

MINUTES FROM THE  
REGULAR ANTWERP TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING  
Tuesday, May 14th, 2024

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Board Members Absent:

Also Present: 20 guests

Supervisor Ruzick called the public hearing for Hickory Point subdivision special assessment district.

- Hickory Point Special Assessment District would allow for Hickory Point neighborhood to be sprayed for spongy moths. The Township received a petition with 51% or greater of property owners requesting the special assessment district be created. This is a one-year assessment.

Supervisor Ruzick had received one call in opposition of the special assessment. He asked if there were any residents in the crowd that would like to have their names removed. There were no residents that requested to be removed.

Supervisor Ruzick stated that the company that would be spraying is licensed with the Department of Agriculture and Department of Aviation.

Resident: Stated that they had information from MSU, State of Michigan, Van Buren County Conservation District and other resources stating that the spongy moth invasion is on the fall and that the residents should let nature run its course. They stated that there were other options such as burlap, tape, soap and water and others. Resident states they have had no issues with the oak trees in their front yard. There are also concerns about the product being used affecting the stream that is near. This resident is against the special assessment.

Resident: Resident has not signed petition and attended meeting for more information regarding the treatment. Is asking if the residents of Hickory Point have exhausted all other options before attempting this method. He is suggesting having an arborist come in to discuss options.

Resident: This resident is from Higley's Orchard Downs and states that their neighborhood has been battling the spongy moths for over 4 years. They have exhausted all the options discussed with no relief.

Resident: Lives in northern part of neighborhood with oaks all around. They have been battling this issue for years.

Resident: Has not had a lot of issues with the moths but feels if there is an issue within their neighborhood, they are in full support of the treatment to prevent it from becoming a bigger issue.

Resident: Another resident of Higley's Orchard stated that other trees within their neighborhood have now been affected. The spongy moths are attacking his maple trees.

Supervisor Ruzick closed the hearing at 7:13pm.

Supervisor Ruzick called the public hearing for Higley’s Orchard Downs special assessment to order at 7:13 pm.

- This is the second hearing required to establish the special assessment and have it placed on the 2024 winter tax roll.

Supervisor Ruzick addressed the crowd asking if there were any residents no in favor of the special assessment and there were no residents that spoke up.

Resident: Thanked the Township Board for all of their help during the process. They are hopeful this will bring relief.

Supervisor Ruzick closed the hearing at 7:14 pm.

**Public Comment:**

Deputy Scotty Borah – Van Buren County Sheriff Department

- 99 calls in Antwerp Township for the month of April.

Paul Schincariol – Van Buren County Commissioner

- County wide ORV ordinance in the works. Plans to have it finalized in a few weeks.
- Michigan Materials Management Plan through EGLE is now required. The County is partnering with Cass to prepare this plan.
- The county GIS department is “rebranding” their name which will not be digital information department (DID)
- Van Buren County Transit ridership is up 20%. Numbers are close to pre-COVID numbers.
- ARPA funds awarded to the County have all been allocated.

Wayne Nelson – Van Buren County Road Commissioner

- Summer hours have begun at the Road Commission
- Road Commission has mutual aid help with other agencies.
- Seal coating will begin June 3<sup>rd</sup>, weather permitting.
- The Road Commission has taken over the roadside mowing within the County.
- Bloomingdale facility got a new roof on the salt storage building.
- There will be a county wide road millage renewal request on the ballot in August.
- Supervisor Ruzick again reiterated that the Township is not pleased with the current allocation formula. He also asked Wayne to look into why roads within the Township that have been repaired do not have lines yet. The Township was also quoted \$15,000 for tree work along 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave. The bill received included tree work in the amount of \$35,918.58. Supervisor Ruzick, as well as the rest of the Board feel that the Road Commission should have informed the Board of the significant increase.
- Trustee Tarchala asked Wayne to look into the timing on the traffic light at the corner of C.R. 652 and Red Arrow Hwy.

Motion by Tarchala, second by Osborne to accept the agenda as submitted. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Tarchala to approve previous minutes from Regular Scheduled Township Board Meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Tarchala to approve the previous minutes from Special Meeting on May 1, 2024. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

**Action on Planning Commission Recommendations:**

None

**Pending Business**

None

**New Business:**

**A. Hickory Point establish Special Assessment District**

All residents of Hickory Point subdivision were notified of the public hearing that took place. Of those in attendance, there was one resident in opposition of the special assessment.

Motion by Cutting, second by Tarchala to establish the special assessment district for Hickory Point subdivision for one year for the treatment of spongy moths. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes. Motion carries.

**B. Higley's Orchard Downs to add special assessment to 2024 winter tax roll**

There were no residents in opposition of the special assessment being added to the 2024 winter tax roll.

Motion by Reyna, second by Osborne to add the special assessment for the treatment of spongy moths to the residents of Higley's Orchard Downs 2024 winter tax bill. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

Supervisor Ruzick called a short recess beginning at 7:44 pm.

Supervisor Ruzick called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

**C. Land lease sample with VBCRC and Antwerp Township for property at Transfer Station**

Antwerp Township submitted a sample lease to the Van Buren County Road Commission for review. The Road Commission submitted a revision back to the Township for review.

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to authorize Supervisor Ruzick to sign the lease with the Van Buren County Road Commission pending approval from the Township's legal counsel. Roll call vote; Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes. Motion carries.

**D. Discussion on letter dated April 24, 2024 from Van Buren County Conservation District**

The Conservation District is requesting a partnership with the Township for recycling programs. The Township currently hosts its own programs. After discussion, it was decided that the Township Board does not want to participate in the Conservation District programs.

**E. Set Budget hearing date of Tuesday June 4, 2024**

Supervisor Ruzick provided the notice that will be published for the budget hearing with a date of June 4, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**F. Salaries for Clerk, Treasurer, Supervisor and Trustees**

The salaries for elected officials are discussed at the May meeting. Historically, current CPI numbers as well as wage information gathered have been a factor in determining the wages. After reviewing wage information from other municipalities and using current CPI numbers the Board is recommending a 3% increase to office management salaries. The Board is also recommending increasing the statutory duties

salaries to \$25,000 per year due to increase in required duties per state statute. The Board feels that the current salary set for Trustees is in line with other municipalities.

Motion by Osborne, second by Tarchala to increase the Clerk wages 3% for office management and increase statutory duties salary to \$25,000 annually. Roll call vote; Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Cutting to increase the Treasurer wages 3% for office management and increase statutory duties salary to \$25,000 annually. Roll call vote; Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Cutting, second by Osborne to increase the Supervisor wages 3% for office management and increase statutory duties salary to \$25,000 annually. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Tarchala to keep the salary the same for the 2024-2025 fiscal year the same as the previous year. Roll call vote; Reyna-yes, Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes. Motion carries.

**Correspondence:**

VBCRC weekly newsletter  
KCHHW 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report.

**Announcements**

Budget hearing set for June 4, 2024 at 6:00 pm

**Reports:**

*Attorney*  
None

*Treasurer-* Bonnie Osborne  
\$307,310.09 in general fund

*Building Activity-* Chantel Reyna

Antwerp: 34 permits for April including Building, Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing with fees of \$10,685.00.  
Almena: 21 permits for April including Building, Electrical and Mechanical with fees of \$5,253.00.

*Van Buren District Library-* Bruce Cutting  
Millage of .4 passed at the May election.

*Sunshine Branch Library-* Bonnie Osborne

Community garden has 28 participants with a 10x10 plot. Some of the food grown will be donated to the Mattawan Area Pantry.

*Lawton Fire Department-* Bruce Cutting  
Authorized Chief to pay bills. Short meeting

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

*Mattawan Fire Department -* Bonnie Osborne

Budget presented and elections took place, and everyone remains in the same elected positions as last year. Congratulations to Scott Brooks on remaining Chief. NFPA is requiring physicals to be done. Mattawan fire has partnered with other departments.

*Cemeteries - Chantel Reyna*  
No burials in April.

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

*Zoning Board of Appeals -*  
Meeting minutes are available online at [www.antwerptownship.com](http://www.antwerptownship.com).

**Public Comment:**

Randy Graham stated that the transfer station new building looks nice.

Recommendation from the committee on Antwerp Township, Mattawan Fire Department, and Senior Services bills in the amount of \$752,877.91

Motion by Cutting, second by Tarchala to pay the bills in the amount of \$752,877.91. Roll call vote; Osborne-yes, Cutting-yes, Tarchala-yes, Ruzick-yes, Reyna-yes. Motion carries.

Motion by Osborne, second by Reyna to adjourn.

All voted in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chantel Reyna