

Johnstown Township Minutes

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

Regular Board Meeting – Dec. 14, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:30 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-two (22)

Agenda: Need to amend the agenda to add #3 Budget meeting date, #4 Road Commission annual meeting date.

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):

- A resident wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas

Minutes: A motion was made by Warren to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 16, 2022, and the Special ARPA Meeting of December 7, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Karmen Nickerson

- The tax bills should have been received by everyone. They were mailed out on Dec. 1st;
- Bank CD interest rates are finally going up. Two new CDs at 4.5% interest rate;
- PLM Plant and Lake Management called to ask about the Clear Lake Weed Control process being halted. He was informed that we will be starting that back up in January and we still plan on treatment in the spring. Publications and notices will be sent out prior to the public hearing.
- The surveyor has the stake out at Banfield Cemetery but working on legal description.

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

Township Lights: Replacement of lights to LED completed today.

Pension Plan: Annual contribution calculation and payment processed this month.

Chart of Account Changes: Assistance from the auditor was requested and final draft of changes were submitted to BSA. Now waiting on notice from them to start the next sequence of events.

Water Testing: Received the bill for water testing back in Sept. A second sample was needed to complete the testing for nitrates. The Health Dept. called the lab to follow up.

County Directory: Review for updates. Please initial if your information is correct. – Completed;

Clerk's Report – Sheri Babcock (continued);

Budget Modifications:

Mill Lake

536.536.801.000	Expenditures	713.50	Overage in expenses/annual fee
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General Fund

101.801.802.000	Drains	443.21	To cover Butler Drain Expense
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101.191.726.000	Elections – Office Supplies	1,205.00	To cover ID card expense
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101.000.665.000	Interest Income	300.00	Increase revenue
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101.215.703.000	Township Hall Rental	(300.00)	Decrease expense
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101.801.802.000	Drains – Butler Lake	444.00	Increase expense DUPLICATE
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A motion was made by Powell to approve the budget modifications as amended. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Assessor's Report – Joyce Foondle

- Building permits since the last meeting – two (2);
- A listing of the ratios for Equalization for 2023 for all assessing units in Barry County;
- The 2023 increase will be at the maximum allowed 5%.
- Property inspectors except those related to building permits will continue in the spring. Next year hope to do the remainder of the roads on the west side of M-37 (including M-37), excluding the following roads that have been completed: Budd Rd., Sheffield Rd., Uldriks Dr., Baseline Rd., Ferris Rd. and Hickory Rd;
- The letter from Attorney Jason S.H. Ter Avest regarding the tax status of Fine Lake Association properties is provided for the board.
- Land Divisions: None;
- Michigan Tax Tribunal: Nothing to report.

Fire Report – Fire Chief Chris Jozwik

- 37 calls for the month of November for a total of 390 calls year to date.
- 23 MFR calls in October. MFR calls year to date 249.
- Training: Smoke House, MFR
- Personnel changes: Two new members: John Hicks, Gavin Poley
A motion was made by Warren to formally approve the hiring of John Hicks and Gavin Poley effective December 1, 2022. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.
- Current Membership: 17 Active members, one on leave, 1 cadet.
- Department Activity: The Fire Dept. Association made a donation to the Food Bank

Consideration to change: Due to Jan. 2nd being so close to holiday, it would be best to change date of next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting.

A motion was made by Powell to approve the change in Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting time and date to: January 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Next Quarterly Meeting of the Township Board and JFD Officers is January 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Report - Bruce Campbell

- Bruce is back after a couple months due to illness and then hunting season;
- Agreements approved for services through BC Chamber & Economic Development Alliance, Drug Testing, snow removal, United Way for Veteran's services;
- Approval to apply for grant at the Police Academy;
- Approve the use of National Opioid settlement funds for services;
- Agreement approval for Scrap Tire event;
- Consideration for Inflation Impact payments for county employees;
- Recognition of retiring Commissioner's service to the community.

