

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
Township Board
Minutes
June 9, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley via tele-conference.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Trustee Beliger provided a brief invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor	Present
Kathleen Manley, Clerk	Present (left at 10:50 P.M.)
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer	Present
Tawn Beliger, Trustee	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present (left at 10:00 P.M.)
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Public Safety Director William Wagner
Township Planner Paul Lippens
Township Manager Steven Aynes
Manager Assistant Jennifer Carlisle
Township Attorney James Fink, Fink & Fink PLLC
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the community

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

David Gordon, Hellner Road, commented on the proposed budget and Board communication with the public. Jennifer DeLisle, Parks & Recreation Committee, commented on the their budget needs.

Lenore Zelenock reported on the closing of the Kiwanis store and thanked the Township and the public for their support of it, giving special thanks to Margaret Riddell and the late Mary ~~Tummins~~ Tummonds.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSE

Board members thanked Kiwanis for their service to the community over the years of operating their thrift store and commented on the recent loss of Mary Tummins.

In light of the recent death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Chief Wagner reviewed the training the Township's police officers receive, including de-escalation and mental health response. He specifically stated neck restraints are not used anywhere in Washtenaw County, body cameras are worn to protect officers and the public, and they will be reviewing internal policies to make sure their training and

practices are current and to improve the department. The Board thanked Wagner for his leadership.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- **Reports**
- **People's Express Correspondence**
- **Check Disbursement for Paid Bills (5/8/20 - 6/4/20)**

Chockley noted there is no code enforcement report.

Regarding the 75 Barker Road sale, Aynes said he signed the purchase agreement and is looking for an engineering firm for the parking lot survey.

Chockley noted the 75 Barker Road developer did not include office use in his proposal, but would like to have office space—which is allowed in the zoning district—in the building. It was agreed to add item 4b to the agenda to address this.

Regarding re-opening the Township office, Aynes said the State requires approval by the Board two weeks prior to the re-opening.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, that the consent agenda be adopted as presented.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, that the balance of the agenda be adopted with the correction of the date of the minutes and the check run date for open bills, and with the addition of Item 4b, 75 Barker Road Development Agreement. **Motion carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Zelenock opposed.**

PUBLIC HEARING
Proposed 2020-2021 Budget

Aynes noted the Board has had fewer opportunities to review the budget this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the State is suggesting there may be a 6% decrease in revenue sharing, but he recommended that the Board plan for a larger cut. He noted the Board has wisely built up the Township's reserves which puts the Township in a good position.

Chockley reviewed her memo showing what the millage rates will be unless reduced by the Board.

Chockley opened the public hearing.

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David Gordon commented on expected revenue sharing, urged more spending on a public park, and urged cuts to prepare for a serious financial outlook through the next year.

Chockley closed the public hearing.

AGENDA ITEMS

1.

May 26, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, that the minutes of the May 26, 2020, Regular Board Meeting be approved as presented.

There was discussion about the incorrect set of minutes being in the packet and a question about whether a dollar amount had been included in the motion republishing the equalization basin bond notice.

Motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Zelenock and Dockett opposed.

2.

Payment of Open Bills

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, to approve payment of Open Bills (expected check run date 6/10/2020) for a total of \$59,618.52 from all funds in the Municipal Investment Fund (MIF).

Zelenock suggested costs related to the sale of 75 Barker be paid from the fund accrued for that property, and asked that the Township attorney's bills be separated by cost center. Fink said he will revise his billing format. Dockett asked Zelenock to prepare an accounting of all the expenses involved in selling 75 Barker Road.

Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.

3.

Hiring of Part-time Police Officer

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Otto seconded, to approve Chief Wagner to hire James Basso as a part time police officer at a rate of pay of \$18.60. Hiring will be contingent on the successful passing of a physical.
Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.

4a.

**Resolution 20-625:
Amendment to Investment Policy**

- ▶ **Motion:** Zelenock moved, Beliger seconded, to approved Resolution 20-625, A Resolution of the Northfield Township Board of Trustees establishing a policy on township investment and depository designations to remove Ann Arbor State Bank and Morgan Stanley/Greystone Consulting and include

Level One Bank. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote. Resolution adopted.**

4b.

75 Barker Road Development Agreement

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, to allow the uses permitted in the underlying zoning district, Whitmore Lake Downtown District, to be written into the development agreement with Mr. Munger for 75 Barker Road.

Beliger said she would like the amendment limited to the office use being requested by Mr. Munger. Otto said whatever is allowed per the zoning, which includes office, should be allowed. Manley agreed, and Chick said it would be problematic to try to deny any use allowed by the zoning.

Motion carried 5—2 on a roll call vote, Zelenock and Dockett opposed.

