

Charter Township of Portage  
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

March 8, 2021

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, March 8, 2021 via Zoom meeting.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 11:00 AM

**In attendance** were Supervisor Bruce Petersen, Clerk Amy Skewes, Treasurer Betsy Smith and Trustees Peggy Anderson, Bill Fink, and John Ollila as stated by roll call Bill Bingham joined late

**Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:**

Under Correspondence: Keweenaw chamber of commerce, USDA Hurontown Fire and Rescue Truck grant, 2021 compliance review, revenue sharing

A motion was made by Ollila, seconded by Smith to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried by a voice vote. Absent: Bill Bingham

**Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes:** A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Fink to approve the February 8, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried by a voice vote. Absent: Bill Bingham

**Approval of the Bills:** A motion was made by Anderson and seconded by Fink to approve the bills as audited. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none. Absent: Bill Bingham

**Review Clerk's Report:**

- Quiet Month, working on balancing for Audit
- There will be an election in August, the Canal View (formerly known as Houghton County Medical Care Facility) will have a renewal on the ballot

**Review Treasurer's Report:**

- Final day for tax submission was 3/1; finishing up final disbursements and deposits
- Rec'd 425 monies and they are allocated to FD's (one mil split 40/60) and Gen Fund (2 mils)
- Rec'd all anticipated tax monies
- Now on digital tax receipt with the county – this saves time and frees myself and the deputy up for more time doing audit and things needed
- Prepping for audit
- General Fund Concerns (relating to bail outs and unnecessary spending)

| General fund balances |            |            |           |            |            |           |            |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| year                  |            |            |           |            |            |           | total      |
| 2011                  | 363,166.00 | 100,478.00 | 18,956.00 | 100,328.00 | 100,340.00 | 0.00      | 683,268.00 |
| 2012                  | 322,472.00 | 100,673.97 | 0.00      | 120,538.00 | 100,825.00 | 0.00      | 644,508.97 |
| 2013                  | 292,387.00 | 100,855.00 | 0.00      | 121,110.00 | 45,924.00  | 0.00      | 560,276.00 |
| 2014                  | 318,909.00 | 101,015.00 | 0.00      | 121,466.00 | 2.45       | 0.00      | 541,392.45 |
| 2015                  | 406,197.00 | 101,303.00 | 0.00      | 104,658.00 | 0.00       | 0.00      | 612,158.00 |
| 2016                  | 495,851.00 | 101,500.00 | 0.00      | 104,921.00 | 0.00       | 0.00      | 702,272.00 |
| 2017                  | 301,032.00 | 101,706.00 | 0.00      | 105,190.00 | 0.00       | 0.00      | 507,928.00 |
| 2018                  | 41,326.00  | 218,827.00 | 0.00      | 131,055.00 | 170,651.00 | 19,821.00 | 581,680.00 |
| 2019                  | 22,113.00  | 219,265.00 | 0.00      | 131,336.00 | 77,637.00  | 30,216.00 | 480,567.00 |
| 2020                  | 14,365.00  | 219,539.00 | 0.00      | 131,552.00 | 108,083.15 | 0.00      | 473,539.15 |
|                       | gen fund   | 1001A      | 1101.1    | 1101.2     | 1102.7     |           |            |

- Cemetery Concerns and Budget

- Did we vote to make perpetual care mandatory? If so, the pricing sheet on website from 2014; we should seriously look at increasing prices for cremains
  - The price sheet needs to be updated if perpetual care is mandatory, and remove annual care as an option? Or are people on existing annual care agreements remaining for perpetuity? Or will they move over to perp care after a certain time?
  - The new price sheet needs to be put onto the website
- What is our plan for staffing structure to decrease budget?
  - This past year we transferred \$13,302 from Gen Fund to pay for the deficit that was not covered by perp care
  - This spring seems to be having high temps so far (40's and 50's forecasted) so the potential "open" season for cemetery may be longer than usual due to lower snow pack and warmer temps
  - Has there been any thought to:
    - Having cemetery workers scheduled for 29-30 hours/week only, and then adding additional days as needed for weekend burials?
    - Hiring younger workers for manual tasks at a lower rate?
- Cemetery entry into BSA is going to be billed (being done by Vanessa, Tressa or Jessica) to Cemetery because it is not an item in any of our budgets; this may increase the amount of budget needed to cover cemetery costs; in the long run, this project:
  - Meets goals of having cemetery info online for genealogy searches
  - Decreases the amount of time our Sexton or front desk person spends searching (currently manually) records for people wanting historical cemetery info (currently in paper cards, but searchable via web through BSA)
- What is our cemetery Sexton secession plan? Does Marty have someone he is seeking to train? Should we seek this now so he has a #2 until then that can then transition into the role whenever he is ready?
  - If we don't have someone on the roster for cemetery that is ready for this, do we need to seek it out?
  - Advertise that this job works well for someone with a plow service and summer work needs?

## Review Zoning Administrators' Report (John/Bill) for (Feb. 2021):

### Zoning Report February 2021

Carl Hamlin Addition to home, Dodgeville (approved)  
Carl Groenevelo Addition to home, Dakota Heights (approved)  
Mike Mattila New Sauna & woodshed Hwy 41 (approved)

### Communications

Rental of property in an area zoned LAR  
Question regarding property between Dodgeville & Hurontown  
Change in zoning ordinance in 2015  
Bill & John

Ollila asked for clarification on the payment for the site plan review of \$500.00. Melanie Watkins agrees with John's suggestion to add to the flow chart. Zoning administrators will make sure fee is collected.

