

**ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD**  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 1, 2021

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm (*note: this meeting was held by teleconference*).

Present: Terry Pihlainen, Supervisor  
Cheryl Lane, Treasurer  
Catherine Kimar, Clerk

Connie Lacko, Trustee  
Brian Bresette, Trustee

**II. AGENDA**

A motion was made to accept the agenda as amended (*supervisor added "B. Tyoga agreement review" and "C. Recycling survey" under current business and "C. Policy for unapproved expenditures" under new business*).

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Connie Lacko  
Motion carried.

**III. MINUTES**

A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.

**IV. REPORTS**

A. Financial Report

The treasurer presented the bills for payment.

A motion was made to pay the monthly bills as presented:

- » \$6,909.79 for the general fund, checks #4981-99;
- » \$2,159.13 for the fire fund, checks #2024-29; and
- » \$5,959.67 for the solid waste fund, checks #1212-13.

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Connie Lacko  
Motion carried.

A motion was made to approve the monthly balance sheet and profit & loss statements for the general fund, fire fund, solid waste fund and tax fund as presented by the clerk.

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Catherine Kimar  
Motion carried.

Roll call vote:  
Ayes: Cheryl Lane  
Terry Pihlainen  
Connie Lacko  
Brian Bresette  
Catherine Kimar

Gen: \$680,017.11
Fire: \$228,540.98
SW: \$137,673.81
Tax: \$168,129.89

B. Assessor Report

The clerk read the report from the assessor (*copy on file*).

C. Zoning Administrator Report

The clerk read the report from the zoning administrator (*copy on file*).

D. Fire Department Report

Chief Kimar read the Fire Department Report (*copy on file*).

A motion was made to approve up to \$7,600 for three new sets of turnout gear.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen  
Support: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.

Roll call vote  
Ayes: Cheryl Lane  
Brian Bresette  
Terry Pihlainen  
Connie Lacko  
Catherine Kimar

A motion was made to accept the Leave of Absence for Craig Riley Sanders and the resignation of Matthew Hagerty.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen  
Support: Brian Bresette  
Motion carried.

E. Planning Commission Report

Trustee Bresette reported that the Planning Commission had an outdoor Planning Commission meeting with four members in attendance.

F. Supervisor Report

The supervisor reported on the following:

- \* Participating in a boundary/annexation survey through the Census Bureau
- \* Wolverine will be changing the all township locks for no apparent reason
- \* Road repair:
  - Asked if the township could put \$125k at once into road repair (*the township accountant said this was possible to do*);
  - Board members thought that the township should wait until budget time to discuss this;
  - Supervisor felt that repaving Whitefish Rd should be a high priority;
  - Culvert on old M28 also needs to be repaired.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE**

*No correspondence was received.*

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Opened: 7:21 pm

Comment was received from: Terry Lane on (1) the snow by the firehall / handicap parking in the township hall needing to be moved by heavy equipment and (2) the side roads not being graded well and that water drainage is not being taken care of properly by the county (3) fiber optic line installation interfering with the landlines (the new expectation date was June 1).

Closed: 7:26 pm

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Budget Meeting Dates

The clerk apologized for being unable to attend the February 23 meeting following unexpected complications during her surgery.

The board set the special meeting date to be set as March 11 at 10 am. The clerk added she had already disseminated the budget recommendations to the board and would have additional blank sheets and previous years budgets ready for the meeting as well.

B. Tyoga Agreement Review

As requested, the attorney had reviewed the state agreement regarding the Tyoga trail and campground site. In his written correspondence, he brought up the (1) question of responsibility for stolen items and replacement and (2) the amount of staffing required to adequately handle the campground needs (3) the collection of funds and payment for the campground, among other items.

The supervisor and John Highlen planned to discuss the counter-offer to the DNR tomorrow.

C. Recycling Survey

The supervisor had drafted a survey on recycling to send township residents and taxpayers.

Upon reviewing the survey, the clerk noted that the Planning Commission had never sent self-addressed stamped envelopes (SASE) with their surveys because the cost was too high. Brian Bresette could not recall a time when the board had used SASE for a survey. The supervisor felt the board should choose a method that would provide the best response rate.

The board agreed that it was important to query the public, but was uncertain how best to guarantee a high response rate from township residents while reaching the majority of the residents. It was finally decided that the supervisor should simply change the bottom portion of the survey to direct residents to submit the survey to PO Box 100 or in the township drop box, then they could be mailed.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Interlocal Designated Assessor Agreement

The county had requested that the township board approve this, have the supervisor sign it, and return it to them as soon as possible. This is a state-mandated agreement that would appoint an interim assessor in the event that the township assessor was not meeting state standards.

A motion was made not to approve the agreement for the Interlocal Assessor Agreement for Alger County.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen  
Support: Brian Bresette  
Motion carried.

Roll call vote

Ayes: Terry Pihlainen  
Brian Bresette  
Connie Lacko  
Cheryl Lane  
Catherine Kimar

The clerk asked for reasons to give the county clerk in the email notifying her that it was not approved. The township board felt they were not given enough time to review it, had no input in selection, the county gave no communication other than insistence on approval, and there appeared to be a conflict of interest for the party being appointed as designated assessor due to the other office she held in equalization as well as her private company for assessing.

B. Board of Review training

The clerk noted that a state law had been passed requiring that all Board of Review members receive formal training. While all current members have attended these trainings, the clerk noted if there is a need for continuing education or recertification (as there is for election workers), Michigan Township Association is offering online sessions over the next few months.

C. Policy for unapproved expenditures

The township supervisor said the board needed to review the policy regarding purchases. The clerk

noted that there was already a section of board policy that dealt with this matter. She also questioned if this included mileage, the supervisor clarified that it was only relevant to material goods purchases. The supervisor stated that anyone making purchases (e.g. the sextons, custodians, fire dept members, etc) should be bonded. The clerk said she would put this section of the board policy in the packet for next month's meeting but added that herself, the treasurer, and their deputies regularly review any cost requests from township employees; and the form for mileage and reimbursement already records details.

#### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Opened: 8:01 pm

Comment was received from: Jarrod Biebel on support for the recycling survey, the road improvements, and the supervisor attending a conference call with Michigan Dept of Transportation.

Closed: 8:02 pm

#### **X. BOARD CONCERNS**

Catherine – need email addresses from Brian and Connie. MTA will not accept members being added without them, and it's necessary that any business items emailed go to all board members, not just the clerk, treasurer, and supervisor – otherwise no business items should be emailed (*Brian Bresette and Connie Lacko responded that they would work on this*).

*No other concerns were expressed.*

#### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm.

Motion: Catherine Kimar  
Support: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Onota Township Clerk  
Proposed: 1-Mar-21  
Approved: 11-Mar-21