

**NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP**  
**Township Board**  
**Minutes**  
**September 8, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley via tele-conference.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE**

Trustee Otto provided a brief invocation, expressed condolences to the family of John Westover, and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor	Present
Kathleen Manley, Clerk	Present
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer	Present
Tawn Beliger, Trustee	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Public Safety Director William Wagner  
Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Dan Willis  
Township Manager Steven Aynes  
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble  
Members of the community

**FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Marissa Prizgint, 32 Schrum Drive, asked for an update on the development proposal for the North Village site and purchase of lots by the Horseshoe Lake Association, and she suggested better communication with the public.

**BOARD MEMBER RESPONSE**

Chick reported at least one Horseshoe Lake resident has inquired about purchasing Horseshoe Lake lots previously discussed by the Board. Zelenock agreed the Township's resources to communicate with the public should be better used. Dockett said the Board members should meet together at the Township for Board meetings with the public participating via Zoom, and there is no reason to wait to sell the Township's Horseshoe Lake lots.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- **Reports**
- **Check Disbursement for Paid Bills (8/7/2020 - 9/3/2020)**
- **Correspondence**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, that the consent agenda be adopted as distributed.

In answer to questions Aynes said:

- The same "not to exceed" figure used in the public notice can be used on the postcard mailing to Township residents about the Wastewater Treatment Plant basin expense.
- He will send testing results to the Board related to the 75 Barker Road soil contamination provided by Mr. Munger.
- Road improvements on Nollar and ~~Seven~~ Six Mile have been done, but may not be complete. [Beliger said the work done is not satisfactory].

Regarding the Police report, Chief Wagner said one expense was for firearms classes, and overtime is down due to fewer holiday activities and staff taking fewer vacation days. Dockett asked someone to investigate the electric bill for 75 Barker marked "Water heater and office" to make sure the water heater is not on.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, that the balance of the agenda be adopted as presented.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**1.**  
**Minutes of August 25, 2020:**  
**Special Meeting**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that the minutes of the August 25, 2020, Special Board Meeting be approved as presented.

It was noted that Mr. Aynes was present.

- ▶ **Amended motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that the minutes of the August 25, 2020, Special Board Meeting be approved as amended.  
**Amended motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**2.**  
**Minutes of August 25, 2020:**  
**Regular Meeting**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Chockley seconded, that the minutes of the August 25, 2020, Regular Board Meeting be approved as presented.

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An addition and four corrections were made.

- ▶ **Amended motion:** Chick moved, Chockley seconded, that the minutes of the August 25, 2020, Regular Board Meeting be approved as amended.  
**Amended motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**3.  
Approve Payment of Open Bills  
(expected check run date 9/9/2020)**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, to approve payment of Open Bills (expected check run date 09-09-2020) for a total of \$72,273.93 from all funds in the Municipal Investment Fund (MIF) account.

There was a brief discussion about the expenses for providing Wi-Fi hotspots at the two fire stations.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Zelenock moved, Manley seconded, that the Township's first choice of payment for the \$10,446.89 bond payment to Huntington Bank is through ACH.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**4.  
Fire Rescue Truck Repair**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, to approve repair of the Fire Rescue Truck 8-1 for an amount not to exceed \$9,000.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**5.  
WWTP Trickling Filter Equipment Repair**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, to approve the repair of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Trickling Filter Equipment which has developed a leak and to approve the award to Titus Welding at a cost not to exceed \$20,650. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**6.  
Public Safety Building Parking Lot Resealing,  
Crack Sealing, and Striping Bids**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, to approve Chief Wagner to hire Alans Asphalt for sealing, crack sealing, and striping of the parking lot at the Public Safety Building for an amount of \$6,927.00.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Chief Wagner said this represents about half of the concrete and asphalt work that needs to be done, and the rest is planned for next year.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**7.  
DEA Annual Provisional State & Local Task Force  
Agreement**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Otto seconded, to approve the DEA Annual Provisional State & Local Task Force Agreement as presented and to allow Chief Wagner to sign the agreement.

Dockett said this officer should be working a beat.

