

**ADA TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2009**

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Haga at 7:30 p.m. Members present: Supervisor Haga, Clerk Burton, Treasurer Rhoades, Trustee Westra. Also present: Fire Chief DuVall, Park Director Mark Fitzpatrick, Recording Secretary Johnson and fifteen community members. Members absent: Trustee Smith, Sytsma, and Proos.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Haga noted one change to the agenda. Under "III.B. - Receive and File Various Communications" one item had been added: Item #10 – Township Supervisor's Report for August 22, 2009. **Moved by Westra, supported by Rhoades, to approve the agenda as amended. Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion carried.**

GENERAL TOWNSHIP BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes

August 10, 2009, Regular Board Meeting

Receive and File Various Reports/Communications

1. Zoning Board of Appeals - 7/20/2009; 2. Ada Township DDA Minutes - 7/6/2009; 3. Ada Historical Society Minutes - 7/11/2009; 4. Ada Township - Edith Pettis Property, 6801 Conservation - 8/10/2009; 5. Roselle Park Lagoon Annual Sediment Report - 7/31/2009; 6. MTA Legislative Update Fax - 7/31/2009, 8/7/2009; 7. First Quarter FY 09/10 Revenue/Expense Report; 8. Open Space Advisory Board Minutes - 7/9/2009; 9. Building Permit Report – 7/2009. **Moved by Burton, supported by Rhodes, to approve the Minutes and accept the reports and communications under the Consent Agenda.** Trustee Westra expressed appreciation for the Supervisor's Report, but suggested in the future it be included in the packet of documents distributed to the Board for review prior to the meeting. **Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion carried.**

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS AND RECEIPTS

Treasurer Rhoades presented Warrants and Receipts in the following amounts: Hand Checks: #101 \$5,491.63; #205 \$140.60; #208 \$247.68; #248 \$940.97; Total All Hand Checks \$6,820.88. Warrants: #101 \$19,662.93; #205 \$2,125.63; #208 \$3,644.44; #211 \$44.67; #213 \$34.76; #248 \$347.00; #590 \$16,447.14; #591 \$14,119.01; #592 \$3,565.55; Total Warrants \$59,991.13. Total All Checks and Warrants \$66,812.01. **Moved by Westra, supported by Rhoades, to approve the Warrant Report for August 24, 2009, in the amount of \$66,812.01.** Upon inquiry by Trustee Westra, Supervisor Haga explained Line Item #1 was for the purchase of two computers as a replacement for computers that did not meet the system requirements for the BS&A.net upgrade. **Roll Call: Yes – Westra, Rhoades, Burton, Haga. No - 0. Absent – Smith, Sytsma, and Proos. Motion carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENT OTHER THAN AGENDA

There was no Public Comment.

BOARD COMMENT

Trustee Westra expressed appreciation for the Supervisor's Report. He indicated that he felt the Community Media Center, as a potential bidding vendor, should not be involved in any aspect of strategic planning, even in an advisory capacity. Supervisor Haga and Clerk Burton said the Administrative Committee was gathering groundwork information for the future development of a strategic plan. Trustee Westra stated strategic planning is the role of the Board.

Trustee Westra noted there was a signed agreement with Communications Inc. for a community video tour book. The vendor provides video clips, which would be free to the Township. However, the video clips are supported by businesses which advertise with Communications, Inc., which places the advertisements alongside the videos as visitors play them. Trustee Westra reminded the Board Michigan law prohibits the Township from directly supporting any commercial enterprise. He stated the Communications, Inc. software opens an external browser window to view the video, and the external browser window is branded to Communications, Inc., as opposed to the Township. This is a best-practice style concern.

Clerk Burton announced there is a class offered by the Kent County Cooperative Extension to identify and manage invasive plant species. It will be held at the Isaac Walton League in Rockford on September 12 from 8:00 –12:30pm. It will cost \$30.00 and it is open to the public.

