

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
4338 BEELINE ROAD
ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND, MI 49423

March 11, 2009

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer called the regular monthly Board of Trustees meeting to order at 8:10 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Hofmeyer, Wendy Van Huis, Ed Stielstra,
Gary Dewey, Bob Scanlan

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Cal Haverdink – Fire Chief
Bob Curnick – Township Deputy
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary
Kathy Stoike – Finance
Charlene Fields – Deputy Treasurer
Mary Geurink – Deputy Clerk
Paul Smith - Assessor

ARTICLE II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the February 11, 2009 meeting. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the minutes as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE III. TREASURERS REPORT/REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the bills for the month of February 2009. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to approve and pay the bills as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Terry Hofmeyer stated that he received a letter from Randy Schipper of Cunningham and Dalman representing three residents in regards to their opposition concerning the non-motorized trail. The residents being represented were Mr. and Mrs. Roger Dorn, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin DeMaadg and Mr. and Mrs. Alex Faith.

ARTICLE V. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Randy Schipper of Cunningham and Dalman spoke to the letter submitted representing property owners on the east side of 64th Street in opposition of the non-motorized trail on that road. The objection is to the easement of extra wide right of way on the property of residents that have homes built closer to the road. Rather than the residents saying no bike path, an alternative would be to have the path across the back of the property through a more pleasant area. It would reduce the cost and eliminate the danger of the driveways.

Patricia Dorn of 3707 64th Street disagrees with the path and does not want it in the front yard but would support it being along the back side of the property.

Cal De Maagd of 3719 64th Street agrees with the bike path comments that have been made so far. Not all of the neighbors agree with putting the path along the back side of the yard.

Dale Scholten of 4228 60th Street addressed the single waste hauler decision and he disagreed that the Board should have the authority to make that kind of decision. A survey was sent but it was never indicated that the results of the survey would determine the outcome. To this date I had not received the letter from Chef Container until someone personally delivered it to my house. My personal situation, I live on 60th Street in a very high traffic area. I used set out a garbage container and cars travel at very high speeds and hit the containers. Now I place bags with out with the current service and have no problems. The second issue is the issue of the officers. It is ironic that the township had two officers and the Board asked for four which was soundly defeated. The board then decided that it is not a priority so you cut from two to one. I read the article about the stimulus plan and I have serious issues with it. I understand that the stimulus money is an option to ask for two to three additional officers at a four year commitment. The stimulus covers only 3 years and the 4th year will cost us money. If we need two officers, then we should budget for two officers.

Randy Becksvoort of 3930 Beeline expressed concern over the article in the Sentinel reporting Bob Scanlan requesting additional officers. The Board should work for the people and not for their own best interests. Their voice should be representative of the residents. I know you are concerned with township spending. I hope you will be worthy of the stimulus spending because it is taxpayers' money. We should not believe that we deserve this money. We should consider it wisely.

Keith Becksvoort of 4468 64th Street spoke about the article on the stimulus money to cover the additional officers. The township voted against additional officers. The first three years will only be covered but not the fourth. Let the county put the deputies on their payroll and not ours. It should be put in front of the voters.

Sam Greydanus of 3735 63rd Street expressed concern with how Chef Container is handling the recycling in the Township. There are several bins at Chef that are always overflowing. Three of the bins, the plastic, glass and cans have three openings but they all fall into one bin.

George Smeenge asked if someone will get back to Sam Greydanus. Terry Hofmeyer stated a response would be provided.

Terry Hofmeyer responded to the concern expressed about the bike path. He stated that the situation is somewhat unusual because of the 100 foot right of way. Houses may have been built assuming a 66 foot right of way. We have talked about where the trail could be located. It was suggested to go through the rear yard. Not everyone is in agreement with that. It was suggested to use the Consumers Power right of way be considered but it is not an option. The Rails to Trails option is not thought to be in the best interest of the residents. The monies we are using are local, state and

federal funds and the project has been on the books for three years.

Terry Hofmeyer addressed the waste hauler concerns and he noted that communities around us have moved to single waste haulers and it has proven to be cost effective. It does not cost as much to go forward with the bag program and the recycling, too. With Chef Container, they will pick up the recycling materials in front of your home. In terms of what they do with the recycling we do know what method they use, they are pulling the recycling out of there before they send it to the landfill.

Terry Hofmeyer acknowledged the concern of the deputies was soundly defeated on the ballot. He recognizes that we had three officers and went to two. Unfortunately, one of the two deputies has been out for six months. This stimulus plan does provide us with an opportunity to increase to two maybe three officers at a minimal expense to the township. We will discuss the budget and you will see that there are minimal increases and we recognize the issues of the economy. The stimulus money is funded by state and federal taxes in some form. We are all paying for it. Hopefully it will be given to those who need it most. Local boards are elected to make decisions and we do not go back and ask for a vote on every issue. Public hearings are held for resident comments.

Bob Scanlan responded to the comments made on the police officers. The request for going back to the number of three officers makes better sense for the protection of the township. The township has covered officers in the past with the general budget. Please separate the security and the financial.

Wendy Van Huis supported Bob Scanlan in that voters voted no in response to the millage not that residents do not want or need additional officers.

Wendy Van Huis also noted that Chef Container will provide a tour and there is also a CD available that explains their recycling process.

Bob Scanlan stated that many of the current providers dump at Chef Container today.

