

MINUTES FROM THE
REGULAR ANTWERP TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, March 14th, 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: Seventy-Four guests

Motion by Osborne second by Reyna to approve the agenda as submitted. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Public Comment:

Daniel Ruzick – Antwerp Township Supervisor

- Supervisor Ruzick showed guests where the proposed high voltage power lines from Consumer’s Energy would run through the Township and gave guests from Antwerp, Almena, Paw Paw and Lawrence Township an opportunity to express their concerns:
 - There is currently an AEP substation within a few miles of the Crandall Park. It is recommended that AEP and Consumers work together to use that substation.
 - Residents are concerned with the size of easements Consumers will need for the high voltage lines.
 - Residents are asking Senator Nesbitt to host a meeting for Township residents to address concerns.
 - Residents are feeling bullied by Consumers Energy and their process in trying to obtain easements.
 - Ethics are not being followed by Consumers Energy and their contractors.
 - The amount being offered by Consumers for the easements does not offset the decrease in property value from the lines being on properties.
 - Residents feel Consumers is dictating how homeowners use their land.
 - There are businesses along the proposed route that will be affected not just homeowners.
 - The proposed route in Antwerp runs through Portman Nature Preserve as well as heavy wooded areas within the Township.
 - Residents would like a more in-depth map of proposed lines.

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to adopt a Resolution in opposition of proposed high voltage power lines in Antwerp Township and encourage Consumers Energy to work with AEP for use of their existing substation. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes. Motion carries.

Supervisor Ruzick called for a recess at 7:45 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 7:57 pm.

Deputy Turner – Van Buren County Sheriff

- There were 136 complaints in the Township for the month of February.
- Deputy Turner asked that we continue to support our local fire departments who are still grieving the loss of fellow firefighter Lt. Quillen. He encourages all Residents to thank public safety officers for their service.

Motion by Cutting, second by Stock to approved previous minutes from Regular Scheduled Township Board meeting held on February 14, 2023. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Stock to approve previous minutes from Special ARPA Workshop held on March 8, 2023. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Action on Planning Commission Recommendations:

None

Pending Business

A. Wage and Benefit Committee Study update

Supervisor Ruzick provided a brief overview of the timeline of the study and where we are today with the committee on the report that came back from Rahmberg Stover. The study that came back had data that Clerk Reyna provided to them dating back to 2021 as well as two other jurisdictions. The committee presented a recommendation in December that has been tabled since then. The recommendation is as follows:

- Elected officials would receive a 2% retroactive compensation increase for fiscal year July 2021 – June 2022.
- Elected officials would receive a 6.5% retroactive compensation increase for fiscal year July 2022 – December 2022.
- There would be no change to per diem meeting compensation for trustees.
- Deputy Clerk position would receive a retroactive compensation increase from July 2022 – December 2022 in the amount of a \$2.00 per hour worked.
- Senior Services Program Administrator would receive a retroactive compensation increase from July 2021 – December 2022 in the amount of \$4.45 per hour worked.
- Mattawan Fire Administrative Assistant would not receive an hourly increase and decrease hours worked from 40 hours per week to 15-20 hours per week.

The final report that came back from Rahmberg Stover indicated that all rates currently being paid to Elected officials were in line with the data collected and that only trustees were somewhat underpaid. The report also indicated that Township staff was not underpaid as well. The report also stated that the Administrative Assistant position recommendation of no wage increase, and reduction of hours was in line with data collected. There was discussion from the Board and guests regarding the Administrative Assistant position.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to keep the Administrative Assistant position as a full time (40 hours per week) position, increase the hourly rate to \$24.00 per hour effective Monday March 20, 2023, pay a one time retroactive compensation to the current Assistant in the amount of \$23,616.00 to cover benefits not paid since 2012 when the Assistant became a full time employee, and moving forward include this position in all benefits offered to full time Township employees. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-no, Stock-no, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Cutting, second by Reyna to increase the Deputy Clerk position from \$20.00 per hour to \$21.00 per hour with a retroactive compensation check for the increase in hourly rate dating back to July 2022. Also, to keep the recommendation from December for Elected Officials, Trustees and Senior Services Program Administrator. Roll call vote; Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes. Reyna-yes. Motion carries.

Ben Brousseau, Assessor, contract is ending March 31, 2023. Ben provided an updated contract with an increase of 9-10% for two years. The committee has been working on the wage study and has not had time to look into the contract.

Motion by Cutting, second by Stock to table the renewal of the contractor until the April meeting. Roll call vote; Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-no, Reyna-no, Osborne-no. Motion DOES NOT carry.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to approve the contract submitted with an increase of 8% for one year with \$30,000 of the wages being reported on a W-2 and the remaining \$73,483.43 paid as a contractor. Roll call vote; Stock-no, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-no. Motion carries.

