

MINUTES FROM THE  
REGULAR ANTWERP TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING  
Tuesday, January 10th, 2023

Supervisor Ruzick called the board meeting to order at 6:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: Daniel J. Ruzick-Supervisor, Bonnie Osborne-Treasurer, Chantel Reyna-Clerk, Bruce Cutting-Trustee, Gary Stock- Trustee

Board Members Absent:

Also Present: Twenty-seven guests

Motion by Reyna second by Osborne to approve the agenda as submitted with the addition of item 4. Uniform Chart of Accounts. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**Public Comment:**

Supervisor Ruzick addressed the audience with a brief update of the trail project. This project transpired roughly eight years to give residents a way to safely get back and forth between Mattawan and Paw Paw by way of foot or non-motorized vehicle. In July of 2022 letters were mailed to nine property owners explaining the proposed trail in the Township. Since then there have been meetings and workshops discussing the plan. There were several concerned residents in attendance with questions regarding the plan.

David Cole (Resident) – Mr. Cole would like to be added to the mailing list for updates on meetings and the progress of the trail.

Guest – Will the trail be used in winter months?

- The use of the trail during winter months has not been determined due to this project still being in the preliminary phase.

Jacob LaRue (Property Owner) – Will the use of motorized vehicles ever be permitted on the trail?

- Again, this is a question that can't be answered due to the phase of planning the trail is in.

Guest – How is it healthy to have a trail along I-94?

- The proposed trail along I-94 seemed to be the best way to accomplish the path from Mattawan to Paw Paw.

Jacob LaRue (Property Owner) – There are parcels of land that are currently zoned Commercial (GC) and Industrial (LI). How is that safe?

- The Township and Engineer is studying these parcels to determine if there are hazards.

Pat Coombs (Resident) – Serious concerns with the trail being placed along her property which is located along I-94.

Guest – What kind of fencing would be installed to protect trail users from accessing property owners' property?

- These are all questions that at this time can not be answered. All of these questions will be considered in later phases of the project.

Shannon Thompson (Guest) – How will this trail affect property taxes in the Township?

- The majority of the funding will come from grants applied for by the Township. The Township Board has voted to spend roughly \$1,000,000.00 from general fund for the project.

Jacob LaRue (Property Owner) – Feels there is not a clear enough plan to ask for funding for the project.

David Cole (Resident) – Why wouldn't the Township put money into the existing park located near the Transfer Station?

- Residents stated that they did not like that the park would be located near the Transfer Station.

Karen Bohn (Resident) – A question in the survey asks about trails in the Township. In her mind a trail would be in the nature, not along I-94. Karen feels the Planning Commission is lacking on communication to the residents. She feels a basketball, pickleball, tennis court would be more beneficial.

Jacob LaRue (Property Owner) – Would the Township Board consider tabling this until questions can be answered?

- The Township Board is taking no action on the trail at this meeting.

Pat Coombs (Resident) – Will the trail be open specific hours?

- This question can not be answered due to the phase of planning that the trail is in.

Guest – Has AEP been notified of the trail plan?

- AEP received a letter in July of 2022.

Deputy Tarnier – Van Buren County Sheriff Department

- There were 113 complaints in the Township in the month of October
- There were 107 complaints in the Township in the month of November
- There were 103 complaints in the Township in the month of December

There has been an increase in suicides in the County so please check on your friends and family.

Motion by Cutting, second by Stock to approve previous minutes from December 27th, 2022 Special Township Board Meeting. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Stock to approve previous minutes from December 10th, 2022 Regular Township Board Meeting. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**Action on Planning Commission Recommendations:**

A. Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2023

The Planning Commission presented the 2023 Parks and Recreation plan to the Township Board to adopt a Resolution for the plan. This plan will serve as a guide to future recreation development in Antwerp Township.

Motion by Stock, second by Cutting to adopt a Resolution approving the 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes. Motion carries.

Supervisor Ruzick called for a recess at 7:24pm.

Meeting reconvened at 7:29pm.

**Pending Business**

**A. Wage and Benefit Committee Study update**

The committee is waiting on the final report from Rahmberg Stover to provide a final determination on wages and benefits for employees at the Township. At the Special Meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Board took no action on the recommendation provided by the Wage and Benefit Committee. It was suggested that a time study be conducted to determine if the Administrative Assistant position at Mattawan Fire would be a part time or full-time position. The committee feels that the position is a part time position based off the job description provided, data collected from other departments and the initial meeting with the consultation company used to conduct the wage study. Supervisor Ruzick provided a comparison to the Administrative Assistant position vs. the Deputy Clerk to show that the wage being paid is more than Township employees were paid over the last 6 years. The committee has asked for an employment file for the Administrative Assistant position and has not received that as of this day. Chief Brooks is asking the committee to sit down with members of the fire department to discuss day to day operations. The wage and benefit committee are recommending this matter be tabled until more information can be gathered. It was agreed on by the Board. This matter has been tabled. No action taken.