Ollila made a motion to charge any group an additional \$500.00 if a special meeting is requested for site plan review, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Skewes, Smith. Nay: Anderson, Petersen

### Review Fire Departments:

**OLFD:** 1 EMS, 0 Fire

**HTFD:** No report

### Review Assessor's Report: Won Moyles C.C. Mall taxation challenge

Board of review is today

Laura is requesting the board ask the County send us a monthly report as well as copies of permits issued. Bruce will send them a letter.

### Trustees Reports/Updates: None

**Public Comments:** Anderson commented that the Planning Commission had their first meeting on 2/25/21, the site plan was presented by John Paul Pietela and approved by the planning commission.

**Correspondence:** EGLE – Tom Flamineo UPEA Response, FOIA – American Transparency in Florida, US Census Bureau – Boundary and Annexation Survey Done, Letters Sent to Canal Road Residents, Pete Cattelino – Sewer Charge Letter, WUPPDR 2020-2021 Billing, Kew. Chamber of Commerce, Rural Water Association, Letter of Support to DNR – Keweenaw Point Land Acquisition. Hurontown Fire department withdrew their grant application for a rescue truck

### Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer Project. – Final Easement, Bid & Waterline Permit Letter.  
Working with Pat Greeley on discharge of mortgage. Hoping to bid within a month
- B. 425 City Agreement – Item Number 21 – Legal Review Done.

Item #21 now reads with attorney recommendation - #21 The City of Houghton has sole discretion to determine if a Public Act 425 tax sharing agreement with The Charter Township of Portage is necessary



for any new commercial development to be connected to the Green Acres Road/M-26 sewer system beyond those commercial users existing at the time of sewer system construction. The Charter Township of Portage and the City of Houghton shall negotiate in good faith, if a 425 agreement is deemed necessary.

Bingham asked why we need this agreement, Eric Waara said it's a good idea if a big business comes to the area that all parties come to the table

Fink made a motion to adopt this new language, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None

- C. Service Agreement Signed for Houghton Co. Road Commission – Boundary Road.
- D. UP and Running Training DPW Staff - February 25, 2021 Training Meeting.
- E. EGLE – Cross Connection Control Program Model.
- F. Adams Twp. Response Letter About Green Acres Road Break. They claim it is not their responsibility
- G. Houghton Co. Recreation Authority Draft & Mtgs. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of Each Month. Will ask if Dan Dalquist can attend the meeting
- H. Signed Rukkila/Negro Audit Letter – Mailed to USDA – Rural Development.

#### **14. New Business:**

- A. Annual MDOT Right-A-Way Permit for 2021 Issued.
- B. Vote on Acceptance – New Volunteer Fire Depts. Members  
Petersen made a motion to accept Randy Malone as a new member of the Otter Lake Fire Department, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None
- C. OPUS Web Update of Our Assessors Tab – Schematic and Forms
- D. John Meyers Water Line Freeze-Up to Curb Stop – Runs Under Main Street.  
Petersen will request DPW find an alternate water line to connect the home  
Homeowner was also requesting credit for running water, Ollila said that Portage Water is in the red and the Township will replace the water line only. John Meyers said as long as the line is replaced, he will abandon that request
- E. Installation of iPearl Meters for the Commercial/Business. Core and Main is there today to change some of the meter readings
- F. Tax Classification Change on Parcel Between Dodgeville & Hurontown.  
Ollila clarified the zoning/tax situation on the Perkins property. After statements from the property owners, Ollila stated that the Township is receptive to receiving a letter to request re-zoning of the area between Hurontown and Dodgeville to permit certain types of businesses.

#### **15. Meetings:**

- A. February 25, 2021 – UP and Running DPW In-Person E-mail Training.
- B. March 2, 2021 – B.O.R. Organizational Meeting – Zoom
- C. March 8, 2021 – B.O.R. Late Meeting, March 11, 2021 Early Meeting and The Finalization Meeting on March 22, 2021.

**16. Other Business:** Water/Sewer committee meeting scheduled for 3/19/2021 at 10 AM, cemetery meeting scheduled for 3/16/2021 at 2 PM

The board decided to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month for the 2021 year at 10:30 AM via zoom until COVID is under control and a vaccine is readily available, then go back to our normal scheduled time of 7 PM at the Township office. The board also agreed to meet via zoom if there is inclement weather instead of cancelling a meeting.

**17. Public Comment:** none

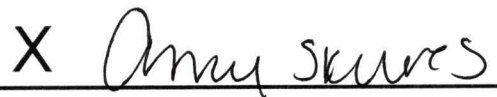
**18. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Bingham to adjourn at 1:00 PM. All in favor, motion carried by voice vote.

**Public Attendance:**

Chris Holmes - UPEA  
Laura Erhart - Assessor  
Ted Soldan – OLFD  
Vanessa Dietz  
Roy Britz  
John Meyers  
Eric Waara  
Cindy Perkins  
Shannon Perkins  
Roy Britz  
Mark Sipe  
Evan Dixon

X 

Bruce Petersen  
Supervisor

X 

Amy Skewes  
Clerk