Clerk Burton advised the Board and interested citizens applications are currently being taken for the 2010 Michigan Political Leadership Program, sponsored by Michigan State University. It is a fully paid program awarded to 24 applicants from all over the state. It is a multi-partisan program that teaches the necessary skills to make sound public policy decisions and to be effective leaders as candidates for office, as government officials, or as citizen activists. The fellowship covers meals, lodging, program, and materials. The deadline for applications is September 4th. Clerk Burton is a graduated fellow from the program and has found it very beneficial. Contact the Clerk's Office for application details.

Supervisor Haga reminded the public and the Board on September 1st at 7:00 pm the Township Board has a work session with the Planning Commission on the Capital Improvement Plan.

Supervisor Haga provided a brief update on the BS&A.net upgrade. The applications have been installed for conversion and training commences on August 25th. Assessing and tax applications are scheduled to be installed and converted September 3rd.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

TOWNSHIP YEAR-END AUDIT REPORT – MARCH 31, 2009 – RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE

The Township Auditor, Dan Veldhuizen, presented the Township year-end report for receipt and acceptance. He reminded the Board the auditors prepare the audit report, but the financial statement still remains the responsibility of the Board. The auditor gives an opinion on the fairness of the financial statement. In the case of Ada Township, the auditors have given an unqualified report that the financial statements are presented fairly. In this year, as in the past, there have been some corrections to the internal records. This is common to most municipalities. As regards to internal controls, there is a comment that the Township doesn't have a system in place to prepare its own financial statements. This has been true for the last few years and is true of virtually every township in West Michigan. It is very difficult for the township staff to have adequate training to prepare financial statements on their own. There are three possible responses to this comment. The first is to provide the necessary training to the township staff or hire a qualified staff member. This can be prohibitively expensive. The second is to locate an external vendor to handle this aspect. This can also be costly. The final response is to keep the status quo. Township Auditor Veldhuizen explained this response is probably the best value for the Township. Concerning the financial condition of the Township, the Township funds and the Township as a whole are very healthy. Currently the Township has a 1.8M fund balance, which represents 97% of current year expenditures. The auditors recommend a healthy fund balance of 3-6 months of expenditures to be reserved, but one year is not excessive. The Public Safety fund has a balance of nearly 1.8M, which is 153% of current expenditures. Township Auditor Veldhuizen advised the Board to evaluate capital improvement planning to determine what public safety projects are upcoming that justify that level of fund balance. The Sewer Fund has about 2.2M in unrestricted net assets and the Water Fund has about 1M; these numbers may seem high, but could be drained significantly if there are multiple repairs required to these two extensive infrastructure systems. Based on the negative trend of available net assets and cash for the last few years, the Auditor recommended the Board continue to look at a rate study, although there is no short-term problem. There was a change made to the Parks and Land Preservation Fund this year. In the past, the millage money for this was managed in one fund. Following an earlier recommendation of the Township Auditors, the Township divided this into two distinct funds: an open space fund and a parks fund.

Trustee Westra inquired if the expense of preparing the statements would provide value to the Township. Township Auditor Veldhuizen responded it is very difficult and expensive to bring even talented staff to the appropriate level of training. It would cost the Township \$10,000 - \$15,000 to use external vendors for this; hiring a qualified CPA on Township staff would be over \$50,000.

Trustee Westra asked if the audit specifically addressed the expenditures associated with the Trail to date, as had been discussed by the Board earlier. Township Auditor Veldhuizen explained the year-end audit performed had examined the Trail Fund and had concluded the Trail Fund was fairly stated and there were no errors found. There was no separate fund report related to just the Trail Fund. Trustee Westra clarified he was interested in a distinct audit of trail expenses to determine the accurate and current accounting of costs to date. There was no separate documented audit of that nature performed.

Supervisor Haga thanked the staff for their professional and diligent efforts in preparing and providing the necessary information to the auditors.

Moved by Westra, supported by Burton, to receive and accept the year-end March 31, 2009 Audit Report as presented. Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion carried.

