

Lee Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Lee Township Board was called to order at 7:30 pm at the Lee Township Hall located at 877 56th Street, Pullman, Michigan.

Members Present: Trustee Hatfield, Trustee Galdikas, Supervisor Owen, Clerk Friel. Absent: Treasurer Lowery

Amendments: None

Board Comments: Supervisor Owen thanked everyone for being there, and commented on the LSL weir, explaining that the contractors were still finishing up a previous job but planned to begin work in the upcoming week.

Citizens Comment: Steve Schulz, of Bloomingdale Communications spoke regarding the ARPA funds. He stated that he met with residents near Osterhaut Lake area regarding broadband. He handed out information regarding broadband, and explained that they will be bringing broadband to 416 homes in the Osterhaut Lake area. He is looking to receive ARPA funds from Lee Township, to offset the costs for the instillation near Osterhaut on a project they started over a year ago. He explained that locally, Cheshire Township has committed 90% of their ARPA funds to the project, and Columbia Township has committed 70% of theirs.

Guest Speaker: None

Approval of Regular Board Minutes:

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to approve the regular board meeting minutes dated September 13, 2021. All voted: "Aye." Motion carried.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to approve the special board meeting minutes dated September 27, 2021. All voted: "Aye." Motion carried.

Treasurer's report: Trustee Galdikas gave the report in the absence of Treasurer Lowery.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to receive the treasurer's report. Roll call vote was taken: Yes –Galdikas, Friel, Owen, Hatfield. Motion carried.

Commissioners Report: Tom Jessup spoke regarding the upcoming budget. The county should have a 40 million + budget. There will be a budget hearing this Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 7pm. They got an additional 5 million this year and have spent about half on different things. The 40 million will cover replacement of 18 county vehicles. He spoke regarding the ARPA funds and cautioned spending funds on programs not approved. The county broadband committee is meeting and going well. He informed that the state has \$5.7 billion of ARPA funds and have not committed to where they will spend that. They are trying to get them to use the money toward broadband. He spoke regarding the school mask mandate, which has been lifted in Allegan County, by the Health Department. They had asked to have it lifted, after receiving 8 hours of testimony submissions, in support of appealing the mandate. After researching, and weighing the options, they decided it made sense to lift the mandate. Mask wearing decisions are now made at the local school district level with health department input. Regarding the redistricting, there are currently 7 commissioners, and beginning in 2023 there are plans to cut down to only 5. He believes this to be a "dumb idea." Jessup thinks it will give too much vote to commissioners who cover larger areas, and fears it will become a partisan run position as a smaller group. He stated to keep watching for ARPA funds, as the date keeps getting pushed back, and advised to be sure to only spend the funds within the parameters spelled out.

Deputy Report: none

Code Official's Report: none

Fire Department Report: Chief Chamberlain reported that in the month of September, there were 11 runs, including 3 medical assists, 3 auto, 1 wire down, 1 rubbish fire, 2 grass fires, 1 alarm response and a cancel in route. He informed everyone that the department lost Ray Adams this past month and spoke on what a great loss it was for the department and community. Ray will be missed by all.

Over the weekend the department had 2 equipment failures. Lee 25 engine succumbed to engine failure and will need a complete replacement engine to get it back into working order. He got quotes for replacement engines from Auto Value and Ford. Auto Value was the best value at \$12,500 with a 3-year warranty, where Ford was \$13,500 with only a 2 year warranty. He would like to move quickly to get the engine back in action. The cost to replace the truck completely would be about \$225,000.00. This truck was planned to come up for replacement in a couple years, but was expected to still be used in other areas when it is replaced. Replacing the engine will add a few more years to its use for the township.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Owen to approve a fire department expenditure up to \$13,000.00 for a replacement engine for truck 25. Roll call vote was taken: Yes –Hatfield, Galdikas, Owen, Friel. Motion carried.

Ladder truck 55 blew a power steering line which lit the truck on fire over the past weekend. There was significant damage to the truck's engine compartment and cab and all wiring was lost. Chief Chamberlain believes the truck to be a complete loss. The crew was able to pull the equipment off the truck as they waited for a quick response from the Fennville Department. Their quick action saved the department a lot of money in replacement equipment. Supervisor Owen stated that the claim has already been filed with the insurance company, and the truck had \$125,000.00 in coverage. Chief Chamberlain mentioned that they do have the option to buy additional coverage, which may be a good idea. The department has temporarily replaced the lost vehicle with engine 12, and have already moved the equipment over to that truck. Chief stated that they will make due until the repairs/replacements are complete.

He finished by reminding everyone that Fire Prevention Day will be held Monday, October 18, beginning at 8:30 am, at the Fire Station. They will have activities and demonstrations for the kids.

First Responders Report: Pam Rawson reported that for the month of September, there were 40 calls, including 38 medical, and 2 PIs. It was day 284 of the year and had had 350 calls so far.

Assessor's Report: Kyle Harris was unable to attend. Supervisor Owen reported that Kyle continues processing and answering emails and phone calls.

Ambulance Reports: none

Building Inspector's Report: Supervisor Owen reported in the month of September, there were 9 electrical permits, 1 plumbing permit, 12 mechanical and no building permits.

