

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

December 11, 2023

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, December 11, 2023.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 5:50 PM.

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

Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:

New Business: end of year approvals

Meetings: Board of Review December 11, 2023, planning commission 2024

Old Business - Sand pit sales 2024

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

Approval of the Bd. of Trustees Previous Minutes: A motion was made by Ollila and seconded by Anderson to approve the November 13, 2023 regular meeting minutes and the November 29, 2023 budget meeting minutes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none.

Approval of the Bills:

Bingham questioned if the water notifications should be paid for out of the general fund, Skewes commented that people who have no water/sewer services should pay for water/sewer issues in the township.

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. Nay: none.

Review Clerk's Report:

- Mailed out over 2700 letters to voters regarding voting in 2024
- If anyone has questions for the clerk, please do not approach my deputy to answer your questions or request they do projects. Deputies perform limited jobs and aren't in charge of anything regarding minutes, quickbooks, payments or payroll
- Schedule a final 2023 budget meeting. Scheduled for December 29, 2023 at 1PM
- Need township camera returned by the assessor so DPW can use for water/sewer

Review Treasurer's Report:

- Winter Taxes being collected

Review Zoning Administrator's Report (John) for (November 2022)

Zoning Applications:

11/14 – 16225 Toro Road, large new cabin & sauna, built w/o any permits, fees doubled, retroactively approved. 11/14 – 15799 Toro Road, an even larger new cabin and more deluxe sauna, also built w/o any permits, fees doubled, retroactively approved. 11/14 – Incredible Bank, Sharon Ave. replace damaged awning over drive through, approved. 11/28 – 45520 Cottage Row, request to modify a recent zoning permit, approved.

INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

11/6 – Side lot setback requirements in Hurontown, 11/6 – Inquiry about permit to replace drive through at local bank, 11/8 – Dispute between Health Dept. and UPEA about wetland delineation affecting local landowner, 11/12 – Is a permit needed for shipping containers on Paradise Road, 11/16 – Permit for new sign for Higher Love, 11/28 – Zoning rules for Haarala Road, 11/28 – New sign(s) for former Power Sports site.

OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

Extended communication/interaction with the Building Dept. and Drain Commissioner about the two neighboring illegal building sites on Toro Road.

Preparation and distribution of materials for the Dec. 6th ZBA variance request meeting.

A motion was made by Ollila to charge \$50.00 for free standing signs and \$100.00 for billboards, seconded by Bingham. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none. Vanessa will update the fee schedule.

Correspondence: Liquid Engineering Hydrosphere Inspection Report, EGLE ITA Form for EGLE Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing, Copper Country Intermediate School District Request – Summer Tax levy Collection Request, MRWA – Thank You, Green Acres/Sermon Road Customers Letter/Notification

Review Fire Departments: Hurontown FD asked if there is a northern boundary line for first responders from Otter Lake. Ollila confirmed that dispatch decides.

Review Assessor's Report: Attached
Trustees Reports/Updates:

Bingham addressed concerns with infiltration in the sewer lines and asked for an update. Bingham said we need to inspect for sump pumps.

Board of Review was posted 4 times on the website with three different dates, the correct date was posted in the glass case. Ollila spoke to MTA about the conflict and recommends having the meeting again with one date. Bruce will find out if this should/can be done.

A motion was made by Fink to ask the City of Houghton to annex the church property of Sharon Ave. for the new jail, seconded by Bingham. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none.

Old Business:

- A. Green Acres Rd. Sewer Project – Working on North Side of Highway – Miss Dig Permitting.
A motion was made by Fink to approve the 16th draw from the USDA grant in the amount of \$368,346.08, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none.
- B. Vote on Storm Water Ordinance Amendments. – was conducted at November's meeting.
need a digital copy of the stormwater ordinance
- C. I Phone and Apple Watch – Placed on Private Account and Ownership.
- D. Sand sales – Bingham made a motion to discontinue sales of sand out of the township pit as of 1/1/2024 unless it's a Township funded project, seconded by Ollila. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none.

New Business:

- A. Hydrosphere – Vacuum Pressure Frost Free Vent Pipe Installation Needed.
A motion was made by Fink to purchase a vacuum pressure frost free vent pipe from Liquid Engineering, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none.
- B. Prioritize Where our Road Millage Will be Spent – Superior Road Is already planned. In addition, Township will put priority on finishing Boundary Rd, the small section in Dodgeville and south end of Paradise Rd
- C. USDA – RD 2023 Yr. End Compliance Report Submitted, D. Heights & Port. Water.
- D. Health Insurance – “Cash In-Lieu” Option Posed by Assessor. The Township will not at this time offer a cash payout for insurance. Personnel committee will research.
- E. A motion was made by Ollila to approve the 2024 budget, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none
- F. Committee Assignments, Bank Acceptance, Board Meeting Dates, Legal Counsel.
A motion was made by Ollila to continue with the same attorney, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none
A motion was made by Skewes to continue with the same committee assignments except Fink on the personnel and Bingham on the Rec. Committee, banks, attorney auditor and 2nd Monday of the month at 6PM meeting dates, BOR members, ZBA members and Planning Commission members, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none

A motion was made by Skewes to have the same Fire Chiefs (Jared Ruotsala and Anders Kalungi), seconded by Anderson. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none

A motion was made by Ollila to allow the clerk to pay all bills by 12/31/23, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: none

- G. Health Insurance - Skewes made a motion to opt out of the health insurance 80/20 rule, seconded by Fink. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: None
- H. A motion was made by Ollila to approve the proposed 2024 budget with Bingham's amendments, seconded by Skewes. Motion carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Anderson, Bingham, Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes. Nay: None

Meetings:

- A. EGLE – Coastal Resiliency Planning – Gr. Lks. Resource Center – December 7, 2023.
- B. B.O.R. – December Meeting – Twp. Office – December 18, 2023.
- C. Z.B.A. – Side Lot Variance – Twp. Office – December 6, 2023.
- D. Planning Commission meeting – 1/25/24
- E. Personnel committee meeting scheduled – January 10, 2024 at 3PM

Other Business: Anderson is requesting a meeting packet before our monthly meetings.


Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM


Public Attendance: Chris Holmes – UPEA

Chris Holmes - UPEA

Marty Raffaelli

Dale Belanger

X 
Bruce Petersen
Supervisor

X 
Amy Skewes
Clerk