

Charter Township of Portage  
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

June 12, 2023

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, June 12, 2023.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 6:00 PM.

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

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

Old Business – Front steps

Meetings – May 25, 2023 oral arguments, June 15, 2023 – general council, P.C. meeting update

New Business – Hand out sheet, cloud backup, budget review for planning commission and zoning

A motion was made by Ollila, seconded by Anderson to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

**Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes:** A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Anderson to approve the May 8, 2023 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

**Approval of the Bills:**

Anderson asked if the regular attorney bills and the lawsuit bills are separated.

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

**Review Clerk's Report:**

- Billed the Houghton County Road Commission \$5776.59 for the May 2, 2023 Election
- Attended a local clerks' meeting, all local clerks decided to have the County Clerk administer the early voting centers.
- Need to schedule a mid-year budget meeting. Meeting scheduled for August 10, 2023 at 3PM

**Review Treasurer's Report:**

- **Audit:** This year we had a special audit called the Single Audit due to taking RD monies that were more than \$750,000. We will have a ding due to a missing procurement policy; this was something Deb Bradford sent our township in an email about in 2018, stressing the importance of this policy being in place by any municipalities using USDA RD monies. We searched files of the Clerk and Treasurer, and backup physical files in the safe, our offices, and basement. It was not found and needs to be created. Our deadline for finding it was 5.31.23. Our auditor has since resent the

original email from Debbie Bradford with backup resources so we can create this policy. The supervisor has this information. (attached)

- **Ordinances to website:** this is paused waiting for board direction
- **Rural development:** Dakota Sewer is at a deficit right now, what needs to happen to get this account out of the hole?

Smith commented about the statement made by the assessor about being locked out of the server. Smith acknowledged she did this accidentally when she was adding another user.

#### Review Zoning Administrator's Report for (May 2023)

##### Zoning Applications:

5/3 – Expansion of existing garage, Superior Service M-26, approved.

5/16 – Paradise Rd. on left just past radio tower, new home, approved.

5/16 – 44644 Superior Rd., new garage, approved. 5/25 – 19383 Calverley Street, addition to existing deck, approved.

##### INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

5/3 – Procedure for future cabin on Conservation Drive, 5/8 – Rental policy on Woodland, 5/8 – Minimum house size Tapiola & Valley Road, 5/8 – Rental apartment attached to existing home on Main St., 5/9 – How many houses can be on 100 acres, 5/11 – Zoning requirements for prefab building on Superior Rd., 5/15 – Realtor questions about rental policy on Green Acres Rd., 5/17 – Complaints about roadside business signs, 5/18 – Ed's Auto Parts composting site questions, 5/18 – Rental policy if house is purchased on Green Acres Rd., 5/19 – Current zoning of 19633 Dodge St. B-1 or R-3, 5/22 – Permit for concrete pad for RV on Boundary Rd., 5/24 – Permit to blacktop an existing gravel driveway, 5/24 – Permit to widen a deck in Dakota Heights, 5/24 – Rules for fences in Hurontown, front yard setback, 5/26 – Procedure for addition to cabin Askel Rd., 5/30 – Fences on Epidote St., 5/30 – Permit requirements for new house on Scout Camp Rd.

##### OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

Attended KEDA workshop/presentations on 5/3 & 5/15. Prep and presentation to Planning Commission on 5/11. Multiple communications with Houghton County Drain Commissioner John Pekkala and with Steve Rouser WUPPDR digital map expert. Phone calls to businesses telling them to remove signs placed on roadsides and intersections throughout the township.

##### A NOTE TO THE BOARD:

With the P.C. working on the Zoning Ordinance and then the Master Plan, we should anticipate some regular attorney fees going forward as we send revised documents to our attorney for final proofing.

Ollila commented that the Planning Commission members who have extra duties should be paid more for P.C. meetings because there is a lot of extra time involved.

Ollila stated that the amount of time spent on zoning questions and inspections, site plan preparation, research for the lawsuit, and assisting the P.C. with updating the zoning ordinance is worth more than \$300.00 monthly.

**Correspondence:** American Secure Cabinets – Ballot Drop Boxes

**Review Fire Departments:** OLFD – 4 medical calls, 2 fire calls

**Review Assessor's Report:** Distributed

**Trustees Reports/Updates:** none

**Public Comments:** public question regarding bump on Green Acres Road and speed. Bruce again went over the rules of a speed study.

