

**ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD**  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 3, 2021

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at

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

Absent: Connie Lacko, Trustee

**II. AGENDA**

A motion was made to accept the agenda as presented.

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.

**III. MINUTES**

A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented.

Motion: Cheryl Lane  
Support: Brian Bresette  
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:

- » \$16,734.80 for the general fund, checks #5031 to #5057;
- » \$4,161.79 for the fire fund, checks #2041 to #2046; and
- » \$5,571.48 for the solid waste fund, check #1215.

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Terry Pihlainen  
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                      Roll call vote  
Support: Cheryl Lane                      Ayes: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.                              Terry Pihlainen  
    Brian Bresette  
    Catherine Kimar

Gen: 693,637.22
Fire: 285,080.15
SW: 147,264.69
Tax: 1,038.97

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*). The report criticized the supervisor's action of compromising the fire station security by having Wolverine replace the lock so he could have

access, which is a violation of the Fire Department Ordinance that the board approved as part of township policy.

E. Planning Commission Report

Trustee Bresette reported that the Planning Commission had not held a meeting in April. The clerk notified him that she had made copies of the Master Plan for the Planning Commission members, and copies of their March minutes were also in their inbox.

F. Supervisor Report

The supervisor reported on the following:

- \* Au Train Boat Launch was dredged and he met with the US Forest Service at the site.

G. Tyoga Trail

John Highlen reported that the township, DNR and Friends of Tyoga group are making progress on opening a small four-site campground (as a one-year trial) on the north side of the parking lot. A significant amount of brushing was done for the campsites and road to the sites. The fire rings, picnic tables, DNR information sign, campsite markers have all been installed. He reported the actions left to do: stake the tables to the ground, install other signage for campers, and install a payment pipe. The Deerton School kids are going to come assist with moving signs and rerouting the final portion of the trail that goes through a floodplain.

H. ORV Trail

Jarrod Biebel had submitted correspondence to the township regarding his request for the township to ask the Michigan Department of Transportation for off-road vehicle (ORV) access along the M28 corridor from Shelter Bay to Rock River. A neighbor spoke on his behalf making this request formally at the meeting. Multiple neighbors affected by the situation spoke to the support of the trail and expressed strong feelings about the necessity of this project to improve the safety of ORV riders along the highway. They stated they were seeking a legal method of trail access, had been in this process for the past year, and would like to see evidence of progress in this matter. The supervisor replied to them and said the issue would be tabled until next month.

## V. CORRESPONDENCE

An anonymous letter was received criticizing the condition of Deerton-Onota Road. Due to board policy regarding not reading letters that are unsigned, only the topic of the letter was mentioned.

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:25 pm

Comment was received from:

James Short on the supervisor denying the fire department access to their station by drilling out the lock without notifying them;

William Dunham on the supervisor having no right to unmonitored access to the fire hall and that he should resign;

David Kimar on the Whitefish Road project being a poor means of spending of \$90,000 that could be better used in other areas; and

Gloria Rinne on the poor use of funds to blacktop Whitefish Road and the fact that people would not join the fire department due to the conflict with the supervisor;

Closed: 7:41 pm

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Audit Cost Amendment

The clerk reported that the accountant had finally gotten back to her with an updated cost.

A motion was made to amend the motion from the April 5 meeting by changing the amount to \$6,300.

Motion: Catherine Kimar

Support: Brian Bresette  
Motion carried.

B. Whitefish Road

The clerk reported that the attorney stated the conflict of interest was not a violation of law and that the proper procedure with the township supervisor owning land on the road would have been for him to disclose his financial interest in the matter before voting on it.

Trustee Bresette defended the expenditure of \$90,000 on Whitefish Road as a project. He stated that while he did not think the township should have to spend money on roads as it was the county responsibility, but that the county refused to reduce the road to gravel.

C. Board Policy

Previously, the supervisor requested that section 4 of the board policy be brought up for review. This matter was tabled.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Statutory Duties

The clerk included an MTA publication in the packet that clarified statutory duties of board members following the disagreement last month on if sending township newsletters and surveys was a legal duty of the clerk.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Opened: 7:49 pm

Comment was received from: David Kimar on the actual cost of Whitefish Rd, if the county requested this project (the supervisor confirmed this) and the possibility of a special assessment for cost;

Terry Lane on that there should be a dumpster near the Whitefish Lodge and Peter White Rd quality of maintenance is poor;

MaryAnn McHaney on the old M28 drainage problem and TV repeaters on the cell tower;

Mark Fisher on if Tuesday pickups were resuming (GAD would not commit to this) and if Burning's Road would receive a new bridge (the landowner nearby is opposed);

James Short on if curbside recycling would start any time soon; and

Mat Watkeys on the AT&T cell tower progress;

Closed: 8:01 pm

**X. BOARD CONCERNS**

Catherine – Shore Drive HOA is using the hall June 19. The chairs and tables must be in the hall at this time. There is a county-wide election tomorrow.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm.

Motion: Brian Bresette  
Support: Cheryl Lane  
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Onota Township Clerk

Proposed: 5/3/21

Approved: 6/7/21