**Motion carried 7 6—1 on a roll call vote, Dockett opposed.**

**8.  
Land Preservation Committee Social Media Plan**

- ▶ **Motion:** Zelenock moved, Chick seconded, that the Preservation Committee be approved to create and operate a Facebook page for the purpose of educating and engaging the public in support of the mission to protect and sustain Northfield Township's unique beauty and rural character for current residents and future generations through the preservation of farmlands, wetlands, and key natural areas, the continued support to our local farmers, and educational outreach for the entire township.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Zelenock said there will be no cost for this.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**9.  
Personnel Committee Recommendations  
Concerning Raises and  
Part-time Employee Compensation**

The Board reviewed the September 1, 2020, memo from the Personnel Committee and made comments and posed questions including:

- The expectation was to see information about PTO time, but not the other subjects included in the proposal.
- Do the positions in Green Oak Township correlate sufficiently to Northfield Township positions to make the comparison a good one?
- A study for Northfield Township should be done for all positions, not just the assistant to the Manager.
- Any salary increase for the position of assistant to the Manager should wait until a study of all positions are done and until State revenue sharing is known.
- The proposed PTO time for part-time employees would be prorated based on the number of hours worked.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Zelenock seconded, to accept the policy for accruing PTO time for part-time employees, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.

Beliger suggested that all such time awarded be based on a straight mathematical calculation. Otto said she would

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agree, except it is not possible to easily keep track of under the existing payroll system. Manley noted a new software system is being researched; Otto suggested the ability to make the suggested calculations be considered in that research.

Dockett said PTO time should not be banked because it takes a lot of time to track it. Beliger said someone who earns PTO at one pay level, then is promoted to a higher position, would be getting more value for their banked PTO. In answer to a question from Chief Wagner, Otto said the two non-union Police and Fire employees would be covered by these policies.

There was discussion about the purpose of providing PTO (to provide vacation time for staff), and how this relates to how much time should be allowed to be carried over. Zelenock noted that the proposed awarding of time off takes into consideration the number of years the employee has worked for the Township.

**Motion carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, that to accept the policy for awarding holiday pay for part-time employees, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.

Beliger and Dockett said part-time employees should not be given holiday pay. There was discussion about whether an employee not scheduled to work on a particular holiday would receive holiday pay for that day. Manley said that gets too messy to track and schedule around. Chick agreed. Zelenock said part-time employees know what they are agreeing to and should not be paid for holidays they would not work. Beliger said this is taxpayer money and should not be spent this way. Chockley said providing benefits like this helps keep quality employees at a small cost. Dockett said there is not much turnover. Other Board members listed positions that have turned over.

**Motion carried 4—3 on a roll call vote, Dockett, Zelenock, and Beliger opposed.**

There was discussion about waiting until State revenue sharing figures are available to consider pay raises. Willis noted his department is not affected by revenue sharing, but they are always grouped in with other departments that are when revenue sharing is discussed. It was agreed to wait to consider pay raises for the WWTP pending a proposal from Willis.

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, that office staff will not be offered comp time in lieu of overtime. Overtime will be paid at time and half for hours worked over 40 hours, as outlined herein, effective July 1, 2020.

Otto said she discussed this the Township labor attorney, who said comp time can be capped, like PTO, but is a “use it or pay it item,” not “use it or lose it,” and it has to be offered to all office staff. Otto said she spoke with Mary Bird, the only office staff getting comp time, and Bird said

she was told she could not be paid for her overtime, but she would prefer that because she does not always have the opportunity to use the comp time. Willis noted that WWTP employees accrue up to 150 hours of comp time, and after that they are paid. There was discussion about the law regarding overtime and exempt and non-exempt employees.

Otto said passing this motion would probably affect the ability of WWTP staff to accrue comp time. Otto noted Mary Bird can be informed that she can opt to be paid for her overtime if this motion is not acted upon.

**Beliger withdrew her motion.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, to accept that the township office will close December 28, December 29, and December 30, 2020, for the Winter Holiday, with staff using unused PTO or time off.

Zelenock noted the Treasurer’s office would have to be open for one of these days until 5:00 P.M. There was discussion about whether the office is busy during this time, whether this would be an inconvenience to the public, and if staff could handle phone calls and emails from home. Aynes said receiving tax payments is the bulk of the activity.

Dockett, Beliger, and Dockett Chick said they are not in favor of closing the offices in general because it is a service to the public. Manley said Ypsilanti and Pittsfield close during this time. Dockett said those are Charter Townships.

**Motion failed 2—5 on a roll call vote, Dockett, Zelenock, Chick, Otto, and Beliger opposed.**

Regarding the recommendation to cap PTO accrual, Zelenock said the current policy caps PTO accrual at two years, with any additional unused PTO being lost, so no one should be considered to have more than two years at this point. Aynes said employees may not be aware of this.

Manley said a Human Resources expert should be reviewing this because it would not be fair to employees to lose accrued time. There was discussion about the option of allowing employees to request a payout for excess PTO.

There was further discussion about whether employees listed as having more than two years PTO accrued will lose the additional time, why it has even been counted if the current Personnel Policy states it cannot be accrued, if the Township has a liability for paying for the time at this point, and the need to have employees acknowledge personnel policies in writing.