New Business:

A. Lawn Perfect proposal for cemeteries

Lawn Perfect submitted a renewal quote for lawn services at the cemeteries. There is an increase in service prices for mowing which are as follows:

- Trash barrels from \$15.00 per time needed to remain at \$15.00 per time
- Harwick mowing from \$225.00 to \$325.00
- Maple Grove mowing from \$725.00 to \$955.00
- Bangs mowing from \$175.00 to \$200.00
- Transfer Station from \$75.00 to \$85.00
- Spring clean up from \$1500.00 to \$2550.00
- Fall clean up from \$5450.00 to \$6950.00

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to approve the contract renewal with the prices listed above. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes. Motion carries.

B. Cummins Sales and Service

Cummins Sales and Service provided a renewal for the planned maintenance contract on the generator in the Activity Center in the amount of \$1551.06 for three years.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to approve the renewal contract in the amount of \$1551.06 for three years. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

C. Antwerp Township meeting room furnace bids

Two bids were received for a new furnace for the meeting room. Metzger's submitted a bid in the amount of \$4561 and Mattawan Mechanical submitted one in the amount of \$6526.

Motion by Reyna, second by Osborne to accept the bid from Metzger's in the amount of \$4561. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

D. ARPA funds

Supervisor Ruzick provided a list of requests for ARPA funds. There was discussion regarding the Workshop that was held on March 8, 2023. MEC revised the number of addresses in Antwerp Township to 198 and is requesting \$650.00 per address.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to allocate \$128,700.00 in ARPA funds to MEC for broadband if they are awarded funds through the ROBIN grant that was applied for. Roll call vote; cutting-no, Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes. Motion carries.

E. Antwerp Building pre-design/schematic design proposal

Wightman and Associates has provided a proposal for pre-design/schematic plans for the Antwerp Township/Senior Services building in the amount of \$41,200.00. Supervisor Ruzick is working with Tower Pinkster to provide a proposal as well. As of today, the proposal has not come back.

Motion by Osborne, second by Stock to table the bids until Tower Pinkster provides their proposal. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

F. Recycling cube quote

Clark Logic submitted a quote in the amount of \$5250 plus delivery and fuel surcharge. CGI Container submitted a quote in the amount of \$6300 plus delivery.

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to authorize Supervisor Ruzick to purchase the recycling cube from Clark Logic. Roll call vote; Stock-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes. Motion carries.

G. ASSA Abloy quote for all Antwerp automatic door closures

ASSA Abloy provided an annual service maintenance contract for all automatic door closures within the Township, Library, and Activity Center in the amount of \$1,230.66 per year for three years. After discussion, the Board does not feel the contract will be beneficial at this time. No action taken.

Correspondence:

- Van Buren County Road Commission weekly updates

Announcements

None

Reports:

Attorney

None

Treasurer- Bonnie Osborne
\$224,302.92 in general fund

Building Activity- Chantel Reyna
Antwerp: 24 permits for February including Building, Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing with fees of \$4,729.00
Almena: 17 permits for February including Building, Electrical and Mechanical with fees of \$2,181.00.

Van Buren District Library- Bruce Cutting
No Report

Sunshine Branch Library- Bonnie Osborne
March is reading month. Library has teamed up with Kalamazoo Growlers to encourage kids to read. Prizes can be earned each week in March. Adult Book Club is Wednesday March 15 at 5:30. Lego Day is Saturday March 18 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Adult craft day is March 21 from 4:30 – 6:30.

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

Paw Paw Fire Department -Dan Ruzick
Meeting was tough as the department mourns the loss of fellow firefighter, Lt. Quillen. Paw Paw fire department as well as many surrounding departments have worked tirelessly to organize a beautiful celebration of life for the fallen firefighter.

Mattawan Fire Department – Chief Brooks / Bonnie Osborne
106 calls in the month of February. Bonnie thanked the department on all of their hard work in making Lt. Quillen’s celebration of life a beautiful service. Everyone on the department has put in countless hours in helping organize the event. Thank you to the entire Mattawan Fire Department of all of their service and support during this time. A special Thank You to Shannon for all she did over the past few weeks.

Cemeteries - Chantel Reyna
One burial in February.

Planning Commission - Gary Stock

Meeting minutes are available online at www.antwerptownship.com.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Gary Stock

No meeting.

Meeting minutes are available online at www.antwerptownship.com.

Public Comment:

Diane Lambert – Resident

Diane asked if there is cemetery data online or how she would obtain information regarding burials. Clerk Reyna stated that the new expansion on Harwick cemetery now has GIS mapping and that all other cemeteries would require a phone call to her in order to obtain that information.

Recommendation from the committee on Antwerp Township, Mattawan Fire Department, and Senior Services bills in the amount of \$102,584.73

Motion by Cutting, second by Stock to approve the bills in the amount of \$102,584.73 to be paid. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Stock-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to adjourn.

All voted in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 10:03pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chantel Reyna