

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

October 6, 2008

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer called the regular monthly Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer opened the meeting with prayer and Treasurer Gary Dewey led the pledge of allegiance.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra - Recording Secretary
Cal Haverdink – Fire Chief

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the September 8, 2008 meeting. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the minutes as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. TREASURERS REPORT/REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the bills for the month of September 2008. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve and pay the bills as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

ARTICLE VI. PUBLIC HEARING ON LAW ENFORCEMENT MILLAGE

(a) Presentation by Sheriff Blaine Koops and Lieutenant Frank Bakker

Sheriff Koops and Lt. Baker gave a detailed presentation on the 2007 Serious Crimes as compared to 2006. Sheriff Koops highlighted several areas of concern. 2007 Less Serious Crimes and Traffic Accidents were also reviewed and compared to 2006 numbers. A 3-year study was done on seven categories listing the cost of crimes such as robbery, murder, rape, assault, larceny burglary and motor vehicle theft. The cost of automobile crashes was \$14 mil for 2007 compared to \$10.8 mil in 2006. Every drunken driving crash costs over \$100,000 per event. This report covers the Allegan County events only and not those handled by other law enforcement agencies such as the Michigan State Police. Allegan County Law enforcement is limited to reactive and not proactive enforcement due budget constraints. Overall, there are 1500 fewer law enforcement agents in the State of Michigan since the national 9/11 event. Public education and public awareness is essential to reduce crime and incidents. The law enforcement and corrections in Allegan County cost the average homeowner approximately \$152 per year. A copy of the full report is available for residents to review. Sheriff Koop also shared a copy of the 2008 Allegan County Enforcement Action Plan for public review.

Terry Hofmeyer opened for public hearing.

Cal DeMaagd of 3719 64th Street spoke in opposition of the law enforcement millage. He stated that the residents have voted this down 2 to 1 when it was previously put to vote. He also stated that Holland City, Saugatuck, Douglas, Allegan County and the State Police are all frequently in the Township so he does not feel additional Township deputies are necessary.

Dave Stover of 6448 Hidden Hollow asked for the language of the ballot. Al Meshkin stated that it would come out in the Township Newsletter. Mr. Stover asked for justification of the millage amount. Terry Hofmeyer explained that the amount would provide 24/7 coverage. Al Meshkin gave an explanation of the cost coverage for two additional deputies with a possibility for three for a total of five. Up until now the Township budget has been providing support to cover the cost for the law enforcement out of the General Fund.

Keith Becksvoort of 64th Street asked who would decide how many deputies would be hired. Is it on the ballot how many would be hired? Terry Hofmeyer explained that if the millage were approved, the Township Board would make that decision. Keith asked why the patrol cars are not shared. Lt. Baker explained that due to the size of the County and Township, it is not feasible to have an overlap in order to share automobiles. The deputies are on 12-hour shifts with no time for overlap. Vehicle repair and maintenance costs are lower with assigned cars versus fleet vehicles.

Barry Kleinjans of 64th Street spoke in opposition of the millage as he does not see any need for an increase in deputies.

Dave Stover asked if the fee for the deputy would include the cost of a car for each officer. Al Meshkin explained that it would include the cost of a car for each deputy. He asked how much they are driven in the Township. Al responded the cars are driven approximately 25-30,000 miles per year.

Patricia Dorn of 3707 64th Street stated that additional stop signs at 138th and 64th Street would take care of the increase in crashes.

Keith Becksvoort asked why there are two county patrol cars parked at Graafschap Fire Department. Lt. Baker explained that those two officers live outside of the patrol area. These deputies are assigned to six townships in the county.

Terry Burns asked what the current response time is for the County officers and Lt. Baker responded approximately 25 minutes.

Mary DeMaagd of 3719 64th Street asked if the Laketown officer response time is also 25 minutes. Lt. Baker responded that number is the County wide response time and not the Township. Mary DeMaagd also noted that every resident is going through budget restraints.

Randy Becksvoort of 3939 Beeline Road asked if the numbers took into account that the fire department responds to the accidents. Cal Haverdink explained that they respond for medical reasons only and not police response. Randy also asked if the current expenses are coming out of the General Budget, what would happen with those dollars if the millage passed. Al Meshkin explained that the law enforcement has always been covered by the General Fund. If the millage passed and we were allowed to go up to four deputies, it would give relief to the General Fund but not absorb the entire cost. Al explained that the Township budget is extremely lean and always has been. Last year there was a very small surplus but prior to that, expenditures have been approximately 5% over budget causing a decrease of the Fund Balance. The Fund Balance has been eroding over the years and the State revenue has been reduced dramatically. If the economic times continue to be hard, we may be forced to reduce to one deputy which is not the time to reduce law enforcement because a worsened economy may result in an increase in criminal activity.

