

Watson Township Board Meeting
May 1, 2014

Called to order: 7:01 P.M.

Present:

Sue Jones, Chuck Andrysiak, Rod Zeinstra, Pam Brown, and Kelli Morris.

Absent:

None.

Agenda Approval:

Chuck made a motion to approve the agenda, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Reports:

Allegheny County Road Commission:

Larry Brown attended and gave a report and explained the process of a "Safety Project" on 120th Ave. and 16th Street. This project was the result of a grant applied and awarded to the county earlier this year. John Andrysiak asked Mr. Brown about the possibility of passing a law allowing ORV's on roadways. Mr. Brown explains that this would not actually be something the "county" road commission would have authority to pass, it would be a "state law" and it is currently being reviewed (and the state did ask for input from the county). Mr. Brown is not in favor of having ORV's on "all" county roads. There is also some discussion with an audience member about using a type of enzyme or limestone to make the gravel roads more of a hard surface like pavement. Mr. Brown discussed some elements of this process and let him know that is actually difficult to find a road with the proper characteristics to be a candidate for these types of applications. Mr. Brown also gave everyone some information on the "Road Risk Reserve Fund" grant that was awarded to the county in the sum of \$300,000.00. Because it was unknown at the time of the grant the cost of the project for the bridge on 112th, Mr. Brown facilitated getting both the bridge on 112th and the one around the corner on 20th St. done.

Mr. Brown answered questions about the difference between "boxed end" culverts and "wood" bridges, explaining that there were many differences, but the most important would be the cost.

There is a question raised about putting "speed limit" signs on 16th St. Mr. Brown explained that they do not have any plans to do that, and the state law on an unmarked road is 55 mph.

Gary McNeil inquires about cleaning the ditches and the disposal of Phragmite weed. Mr. Brown is unaware of this weed, but will look into it further.

Mr. Brown also gave everyone some information on some local projects not in Watson Township. Those included one on "old" U.S. 131 just north of Moline, this area will be converted into a 3-lane road, with a turn lane. Another project is 138th St. to 128th St., which will be paved the first part of August. Also in Plainwell from the Railroad track to 106th Ave. will be re-paved.

Pam asked Mr. Brown how the "grading cycle" is determined. Mr. Brown explains that is "not" scientific process, because the roads can vary so greatly. Lastly, Mr. Brown also explains a little about the grading of gravel roads.

The board and the audience appreciated Mr. Brown and Mr. Culver attending the meeting and felt the information they shared was very informative.

County Commissioners- Jon Campbell:

Jon Campbell reported that April was declared "Older American" and "Child Abuse Awareness" month. Other business for the month included the approval of a mental health grant and working with the state police on the WEMET program. Cathy Pardee asks Mr. Campbell about passing a law to allow ORV riding on county roads. There is some discussion with Mr. Campbell as well as other audience members about the subject of ORV on roads. Another audience member asks about the 911 surcharge, and Mr. Campbell explains that it is now a charge on all phone devices because they all have the ability of calling 911.

Senator Genetski:

Senator Genetski attended the meeting and gave a report that included State estimates and revenues expected. He also let everyone know that the Governor has asked for another class of “new” Troopers. Also the Governor has asked for fund to repair the DNR Research Vessel. The Senator also shared information about Detroit and its bankruptcy. The Senator also explained that under the “House” version of the budget, each township would receive over seven dollars per person and this would mean over \$14,000.00 more in revenue sharing for Watson Township.

Ken Pardee asked about a new police post. Mr. Genetski explained that they are working with Wayland city on a new building.

Everyone appreciated Senator Genetski attending the meeting and sharing information from the “State Capital”.

Steve Shultz:

Steve Shultz attended and announced his candidacy for the position of State Representative in the 80th District. Mr. Shultz has been Township Supervisor for Allegan for 14 years. He shared some information about his personal life, including his wife and four daughters. He owns an excavating business and grew up and still lives on a small farm in the community. He shared some information about “meth houses” and its effects on family, property values, and the general neighborhood. He considers himself very “vested” in the community and would appreciate the support of the board and community members in the upcoming election.

The board thanked Mr. Shultz for attending and sharing some information about himself and his candidacy.

Hopkins Fire Chief:

The supervisor read the Hopkins Fire Chief Report in detail for the board and audience members present.

Cemetery Report:

Sexton John Andrysiak gave a reported one funeral for Bernice Norton. John also inquires about some of his duties as sexton with respect to Cemetery cleanup (i.e. old plants, baskets, etc.). The board comes to the consensus that it is best to use his own judgment as to what to remove, as there is an ordinance in place that allows the sexton to remove such items. It becomes basically a matter of the grave sites, stones, and cemetery in general being kept neat and well groomed. If there are items that do not seem to be neat and well groomed, it would be best to remove them. John Dolegowski suggests putting a date on the bottom of the containers placed at the cemetery.

There is also some discussion on the repair of some headstones at the cemeteries. Pam explains that the township does have some money allotted for that purpose. Steve Shultz also added that there are some grants available for “stone” repair.

Planning Commission Report:

Chuck reported that they discussed “fracking” and some of the past ordinances. They did have one guest from the campground for an update.

Supervisor’s Report:

Pam reported that the drain commission completed work on the Pope/Yeldon Drain. She also reminded everyone of “Spring Clean Up” which will be May 3rd from 9:00 a.m. till 2:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Rod made a motion to approve the minutes from April 28th, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried. Chuck made a motion to approve the minutes from April 3rd, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Bills:

A motion was made by Chuck to pay the bills for April, in the amount of \$16,079.82, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Sue gave a report on current bank balances.

Old Business:**1. Proposed Wind/Solar Energy Ordinance Review:**

Rod made a motion to move the subject to next month's meeting, Chuck supported, all in favor, motion carried.

New Business:**1. News Paper Publication Laws:**

With the "new" publication laws for legal ads, it has become impossible for township to comply with the laws of the state with reference to "time frames" allowed to place such notices in the Penasee Globe. This is the result of the "Globe" and the change in publication deadlines. Chuck made a motion to use the "Allegan County news and Gazette" as the township's "legal" publication paper for the remainder of 2014-2015 fiscal year, Rod supported; roll call vote: Rod-yes; Chuck-yes; Sue-yes; Kelli-yes; and Pam-yes. The supervisor declared the motion passed by a vote of 5-yes; and 0-no votes.

2. Mileage Renewal for Road Improvements:

Pam read the "ballot language" for the Road Improvement Mileage. Rod made a motion to approve the ballot language as read, Chuck supported, all in favor, motion carried.

3. Cost Share for Gravel on 112th Ave.:

Pam explained that Otsego Township has approached Watson Township about sharing the cost of graveling on 112th Ave. Chuck made a motion to share the cost of graveling one mile of 112th Ave. by 50%, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried.

4. Request from Karen Fifelski:

The board discussed passing a motion approving the permission of individual members signing a "Protect pure Michigan" letter. The board does not want to pass a motion at this time. Steve Schultz suggests going together as townships to get advice from the attorney that many of the local townships use, as to cut down on cost and get some guidance on the subject.

Public Comment (for topics not on the agenda):

Gary McNeil inquires about the township receiving a letter from "The Wray's" who live next to the township hall. Pam explains that the township as not received a letter from them at this time. Ken Pardee asks if the township would go forward and discuss allowing ORV on township roads, or possibly but the question on the ballot. There is some discussion on the subject of ORV riding on roadways in general by the board and audience members.

Adjourn:

Rod made a motion to adjourn, Sue supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned: 9:32 P.M.