

Austin Township Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 13th 2020

The Austin Township board meeting was called to order by Supervisor Kenneth Vredenburg Virtually, using ZOOM.

Present were: Kenneth Vredenburg, Billie Jean Barnes, Carolyn Towsley, John Brockway, and Sandra Mayo. Three Guests present: Deputy Jared Christensen, Undersheriff James Taylor and Gloria Parker

I. 7:31 p.m. Call to order - Pledge of allegiance

II. Public Comment

- Deputy Jared Christensen joined us today to introduce himself and give us a chance to ask any questions we have.
- Jared has been in law enforcement for 17 years. He started in Lakeview and has been a deputy in Mecosta County for about 13 years. Jared said he would like to crack down on the drugs, have school liaisons, and to help educate people.
- Kenn asked Jared what improvements he would like to implement? Jared said he would like to make sure the department is fully staffed, have a drug team in Mecosta County instead of in four counties, and implement school liaisons.
- Kenn also asked how many officers are on staff? Jared said he believed there were two detectives, four sergeants and twelve road patrol officers.
- Kenn asked Jared what the budget was? Jared said the budget is 4 million; 2.5 is budgeted for the jail and the rest is for road patrol.
- Jared also answers question off of his Elect Jared Christensen for Sheriff of Mecosta county facebook page and www.electjaredchristensen.com (web page is linked to the facebook page listed)
- Undersheriff James Taylor joined us today to tell us about the things he's done within the month. James gives executive orders to the officers, meets with staff about what they need to do to mitigate the spread of COVID 19 (went to 12 hour shifts and stagger shift start times and set up disinfection stations). Started birthday drive-by's about six weeks ago, and continued his normal daily duties, and has answered public questions.
- Kenn asked James what the jail capacity was today? James said they have 97 beds and this morning there were about 46-47 from Mecosta County, 3 were from the department of corrections, they are there for the safety of the inmate due to COVID 19.
- Tom O'neil was not virtually at the meeting but asked Kenn to let us know the Park millage was taken off the ballot. The 911 millage would be a total of \$3.00, right now we pay \$2.25 so if it passed it would only be a \$.75 increase.

III. Approval of minutes

- Carolyn Towsley moved to approve the April 14th Board Meeting minutes as presented, Supported by Sandra Mayo. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Treasurer's Township and Cemetery Reports

- Clerk and Treasurer's Township report will match for the general funds, clerk's report does not reflect the \$5040.80 (the delinquent taxes that the county will give back to us.) We have received them and they will be on next month's report.
- On the general fund - Transfer to the Isabella CD.
- CDARS - You'll see two sets of interest because March's interest payment is reflected on this report.
- Isabella CD 5240 is where the \$80,000 and the interest rate is 1%
- Clerk and Treasurer Cemetery reports match. No activity, only interest.
- Mercantile CD - we let that roll over.
- The Hall account has \$350.12, and Billie wrote one refund check this month
- Property Tax account 80,000 came out and is currently at \$353.69.
- Reports accepted subject to audit.

V. Payment of Township and Cemetery Bills

- Township Checks #9801 through # 9816, and Cemetery Check # 1654 through # 1657
- Carolyn Towsley moved to approve Township and Cemetery payments, Supported by Sandra Mayo.

Roll call Vote for May 2020 Payment of Township and Cemetery Bills:

CT: Yes	SM: Yes
JB: Yes	BB: Yes
KV: Yes	

Motion Carried.

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Assessor's and Supervisors Report

- We are balanced with the county.
- Cemetery Flags will be up one week before Memorial Day.

B. Treasurer's Report

- New chart of accounts not in effect until March 23,2023.
- Bill in legislature to extend property taxes. Bills will go out on July 1st.
- MTA webcast - every township is supposed to set a plan to re-open. Guidelines on their website.
- A question that has been asked - Can treasures refuse to take cash? The answer is no, we can recommend another form of payment.

C. Clerks Report

- Every registered voter will receive an absentee voter application. I will send my regular absentee voters an application and the BOE will send every other registered voter an absentee application.
- I have to order new envelopes, and the state will pay 30%-40% of the cost.
- If the August election is in person we will need to come up with a plan to ensure social distancing.
- Can we require people to wear masks - We may need to put a policy in place but im unsure at this time.

D. Road Commission

- Proceed on - it's within our budget

VII. New Business

- Fire Reimbursement
 - The Fire Chief in Morton Township suggests we have a Fire reimbursement in place for unauthorized burnes.
 - Who enforces it? The Fire Chief would enforce it through the DNR.
 - How much is the cost and can we put it as our recovery? It is typically \$500.00 sometimes more and we can make it our recovery cost.
 - The board would like to move forward with a contract for illegal burns.
- Express Pay
 - Elavon would cost about \$150.00 to get a gateway to access data. Carolyn asked Schumaker to look into this and he suggested we had the developers look into it. Carolyn called BS&A their proposal cost to do this would be nothing but would cost the payer \$2.00 to use.
 - Could we use Elavon to receive payments? Can we tie that to the parcel? BS&A cannot access current taxes. Further investigate using BS&A and let the payer know there is a fee attached when using this option. Carolyn will look into this more.
- Enhanced Policy
 - We can charge for our equipment used to get the information they are requesting and hours used to get the information and the hours used to send.
 - Is it worth the hassle to do it, if it's not required?
- Hall Floor refinish
 - Gary McIntyre BID - \$950.15
Carolyn Towsley moved to accept the BID from Gary McIntyre for \$950.15 To refinish the Town Hall Floors John Brockway supports.

Roll Call Vote For refinishing Town Hall Floors:

CT: Yes

SM: Yes

JB: Yes
KV: Yes

BB: Yes

- Summer Newsletter
Carolyn sent that out for all of us to look at, if we can look at that and let Carolyn know if anything needs to be added.
- F-65
Due the 1st of September, Carolyn and I will work on that with the auditor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm

Billie Jean Barnes