Cal Haverdink explained that the fire department responds to the medical calls but they depend on the law enforcement to handle the traffic control. The fire department responds to accident and medical situations only and not to any criminal situations.

Keith Becksvoort commented that the situation in Laketown Township, the way the houses are placed in some areas would not deter crime because a deputy driving by may not even see the activity.

Mary DeMaagd suggested doing more neighborhood watch groups to make a point of looking out for others.

Commissioner Terry Burns explained the administrative cost of adding a deputy to the township. The administrative cost is approximately \$28,000 for both deputies. That cost has been suspended while the study for adding an officer is underway. Steve McNeal further discussed the administrative fee and the responsibilities to the Township and the County.

Steve McNeal of Allegan County stated that this year the County has seen a flat or one half percent increase in revenue. At the County level there is likelihood that reductions in the County staff may occur due to the hard economic times and the need to reduce budget.

Terry Hofmeyer closed the public hearing.

Bob Scanlan asked if domestic calls require two deputies to respond. Lt. Bakker stated that it is typical that two officers respond to such calls.

Ed Stielstra asked that the Board continue to keep in mind the option of increasing to three deputies if four is not an option. He also stated we must consider levying only part of the millage if it passes.

Gary Dewey stated that at the Township level, we are mandated to take care of fire, law, roads and quality of life. What we have been funding out of budget for years, is the law enforcement. It is our duty to cover the basic quality of life and safety for the residents.

Bob Scanlan agreed and supported Mr. Dewey's position. If you do not feel there is a problem in the Township now, look at the newspaper and see what is going on in the City of Holland and Holland Township. We do not want that type of activity in Laketown Township.

Wendy Van Huis supported the millage to add additional law enforcement.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that additional officers on the road will deter crime and it is a quality of life concern. The State encourages municipalities to have a generous Fund Balance and the Township's is running very low by State standards. Board members have the responsibility to meet the needs of the residents. The Township cannot expend any funds to promote a decision on a millage vote but it is important for residents to know where the Board stands.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Gary Dewey to support the millage increase for additional law enforcement coverage. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE VII. REPORT OF OFFICERS

A. PLANNING COMMISSION – Ed Stielstra

Ed Stielstra reported that the Planning Commission met on October 1 and the following topics were discussed: approved the Greeley site plan; reviewed the McKenna & Associates proposal for the Blue Star Highway Corridor in regards to zoning ordinances. There was no representation for the request for amendment to the special use permit from the 64th Street Bakery.

B. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – No report.

C. COUNTY COMMISSIONER – Terry Burns

Terry Burns stated the revenue increase was approximately 2.5% versus the anticipate 5-7%. The County Commissioners have been very careful about not spending money that is not available. The Veterans Benefits is supported by one full-time representative to support the County Veteran needs. The County also funds senior meals to needy residents as part of the Commission on Aging. Terry Burns discussed some changes that have been made in the County to meet various fund needs.

D. DEPUTY SHERIFF – No report.

E. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD – Chief Cal Haverdink

Chief Haverdink reported on the response calls for the month of September as follows: 28 calls total, 20 calls from Laketown, consisting of 18 rescue and 2 fire, 8 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 5 rescue calls and 3 fire. It is Fire Prevention Week and the Department has been busy at a number of events.

F. PARKS COMMISSION – Chuck Strabbing

Chuck Strabbing reported that the Parks Commission met on September 17 and a Day of Caring was done on the 18th with many volunteers working in the Township Parks. A haunted house has been set up in the Carriage House on the Felt Mansion grounds. Please see the mansion website for details of dates, times and entry fees. You won't want to miss this!

G. BUILDING AUTHORITY – No report.

H. DDA – Al Meshkin

Al Meshkin reported that the DDA met on September 24 and reviewed the McKenna and Associates presentation and also discussed potential residents to serve on the Citizen's Council for the DDA. The next meeting is on October 29th.

