persons for the position of an active volunteer Fire Chief. In both divisions the pay scale should be made equal for the quality of service and not based on years of involvement with the departments. The Whitewater Township Board needs to move ahead with the establishment of an advisory group; written consideration from the local residents including their interest and experience should be requested at once for the formation of the advisory group to resolve these issues, not months.
- Lake, because of our Rural Fire association we cannot establish a Fire Board at this time.
- Boyd, we need someone to do research on equipment, we could establish a committee.
- Lake, the issue of restructuring the command structure has to be separate from the decision to leave Rural Fire.
- Boyd, if we leave Rural Fire, we need to start with a clean slate; not keep any of the old structure or habits. This is a chance to get a fresh start.

Moved by Hubbell, seconded Benak to terminate participation in the Rural Division Intergovernmental Agreement, effective December 31, 2011, due to lack of satisfaction in the dispute resolution process.

- Hubbell, building may not be something that is needed right away.
- Boyd, advisory group should look at bare minimums.

There was considerable additional discussion.

Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Boyd, yes; Hockin, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lake, no. **Motion approved 4-1.**

Upon request from Lake, Fire Chief Stites reported to the board on information received from the Tribal Risk manager regarding information being presented to the Tribal Council on 6/7/11 to build a fire station on tribal property and lease it to Whitewater Township.

Emergency Services Advisory Committee

- Hockin, suggests advisory committee research equipment, finance and personnel individually so not so much for one group of people.
- Benak suggests a five member group.
- Boyd has draft by-laws for a five member group (copy not provided to board).
- Boyd again suggests a clean slate beginning January 1st.

Ad for members should be placed in both newspapers and a letter should be written.

Moved by Benak, seconded by Hubbell to form and organize an Emergency Services Advisory Committee and to advertise for members in the e-letter, Traverse City Record Eagle, Elk Rapids News and on the website. **Motion approved.**

Qualifications were discussed: Township resident; fire, ambulance, emergency services background; business management, finance; grant research.

Responses should be received by June 10th.

There was a discussion of priorities and future buildings.

Temporary Sign Request

Planning/Zoning Administrator Meyers presented a temporary sign request from Williamsburg United Methodist Church for their Strawberry Social being held on June 11th.

Moved by Hubbell, seconded by Benak to approve the temporary sign request from Williamsburg United Methodist Church for their Strawberry Social being held on June 11th. **Motion approved.**

It was the consensus that the Planning Commission should revisit the Zoning Ordinance and amend the ordinance allowing the zoning administrator to approve temporary sign requests for non-profits.

Park Capital Expenditure

Hockin presented a quote from Steuer Excavating Inc in the amount of \$5,300 for improvements to the campground interior roads; the quote includes repairs from the storm on Sunday that must be completed prior to the coming weekend. Hockin stated she did not know the cost of repairs that are included in the quote.

Benak stated that 3 quotes are required for any bid over \$5,000 and asked why Hockin did not present 3 quotes.

Hockin responded that past experience shows that Steuer is the best vendor for the work to be done.

Hubbell noted if the bid was less than \$5,000, three quotes would not be needed.

The board discussed the capital expenditure and the repairs and instructed Hockin to have the repair work done separately and to obtain new quotes for the capital expenditures.

Public Comment

Cheryl Walton, 8423 Crisp Rd

- Spoke on population of City of Lake City and Lake Township; population is more than Whitewater Township and budget is less than \$206,000 that is budgeted by Whitewater Township.

Tim Shaffer, 5309 Moore Rd

- Asked if Rural Fire has ever provided an evaluation of the trucks?
- 5 member EMS Fire Committee will work out well working on equipment, training, personnel, and ambulance.
- Stated he is looking at combining Fire and Ambulance.
- Asked if the Lutz building is a possibility.
- Committee should look at training area.
- Board has discussed Lake City-asked if board has talked to Blair Township?
- Suggests keeping current fire chief until 1/1/12.

Announcements

Next meeting is regular meeting on 6/14.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Hockin, Clerk