In answer to a question from Willis, the Board indicated more than two years of PTO can be accrued, but excess time must be used before the end of each fiscal year or be lost. Zelenock recalled the Board had not previously made a decision about this because it was waiting to see the numbers about how many hours would have to be paid out. It was agreed the Township’s labor attorney should be consulted about these issues.

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- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger seconded, to accept this policy for providing bereavement and jury duty pay for part-time employees, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.

There was discussion about paying employees for the time they would have been working during bereavement leave, and whether there should be a limit on paid time for jury duty.

**Chockley withdrew her motion.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Chick seconded, to accept this policy for providing bereavement pay up to three days for part-time employees, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, to accept this policy for jury duty pay for part-time employees, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.

Dockett said people can volunteer for jury duty.

**Motion carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, to accept this policy for employees to work at home upon approval by the Township Board or the Township Manager, as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2020, effective July 1, 2020.

There was discussion about whether all employees have the ability and necessary tools to work from home. Aynes said only the Controller is set up to work from home all the time, but other employees cover for each other in the office and some functions must be done in the office.

Beliger said she prefers staff to work together in the office and is concerned about security issues with staff working at home. Otto agreed security is a concern without proper internet security, and noted some staff can never work from home, such as WWTP plant staff. Zelenock said this motion is not needed and staff need to return to working in the office to provide service to the public. Dockett said if an office closure is needed in the future the technology should be in place so at least the phones should be answered.

Dockett asked why the Manager's assistant is responsible for paying bills. There was considerable discussion about this.

**Chockley withdrew her motion.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Zelenock moved, Beliger seconded, that the Township follow its COVID-19 plan as provided by the Township manager and approved by the Township Board on June 23, and rescind its motion made on March 17, 2020, regarding COVID-19.

Zelenock explains this authorized paying staff while working from home, but the Township now has its own COVID-19 policy.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

Otto reviewed the final recommendations in the September 1<sup>st</sup> memo from the Personnel Committee about hiring a Human Resources professional to study compensation and classification of Township employees.

**10.  
Resolution to Amend Boundaries  
of the Summer Homes Park**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick seconded, to pass Resolution 20-629 allocating the nine parcels listed in the resolution as future park area and authorizing the Township Manager, Township Attorney, and Township Assessor to take all actions necessary to incorporate the parcels into the future park area.

In answer to a question from Beliger, Chockley and Otto said there are no homes in this area and most of the lots are unbuildable.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**11.  
Ethics Policy**

Chockley recalled this was reviewed by the Board and sent to the attorney for review, who made a few minor changes.

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Chick seconded, to adopt the Northfield Township Ethics Policy with the changes provided by attorney Fink.

Zelenock noted that attorney Fink said contributions collected for an employee for her work on the Barker Road play path would not be allowed under this policy because of the limitations on gifts to employees. At Zelenock's request, Aynes said he will ask Fink what part of the policy would have been violated by that gift. Beliger asked if any policy like this has been in effect during the past few years. Dockett said there is nothing in the policy that forces anyone to do anything.

**Motion carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Beliger opposed.**

**TRUSTEE/LIAISON REPORTS**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto seconded, to accept the Trustee/Liaison Reports as presented.

Chick noted three requests for retail marijuana conditional use permits and site plans were considered at the Planning Commission's September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, and those plus the three discussed on August 26<sup>th</sup> will be forwarded to the Board together. Beliger reported Parks & Recreation met on

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August 20<sup>th</sup>, and the zoning compliance permit to change the location of the Community Garden shed has been approved.

Dockett said he prefers written reports with copies put in his Township mailbox. Chockley reported the Community Center bids for the parking lot will be opened tomorrow, and preliminary bids for flooring have been received. She said she is concerned the amount of the grant will be exceeded, but will not know until the bids are opened.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Taxes are due on September 14<sup>th</sup>; a drop box is available.
- A previously announced special Board meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup> to consider marijuana permits has been canceled. Those items will be considered at the regular meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Adam Olney, 9315 Lakewood Court, reported that Meet the Candidates nights will be held on 9/15/2020 for Trustees and 9/24/2024 for other candidates. He also suggested that all Township meetings be recorded and posted on the website.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Chick referred to the People's Express report and said they are doing good work for the Township. Zelenock said it would be beneficial for the August 22<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting for Board members to meet together at the Township Hall because of the detailed information that will be provided about the marijuana permit applications. Beliger said it would be ideal to return to in person meetings for the Board and the public, but is concerned about technical problems with a hybrid meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chockley adjourned the meeting adjourned at 10:12 P.M.

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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 September 22, 2020.

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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/](http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/)