

**Watson Township Board Meeting
February 1, 2018**

Called to order: 7:00 P.M.

Present:

Kevin Travis, Sue Jones, Chuck Andrysiak, Michelle Harris, and Kelli Morris

Agenda:

Trustee Harris made a motion to approve the agenda, Clerk Morris supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Minutes:

Treasurer Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected for January 4, 2018; Trustee Andrysiak supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Public Comment:

Trustee Harris read emails sent to the township and board members. She read the submitted statements from the following residents (per their request): Mike and C. Lee Pavlak, Christine Fontaine, and Sue and Rod Zeintsra. Trustee Andrysiak also received a phone call from a resident that has just built a home adjacent to the property proposed for the Marihuana facility. These folks were actually in attendance and personally gave the board the information and John Caras (123rd St.)

Supervisor Travis is questioning an email he received from Christine Fontaine resigning from the BOR. Supervisor Travis asked Curt Fontaine if he knew the wishes of his wife Christine. Curt let supervisor Travis know that she does not want to remain on the BOR.

Mr. Caras would like to thank the board for its diligence in this matter. He also wanted to clear up that Symponia Farms is run by two disabled veterans (not supposed disabled veterans). He also wanted to point out that at the last meeting the prosecutor presented information on recreational marihuana, not medical marijuana. He handed out a synopsis of the last meeting (drawn up by non-township member). Mr. Caras also mentioned that the supervisor ran for position on the premise that he wanted more growth and commerce.

Treasurer Jones asked what is currently being grown at Symponia Farms. Mr. Caras answered that they grow fish currently.

Treasurer Jones also questioned how the Symponia Farms downloaded the address list from the county.

Mr. Hersburger answered that he copied and pasted the addresses from the county's web tax data base to a program on his computer to create the mailings.

Bill Holden (16th St.) asked Supervisor Travis why the township would even be thinking of Medical Marihuana, and expresses that he would like to see the township remain "rural" and not grow and expand too much. He likes this township the way it is. Supervisor Travis answers that he is to the point that he is ready to back away from this type of commercial medical marihuana. He explains that there are already "grows" all over the township and there is nothing any resident or the township board can do about that as long as they are following the protocol. Additionally, sometimes even when they are not in compliance it is difficult to get authorities to be available and it is quite expensive to enforce compliance.

Scott Hersberger (Richland, MI) added that he believes the vote to create an ordinance was a good step because it outlined what specifically would be allowed. He also adds that his company will make choices soon based on the progress of this ordinance or (absence of one) that include: staying in the township and growing in the Ag zone, creating a Co-op of caregivers, or finding a new spot else ware.

Mike Pavlak (121st Ave.) expresses that he feels if the township goes ahead with creating an ordinance it would have to be absolutely "bullet proof".

Curt Fontaine (13th St.) expressed that he found it troubling that the board directed the planning commission to develop an ordinance even after the supervisor admitted that the survey sent out by the township found 80 against having marihuana grows in the township. He also pointed out that most of people that spoke on the behalf of having this commerce in the township either had a vested interest in the company or were not residents of the township. He also believes it is not the townships job to debate this subject as it has, but rather

to decide to “opt in” or “opt out” of the creation of such an ordinance. He also wanted to hand out an article written by the Michigan Municipal League that outlined some of the pros and cons of such operations. He added that this article was also available on the Michigan Municipal League website.

Bill Holden (16th St.) asked why they chose Watson Township. Trustee Harris answered his question stating that they already owned property in the township.

Reports:

A. Planning Commission:

Trustee Andrysiak reported they had no meeting since our last board meeting; however they will meet next week. Supervisor Travis asked if it was possible for the planning commission to investigate how many animals per acre were allowed in the township. The board will also research the current ordinance and see what is restricted.

B. Fire Chief:

Supervisor Travis read the report of Fire Chief Tim McKinnon for the benefit of the township board and audience members.

C. Sexton:

Mark Simpson reported that was one regular burial at Miner Cemetery last month.

D. Libraries:

None.

E. Supervisor:

Supervisor Travis reported that he is still working on the DNR designation of a “Natural Beauty” Road in Watson Township. This designation keeps the road commission from cutting trees or doing any cosmetic changes to a designated road. He further explains there is an extensive process for this that begins with an application from the State, which is then approved by the township and then the county. He explains that the road would be marked with permanent signs designating it as such, much like in Barry County where they have a bike race course through the county with permanent markers on the roads which the course takes. He also addresses the fact that because there is no funding mechanism for the replacement of historical or natural beauty signs the county has a no sign policy which means that if they signs are lost or damaged they would not be replaced. He also mentioned some personal grants available through the USDA for qualifying residents to do improvements or repairs to their homes. There are also some grants for broadband available in the county to the tune of sixty three million. Supervisor Travis would like to have at least a portion of that. He adds that for information on any of these grants residents should contact the coordinator at the USDA Valerie Handy (Valerie.handy@mi.usda.gov or 231-486-2510).

Jay Eveland also added that the recreational passport pass has generated approximately 4.2 million dollars, and there is a lot of grant money available for rural development projects. Some of these projects could include parks, trails, water ways, and more. The process for the township to apply or take advantage of any of this grant money would include a 5 year plan for any such project. Also, to access any of the “recreational passport” money the township would be required to have a capital plan in place. Additionally, all grants would require permission of signage.

Trustee Andrysiak added that he has inquired on grants to clean up or take care of old dumps or run off waterways, and at this time there are no funds available for this type of clean up. Ms. Eveland added that you could do a surface test of these areas instead of a core test.

F. County Commissioner:

Gale Dugan reported that the county commissioners had re-elected members of its board. He also explains that they are currently dealing with an error in the budgeting from 2013, and they have been asked to repay money received because of this error. They are currently working on a plan for reimbursement. Jay Eveland asked Mr. Dugan is the County is going to look at the sewer in Allegan.

Mr. Dugan answered that the village took advantage of that grant along with a low interest loan to deal with the project.

Bills

Trustee Harris made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$38,968.31, Treasurer Jones supported, all in favor, motion carried.

Treasure's Report

Treasurer Jones gave the Treasure's Report.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

A. Budget Amendments-

Treasure Jones went over the budget amendments needed individually and proposed the amendments outlined below:

1. \$56 from election print/publish- \$48 to election salary/\$8 to election supply.
2. \$200 from building/grounds repair to building/grounds snowplowing.
3. \$28 from twp. equipment repairs to twp. equipment supply.
4. \$880 from cemetery comp-\$350 to cemetery foundations- \$530 to cemetery maintenance.
5. \$400 from sexton pay- \$370 to zba salary- \$30 to zba print/publish.
6. \$200 from deputy clerk to fire/amb salary.
7. \$200 from assessor supply to planning zoning administrator.

Trustee Andrysiak made a motion to adjust the budget as mentioned in the seven amendments above, Treasurer Jones supported, all in favor motion carried.

B. Budget Workshop Meeting-

The board will table setting the meeting until the next meeting.

C. Lawn Care Bids-

The board discussed omitting the number of mows from the bid specification sheet, only including the months for mows of April through October. Trustee Harris made a motion to put the lawn care bid advertisement in the paper and on the web, Treasurer Jones supported, all in favor motion carried. The clerk will place an ad in the paper and notify the web administrator.

Adjourn:

Supervisor Travis makes a motion to adjourn, Trustee Harris supports, all in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned - 8:46 P.M.

Kelli Morris—Watson Township Clerk