

ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

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

Absent: *none*

II. AGENDA

A motion was made to accept the agenda as amended (*add "Budget Amendment" under New Business*).

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Connie Lacko
Motion carried.

III. MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes as amended (*supervisor requested that all three letters from the meeting, in their entirety, be included in the minutes*).

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:

- » \$17,121.49 for the general fund, checks #4887 to #4923;
- » \$6,439.82 for the fire fund, checks #1993 to #2008; and
- » \$6,056.03 for the solid waste fund, check #1209.

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

Gen: 623,305.77
Fire: 253,975.73
SW: 102,793.39
Tax: 1,988.77

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 who gave a summary on complaints of zoning violations and inquiries on land division & building construction (*copy on file*).

D. Fire Department Report

The fire chief read the department report (*copy on file*).

The board discussed the current situation with the rescue truck (\$1,000 repairs needed – sitting at Crossroads repair). The fire department maintained the best course of action was to return the rescue truck to the DNR and search for a different, reliable vehicle to use. The size restrictions of the hall would make this challenging, and the vehicle would be intended as an interim measure to continue meeting response needs (until a new station is built). The department would notify the board as soon as a vehicle that meets specifications and needs is located.

The supervisor felt the department should search for the lowest priced vehicle possible and suggested a pickup truck with a topper and not more than \$10,000 be spent. Trustee Bresette recommended searching for used contractor box or utility trucks that would have the necessary space for equipment.

The supervisor maintained that all members of the board should have access to the firehall in case it caught on fire, according to the insurance company. The treasurer expressed concerns about liability with a large number of people having access to the firehall. The supervisor stated that public officials were bonded against liability, and that he felt firefighters were more likely to steal items than township board members.

A motion was made that the door code to the firehall be made available and kept updated in a location within the office that is only accessible to township board members.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen
Support: Brian Bresette
Motion carried.

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

A motion was made to approve up to \$2,500 for grant writing costs contingent on asking the current Zoning Administrator if he has experience writing Assistance to Firefighters Grants.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen
Support: Brian Bresette
Motion carried.

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

E. Planning Commission Report

Trustee Bresette reported that the Zoning Administrator attended the last meeting and met the Planning Commission.

F. Supervisor Report

The supervisor reported on the following:

- * Roads – extremely high volume of complaints on roads this fall. The supervisor recommended that the township spend up to \$125,000 cost-matching to the road commission to upgrade township roads. He stated this would be a better use of funds than returning collected millages to taxpayers.
- * Bridges – supervisor was able to view a bridge that was proposed for use on Burning’s Road and felt that it was excellently constructed which made it a good option for this location.
- * Recycling – attending a Zoom meeting on recycling options; will report back next month.
- * Bills – asked that the township go back to placing all the monthly bills on the board table at each regular meeting as was done in the 1980s.

The supervisor made a motion that all monthly bills will be placed on the table at the meeting for all board members to review.

Motion: Terry Pihlainen
Support: Brian Bresette
Motion carried.

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

G. Tyoga Trail

John Highlen reported that the DNR showed strong support of the trail improvements and that they were working on the paperwork for the township being involved with this site.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- * A letter from Desire Short in support of curbside recycling programs was read (*copy on file*). The clerk noted she had replied regarding Great American Disposal plans to offer curbside recycling in the future.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:37 pm

Comment was received from:

- * Terry Lane on repairs to the shingles on the hall roof, Peter White Road still in terrible condition, and the status of the cell tower (may be online at end of February);
- * John Highlen on recycling - the Waste Management facility on Baraga Ave will accept any amount of recycling material for \$5.00;
- * Jarrod Biebel on curbside recycling having strong support from Shore Drive residents.

Closed: 7:39 pm

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Recycling update

As mentioned in his report, the supervisor planned to attend a virtual meeting on December 8 about recycling.

In regard to funding for recycling - the clerk explained due to the cost increase from the contract update with Great American Disposal, the line item for collection charges was expected to overrun its budget by at least \$500 ($6,000/mo \times 3 months = 18,000$; $17,550 left in budget$). The small excess in the dumpster rolloff budget (\$1,800) would cover this cost (along with the \$400 hazmat disposal fee from Safety-Kleen), but there were no excess funds available for recycling costs.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Credit card update

During the audit, the clerk and treasurer asked the township accountant to look into the credit card situation and determine if the township could get a credit card without relying on the SSN of the treasurer or clerk and tying it to their personal financial history.

He reported back after talking to several financial institutions and local municipalities. It seems any municipality without an SSN involved was an account that was set up prior to modern financial regulations and is considered "grandfathered in" (non-compliant but accepted due to age of account). He was unable to find a way that the township could obtain a credit card without personal SSNs being involved. The clerk said she would ask the Michigan Township Association about this matter.

B. Budget Amendment

The clerk reported that the audit had overrun its costs due to changes in accountant staffing for pandemic safety.

A motion was made to move \$550 from contingency fund (850-965) to Audit (215-802) to cover overage costs in the off-year audit due to pandemic restrictions in accountant field staff.

Motion: Catherine Kimar

Roll call vote

Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

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

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opened: 7:51 pm

No comments received.

Closed: 7:51 pm

X. BOARD CONCERNS

Terry – Thanked people for calling in. Next month's meeting type (phone vs. in-person) will be posted on the township website; it will depend on the state's orders at that time.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 pm.

Motion: Brian Bresette
Support: Cheryl Lane
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Onota Township Clerk
Proposed: 12/7/20
Approved: 12/21/20