There was discussion about whether any future changes to the development agreement need to be brought back to the Board. Fink said he has a sense of what the Board wants and should be able to conclude the negotiations quickly.

5.

Proposed 2020-2021 Budget

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, that the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget be adopted as presented.

Comments included:

- The uncertainty about the State revenue sharing and the economy in general make it difficult to make predictions, but this budget closely follows the current year budget, and amendments may be needed in the future.
- The 75 Barker Road sale should be listed as \$112,500 rather than \$100,000, and the difference be shown in expenses related to the sale.
- People's Express:
 - Funding should be removed in favor of funding the needs of the elderly.
 - Originally this was a service for the elderly, but was expanded for everyone who needs a ride, regardless of age; funding should be retained.
- WATS, SEMCOG, and watershed dues should be eliminated/retained.
- The level of Michigan Townships Association dues should be reconsidered. The dues are a good value because lobbying the MTA does saves Townships money.
- The contractual obligation to the Township Manager if the position is eliminated is not reflected in the budget.

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- The expense for elections is uncertain in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; costs may be affected by the level of absentee voting, voter participation, etc.
- Eliminating staff raises should be reconsidered, to potentially be paid for by not filling the front desk position. Perhaps the Community Center assistant could provide some office help.
- Professional fees need to be monitored and controlled. Ideas included reducing calls to the attorney and arranging agendas to limit the amount of time professionals spend at meetings.
- Funding for canceled 4th of July events can be removed from both the current and 2020-21 fiscal years.
- The general fund should not be subsidizing the Building Department.
- Funding should be included for land preservation. No funding should be provided, and work on projects should be done by volunteers.
- Estimates for SAW Grant income and expenses should be included.

[Dockett left the meeting].

- ▶ **Amendment to motion:** Zelenock moved, Chick seconded, to amend the budget to reflect the changes discussed. **Motion carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Amended motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, that the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget be adopted as amended. **Motion carried 6—0 on a roll call vote.**

Zelenock recommended increasing Wagner's salary. It was noted a performance review should be scheduled for July.

**6.
Request for Proposals for
Planning, Zoning, and Building Services**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Zelenock seconded, that we develop and issue a request for proposal (RFP) clearly citing our current state and our needs and soliciting firms who can provide the expert guidance and creativity to improve and enhance our services.

The Board discussed various options for providing these services including having an in-house planner who is assisted by consultants.

Lippens said he was not at the meeting when this first came up and he was not aware it would be on this agenda. He asked the Board to consider the timing of this action in the middle of a crisis, and he noted that a considerable amount of planning costs is paid for by developers, but the Township should raise fees. He offered suggestions for addressing concerns, and said he understands why the Board is asking the questions, but noted this action is being considered without input from the staff or the committee charged with investigating options.

The Board discussed the need to do this to start gathering information because costs need to be cut while continuing to provide valuable service. Discussion included the need to consider fee increases, the possibility of using County services, and the difficulty of making comparisons to other Townships.

Otto suggested calling what the Township is looking for a Request for Information (RFI).

Chockley withdrew her motion.

TRUSTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, to accept the Trustee/liaison reports.

Chick noted that on the advice of counsel the Planning Commission public hearings for marijuana permit applications noticed for June 17th have been canceled. She explained the notice indicated it would be an in-person meeting, which cannot be held under the governor's current COVID-19 order. Fink recommended holding the public hearing via tele-conference.

[Manley left the meeting].

The Board discussed the pros and cons of holding public hearings via tele-conference.

Motion carried 5—0 on a roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Three positions are open on the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Anyone interested in serving should contact Chockley.
- In light of the cancellation of the live 4th of July Parade, Kiwanis will be hosting a virtual parade. Submittals can be made via email to Jacki Otto.
- Otto provided information about priming the pump at the Community Garden.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

David Gordon, Land Preservation Committee Chair, commented on the long Board meeting length and lack of funding for land preservation. Adam Olney, Whitmore Lake, commented on Board training funding, the delayed marijuana permit public hearings, Township funds spent on the marijuana referendum, and Board priorities. Marissa Prizgint, 32 Schrum Drive, commented on the delayed marijuana permit public hearings and police training.

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BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board member comments included:

- reviewing information provided earlier in the meeting by Chief Wagner about police training
- replying to comments about Board members paying for their own training, lack of land preservation funding in the budget, and the marijuana permit public hearing.
- the need for website improvements.
- discussion about extending the use of Zoom for tele-conferencing.
- appreciation for Chief Wagner's service during the COVID-18 pandemic and civil rights protests.

ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion carried 5—0 on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 P.M

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on June 23, 2020.

Kathleen Manley, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/