ROOF REPAIR OF FULTON SEWER LIFT STATION

Fire Chief Jim DuVall presented to the Board. The shingles on the Fulton sewer lift station are brittle and beginning to curl; it is time to replace them. Three bids were obtained. Two of the companies, including Thomet Custom Construction, recommended tearing off the old shingles prior to installation of the new, primarily to protect the warranty of the new shingles. Fire Chief DuVall recommended accepting the low bid, which was by Thomet Custom Construction. The Township has used Thomet for several projects before and they have always done an excellent job. **Moved by Burton, supported by Rhoades, to approve the recommendation to contract with Thomet Custom Construction to reshingle the Fulton Street lift station roof in the amount of \$3,400.00. Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion carried.**

APPOINTMENT OF A PAID ON-CALL FIRE FIGHTER

Fire Chief Jim DuVall outlined the recommendation to appoint Peggy Ferguson as a paid on-call fire fighter. Ms. Ferguson has 5.5 years of experience with Ada. Her firefighting and medical training are current, as are her Fire Officer I and II certificates. **Moved by Westra, supported by Rhoades, to concur with the recommended re-appointment of Peggy Ferguson as a paid on-call fire fighter. Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion carried.**

RESOLUTION R-082409-1, LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION FOR CHARITABLE GAMING LICENSE

Conrad Swanson, Secretary of the Thornapple Valley Lions Club, noted the purpose of the gaming license is to hold an event to benefit the Thornapple Valley Lions Club Charities. **Moved by Westra, supported by Burton, to adopt Resolution R-082409-1, which is a local government resolution for a charitable gaming license. Roll Call: Yes – Rhoades, Burton, Westra, Haga. No – 0. Absent – Smith, Proos, Sytsma. Resolution is adopted.**

RESOLUTION R-082409-2, RESOLUTION TERMINATING URBAN COOPERATION AGREEMENT AND DISSOLVING URBAN COOPERATION BOARD

Supervisor Haga presented the resolution. The Urban Cooperation Board was established in conjunction with the new contract under the Utility Advisory Board, a group of communities working together for water and sewer services. The Urban Cooperation Board collected funding from each member entity and disbursed funds through grants to the member communities. For the last three years, due to economic pressures, the Urban Cooperation Board has not been collecting or distributing funds. All funds that had previously been gathered have since been disbursed. Therefore, the Urban Cooperation Board has recommended the dissolution at this time. **Moved by Westra, supported by Rhoades, to adopt Resolution R-082409-2, which is a resolution terminating the Urban Cooperation Agreement and dissolving the Urban Cooperation Board. Roll Call: Yes – Burton, Rhoades, Westra, Haga. No – 0. Absent – Smith, Proos, Sytsma. Resolution is adopted.**

ROSELLE PARK NATURE TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Park Director Mark Fitzpatrick presented the request for project approval so the Roselle Park nature trail improvement project can be put out for bid. The intention is to have the project completed before snowfall. The trail project proposal has three elements: 1) establish the trail in the northern part of the park, 2) modify the grain chute on one of the silos to reduce risk of injury, 3) install a bollard into the paved bike path trail to prevent access by unauthorized vehicles and allow posting for path closure as needed. Wes Steer, the parks landscape architect with O'Boyle Cowell Blalock & Associates, noted the nature trail improvements were part of the overall master plan. Preliminary walkthroughs with DEQ have indicated the plans are permissible. **Moved by Westra, supported by Burton, to authorize that the Roselle Park nature trail improvement project as presented be put out for bid.** Trustee Westra asked if the safety-related elements of this project were eligible to be funded from the Public Safety Fund. Supervisor Haga noted he would investigate, but cautioned the verbiage may exclude that option. Trustee Westra inquired as to mountain bike access to the proposed nature trail. Park Director Fitzpatrick indicated the trail would be accessible by mountain bikes, but it would not be designated a mountain bike trail. The Board discussed the need for having ongoing maintenance of the trail addressed in the annual budget. Trustee Westra suggested as part of the bidding process, the township ask each vendor to estimate the annual maintenance cost. **Yes – 4, No – 0; Motion is carried.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk

RS/kj