

Austin Township Board Meeting

Tuesday April, 14th 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. One Guest present: Undersheriff James Taylor

I. 7:34 p.m. Call to order - Pledge of allegiance

II. Public Comment

- Undersheriff James Taylor is running for Mecosta County Sheriff and wanted to tell us about himself and his goals if elected for Sheriff.
- James is from Big Rapids, his parents opened Pizza King. James said his interest in becoming a police officer came from serving police officers at his parents restaurant. As a child James went to Riverview and then graduated from Ferris State University with a degree in Criminal Justice. James started with the Big Rapids Police in 1994. After 8 years became a Supervisor. For the past 18 years James has been and is currently the Mecosta County Undersheriff.
- James expressed how important volunteering is to him. He said that "Volunteering is something my parents always encouraged." If elected for Sheriff he would like to encourage deputies in the department to volunteer. Along with volunteering and the most important goal if elected, he would also like to reach out to communities and have more of a presence in residents' lives outside of responding to calls; community trust is important to James. Some other goals he has are becoming more involved in events, sheriff accessibility, increased crisis management, medical emergency training for jail staff and for the department to remain fiscally responsible.
- Kenn asked how many deputies the department currently has and what the turnaround rate has been? John said there are 21 deputies not including himself or the current sheriff. In the last ten years he believes that they have hired seven deputies and two have left.
- Tom O'neil was not present at the meeting but did tell Kenn that he expects Central Dispatch will have a Charge of \$3.00 per line/month for new equipment on the August ballot.

III. Approval of minutes

- Carolyn Towsley moved to approve the May 3rd board meeting minutes and budget 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.)
- On the general fund - The State of Michigan gave us the Revenue sharing; Charter Communications gave us their final payment of the year; dog licenses sold; and the interest accumulated last month, no CDARS interest came in, not sure why. Property tax money collected from taxes. Left a portion of the interest amount in the property tax checking account to cover anything that might come out, the other amount was tax money.
- Clerk and Treasurer Cemetery reports match.
- The Hall account has \$350.00.
- Property Tax account currently \$353.69, closed out for the year
- Revenue sharing was 4.2% more than last year and the biggest year since 2007-2008. We plan to see a drop next year because of the current economy.
- Reports accepted subject to audit.

V. Payment of Township and Cemetery Bills

- Township Checks #9753 through # 9800, and Cemetery Check # 1653
- Note 9787 and 9788 were voided checks.
- Sandra Mayo moved to approve Township and Cemetery payments, Supported by John Brockway. Motion carried.

Roll call for April 2020 Payment of Township and Cemetery Bills:

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

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Assessor's and Supervisors Report

- We are balanced with the county, tomorrow is County equalization.
- We had five petitions, two people showed up, and three write-in's for the Board of Review.

B. Treasurer's Report

- Mercantile CD 6286 expires on April 25th, 2020. Should we leave it or try to find a better rate? Township Board suggests if we cannot find a better rate for an 18 month term, try to find something 12 months or less. See what the rates are and we will go from there.

C. Clerks Report

- Township Assessor and Clerk got the computers that were approved.
- Austin Township's May election was canceled, Morley Stanwood's proposal will go on the August ballot.

D. Road Commission

- They didn't have any idea what they were going to do with black top on 130th ave yet.
- The Road Commission asked for a list of roads the township would like gravel on: Kenn suggested 7 mile from 170th - 130th and 140th from 6 Mile to Pierce Road and 140th from 6 Mile to Pierce Road. Another thing to note is 135th from 6 Mile to Pierce Road, the Amish have bonded this and used trucking through frost laws, and the county said they would use the bond to fix that road.
- John had a citizen ask why we use money to fix the roads when they are county roads.
- We received a letter from the Road Commission stating that as of 2021 they will no longer be applying the first round of dust control free of charge. Instead, they will do a 50/50 split, the township's cost would approximately be \$110.00 a mile. Kenn would like to revisit what we did with Calcium Chloride about 4-5 years ago. The Township Board agrees we should look into that option.
- The Road Commission will not shut down but they are working on a limited staff.

VII. New Business

A. Hall Rental Policy During COVID19 Pandemic

- During the COVID19 Pandemic we will not be renting the Township Hall until July 1st, 2020. If the Governor extends her Stay at Home Stay Safe Order we will adjust our Hall Rental Policy at that time.

B. Cemetery Clean-Up

- The Morley Stanwood Junior Senior Class will not be able to help us. Kenn suggested we pay our mowing company the \$200.00 we would normally pay to the class, Regina (from the mowing company) agreed to do most of the clean-up for that fee. What we won't get this year will be a lot of raking done. Kenn suggests that we mulch the leaves as we mow and see how it goes from there. Between Kenn and Michele picking up all the dead limbs, and taking care of all the flowers and flags we should be able to get it up and going. As of tonight Kenn had heard back from John Johnson, Mary Quinlan and Michelle Graham and they were all okay with this plan.

Carolyn Towsley moved to approve payment to Tinker Pete, but recommends we pay them from the Cemetery Fund, Supported Sandra Mayo. Motion Carried.

Roll Call for 2020 Cemetery Clean-Up Payment:

CT: Yes

SM:Yes

JB: Yes
KV: Yes

BB: Yes

C. Revenue Sharing

- We expect that to take a hit next year because of the current economic conditions.

D. Morgue Board

- The Morgue Board is being eliminated
- It will operate out of Muskegon
- The pathologist that was hired will continue in the new operation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm

Billie Jean Barnes