**New Business:**

**A. Antwerp Township Planning Commission Annual Report**

Zoning and Planning Administrator, David Jirousek, provided an annual report for approval. The Planning Commission held 12 meetings in 2022 with 5 of them being Text Amendments, 6 of them being Special Land Uses and 1 Rezoning. The discussion that took place in 2022 were as follows:

1. Protection
2. Environmental regulations
3. Drive-Throughs
4. Parks Wellhead Alternative uses in General Commercial District
5. Community Survey
6. Pet services
7. Light Industrial (LI) dimensional requirements
8. Design requirements
9. and Recreation planning

**2023 Goals**

1. Antwerp Trail Project pubic involvement workshop, FAQ sheet, and outreach effort
2. Wellhead Protection overlay
3. Environmental regulations
4. Master Plan 5-year review
5. Evaluate and assess Michigan Economic Development Corporation Redevelopment Ready Communities engagement.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to accept the annual report submitted. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**B. Antwerp Township Planning Commission meeting dates**

The 2023 schedule of meetings was presented for approval.

Motion by Osborne, second by Stock to approve the proposed meeting schedule for 2023. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**C. Antwerp Township Hall/Senior Center proposal Whitman and Associates**

Wightman and Associates submitted a proposal that will provide Predesign/Schematic Design Services for the development of a new facility and determine possible uses for the facility being vacated. Scope of Services include; Architectural Programming and Schematic design in the amount of \$26,500.00, Boundary and Topographic Survey in the amount of \$9,500.00, and Geotechnical Investigation and Report in the amount of

\$5,200.00 for fees totaling \$41,200.00. After discussion, it was suggested that Supervisor Ruzick get additional quotes for the project.

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to table the proposal until additional proposals are obtained. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**D. Uniform Chart of Accounts**

The State of Michigan is requiring that all jurisdictions convert their chart of accounts over to a uniform chart of accounts. Treasurer Osborne has pricing from BS&A and Siegfried Crandall to complete the transfer.

Motion by Osborne, second by Stock to authorize Treasurer Osborne to have BS&A and Siegfried Crandall assist in the transfer of the chart of accounts not to exceed \$3000.00. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

**Correspondence:**

- Van Buren County Board of Commissioners updates

**Announcements**

**Reports:**

*Attorney*  
None

*Treasurer- Bonnie Osborne*  
\$275,919.47 in the general fund

*Building Activity- Chantel Reyna*  
Antwerp: 23 permits for December including Building, Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing with fees of \$2,852.00.  
Almena: 20 permits for December including Building, Electrical and Mechanical with fees of \$2,644.00.

*Van Buren District Library- Bruce Cutting*  
Paid bills. Things running smoothly.

*Sunshine Branch Library- Bonnie Osborne*  
No Report

*Lawton Fire Department- Bruce Cutting*  
Short meeting. Paid the bills.

*Paw Paw Fire Department -Dan Ruzick*  
Paid the bills.

*Mattawan Fire Department - Bonnie Osborne*  
The purchase of AED's was approved in the amount of \$13,000. The purchase of new hose nozzles was approved in the amount up to \$14,000. The purchase of flow test kits was approved in the amount of \$6,000. Truck #10 is currently out of service due to warranty work being done. There were 863 calls for service in 2022. There were 82 calls for service in December. Chief Brooks is addressing concerns with the ISO rating report that was received last month. He will loop Supervisor Ruzick in on the communication.

*Cemeteries - Chantel Reyna*  
Two burials for December.

*Planning Commission* - Gary Stock

Meeting minutes are available online at [www.antwerptownship.com](http://www.antwerptownship.com).

*Zoning Board of Appeals* - Gary Stock

No meeting.

Meeting minutes are available online at [www.antwerptownship.com](http://www.antwerptownship.com).

**Public Comment:**

None

Recommendation from the committee on Antwerp Township, Mattawan Fire Department, and Senior Services bills in the amount of \$78,043.99.

Motion by Cutting, second by Stock to approve the bills in the amount of \$78,043.99 to be paid. Roll call vote; Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to adjourn.

All voted in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 9:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chantel Reyna