Community Center Report: Trustee Hatfield reported that for the month of September there was 1 rental, which has been the average.

Cemetery Report: None

Library Report: Clerk Friel reported based on submission by Debbie Laraway, the library recently had a donation of new children's books and they have begun a children's bilingual section. The library is 53% cataloged. They have a friend in Kzoo Books, in Kalamazoo who frequently sends new materials. They are planning a spring book sale, where they will sell duplicate books, and older books of value, that are not of current interest. More people have been using the library and there is plenty of activity on Facebook. She thanked the volunteers and encouraged anyone interested in helping to contact her.

Transfer Station Report: none

Lake Board: No report.

Newsletter Report: Trustee Galdikas reported that the next newsletter will come out in November.

Holiday Committee Report: Trustee Galdikas reported that the Fall Festival is planned at the Linking Center on October 28, from 6-8pm. Anyone interested in baking a cake should contact Shirley Kay. There will be a Trunk N' Treat in the parking lot of the old Northwoods on October 30, from 6-8pm, and there will be an outdoor movie following the event.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to approve Halloween Trick-or-Treat hours for October 31, 2021 from 6:30-8:30pm. All voted: "Aye." Motion carried.

The annual Community Holiday Social will take place on Saturday, December 4, from 6-8 pm at The Linking Center. Caroling, refreshments, gift distribution for children up to age 11 and family photos with Santa will take place. All are welcome.

Pullman Pride Report: Scholarship applications will be distributed to the schools by the first of the year. Deadline to apply is around April 15.

Road Committee Report: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

ARPA- Supervisor Owen informed everyone that there has been no update at this time for the funds but will continue to monitor. The township is still in the auditing phase, but still has no scheduled date or amount to be received. Dick Palmby asked if there is a list of plans set out, as to how the township will spend the money. Owen stated that there is a Master Plan in place, but nothing is set. Galdikas stated that the township is hoping to work with the county and possibly put the funds toward water and/or broadband expenses.

Beautify Pullman Request for Park Improvements- Patty Conway explained that to apply for upcoming grants, they need to have a plan and budget set. They will need to clearly specify what projects they will be working on to apply for the grants. They provided the board with a letter asking for action on 3 specific requests. The conversation went on explain what they need to do to get the grants for different projects, and the board explained how they support the groups efforts, but cannot rush into any decisions that may affect residents, without fully understanding how it will. Pam Rawson and Dick Palmby both spoke separately asking if the board could write a simple letter explaining that they support the group applying for improvement grants, without firmly deciding to make any commitments. Beautify Pullman asked the board to approve a Parks and Recreation committee, to which the board explained that a township sanctioned committee was not necessary at this time and Beautify Pullman can seek input from residents on projects they are considering. Beautify Pullman's main concern was that without the board's approval, they may miss out of available grant funding, which would not become available again until 2024. Supervisor Owen stated concern to the fact that creating a Parks and Recreation department would be a big deal to do for one small park within the township. All parties agree that communication will be key for success in upgrading any local parks. The board agreed to provide Beautify Pullman with a letter of support to help them move forward with grant writing.

Fire/EMS Reorganization Stipend Recommendations: Discussion was had to increase the stipend from \$15 per 12 hour shift for fire/EMS \$25 per 6 hour shift.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to approve the increase, beginning in the 3rd quarter, October 1, 2021 to \$25 per 6 hour shift. Roll call vote was taken: Hatfield, Galdikas, Owen, Friel, Lowery (yes by proxy). Motion carried.

Community Center Purchase Offer: People Helping People offered \$58,000 to take ownership of the Community Center building and responsibility for repairs and upkeep.

Galdikas asked for Lowery, will the building or other space at The Linking Center continue to be available for use by community members for events?

Jeff Kruihoff replied that it absolutely will be. The Community Center or Linking Center can be made available to the community for events as well as current groups and programs using the facility.

Shirley Kay asked if the building will be protected as a historic site to prevent demolition?

Jeff replied that they plan on spending significant money to renew the building, so it will be there for years to come.

Dick Palmby spoke in support of the sale and refurbishing of the building.

Debbie Laraway stated that she grew up in that church and would love to see it restored. She thinks PHP is the perfect group to do this and advised to sell it fast.

Supervisor Owen stated that the building has been a financial burden to the township for years, and has not been able to produce enough to financially support it.

Ted Chamberlain reminded the board of previous discussions regarding the bell. The board agreed that if the bell is ever removed, that it stay in the township and not go to a private collection and that will be added to the purchase agreement.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to sell the Community Center to People Helping People, at the amount of \$58,000.00, pending the agreement with the bell stipulation. Roll call vote was taken: Hatfield, Galdikas, Owen, Friel, Lowery (yes by proxy). Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS: None

Payment of the Bills: Presented by Clerk Friel

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Owen to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$89,992.70, as presented by Clerk Friel. Roll call vote was taken: Yes –Friel, Owen, Hatfield, Galdikas. Motion carried.

Correspondence: none

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to adjourn the meeting. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Heather Friel, Clerk