Old Business:

1. **Lacey Road Truck Traffic:** Resident Tom Allen has been closely monitoring the truck traffic on Lacey Road. The truck traffic starts as early as 5:00 a.m. After following these trucks, noted that these semi-trucks are traveling from Charlotte to a Warehouse near Allegan. They make 2 to 3 trips per day with several different trucks. The use of Jake break is happening all day and many of these trucks are traveling at above the speed limit. He would like to see the Township have an ordinance to declare this as a "No Thru Truck" road. They believe that Assyria Township would consider the same from North Avenue to M-66. He presented that they could go to M-79 which is designed for truck traffic. He stated that this would add 5-6 miles to their trip. Businesses probably would not want to incur that type of cost increase.

Jake Welch from the Barry County Road Commission was present to provide information on the traffic studies, the problems being able to enforce that type of ordinance and the lack of alternate routes of travel to cross from one side to the other side of the township. There have been studies of truck traffic on Dowling Road, at 100 trucks, with truck traffic on Lacey Road at 30. Dowling Road is a no thru truck traffic road but the study shows it is still used. They will continue to do more studies and will work with the township if we choose to make the decision to close this road to truck traffic.

The Road Commission can not address speed, they have no authority. The sign cost between \$150 to \$200 per sign and would need to be at all road entry ways.

The Road Commission will continue doing studies and the township will keep this on Old Business to continue discussion on this matter.

2. **Clear Lake Weed Control:** Our Assessor, Joyce Foondle, has offered to provide us with a complete parcel listing and maps for the Clear Lake Weed Special Assessments. We will need to get emails out to Baltimore to see if the tentative date of January 19, 2023, at 6:00 PM, here at the Johnstown Township Hall will work for them. If we are able to get the information to the Lawyer early in the week of Dec. 26th, this would give her two weeks before the first publication would have to appear on Saturday, Jan. 7th and again on Jan. 14th. We would send out notices right before the 1st publication comes out. The Clerk will email Baltimore and the lawyer.
3. **Mill Lake Sewer:** A petition needs to be approved to move forward with the residents beginning to get petition signatures.

New Business:

1. **Township Blight Problems:** Supervisor Barbara Earl discussed the Blight Ordinance that Rutland Township just started this year. He indicated that they have been able to employ a part-time ex-police officer, and is proving to work well. They employ him at \$17.00 per hour for 4 hours/week.

New Business (continued):

Blight issues (continued): The problem on Winans Drive, Bristol Lake continues to worsen. The trailer park on Cherry is also just getting worse again. It is felt that if we don't find a way to improve the enforcement, the problem will just continue to get worse.

We will continue to keep this ordinance under "Old Business" and will seek more information on moving forward with consideration of this type of ordinance.

- 2. Set ARPA Budgeting Date: Combined 3 and 4 to the same meeting. Set for January 24, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.
- 3. Preliminary Budget Meeting – same day as above.
- 4. Road Commission Annual Meeting: We received a letter from the Road Commission to schedule our annual budget meeting with them. It was decided to attempt to schedule this meeting for January 12, 2023, at 7:30 a.m. Karmen will advise board if this date is set up.

It was also identified that we need to add one more item of business to "New Business" BOR members:

- 5. Board of Review: We need three members plus on alternate member for BOR. We would like to Re-appoint Rob Garrett and Roy Thunder to the BOR. A motion was made by Powell to accept Rob Garrett and Roy Thunder to the Board of Review term for two-year term effective January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

The third position will remain open at this time along with the alternate position. We will continue to seek resident's willing to fill these positions. Members need to complete an oath with the Township Clerk.

Pay Invoices and Payroll:


A motion was made by Warren to pay the bills with the exception of B.E.S.T. lab invoice to be held until further notice, in the amount of \$73,457.07 as presented, and amended to \$73,399.07. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

Additional Citizen's Comments:

- Resident John Howe stated his appreciation of the Township Board.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Warren to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Attested to by:
Barbara Earl
Supervisor**


Sheri Babcock, Clerk