

Lee Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2024

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: Supervisor Owen, Clerk Friel, Treasurer Godlew, Trustee Galdikas, Trustee Hatfield.
Members Absent: None.

Amendments: None.

Board Comments: Trustee Galdikas informed that the Township email system through i2k has been down for a week, and offered apologies to anyone who has not received an email in that time. Supervisor Owen added that he has been working with i2k, and the issue is ongoing. He also noted that former Treasurer Lowery visited recently, and sends her best, stating that she is doing well, and enjoying retirement. He also announced that his Step-Son had a baby that morning, and celebrated the birth of a healthy baby girl.

Citizens Comment: None.

Guest Speaker: Mike Villar, candidate for Allegan County Prosecutor spoke in support of his campaign for the upcoming August 6th primary. He informed that he ran 4 years ago, and lost by 17 votes, he hopes to rectify that this election. He gave a brief history of his life, stating his father was a Cuban emigrant, and his mother from Kentucky. He stated that his pride as an American stemmed from his father's pride in becoming an American citizen in the 60s. He stated that he has been an Allegan County resident since 1991, when he became a private practice attorney. He listed many ways he is involved in the community. He continued with concerns he has with the way things are run with the current County Prosecutor, including budget concerns and loss of prosecutors. He informed that he is running as a republican, as is the current position holder. Trustee Galdikas asked what he plans to do differently to resolve the concerns he has with the prosecuting office. To which Villar stated that he plans to stop the "bleeding" of the loss of prosecutors, by offering more training, and to bridge the gap between the prosecutor's office and the police department.

Approval of Regular Board Minutes:

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to approve the May 13, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes: None.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer's report was read by Treasurer Godlew.

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

Commissioners Report: County Commissioner, Dean Kapinga was present and spoke about the Allegan County Health Department Annual Report, which he provided for the Board's reference. He spoke about the statistics provided regarding 2023 in review, pointing out many different programs that are offered, complimenting a job well done. He noted that Allegan County is the 3rd fastest growing County in the State. He spoke about the construction being done at the Allegan County Courthouse, and how badly it was needed. He complimented Judge Baker's team on continuing to work well through it all. He suggested to check the AC website to stay informed on construction being completed throughout the County.

Deputy Report: Deputy Godsey reported that in the month of May there were 182 calls. He spoke about Noise Ordinance complaints and the Special Event Ordinance, stating residents' concerns about the 90-

day process for registering events, and suggested a solution be discussed for a quicker way to register. He continued to inform that larceny issues have increased, touching on the difficulties in successfully retaining items taken.

Residents present raised concerns about break-ins that had occurred at neighbors' houses, and raised concerns about a potential suspect. To which Godsey informed that he had checked with the person of interest, but was not given permission to search their home, and without probable cause, would not be granted a search warrant to do so.

Trustee Galdikas asked if it is believed to be common assailants committing the larceny, or if they think each issue is isolated. To which Godsey stated they believe it is the same people causing issues, and have determined common details toward that conclusion. He added that it is believed the suspects of concern commit the crimes while under the influence of drugs, and target victims based on knowing their schedules.

Fire Department/ EMS Report: Zack Clark reported that for the month of May there were 57 calls, including 41 medical calls, 2 motor vehicle accidents, 2 forest fires, 2 medical assists, 1 off road/heavy equipment issue, 1 building fire, 2 trash/rubbish fires, 1 down powerline, 1 carbon monoxide issue, 3 cancel enroute, and 1 public service call. He informed that training was on air packs and hazmat suits. He continued that 1 more person received their First Responder license, bringing the total licensed at the department to 13 people. He informed that they are working on getting bids to add a lean-to to Station 2, for vehicle coverage, and an office and restroom at that location.

Code Official Report: Code Official Jeff Olney reported that 1 new letter will be going out this week, and that there are 5-6 cases still in the clean-up stage that he is keeping an eye on.

Assessor's Report: Supervisor Owen read a report from Assessor Heather Jahr. He informed that she is undergoing an audit for the Township, and that the meeting had gone well, with positive feedback. He informed that the July BOR will be held on July 16, at 6:30 pm. He read an announcement from Jahr, asking any interested resident who would like to serve on the BOR, to notify the Supervisor by January 2025. He informed that there were no splits, but a combination for one resident on multiple tiny parcels during the previous month. He finished by announcing that recording a Property Transfer Affidavits with the Township whenever a Deed is recorded with Allegan County is a legal requirement. Failure to do so causes delayed uncapping and penalties/interest to be billed following discovery.

Ambulance Reports: None.

Building Inspector's Report: Supervisor Owen reported that in the month of May there were 6 electrical permits, 3 mechanical permits, 0 plumbing permits and 5 building permits, with \$790,000.00 in improvements to the Township.

Cemetery Report: AJ Canfield spoke about complaints he had received regarding weed control at the cemetery around grave stones. He voiced concerns about decorations being placed outside of plots, and the difficulty in maintaining lawn service with decorations exceeding the grave areas. He asked that residents maintain the area around their loved ones' headstones when decorations are placed around them. His concern is of damaging peoples' decorations if he gets too close with lawncare tools. He stated that he is extremely mindful of the love and care put in by lost loved ones' families, and wants to be respectful of their decorations.

