

Charter Township of Portage  
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

July 10, 2023

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, July 10, 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, Bill Fink and John Ollila as stated by roll call.

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

Old Business – Askel Hill cemetery

Meetings – Planning Commission meeting date change

A motion was made by Ollila, seconded by Fink to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, 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 June 12, 2023 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

**Approval of the Bills:**

Anderson commented that the sewer was over 6 days last month in the amount of \$1667.63. Fink suggested re-negotiating the contract with the City of Houghton.

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

**Review Clerk's Report:**

- Reminder: Budget meeting on August 10, 2023 at 3PM
- Audit is complete

**Review Treasurer's Report:**

- **Audit:** Because of the single audit, we had to submit a Corrective Action plan w/ audit: (1) Township Roads had a deficit of taxes collected vs taxes received after the first of the year. Bruce will follow up with plan. In budgeting for 2024 we may want to take how much is collected before year end into consideration and budget that, AND (2) Cemetery – same as last year, AND (3) we are in process with the new chart of accounts w/BSA; it is noted that we are in process to correct the state chart of accounts
  - **Corrective Action Plan (attached)** was created with assistance of our auditor and attached as required to our audit.
  - **Cemetery Committee Question:** Is there anything in the statutes for charts of accounts regarding perpetual care or cemetery statutes/ordinances, preventing us from dissolving the cemetery sub

account, and putting the items under our general township expenses/ income? (MTA question?)  
Doing this could eliminate deficits, but is it legal according to our ordinance and the state lay out cemetery/perpetual care operations for charter twps?

- **Summer Taxes** are in collection
- **Rural development:** Dakota Sewer is at a deficit, what needs to happen to get this account out of the hole?

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

##### Zoning Applications:

6/6 – 47082 M-26, new home, approved. 6/7 – 46948 Paradise Road, new pole barn, approved. 6/21 – 33157 Michaelson Road, new home, approved. 6/21 – 20351 Askel Road, replace porch with addition to home, approved. 6/29 – 44603 Superior Road, new chicken coop, approved.

##### INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

6/5 – Inquiry, rules for storage building between Hurontown & Dodgeville, 6/6 – Inquiry, storage building Paradise Road, 6/7 – Inquiry, multi-family Denton Road, 6/8 – Inquiry, short term rentals US-41, 6/8 – MQT realtor questions about cabin in FF, 6/8 – Rules for shrubs in Dodgeville, 6/9 – Setbacks for fences and pole barn addition Denton Road, 6/9 – Is a permit required from the Twp. to drill a well, 6/10 – Are township permits required to reopen Feed Mill, 6/11 – Is permit needed to tear down old farmstead in Tapiola, 6/11 – Rules for a fence on Ridge Road, 6/19 – Inquiry about width of abandoned alley near Calverley Street, 6/22 – Questions about concrete pad for parking and new culvert in Dodgeville, 6/23 – Fences on Royalewood Road, 6/26 – Complaint about family with multiple dogs living in camper on someone else's property, 6/27 – Complaint about junk on Woodland Road, 6/8 – Inquiry about basic zoning rules for new home on Denton/Fairview junction.

##### OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

Conversations with MTA & UPEA about amending our Stormwater Ordinance. Research background, precedent, and regulations for proposed duplexes on Denton Road. Many conversations with neighbors about the 'squatters' south of Tapiola, and correspondence with WUPPDR, Equalization and township assessor to determine boundaries of site and ownership.

Ollila reviewed the Zoning amendments approved by the P.C. and noted that the board will vote to adopt the amendments at our August meeting.

**Correspondence:** DNR – Parks and Recreation Division – Onagaming Easement Concerns, SEMCO Energy – Inform SEMCO Months in Advance for any Project Work Impacting Them, 2021-2022 Employee Retention Tax Credit Notice, Keweenaw Outdoor Recreation Coalition (KORC), Copper Shores Community Health Foundation Update, EGLE Regulatory Reminder – Sample Siting Reminder

**Review Fire Departments:** OLFD – 2 EMS runs, 1 Fire. They have received the new EMS vehicle and will put their old one on bids.

