

VOLINIA TOWNSHIP

CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024
6:30pm

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Chris Brooks at 6:30pm.

Prayer was given by Bob Rasmussen.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chris Brooks.

Annette Peters requested roll call: Trustee Seelye – Present, Treasurer Williams – Present, Supervisor Brooks – Present, Clerk Peters – Present, Trustee Grice – Absent.

Others present: Stacey High, Jamie Chambers, Deb Chambers, Bill Personette, Larry Davis, Wes Peglar, Harry Rasmussen, Anne Colgan, Joe Colgan, Chuck Wilson, Jeff Hupp, Joe Bellina (CCRC), Robert Thompson (CCRC), Victoria Locke, Joe Mroczek, Connie Mroczek, and Sue Conklin.

Agenda

Nick Seelye requested to add the concrete bill to the agenda. Alex Williams made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the concrete bill; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Cass County Road Commission

Nick Seelye and Chris Brooks did a road tour with CCRC. Chris presented a report from the tour and made it available for all. Two large items that were discussed were the potential for Dewey Lake from Decatur to Bond to become a primary road and the culvert between Finch Lake and Bunker Lake on Lawrence (currently in the hands of the Drain Commissioner who is waiting on funding/grant). Joe Bellina said that they are planning on working on the culvert on Dewey Lake Street next week which will include extending the pipe, raising the pipe and working on the roll off embankment. Stacey High asked how long the stretch from Decatur to Bond is on Dewey Lake Street, Chris said that it is one mile. Chris said that CCRC recommends that we concentrate on gravel roads again this year, McKenzie from Lawrence west to the curves and Warner from Dewey Lake to Goodenough all need gravel. We will have more funds this year for the roads by March. Nick asked what the full millage fund is now. Alex said that he would have to look. Chris said that CCRC suggested a line/pavement marking 3-year schedule, that would cost approximately \$3,000 per year. Chris said that he asked about welcome to our township like other townships have and was told we can order them from CCRC for \$275 each. Bob Rasmussen asked about Dewey Lake from Decatur to Wickett, was told they would like to but there is no time frame. Nick said that paving of County Line was recommended for next year, Chris said that probably won't be this year but hopefully next year. Nick said that Goodenough is not repairable, and is too far gone, Stacey High said that she is completely against making this gravel and feels like this is going backwards. Robert Thompson said that he completely understands but when roads lack upgrades and can't be maintained this is what happens; it's cheaper to maintain gravel roads than highly deteriorated

paved roads, it's wasting money to pave in the roads current condition. Bob Rasmussen asked if County Line would be paved, or seal coated. Robert Thompson said that it's beyond seal coat option, all the trapments are coming apart. He does not encourage doing the worse roads first. Stacey said that she would rather leave for another 15 years than go back to gravel. Chris said that he made a township road map showing the road levels and the last treatments. Robert Thompson said that Calvin Township is in a similar situation but has worse soil, there has to be a base to have good roads. The last 3 years they have done a double chip seal (ground, let it sit over winter, in the spring double chip seal), can look into this but this option will not take heavy loads. Nick said that CCRC brought up dust control, Chris said that he doesn't know when our current contract is up, Annette Peters said that we are not currently under a dust control contract, it is a yearly commitment. Nick said that CCRC offers dust control, Robert Thompson said they use 42% chloride, its one treatment, one application that is temperature sensitive, the township may pay half the price but he's sure they are currently using brine. There are currently 2 townships in the county that is not participating in the CCRC dust control. They are currently accepting bids for a couple more days, after that they will get the prices to the townships. Chris asked when contracts will be available for the township, Joe said again after the bids are closed, they will send the current pricing, then the township can let them know what roads we would like to do, and they will then provide the contracts.

Minutes

The minutes from the last regular meeting, November 11, 2024, were presented. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the minutes; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

The November Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$264,958.35 in the general fund. Balance in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are listed. Annette asked if the other accounts have not been reconciled since September 30, 2024. Alex said the balances are current as of November 30, 2024, besides the ones with asterisks since those accounts are savings accounts and we get quarterly statements, the date just was not updated. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the November Treasurer's Report; Chris Brooks seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes
Williams – Yes
Brooks – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved the November Treasurer's Report.

Bills

The Revised bills for November were presented with a new total of \$20,184.73. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the revised November Bills; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes
Williams – Yes
Brooks – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved the Revised November bills.

The December Bills were presented with a total of \$46,419.80. Chris Brooks asked about the two City of Dowagiac bills, Annette said that the \$4,638.68 was approved at the last month meeting to be paid, but she forgot to write the check, so it's listed on this month bills the second check is for half year billing that Chris Brooks submitted after the Ambulance Authority meeting. Nick Seelye asked about the Drian Commission bill, Annette said that she remembers something about the McMillan Dam and the drainage. Nick Seelye made a motion to pay the Decmber bills as listed; Chris Brooks seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes
Williams – Yes
Brooks – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved the December Bills.

Alex said that it is Winter Tax Collection season, and he had 4 scheduled office hours: December 21 from 10am – 4pm, January 4 from 10am to 4pm, February 1 from 10am to 4pm and February 28 from 10am to 6pm. He will also be available by appointment, or you can mail in your tax payments. Annette will get these times listed on the website. Alex said that he is excited about his new tax checks.

Clerk

Chris has been helping with updating the website and putting the zoning map and ordinances on. Annette has updated all the inspector's applications. Chris asked if Joe Wickey sends monthly reports, Annette said yes, she received a monthly report.