ARTICLE VIII. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Jerry Durkee of 4672 Pine Drive and Marge Bakker of 6448 140th Avenue spoke in support of Judge Baillargeon on the ballot for Allegan County Circuit Court Judge Seat. Ms. Bakker spoke very highly of the professional and volunteer work she has done with Judge Baillargeon.

Judge Baillargeon spoke in appreciation of the support he has received in the County and the surrounding municipalities. He stated that he tries to bring a great deal of integrity to the court system making sure to stay focused on the family situations that come before him. His goal is always to focus on the best interest of the children. He stated that he also deals with many criminal issues in the court and the Allegan County Law and Court officials are very professional and dedicated to their duties. He shared that he volunteers for several organizations in the community including church and school functions. He humbly asks for the support of the residents and thanked the Board for the opportunity to address the meeting.

Mary DeMaadg of 3719 64th Street asked if she could address the Single Waste Hauler. Terry Hofmeyer stated it is on the agenda.

Chuck Strabbing of 144th Avenue expressed concern over the accountability of the deputies in Laketown Township. How much time do they spend in the Township? It seems like the patrol cars are often seen outside of the Township.

ARTICLE IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. SOUTH HILL WATER S.A.D. PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION #5

Terry Hofmeyer gave a brief overview of the resolutions.

Terry Hofmeyer opened the public hearing.

No public comment.

Terry Hofmeyer closed the public hearing.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to accept the South Hill Water S.A.D. Resolution #5. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

B. SINGLE WASTE HAULER PROPOSAL

Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the proposal and recommendation.

Terry Hofmeyer explained that further discussion occurred at the workshop meeting at which time it was suggested to conduct a survey in the Township. It would be an unofficial vote for residents.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to table the item and distribute the survey throughout the Township in order to provide additional information to the Board. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Mary DeMaadg requested that there be a reasonable timeframe for residents to respond that might be out of town. Al Meshkin stated that he would get the survey out on October 10th with a response due on the 24th. Mary also stated that the service not be mandated.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that it would be the intent to receive the survey results prior to the November 12 Board meeting.

Ed Stielstra stated that the survey should not include the two vendor names.

Bob Scanlan suggested that the low bidder be listed on the survey.

ARTICLE X. NEW BUSINESS

A. MDOT MAINTENANCE RESOLUTION

Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the resolution.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the MDOT Maintenance Resolution. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

B. MECHANICAL INSPECTOR CONTRACT

Terry Hofmeyer and Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the contract.

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to terminate the current mechanical inspector contract. UNANIMOUS DEICISON – MOTION APPROVED

C. INSPECTOR COMPENSATION

Al Meshkin explained that the new contractor fee per inspection would be \$40.00 versus the current \$37.00 fee but this increase would not be passed along to the residents.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the Inspector Compensation. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

D. GIBSON CHURCH

Terry Hofmeyer read a letter submitted by Deacon Dick Porter of the Gibson Church offering the originally constructed Gibson Church to the Township as a historical building.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra that the Township does have interest in the Gibson Church and further discussion will occur on this subject. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

E. BLIGHT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Al Meshkin gave a brief overview of the amendment made to the Blight Ordinance.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Gary Dewey to**

approve the Blight Ordinance Amendment Ordinance No. 151. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

F. PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the appointment of Linda Howell to the Planning Commission. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

G. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION RESOLUTION

Terry Hofmeyer gave a brief overview of the resolution which states that Township employees would be recognized for their service annually with a dinner each December.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the Employee Recognition Resolution. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Bob Scanlan confirmed that the Board is excluded from that.

ARTICLE XI. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Randy Becksvoort of 3919 Beeline Road asked that a correction be made to his comments recorded in the September minutes clarifying that he is not opposed to capitalism but does not support the single waste hauler concept. Terry Hofmeyer acknowledged this would be noted in the minutes of today's meeting.

Keith Becksvoort asked if the Township has hired a new mechanical inspector. Al Meshkin responded there is someone they are talking with.

Cal De Maadg asked that the Board take into consideration the residents on 64th Street wherein those on the proposed bike path do not want to give up the 27 feet of right of way and the State cannot confirm that this stated distance is correct. The residents do not accept this information to be proven. Al Meshkin disagreed with this interpretation.

Patricia Dorn of 3707 64th Street supported Mr. DeMaadg's opinion of the right of way.

ARTICLE XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Terry Hofmeyer and seconded by Gary Dewey to adjourn at 8:58 P.M. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED