

Johnstown Township Minutes

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

Regular Board Meeting – December 13, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Absent: Motion by Trustee Powell to excuse Trustee Warren from the meeting. Seconded by Nickerson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Visitors: 27

Agenda: Old Business amended to include 2A Resolution; New Business amended to include Assessor payroll. A motion was made by Powell to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Babcock. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- A resident inquired if the Township was ready to move ahead with the solar ordinance previously shared.
- A resident reported seeing a number of area mailboxes open; reported it to police. Shared the “informed delivery” feature available through USPS.
- A resident reported some suspicious activity in our area.
- A resident inquired steps to take to deal with an illegal driveway in use by a neighbor.
- A resident provided multiple quotes for the proposed Sylvan Court paving project.

Minutes: A motion was made by Powell to approve the following minutes:

- Regular Board Meeting of November 8, 2023
- Special Board Meeting of November 27, 2023.

Seconded by Nickerson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report – Karmen Nickerson

- Residents should have received their Winter Tax Bills.
- Treasurer explained what taxes are levied on the Summer vs. Winter tax bills.
- Winter 2023 taxes are due by February 14, 2024, and will be collected by Township Treasurer through February 29, 2024.
- Treasurer shared a list of the 11 Special Assessments on the 2023 Tax Roll.
- Current CD interest rates are good.

A motion by Powell to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Second by Babcock. All ayes. Motion carried.

Clerk’s Report – Sheri Babcock

- Early Voting will be held on Saturday, Feb 17th through Sunday Feb 25th from 8:30AM-4:30PM each day for the nine-day period.
- We are required to send out a formal notice to all registered voters advising them of the early voting process. We expect to have these in the mail later this week.
- We will start sending out ballot selection forms for residents on our permanent ballot list (Gull Lake and Hastings school districts) and AV application for Delton school district. The AV application will allow

them to indicate they want to be added to the permanent ballot list for future elections. We will be mailing these out the last week of December.

- The new tabulator and new VAT printers have been received. We are still waiting for the new laptop and EV and VAT for ballot print on demand.
- Residents who need to request temporary address service can do so by contacting the Clerk, or using the form available online.

Assessor's Report – Kara Dougherty, Deputy Assessor

- 11 active building permits. Inspections will be done by 12/31/23. Assessor asked residents to please communicate a progress update to the Assessor before then.
- December Board of Review meeting was December 12, 2023. A property sold in 2022 that had an exemption uncapped when sold has been recapped with an exemption.
- Correction to November 2023 report: Veterans Exemption changes take effect immediately (NOT wait until 2025 as previously reported.) Letters and the appropriate forms will be sent to any veteran or surviving spouse who hasn't filed for 2023 yet.
- One case at the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

Fire Report – Fire Chief Chris Jozwik

- 34 total calls for the month of November. Total calls for 2023: 385.
- 21 calls for the month of November were MFR calls. Total MFR calls for 2023: 244.
- Training completed: Smoke House & MFR.
- Personnel changes: none.
- Current Membership: 15 Active members; 2 on personal leave, 1 cadet;
- Department Activity: JFA Donation to the food pantry at the country chapel in Dowling. We are busy installing smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting: January 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Report – Bruce Campbell

- Commissioner Campbell invited residents to become involved by serving on a committee or sitting on one of the Boards. More information is available online. Meetings are held Tuesday's at 9AM at the Court house.
- Commissioner Campbell provided a summary of actions during the recent meetings.
- Our County Jail is in rough shape. ARPA funds have been ear-marked for a solution.
- Commission on Aging building planning is in process.
- Housing Development in Hastings is taking shape.
- Introductions to the new Blight Enforcement Officer are expected in January.

Old Business:

Blight Ordinance: Still paused until the next Budget planning meeting and after we have met the new County Enforcement Officer.

Sylvan Court Paving Special Assessment:

- Resident presented three bids for the project and outlined the different approaches recommended by each vendor. Vendor will be selected by the residents.
- Board informed resident he can move forward with petition process, with petitions available now.
- A resident asked how each parcel's share of the Special Assessment was calculated? Board responded that it was the Board's discretion which calculation method was used.

- Additional details regarding term and interest rates would be discussed further in the process.

2A Resolution RE: Sanctuary City: Motion by Nickerson to table the discussion until next month. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

New Business:

Winans Drive Special Assessment: Residents are interested in a road repair/maintenance special assessment. Resident requested information on the process. Board explained petitions needed first, then publicize and hold public hearings. Residents currently seeking quotes; considering maintenance approach; May 2024 timeframe.

Community Garden Grant: The Township received funding from the Barry Community Foundation to establish raised beds for a community garden, as well as build a shed to store related items.

Assessor: Joyce Foondle's retirement is effective December 31, 2023. Need to adjust payroll to reflect retirement and transition of Deputy Assessor to full-time Assessor. Motion by Powell to transition Kara Dougherty from Deputy Assessor to full-time Assessor and move from hourly to salary beginning 1/1/2024, and transition Joyce Foondle from full-time Assessor to hourly pay. Seconded by Nickerson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Pay Invoices & Payroll: A motion was made by Powell to pay the invoices in the amount of \$123,387.22 as presented. Seconded by Nickerson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Additional Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- A resident asked the Board to consider enacting a 2A Sanctuary City Resolution, and to consider a Solar Ordinance.
- A resident encouraged the Board to be ready should the recently passed legislation on solar farms be determined to be unconstitutional.
- A resident spoke in favor of adopting a 2A and Solar Ordinance. He also informed the Board of Boy Scout Troop declining numbers and the impact it has on our current cardboard/paper recycling program. They need help!
- Consumers Energy representative asked for, and received, a copy of the proposed solar ordinance. Other activities underway were also discussed.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Powell to adjourn. Seconded by Babcock. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting: January 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Next Regular Board Meeting: January 10, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Attested to by:
Barbara Earl
Supervisor



Sheri Babcock, Clerk