

Lee Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2022

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

Amendments: Supervisor Owen requested to add the road millage decision to the agenda.

Board Comments: Supervisor Owen spoke about the weather and wished everyone happy holidays as they are approaching. He complimented the work done by everyone at the recent Township Holiday Social.

Citizens Comment: Ben Lewis commented regarding the renovation of the Township Hall, stating that he didn't see any of the bids posted anywhere. He questioned if the funds would be well spent on a building that is only used for Township meetings and elections. He spoke regarding the suggestion from MDOT to close the railroad crossing on 107th Ave. He expressed his concerns over this decision and asked to see where the board has the authority to make that decision.

Charlotte Goodell voiced her concerns for whether the school had been consulted regarding the potential closing on 107th as it will affect bus routes and felt as a taxpayer this would cost her more in the long run.

Jackie Warren stated that she received a blight ticket. She stated that she continues to feel picked on, and questioned what is being done about other messy yards. She informed that she makes money on the stuff she has. She stated that the dump [transfer station] has refused her loads multiple times, listing reasons as not in a garbage bag, or items not accepted.

Guest Speaker: Tim Kotas gave an update on Broadband. He informed that 3 vendors have received federal grants for broadband installation in Lee Township. He continued that new law requires that internet must be available at a speed of 25/3. Continuing that old FCC maps showed all of Lee Township to be served at that level, but new maps show that it is mostly unserved. He stated that it is believed that many locations marked as served are believed not to be, and will be challenged. He recommended that everyone Google the FCC broadband map, choose the copper option to check to see if their home is marked as served. He requested that everyone run a speed test by Googling "speed test," and contest the service if it does not meet requirements of 25/3. He included that Frontier is capable of providing fiber optics, but do not. He informed how fiber is better than copper, as it travels longer distances and runs at faster speeds.

Approval of Regular Board Minutes:

Supervisor Owen requested to correct the November minutes on page 1, within the Guest Speaker section, strike out "East" before "of 56th St." and replace with "West", also to strike "57th", before "56th and" and replace with "58th" He also asked to correct page 3, under Building Inspector's Report to strike "revenue" and replace with "improvements."

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Hatfield to approve the minutes from the regular board meeting dated November, 14, 2022, pending corrections. All voted: "Aye." Motion carried.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes None.

Treasurer's report: The treasurer's report was read by Trustee Galdikas 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, Hatfield, Owen. Motion carried.

Commissioners Report: None.

Deputy Report: Deputy Jackson reported that for the month of November, there were 139 calls for service, 29 of which he handled. Included in these were 5 larceny/ B& E calls, 38 traffic stops, which lead to 3 drunk driver arrests and lots of deer/car accidents.

Fire Department/ EMS Report: Chief Chamberlain was out due to illness. Supervisor Owen read a report submitted by the Chief. Informing that there were 58 calls for the month of November. These included 34 emergency medical calls, 3 gas leaks, a 911 citizen complaint, an aircraft standby, 4 down powerlines, a good intent call, an electrical short, 7 building fires, a motor vehicle accident, a standby cover assignment, a cancel enroute a public service call and 2 medical assists. They continued training on Engine 17, informing that it was currently being painted/finished. He stated that it was a very busy month for both fire and EMS.

Code Official Report: Supervisor Owen introduced the new Code Official, Jeff Olney. He introduced himself as a retired State Police Officer, who had worked his entire career in the surrounding areas. He reported that although he hasn't been in the position very long, he had sent out 3 letters since he began.

Assessor's Report: Kyle Harris was out preparing for the December BOR will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at 3pm. Supervisor Owen informed that the meeting would be held for clerical errors on tax/parcel information.

Ambulance Reports: None, next meeting will be in January.

Building Inspector's Report: Supervisor Owen reported in the month of November there were 5 electrical permits, 1 plumbing permit, 6 mechanical permits and 2 building permits, bringing in a total of \$89,000.00 in improvements to the Township.

Cemetery Report: None. The board is looking for a volunteer to fill the vacancy of Cemetery Chair.

Library Report: Clerk Friel reported on submission from Debbie Laraway that they appreciated being featured in the Lee Township Newsletter. That the Library hours remain the same, and a thank you to the DuShanes for volunteering. She informed that they welcome new volunteers and encouraged anyone interested to contact the DuShanes or call her at 269-416-0221. She gave a big thank you to Lisa, Tim and their crew of volunteers for decorating the town and town center. She also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the volunteers who worked so hard on the Christmas Social; stating that a community that works together for the betterment of the whole, is a community that thrives. Continuing, she added that because of all the wonderful volunteers, Lee Township is thriving.

Transfer Station Report: Supervisor Owen reported that for the month of November, the Transfer Station brought in \$1,059 and 39 tickets.

Lake Board: None.

Newsletter Report: Trustee Galdikas stated that extra copies of the Newsletter could be found at the front of the meeting, for anyone who did not receive one. They could also be found on the Township website.

Holiday Committee Report: Trustee Galdikas thanked everyone who was part of the Holiday Social. She informed that 150 gifts were given out. She recognized the Fire Department for their great work in bringing Santa and Mrs. Clause to the event, complimenting their efforts in decorating the trucks. She continued by recognizing the youth who participated in the live manger, thanked the new local Rotary Club for their help with translating, Deb and Doug for supplying the food, and all the volunteers who baked, served and passed out gifts.

