

Johnstown Township Minutes

13641 South M-37 Highway. Battle Creek, Michigan 49017

Regular Board Meeting – May 10, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Supervisor Barb Earl, Clerk Sheri Babcock, Treasurer Karmen Nickerson, Trustee Deana Powell, Trustee Jeff Warren

Absent: none

Visitors: Twenty-six (26)

Agenda: An amendment is needed to add Solar Energy and the Master Plan to new business.

A motion was made by Warren to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- None

Minutes: A motion was made by Powell to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2023, and the Special Board Meeting April 26, 2023. Seconded by Nickerson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Karmen Nickerson

- Summer property tax bills will be going out in the mail the first week of July.
- CD interest rates are increasing. Moving into new CD's as they mature.

A motion was made by Warren to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

Clerk's Report – Sheri Babcock

May Special Election: Both proposals on the May Special Election ballot failed.

Reimbursement request has been submitted to the County in the amount of \$450.15 to be reimbursed by the Gull Lake Schools and K.R.E.S.A. for costs of May election.

Additionally, a request was submitted to the State of Michigan in the amount of \$16.38 to cover the additional postage required on AV apps.

The AV applications now have a check box to be added to the Permanent Ballot list so they automatically receive a ballot without the application process for all elections.

Aug Special Election: Hastings School district will have a proposal on the ballot in August.

MTA Conference: The conference was attended by four board members and was very informative.

Parks & Rec Grant: The Parks & Rec grant was submitted on May 3, 2023.

Assessor:

Joyce would like to make her assistant, Kara, a Deputy Assessor to make the transition process go smoothly as she moves into retirement.

The lawyer was contacted to see if we will need to do this process by resolution and to be certain that this is a good process. Joyce is doing this in other townships.

Park Area

Excavating is done, now ready for paving. May happen later this week or sometime next week. Working on orders for tables, researching cost for other items.

Assessor's Report – Joyce Foondle

- 2 Building permits for the month of March and April
- The final assessed and taxable values report.
- State guidelines on supervision of Assessment roll attached. Would like to request change of Kara Dougherty's title from Assessor Assistant to Deputy Assessor is desired. Kara will be in attendance at the June meeting. Kara will now be in direct supervision of the roll.
- Land Divisions report – 3 new divisions
- Michigan Tax Tribunal: nothing to report

Fire Report – Fire Chief Chris Jozwik

- 51 total calls for the month of April. Total calls for 2023: 144
- 27 of the 51 calls for the month of April were MFR calls. Total MFR calls for 2023: 82
- Training completed Wildland Fire Refresher, Severe weather.
- Personnel changes: None
- Current Membership: 17 Active members; 1 cadet;
- Department Activity: Pancake Breakfast held on April 29th went very well. Thank you to those who supported this fundraiser.
- Next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting: July 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Commissioner Report - Bruce Campbell

- Review of new appointments to various boards and committees; Wage updates
- Discussions and research still happening on the Jail and COA buildings;
- Wage increases were necessary to keep current personnel;
- New Barry County Directories are available;
- 2023 Household Collection at the Barry County Expo Center to be held on June 3rd and September 23rd. Drive thru, they remove items for you. Includes tires, used oil and batteries.

Old Business:

1. Mill Lake Sewer: Petitions are available if requested by residents.
2. Blight Ordinance: Set up next date for meeting to discuss the Blight Ordinance with the lawyer. Date and time TBD – tentative date Monday, May 22, 2023, at 3:00. Received a letter today indicating that Jack Ward, Enforcement Officer, will be retiring on June 30, 2023. Residents want to see this blight ordinance process moving faster and the board to report a timeline.

New Business:

- Tony Wawzysko: Appointment to the Board of Review as alternate member. A motion was made by Powell to approve the appointment of Tony Wawzysko to the Board of Review as alternate member, seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

- Barry County Master Plan/Solar Energy: The township needs to attend the next Commissioners meeting to express our concerns over the number of acres used in the township for solar energy. The master plan outlines the number of acres in the entire county, but the ordinance could define the use per township. We have until May 26, 2023, to provide our feedback to Planning & Zoning. Board members will plan to attend this next meeting on Monday, May 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Pay Invoices and Payroll:

A motion was made by Powell to pay the bills in the amount of \$34,773.59, as presented. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- A resident commented on the blight situation on Winans Drive. Read letters from residents unable to attend stressing the concerns over health and safety. Another resident commenting on inability to sell his home due to the situation of the house located nearby.
- The residents would like to have the township pay to have our attorney work with the court system on blight issues.
- Regarding the blight ordinance, residents stated they want more accountability on the timeline and progress from the board.
- The residents feel like the board is not making progress fast enough on a blight ordinance.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Powell to adjourn. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Next Special Board Meeting: May 17, 2023, at 3:00 PM.

Next Regular Board Meeting: June 10, 2023, at 6:30 PM

Attested to by:
Barbara Earl
Supervisor



Sheri Babcock, Clerk