Trustee Grice

Not Present

Trustee Seelye

Trustee Seelye has reviewed the masterplan and did not notice any changes from 2004-2016 and made no changes.

Nick called the assessor because his tax bill is messed up; while talking to him, Kevin told him any buildings that Joe Wickey had not red tagged, we can let him know, he will come and reassess and add the buildings to the tax bills. This way residents pay taxes, even if no permits were pulled.

Chris said that he needs to talk to all the inspectors, Nick said that Kevin agrees.

Chris Brooks made a motion to increase the township zoning liability insurance coverage, which will increase our bill by an estimated \$490; Annette Peters seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes
Williams – Yes
Brooks – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved increasing the Township Zoning Liability Coverage.

Nick said that he talked with Cairns Concrete about the invoice difference and explained to the wife that we were quoted \$1,500 and the \$2,300 invoice had no explanation. The wife chuckled, said if that's what we were quoted, that's what we will do. So, nothing more is owed.

Nick said that our zoning is against short-term rentals, tiny homes, wedding venues and he would like to look into having these changed. Annette Peters said this is not how this happens, he would have to go to the zoning administrator, who then takes to the planning commission, and the steps start there. The board is the last and final step.

Fire and Ambulance Report

Chris attended Ambulance Authority meetings December 4th and December 9th. The Ambulance Authority is now made up of 4 townships and the City of Dowagiac. They are requesting a revised contract, which was prepared by our township attorney. They need the township/city approval then it would go before SMACAS for approval. There are two ambulance styles type A has a paramedic and Type B has NO Paramedic. There is an A unit 24/7 in Dowagiac, roughly less than 5% have a destination. Current contract is \$45,000 approximately per year, reports show 3 runs in Volinia in May. Chris and Nick meet today with Marcellus Ambulance. They offer 24/7 Type B service for \$36,000 a year. If a Type A is needed, they will contact Van Buren. Sue Conklin said that is actually depends on where they are going. Nick said they cannot move or meet any another ambulance unless there is a pulse. Chris said that there is not Type A option. Nick said that Marcellus is currently handling more than double of the calls and not getting paid for them. Chris said that the length of time to respond is a concern. Nick said that Bobby said today that their response times are well below that and would talk to CCRC about handling Marcellus Hwy better. Sue asked who is maintaining Marcellus' Ambulances. Nick said that Heath is. Sue asked if we would have to use Marcellus Fire also, break our contract with Wayne Township Fire Department, Nick said they told Bobby just the Ambulance. Sue asked how many workers Marcellus has, Nick said 9. Bob Rasmussen said that Marcellus sued Volinia Township previously, Nick said that they were told that Volinia Township broke the contract by not doing a 90-day cancellation notice per the contract. Nick said that Bobby told them he talked to our old Supervisor 14 months ago and told him they could solve our problem in 5 minutes. Chris said that we need to find a solution to best suit us and would like to table the conversation until next month.

Cemeteries Report

Bill Personette said that there were no burials this month. He has been doing the cemetery maintenance for 15 years and appreciates the opportunity. His son lives on Little Fish Lake. His current contract is April 1st to March 31st. Nick asked if Bill plans to raise the contract amount next year, Bill said that he does not anticipate it.

Supervisor

Chris said that he as reviewed the budget and sees that it needs to be adjusted. He knows there are issues but does not know how to approach it just yet. He knows we will need to adjust it before March. Alex said that we will have more income listed before then. Nick asked when we normally get a tower buy out option, Annette said that she does not believe they come on a schedule.

BOR will be meeting December 11th at 2pm. Chris said that he has a limited understanding of what that entails, but his understanding is that it is about the assessment of equal distribution through the township.

Chris will be attending the New Elected Supervisor training put on by MTA all day Thursday.

Chris attended a Zoom meeting about Camp Matziv with Attorney Seth, the camp's attorney Mitt Drews and Roger. Chris let them know that the township board voted to put the camp back on the tax roll, and the camp attorney was upset. They asked for proof of the 501c3, and the difference between Camp Matziv and MMW before Wednesday's BOR. Chris pointed out that the township does not allow resorts without a special use permit. The camp attorney claimed that they are grandfathered in. Chris told them that is now allowed, and they would have to reapply, along with providing a site plan. Jake Weiss reached out to Chris saying that he wants to be a good community partner.

The LASA appointment of representative term renewal is due, and Chris said that he would like to continue with this role. Nick Seeley made a motion to appoint Chris Brooks as representative to the Lakes Area Sewer Authority for the term of four years, beginning December 9, 2024, through the second Monday of November 2028; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Roger Leach texted his zoning administrator reports that he had continued communication with a company that coordinates work between cell phone companies and cell tower operators, continues communications with a homeowner planning to do a tear down and new build, spoke with a property owner who wants to build a pole building on a farm property he owns, and he participated in a meeting with lawyers and Supervisor Brooks about Camp Matziv.

Board

Nick asked about condemning houses, Annette said that would be blight and we would have to contact Roger.

Nick said that he is still getting complaints about the electrical inspector, the resident that is trying to get solar was red tagged. There has been back and forth between the solar company and Ron for something that was on the house when the residents purchased it.

Public

Bob Rasmussen said that the dust control that was applied to Warner Road only lasted about 1-½ to 2 weeks. There was gravel put down, but it had too much sand (was not put down by CCRC), when he talked to Robert Thompson, he was told they would take care of it. Bob does not recommend putting any more dust control there until more gravel is out on. Annette said that CCRC also told us years ago that they would not put gravel down without dust control mixed in.

Adjournment

Annette Peters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Peters
Volinia Township Clerk