Pullman Pride Report: Trustee Galdikas reported that scholarship application information has been given to the local school counselors. The deadline to apply is April 14. She continued that Pullman Pride Day 2023 will be held the weekend of June 24th.

Road Committee Report: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

107th Road Closure: Supervisor Owen began by reading the Guest Speaker section of the November minutes, regarding the closure of the railroad crossing at 107th Ave and 56th Street. He stated that he believes a car/train accident, resulting in a death may have been what brought this crossing to light to MDOT, causing them to deem the crossing unsafe.

Charlotte Goodell spoke on her feelings that the suggestion to close is related to the solar farm desire to close the road.

Supervisor Owen assured that the solar farm it has nothing to do with the recommendation of the railroad crossing closer.

Ms. Goodell questioned who would be responsible to put up railroad crossing arms?

Supervisor Owen informed that the CSX railroad is responsible for the tracks.

Trustee Galdikas reiterated that the closure suggestion was initiated by MDOT, and the Allegan County Road Commission presented it to the Township for review.

Supervisor Owen spoke regarding the location of the houses on 107th, stating that all of the houses on the street are between 57th Street and 58th Street, not 56th and 57th, close to the suggested closure. He continued that there are many dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs where busses have to compensate currently.

Ms. Goodell stated that many people use these roads, and that there are many more areas more dangerous than this crossing.

Supervisor Owen that funds from the closure of this crossing could potentially save 3 other roads from being closed, due to failing culverts in need of dire but costly repair. He asked everyone to consider the good that could come by fixing other roads.

Ms. Goodell asked who was responsible to fix the roads.

Supervisor Owen stated that the Township covers road maintenance for the majority of the roads in the Township, stating that the County cares for "primary" roads. He gave stats for the costs to repair other culverts that have been deemed a concern, and in need of repairs/replacements. He stated that the Township does not have the funding to fix these issues, and in time these roads could be closed as they would be unsafe. He stated that with the current millage, the Township can afford to fix about 1 mile of paved roads per year and that funding does not provide enough funding to care for extra issues, like culvert repairs.

Ben Lewis stated that he believes the solar farm being on the road that can potentially be closed looks bad for the Township. He asked if they will close the road or just the area, stating that the former minutes sound like 107th would be closed from 56th St to 58th St. He also asked what the railroad is responsible for, and what the Township is responsible for, asking if the Township could try to get more money if they do close.

Supervisor Owen informed that only the end of 107th would close, at the RR crossing near 56th St. He stated that Chief Chamberlain stated that the Fire Department would be okay with the closure, stating that they would strategize the best routes for emergency response.

Trustee Galdikas reassured that per the guidelines from the County, the funds given for the closure can only go toward Lee Township road improvements.

Clerk Friel noted that the funds would be in the possession of the ACRC. It would not come to the Township, but the ACRC would keep it as a credit for road maintenance.

Mr. Lewis asked if RR crossing arms would be put at other crossings; to which Supervisor Owen stated that it was not the Township's jurisdiction.

Kim Morris asked who decides what roads to fix.

Tim Kotas stated that there is a road committee who makes suggestions.

Supervisor Owen informed that the County also makes suggestions based on the state of the roads.

After no further questions from the audience,

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to approve for the ACRC to close the railroad crossing at 107th Avenue and 56th Street. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Road Millage Decision: Supervisor Owen proposed 3 roads to be considered in the decision for what road the millage funding would fix in the coming year, based on suggestions by the ACRC. He gave estimated costs for each suggestion, ranging from \$160,000-\$180,000. His suggestion was to start with the road in the worst condition to ensure longevity and save funding by not having to do extreme repairs, or revert back to gravel. He stated that currently, the Township has \$95,000.00 worth of funding available, plus a \$50,000.00 contribution from the ACRC, for a total of \$146,000.00 to work with. Discussion was had regarding which roads are the worst off, and which see the most traffic flow. Supervisor Owen informed that money can be saved by keeping the work to one stretch of road, keeping the hired company from having to move their equipment from site to site. He recommended to fix the stretch of road on 55th St to 111th Ave.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to approve the bid to fix 55th Street to 111th Avenue, from 109th Avenue to 111th Avenue, and 55th Street to 54th street from 109th Ave to 111th Ave and 111th Ave from 55th St to 54th St. Roll call vote was taken: Yes- Hatfield, Galdikas, Owen, Friel. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appoint BOR Members:

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to appoint Sally Lacy, Jeff Rawson, Ray Russell and Shirley Kay as BOR Members for the next 2 years. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

MEC Permit Application: Supervisor Owen informed that Midwest Energy & Communications would like to be granted approval to move forward to dig and bury fiber to the areas they have been awarded by the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) allowing highspeed internet to be available to unserved homes in Rural America.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to approve the permit application for MEC. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Land division Parcel # 12-028-026-20 & 12-003-015-42: Both splits meet requirements and have been approved by MTS and the assessor.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to approve the split of parcel # 0312-003-15-42 on 110th. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to approve the split of parcel # 0312-028-026-20 at 102nd and 54th. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Payment of the Bills: Presented by Clerk Friel, totaling \$105,181.36.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Hatfield to approve the payment of the bills for a total of \$105,181.36, as presented by Clerk Friel. Yes –Galdikas, Hatfield, Owen, Friel. Motion carried.

Correspondence: None

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Friel to adjourn the meeting. All voted: "Aye." Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Heather Friel, Clerk