A motion was made by Ollila to authorize Otter Lake Fire Department to purchase \$10,000 of fire department items for reimbursement by a grant by the State, seconded by Smith. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

**Review Assessor's Report:** Distributed

**Trustees Reports/Updates:** Bingham commented that the two new part time cemetery employees are working out well.

Fink asked if there is a status update on the 425

**Public Comments:** Public comments regarding “squatters” (up to 12 people without bathroom facilities) living in a camper and occupying private land. The board will write a letter to the Health Department voicing our concerns about the foul mess they left behind on the property. The Township will also issue a junk citation warning to the land owner.

**Old Business:**

- A. Green Acres Road Sewer Project – Payment Submittal & Start-up on June 26, DWAM Grant, Centerline Ditch in Hurontown, July 15, Hook-up Deadline – Extended to Include Sm. Contractors **plus** needed for Brackets on **June 21<sup>st</sup>**.
- B. Personnel – Still Need a Shadow DPW Worker – (2) Days per Week. The new temporary/part time cemetery employee will work up to 40 hours per week between the cemetery and DPW for a limited time.
- C. 2022 Audit Printed Up – Disseminate – Letter Outlining Audit Deficiencies.
- D. Municipal Civil Infractions “Board” According to MTA – Non-Contested Payments Handled by Vanessa. If Payments Contested/Appeals Handled by ZBA.
- E. Appeal to gain an Appeal at Higher Court – Onagaming Complaint.
- F. Liquid Engineering Cleaning **and** Inspection Should Occur in July. PTTG also Submitted a bid for Inspection Only.
- G. Askel Hill cemetery – Bingham found the deed, which is in the township’s name and was never changed to the cemetery association. This needs to be done.

**New Business:**

- A. Increase to \$50.00 per Deed Transfer at the Cemetery. A motion was made by Fink to increase the deed transfer price to \$100.00 effective immediately, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.
- B. Dodgeville Warming House and New Restrooms Vandalized Again, Remote Cameras. A motion was made by Skewes to accept the proposal for camera installation with the addition of a camera at the Township office, seconded by Anderson. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.
- C. Total Energy Systems – Lift Station #2 Repair/Maintenance Needed. A motion was made by Ollila to accept the proposal from Total Energy Systems for the upgrades on lift station, seconded by Anderson. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.
- D. Tim Ryan Request for an Alley Abandonment Between Calverley St. and Baraga Street. A motion was made by Ollila to initiate the process to abandon the alley and give to the property owners on Calverley Street, seconded by Bingham. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: none.

**Public Comment:** A resident asked for a meeting agenda before the meeting, Bruce stated that he posts on the Township website.

**Meetings:**

- A. June 14, 2023 – Cemetery Interviews – Township Office
- B. June 23, 2023 – Amy Schultz – Township Office
- C. Planning Commission meeting changed from July 20, 2023 to August 24, 2023 at 7PM

**Other Business:**

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:54PM

**Public Attendance:**

Randy Malone - OLFD

Mark Little - OLFD

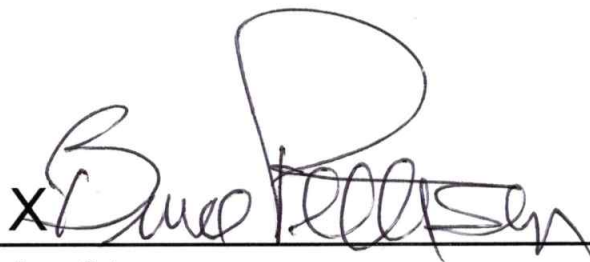
Patricia Paavola

Krystal Little

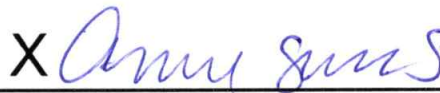
Chris Holmes – UPEA

Carol Sowards

John Ylitalo

X 

Bruce Petersen  
Supervisor

X 

Amy Skewes  
Clerk