ARTICLE VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. AMEND FY 2008-08 BUDGET

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the amendments.**

Ed Stielstra asked if the amendments will be reflected in the new budget. Al Meshkin responded they will be reflected in the current budget.

ARTICLE VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2009-10 BUDGET

Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the FY 2009-10 Budget. The budget shows that revenue income is fairly flat. Al highlighted several categories of interest. There is no increase in millage and there may be a slight decrease but that number is not available at this time. The Township Board and staff are not taking a wage increase this year.

There is a slight increase in office expenses to upgrade to electronic files. The Township

Ordinances will be digitalized and put on the website for full access on the web. There will be some upgrades made to the software and hardware and there will be a new server put in place. There will be fewer elections so a decrease is seen in the elections expense.

There is a significant decrease in the Buildings and Grounds due to the higher expense in 2008 for the demolition of the prison buildings. The solid waste is now at zero as a result of the single waste hauler. The expense for the police has also decreased as a result of being reduced to one deputy. This is due to the need to provide relief to the General Fund which supported the second officer. The stimulus program would provide funding for one or two officers. The grant would provide full coverage for three years and cost the township for only one year.

Dale Scholten commented that Al is assuming that this will be approved. Al noted that it is important to increase the fund balance in the General Fund, which is based on revenue. We once averaged a million dollars a month in building requests but year to date in 2009 only four permits for approximately \$400,000 have been requested. Keith Becksvoort stated that the Deputy stated that the calls are down so why would we need more deputies. Al responded that the economy will likely worsen and we cannot continue to operate on .5mil. Al Meshkin stated the number of calls may be down but there are calls for service that are not getting answered and traffic reports that are not getting addressed.

There is a significant decrease in Drains as several items were paid off last year. The Parks Commission shows an increase in the salary dollars which is the part-time employee that rents the small Huysler farmhouse through his employment. The Parks Commissioners are not receiving an increase and the Commission has been reduced by two members.

The Planning Commission shows an increase for the expenditure of the contractor used for the Downtown Development Authority. There may be federal monies available to support the bike path expenses.

Al discussed the Fire Department Budget and no increases in pay for any of the staff. There is an increase in the capital outlay to purchase new gear and the new ranger. The fire fighters also held fundraisers to pay for one half of the ranger.

Al reviewed the remainder of the Budget Funds, Debt Service Funds and the Construction Funds. The last item discussed was the Felt Mansion Fund. The revenues have increased as a result of the increase in rentals and the fees for such.

Chuck Strabbing asked when the dumpsters would be removed at Chef. Al responded that they would be removed on March 31st. Chuck stated that he had not received his clean up coupon. Al will see to it that he receives it.

Sam Greydanus argued that Chef does not do recycling. Al Meshkin again responded that he should request a tour of the facility.

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer opened for public hearing.

Cal DeMaadg of 3719 64th Street clarified that the Park Township offers \$84,000 for a Township Manager and it equates to Laketown Township being at three times that of Park Township per citizen. He appreciates that salaries are flat but perhaps we should be cutting salaries as is being done at the state level.

Terry Hofmeyer acknowledged Cal's comments. He stated that the salary information is available on the Internet. He also made comparison to Wayland City and the compensation offered to their recently hired manager. He stated that we need competent people serving in these positions.

Al Meshkin commented on the cost of the administration as a whole. The office is operated at a very lean staff and efficiently done so at a low total cost of administration.

George Smeenge stated that he is having a difficult time grasping the big picture. It would be great to have an overall big picture presented on issues being discussed. Public participation would be better. He also spoke in support of the recycling as he has seen the segregation being done.

Udelis Kuipers stated that when you talk to the governor keep the money west of U.S. 131.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Ed Stielstra and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to close the public hearing. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the FY 2009-10 Budget. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Terry Hofmeyer stated that perhaps the newsletter or another communication might include information about the upcoming budget prior to the meeting.

B. APPOINT DIRECTORS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE FELT ESTATE

Al Meshkin gave an overview of the 501(3)(c) process that provides more grant opportunities for the mansion. It does require that a Board of Directors be established.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the appointments of Pat Meyer, Wendy Van Huis and Ann Scanlan as Directors of the Friends of the Felt Estate. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE VIII. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Randy Schipper noted the bridge abutment comment concerning the public right of way easements. A number of surveys looked at recently do not show it at all. The homes are built at setbacks of 66 feet. The township is proposing to worsen a non-compliant situation. Randy asks that the Township consider acting on respect of the residents to try to work something out.

Mary De Maagd of 3719 64th Street stated that she was lied to about the setback of 33 feet of the center of the road. She also stated that a request was made to put the single hauler on the ballot in November. It appears that this Board is here to do what they want and not what residents want.

Dale Scholten stated that we obviously have a disagreement. Obviously, this decision was made based on the survey. Can I depend on the points made on the survey such as a 5-year price lock, fuel surcharge, door front pickup, etc.? Al Meshkin responded that it must be medically certified as a means to regulate it the door front pick-up service. Dale asked about the accountability for trash falling off trucks as a result of Chef being the hauler. Who do I call? Al responded that it is a practical difficulty because you on the borderline on 60th Street unless you can positively identify the carrier and if so he should call the township office.

Ed Stielstra stated he appreciates the comments made by the citizens. It is good to hear the comments and listen to their concerns. I know that in years past that I sat in the audience and thought the Board didn't always listen. I know now that the Board works very hard to take citizens' concerns into consideration. I agree that we need to communicate more.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 P.M. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED