

VOLINIA TOWNSHIP

CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, January 13, 2025
6:30pm

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

Prayer was given by Denny Grice.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Denny Grice.

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

Others present: Beth Brooks, Larry Davis, Deb Chambers, Jamie Chambers, Wes Peglar, Tyler Augst, Chuck Wilson, Sue Conklin, Randy Cuthbert, Zach Morehouse, Glenn Blough, Brenda Blough, and Dave High.

Agenda

Annette Peters said that Ray Northrup called this afternoon and will not be present this evening so he can be removed from tonight's agenda. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of Ray Northrup; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Minutes

The minutes from the last regular meeting, December 9, 2024, were presented. Chris Brooks said on page 4 under Supervisor should say "that he has" not "that he as." Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the minutes with the above correction; Chris Brooks seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Supervisor

Budget – would like to have a special meeting to review and discuss the 2024/2025 budget. Special meeting scheduled for January 20, 2025, at 7pm.

Training, CCBOPW – Attended MTA's new supervisor training and was contacted by Cass County Public Works who would like for Chris to be on their board.

Camp Matziv/MMW - We asked for more information from the camp prior to the BOR meeting and got nothing, was promised by Friday and still nothing. Our attorney has not heard anything either.

Zoning Administrator Report – Has been working on 3 things: Ron Edinbough (Dewey Lake/Gards Prairie), Brooks and Brian Lamouroux about a fence.

Building Inspector Report – Sent a report that was shared with the Board. There were 5 permits submitted in December.

Master Plan Update – Denny and Chris attended a County Planning Commission meeting December 18, 2024. Our Master Plan update is being included with the County Master Plan. Tyler Augst said that the Master Plan has a 5-year review that is mandated by the State, and there is a working draft that has been distributed. The County has suggested for the local planning commissions to review and give back to Ambroisa by Wednesday. We could set a date to review the master plan draft. Randy Cuthbert said he didn't read that we're part of the renewal. Tyler said that Volinia is one of the 3 out of 15 in the county that elected to participate in the County Master Plan. Denny Grice said that his understanding is that we're not changing the Master Plan. Chris said that we're required to review it every 5 years, and asked how it ties into zoning. Tyler said you have to have a Master Plan to have zoning and ordinances. Randy said that our township planning commission wrote our local master plan 20 years ago then updated the zoning ordinances. Tyler said that generally the master plan is a tool for the planning commissions. Denny said that in 2014 the County did the same thing and reviewed the Master Plan. Randy said the draft pretty much mirrors the existing besides a few words or typos. Denny said that's the plan. Next Wednesday there is a county meeting that will be the 1st working draft meeting to review the feedback. Not everything will be completed at that County Commission meeting. Tyler said it would be great if at least one person could give feedback for the first meeting to get moving. Chris said that it may not be final until May or June and asked Randy to let Annette know when the planning commission sets a date for the draft review so it can be posted.

Treasurer's Report

Budget Update, CTVRS income \$1,077 – Nothing Special

The December Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$220,172.31 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are listed. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the December Treasurer's Report; Chris Brooks seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

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

The Board approved the December Treasurer's Report.

Bills

The January Bills were presented with a total of \$18,759.50. Annette Peters pointed out that the two highlighted items are estimates as the accountant has not given the tax amounts yet. Nick Seelye said that Energy is spelled wrong for the propane. Annette explained that the Decker Agency Check is the annual premium that was approved to renew previously that we just received the bill for, and that does include the extra that was approved last month for the increase in liability. Nick Seelye made a motion to pay the January bills as listed; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

Grice - Yes
Peters – Yes
Brooks– Yes
Williams – Yes

Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the January Bills.

Clerk

Website - Annette has updated some older minutes to the website. She just received some information from Tyler Augst for the MSU Extension that she will be working on putting on this week.

Cass County Hazard Mitigation Plan – FEMA has approved the 2024 Cass County Hazard Mitigation Plan for a multi-jurisdiction for five years. The approved plan is one of the conditions for applying for and/or receiving FEMA mitigation grants for programs including Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance and High Hazard Potential Dam Program. Chris Brooks made a motion to adopt Resolution #1-2025 for the Cass County Hazard Mitigation Plan; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed.

Trustee Grice

Cemetery digitization progress – 2 of 4 cemeteries are downloaded. Charleston and Crane are done except for mapping. Little Fish book was given to Emily today. Mapping will be done in the Spring.

Lead Paint – The Insurance Company said that as long as we don't neglect, we are not liable. We can seal off the area and put on the agenda to address in the future, and we should be covered. Denny said that he had gotten the one quote and will get more when the board is ready. Chris said to wait to see where the budget is.

Planning Commission – There is a meeting Wednesday. Pretty much covered everything earlier.

Trustee Seelye

The furnace kick did not work. ML Heating just informed us that we are out of gas. Annette said that the disconnect notice was until later this week. Alex said that he doesn't like MEC's billing, that it does not line with the townships pay schedule and thinks we should look for a different company.

Roads – Marcellus Highway from Decatur Road to Gards Prairie will be closed Wednesday
From 8am to 5pm for tree removal.

Chris and Nick met last week to go over the roads. CCRC said that the 2025 match will be \$42,980.36. Recommendation for 2025 is gravel roads and paving Warner Road. Would like to talk to other engineers. We would have to submit what we anticipate doing to get contracts. Denny asked how much it would be to pave Warner Road. \$90,000. Denny said that CCRC suggested focusing on gravel roads. Nick said that the old board said Warner would be paved and never did it. Dave High asked why the township is responsible for County Line Road. Nick said that he did ask, and they skirted around answering. Dave said if CCRC says we need to do County Line Road then they need to do Dewey Lake, other townships have not capped gravel in 20 years. Randy Cuthbert asked how much it is for gravel. Chris said that it is \$35,000/mile for 3 inches. Denny said that he looked into outsourcing last year. Randy suggested rethinking liability, intersections need cut back everywhere, gravel roads are wasting money, they are just ditches until someone figures out why. Nick said he asked why ditched roads were not as wide as they are now. Randy said that Wayne Township roads are better. George said we went back 50 years by tearing up Warner now we are talking about doing the same thing to Goodenough. Dave said the leadership at CCRC is to bully to

get what they want the township to do, not what the township wants to do. Dave asked who the road commissioners were. Chris said that it is on the Road Commission website. George suggested getting a bid from Reith Riley to compare to. Denny said that we can, but we would have to increase our liability insurance.

Fire and Ambulance Report

Chris said that he met with residents, the ambulance authority, and Marcellus Ambulance over the last month. There are two kinds of ambulances, ALS vs. BLS, and Marcellus does not have a paramedic. The Authority has 2 units in Dowagiac (1ALS, 1BLS), and 33%-time paramedics available. Cost for the Authority is \$44,000/ year, Marcellus is \$36,000/year. SMACAS has said they are willing to provide equipment for a 1st responder at Wayne Township, which would decrease response time in our area, which is currently 17-25 minutes. Marcellus has 9 volunteers on staff. Annette said that she reviewed the information that was sent over and has concerns: there's not information from SMACAS to actually compare to, Marcellus is claiming to be doing the majority of the calls in our area but there is no proof, Marcellus has poor results on a lot of PPC review, Certifications are expired on ambulance and pumps, claims that response time would be better but there's no way of knowing that when the staff is volunteers and they have to get to the garage before they can leave for a call and that extends call times, would have to break a contract with Wayne Township Fire, and 52% of township ambulance calls were ALS, which Marcellus does not offer. Denny said that the fire/ambulance millage passed, and that money cannot be spent anywhere else. He thinks taking SMACAS for the higher cost gives better benefits with 24-hour staff, on board for medical staff (Jeff Conklin said that BLS cannot give meds). Jeff Conklin said that last he knew, SMACAS had 3 paramedics on for all shifts. Denny said to stay with the ALS ambulance. The residents approved for the best ambulance we could provide. Jeff Conklin said that it would be a 1st responder at Wayne Township not an ambulance if Wayne Township approved. Denny said that he still recommends staying with SMACAS. Nick Seelye made a motion to extend the contract with the Ambulance Authority and SMACAS; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Annette Peters requested a roll call vote:

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

The board approved extending the Ambulance Authority Contract for ambulance services.

Jeff Conklin asked how long the contract is. Chris said it is an annual contract with a 6 month out option.

Cemeteries Report

There were no burials this month.

Board

None

Public

Zach Morehouse asked if the cemetery software is coming in on budget, and if it ends up going over budget what will happen. Denny said as of right now it looks to be right on budget, but we will not go over budget, he will make sure of that.

Zach Morehouse asked if the Master Plan meeting would be an open meeting. Annette said that all meetings are open meetings. Zach said he would like to see more involvement, and someone should post on Facebook. Annette said that it will be posted on the township's website along with the message board outside.

Tyler Augst provided handouts from the MSU Extension office on Governing Essential Series, 2024 Master Citizen Planner Webinar Series Recording and Redlining in Michigan.

Dave High asked if there was any information on the dam, and why it changed. Chris said Jeff Vanbelle told him that the Midland Dam broke, a 100-year storm became a 200-year storm, changing structural ability. 85 feet spillway around dam. They want to move McMillion Dam to the East side of Lawrence Road and decommission Bunker Hill Dam. This would give them access to the dam.

Sue Conklin asked what CTVRS meant on the agenda. City Village Township Revenue Sharing

Adjournment

Alex Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Annette seconded the motion; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Peters
Volinia Township Clerk