He raised concerns about the water situation, bringing up concerns for elderly residents' ability to get water to their family's gravesites.

Supervisor Owen offered to go out with Canfield to discuss options for resolution.

Trustee Galdikas reminded that the Township holds 2 cemetery clean-up dates (fall and spring), and between those Canfield can only care for what can be accessed, otherwise it is up to plot owners to maintain weeds around gravesites with decorations.

Sandy Anderson spoke about headstones that have been shifted off their bases. To which Canfield agreed, and stated he is doing his best to fix what he can. He also complimented Deputy Godsey for stationing at the cemetery to cut down on unlawful activities being conducted there.

Library Report: None.

Transfer Station Report: Treasurer Godlew reported that for the month of May the transfer station brought in \$1,614 and 60 tickets.

Lake Board: Supervisor Owen read a report submitted by John VanGessel, stating that people seem pleased with the lake's appearance, adding that milfoil is present, and should be treated with the goal of elimination by the 4th of July holiday.

Newsletter Report: Trustee Galdikas stated that the next newsletters are at the printer, and should be received in the next 7-10 days. They will be available on the website and community kiosks.

Holiday Committee Report: Trustee Galdikas thanked the VFW and everyone who helped with the Memorial Day celebration; stating that it was a good turnout despite the rain.

Pullman Pride Report: Trustee Galdikas reminded that Pullman Pride Day will be held the weekend of July 19-20. She reminded that there will be a band playing Friday night at the Pullman Tavern, and the majority of activities will be Saturday beginning at 8:30 with the pancake breakfast, with activities for everyone throughout the day. She stated that there is a schedule available, and will circulate more as the date grows nearer. She reminded that there is still time to sign up as a vendor, or join in the car show. Contact her if you wish to be involved.

Road Committee Report: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Road Millage Discussion (financials): It was made known that a special meeting was not held to discuss the financials regarding the road millage expenses, as discussed at the last regular meeting. Supervisor Owen explained a conversation he had with ACRC discussing the fees they charge for road projects. Treasurer Godlew stated that we would be over budget for road expenditures, but there is money available to cover the difference, but will require the board to be diligent as they budget road work in the future.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to approve expenditures for \$66,490.22 to cover the cost of shoulder paving on 56th Street, from 102nd Ave to 109th Ave. Roll call vote taken. "Yes"- Hatfield, Galdikas, Godlew, Owen, Friel. Motion carried.

Gravel Roads:

Supervisor Owen informed that the deadline to schedule graveling has passed and is no longer available to schedule.

Crack Seal: Supervisor Owen informed that ACRC stated crack sealing was not urgently needed, and could wait another year before being done.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Godlew to table crack sealing until next year. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Library Resolution Discussion: Supervisor Owen gave an update about the legal requirements of the Township, regarding the Pullman Free Library (PFL), as provided by the Township attorney. Stating the Township cannot be financially responsible for PFL. He continued that the issue regarding moving forward is that the building is privately owned, but sits on Township property. He gave a history of this discussion, informing that the State brought the issue to light when they sent a formal letter to the Township, stating that as the PFL is not a "legal library," the Township taxpayer funds cannot pay for the PFL.

Suggestions from residents in attendance were made for the Township to donate the property to the library, or take it on themselves, to which the Board informed they are not legally allowed to donate Township property, and the Township does not have the means or staff to man the library.

Clerk Friel informed that the bills that need to be covered include the phone bill that averages around \$150.00/ month and the utilities that range between \$50.00-\$150.00/ month.

Supervisor Owen informed that the attorney suggested a lease between the Township and PFL, for the property. He read a proposed resolution offering to lease the property to the PFL at the cost of \$1.00 annually.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to provide the lease agreement to Debbie Laraway, President of the PFL. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Pullman Pride Scholarship: Trustee Galdikas proudly announced the winners of the 2024 Pullman Pride Scholarships. Three Bloomingdale HS students and one Fennville HS students were this year's recipients. Evan Jewett and Sherlyne Moreno will each receive \$1000, and Ruby Gonzalez and Julissa Sanchez \$500 each.

Trustee Galdikas informed the board of a discussion with Stephanie Calhoun, Allegan County Community Foundation, about the option to move the Pullman Pride Scholarship fund to ACCF for management. She listed the benefits of doing so, stating that the process would be made easier for applicants, who could apply online for this scholarship and many others in one place. She stated that PP would still have a committee who would review and select award recipients, and that if the Board chose to move forward with this process, a link would still be available on the Lee Township website to streamline the process. She will continue to research this option.

Payment of the Bills: Presented by Clerk Friel, totaling \$91,544.41, which included one additional invoice for the Fire Department, for \$450.00. During discussion it was noted a check for \$6000 was to be voided.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Godlew to approve the payment of the bills for a total of \$85,544.41, with adjustments presented by Clerk Friel. Yes –Hatfield, Galdikas, Godlew, 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 9:02 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Heather Friel, Clerk