

ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

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 amended.

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:

- » \$8,327.52 for the general fund, checks #5450-80 (+a \$498.00 check to the Accident Fund that will be audited next month);
- » \$209.51 for the fire fund, checks #2111-13; and
- » \$5,674.21 for the solid waste fund, check #1241.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Catherine Kimar
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. The clerk mentioned that the solid waste collection charges used 48% of the budget and should be monitored closely.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

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

Gen: 727,465.26
Fire: 338,600.75
SW: 134,389.65
Tax: 43,492.53

B. Assessor Report

The clerk read the report from the assessor (*copy on file*). Routine inspections and updates are being completed, and there is one individual who is filing with the state tax tribunal. The assessor will keep the board apprised of updates on this situation.

C. Zoning Administrator Report

The clerk read the report from the zoning administrator. (*copy on file*). He had responded to several zoning questions. Multiple landowners have inquired about the possibility of allowing campgrounds/RV parks in the town development zoning district (currently only permitted in resource production). He recommended that if allowed, that it should initially be a conditional use, so each request could be reviewed individually.

D. Fire Department Report

Chief Kimar read the Fire Department Report (*copy on file*). There was one call in August for a potential gas leak, and one in September for a vehicle fire.

A motion was made to approve up to \$1,000 for annual Department of Transportation (DOT) truck inspections and any necessary supplies or repairs that may come up during this process.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Terry Pihlainen
Motion carried.

E. Planning Commission Report

Trustee Bresette reported that they turned in the surveys to Dotty LaJoye with CUPPAD who will compile the information and get the process of the Master Plan started. The ZA also asked the Planning Commission to look into if an accessory building can be put on a vacant piece of land without a dwelling on it.

F. Supervisor Report

The supervisor reported on the following:

- * Dumpster rolloff is scheduled for September 16-17 for 10 am – 4 pm. One dumpster had to be obtained from North Country Disposal as this rolloff service is no longer being provided by GFL/GAD and the Wood Island Landfill.
- * Recycling may be mandated in Alger County by 2024.
- * Road projects continue being pushed back – may happen by October.
- * Kitchen/Hall project – Tim Prisk may be interested in doing this work as well as the repair to the side of the firehall.
- * Tree in cemetery – in contact with Phil’s Tree Service regarding this.
- * Tyoga Campground – sites were used by campers fairly regularly this year. Still working out details with Michigan Dept of Natural Resources (DNR).

G. Other Reports

1. Terry Lane reported on the roof status – 14’ of cap shingles missing. The “hole” is just the reflection from the ridge vent due to the missing shingles.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- * A letter from Joan Sommer-Potter in favor of the township permitting green burials was included in the board packet and read by the clerk.
- * Michigan Township Association (MTA) is offering training at a regional summit in Marquette during the first week of October.
- * Central Upper Peninsula Planning & Development (CUPPAD) and MDOT are seeking public comment on the updated non-motorized transportation plan for the region.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:15 pm

Comment received from:

Mark Fisher on extent of work being done on Peter White Rd;

Frank Lampi, Ron Christensen, and Jim Gegare on the lack of blight enforcement in the township.

Closed: 7:27 pm

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Hall/Table Rental Policy

The clerk reported the following information was obtained on rentals from nearby townships: AuTrain, Mathias, Munising and Burt Township all charge by the hour for rental of their community buildings or township halls. However, she also noted that all of these townships have a higher and more centralized population with an increased frequency of use for public buildings than Onota. Onota is more similar to Limestone in terms of rural nature / dispersed population.

The clerk said she would draft a new section in the board policy regarding table/chair rental.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning Commission

1. **Resignation**

Bill Dunham submitted letters of resignation from the Planning Commission as of August 10 and Fire Department as of September 1.

A motion was made to accept the resignation of Bill Dunham from the Planning Commission and Fire Department.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Terry Pihlainen
Motion carried.

The clerk will send a recognition of service letter to Bill Dunham for the many roles he has served the public in the area over the years.

2. **Letter of Interest**

A letter of interest in the open Planning Commission position was received from Ruby Miller. The supervisor declined to take action on this, as he stated he was expecting other letters from residents, and felt the board should wait until multiple people apply instead of filling the vacancy now.

3. **Minutes**

Planning Commissioners have expressed repeated concerns regarding their minutes being available on the township website, and have directed the clerk to post them. Email correspondence was provided for the board to review.

The clerk stated the following:

- * Maintaining the website is not a statutory duty – this is done for efficiency and financial reasons. As such, files and updates are occasionally delayed.
- * While it is appreciated that the Planning Commission is diligent about this matter, it is not mandatory for a general law township to have minutes available online. This is a voluntary act by the township board to promote government transparency and availability of documents to the public.
- * Upon review, the Planning Commission minutes were removed as the liaison had actually recommended *against* them being posted (in 2017) as they are only provided for informational reasons, and not the actual record of minutes.

The board liaison recommended that the clerk attend the next Planning Commission meeting.

B. Financials / Range Bank

1. **Direct deposit payroll**

The treasurer had contacted Range Bank on the recommendation of her deputy, and found that their rates for direct deposit payroll were far more reasonable than Incredible Bank.

A motion was made to authorize the treasurer and/or clerk to work with Range Bank to set the

township account up to allow direct deposit for employees.

Motion: Catherine Kimar
Support: Brian Bresette
Motion carried.

2. Combining Certificates of Deposit (CDs)

The off-year audit was held August 29 and went well. The accountant asked if it was known if there was a reason as to why the township had so many CDs. If not, he recommended that the township combine their CDs to simplify accounting and reporting. Trustee Bresette said that the intent of having CDs in smaller amounts was to minimize the fees for cashing them in early if they were needed for urgent or emergency costs.

3. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) reporting

The accountant further recommended that the township report their ARPA funds being used as an income shortfall, as was the best practice for any jurisdiction receiving less than \$10 million. The reporting deadline is by 2024.

C. Kitchen/Hall update – committee formation

Based on prior discussion, the clerk presented the board with details on how to create a committee for the building update. The supervisor stated forming a committee seemed unnecessary for the scope of this project, but input from the public would still be welcome.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:55 pm

Comment received from:

Gloria Rinne about a shed that is available for the cemetery to hold tools for the public to use (the board was agreeable to this); Terry Lane on tires being taken at the dumpster rolloff; Jarrod Biebel on the Master Plan survey data; and Joan Potter-Sommer on the table/chair rental policy and access to copies of agendas and minutes.

Closed: 8:04 pm

X. BOARD CONCERNS

Cheryl – The township hall building should be washed – a business out of Florence, WI offers this service. She will bring details to the next meeting. Fluorescent tubes were placed in the dumpster.

Brian – asked when the garbage contract is up with GFL/GAD.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Catherine Kimar
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Onota Township Clerk
Proposed: 9/6/22
Approved: 10/3/22