Roy Britz inquired about the property on Sharon Avenue for the new Jail. The board is going to look at a basic agreement to transfer the property to the City of Houghton with the stipulation that the property reverts back to the Township if the County sells the property.

**Old Business:**

- A. Green Acres Road Sewer Project – Payment Submittal & When is Start-up, DWAM Grant, Centerline ditch in Hurontown, July 15 Hook up deadline.
- B. Personnel – (2) Part-Time Cemetery Workers Applied, Saturdays Discussed. Bruce updated the board on his discussions with the Cemetery staff. Ollila suggests keeping the cemetery schedule Monday – Friday.
- C. Consumer Confidence Report Submitted to EGLE, Health Dept. & on Web Page.
- D. Front Steps – Anderson asked if we can get a bid to fix the front steps

**New Business:**

- A. Bacco (2) Sand Projects #22022 & # 128708 - \$2.75/Cu. Yd. on Contracts.
- B. Federal Grant management Policy – Bruce developed a policy and will send it to the attorney for review. A motion was made by Ollila to adopt the policy pending modifications and approval of the attorney, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None
- C. Handout sheet – After the Planning Commission public hearing, the P.C. approved several amendments to the zoning ordinance. These were distributed to the board for consideration at the next meeting.  
A motion was made by Ollila to formally adopt the municipal civil infraction ordinance, previously drafted, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None
- D. Cloud storage – Ted Soldan advised that the board should use cloud storage instead of a backup in the office to store Township business.
- E. Wage review for P.C. and zoning  
A motion was made by Skewes to increase the monthly salary of the Zoning administrator to \$1000.00 per month effective June 2023, seconded by Smith. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: None  
A motion was made by Ollila to increase the pay for the board reprensive and the chairperson of the P.C. for their extra duties to \$125.00 per meeting, seconded by Smith. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Bingham, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Abstain: Anderson

**Public Comment:** None

**Meetings:**

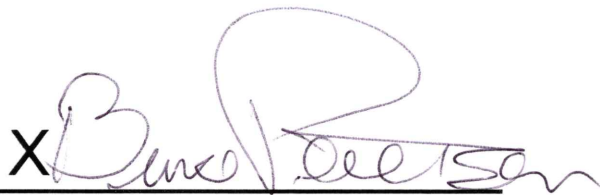
- A. P.C. Meeting – June 8, 2023 – Twp. Office. Anderson updated the board on the P.C. Meetings
- B. Webinar On-Line Meeting – May 22, 2023 – Service Line Verifications.
- C. May 25, 2023 – oral arguments in lawsuit, judge lifted the stay of the developer
- D. June 15, 2023 – 1 PM – general council meeting

**Other Business:**

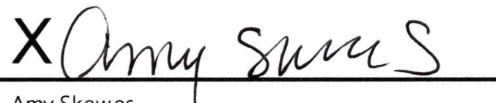
**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM

**Public Attendance:**

Ted Soldan  
Chris Holmes – UPEA  
Roy Britz  
Randy Malone  
Tara Misiak  
Geoff Misiak

X 

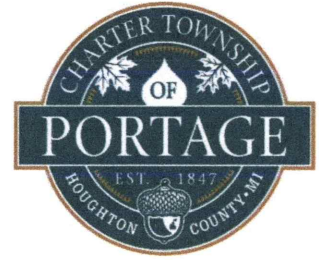
Bruce Petersen  
Supervisor

X 

Amy Skewes  
Clerk



## July 2023 Assessor's Report



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I review of the ownership of properties as a result of the issue that occurred near the intersection of Askel and Tapiola Roads last week, it appears that there is a strip of land without current ownership on the assessment Roll.

The description of the 'omitted' property is

SEC 21 T52N R34W Part of the E 1/2 OF TH NE 1/4 OF TH NW 1/4. D/F; FROM THE COR OF TAPIOLA ASKEL RD, GO S 105' TO POB; TH 340'W PAR TO TH RD; TH DUE S32'; TH DUE E 340'; TH N 32' TO POB



Once research is completed on the historical ownership, if an owner cannot be determined for the property the property will be added to the assessment roll as 'unknown ownership'.

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Parcel/Property field reviews:

June 67

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*Laura*