

NORVELL TOWNSHIP
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Regular Meeting-October 11, 2023

Present:

William Sutherland, Supervisor, Jeff Oswalt, Clerk, Deserre Sauers, Treasurer, Andrew Haystead, Trustee, Paul Francis, Trustee, Norvell Township, Jackson County

The Regular Meeting of the Norvell Township Board was called to order by Supervisor Bill Sutherland at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Haystead requested the addition of a resolution for local control of local land use. *A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Trustee Haystead to approve the agenda with the addition of Resolution 2023-11, Local Control of Local Land Use as item 11h. Motion carried.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Connie Lincoln questioned why the meeting was being videotaped.

Matt Dame questioned the status of maintaining and updating of the township's website.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 13, 2023 Regular Meeting & September 20, 2023 Special Meeting

Trustee Francis suggested the approval of the minutes be separate motions because he was not a board member at the time of the September 13, 2023 meeting. *A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Supervisor Sutherland to approve the minutes of the September 13th, 2023 meeting, as published. Motion carried. A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023 Special meeting, as published. Motion carried.*

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Trustee Haystead to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPORT

Commissioner Phil Duckham presented the board with a report on recent County Commissioner meetings.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Deputy Jay Truchan reported on the police activities in Norvell Township for the month of September.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to approve payment of the following bills: Paid bills totaling \$29,438.48, Unpaid bills totaling \$5,564.50, and Payroll totaling \$10,211.31. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.

OLD BUSINESS

Blight/Nuisance Ordinance

Supervisor Sutherland spoke, suggesting the board consider moving this item to the end of the meeting. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to table the discussion of the proposed Blight/Nuisance Ordinance to the end of the meeting. Motion carried.*

Resolution 2023-10 – Dissolution of VLS Common Fund

Supervisor Sutherland spoke, stating this resolution is at the request of the Charter Township of Columbia, although we had already sent a letter to all principals of the Vineyard Lake Sewer Common Fund of our intent to leave the fund. If approved, this resolution will be sent to Columbia Charter Township, Cambridge Township, and Jackson County. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to adopt Resolution 2023-10, Dissolution of VLS Common Fund, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.*

NEW BUSINESS

1st Quarter Budget Amendments

Supervisor Sutherland spoke, explaining the layout of the information presented, and stated he felt no amendments are needed at this time. It was requested he add a line showing percentages to his report for the next quarter.

Agreement with Jackson County for 9 Days of Early Voting

Clerk Oswalt spoke, informing the board that this is the official agreement with Jackson County for hosting the nine days of early voting required by Proposal 2, which was approved by the state electorate in November of 2022. This agreement will take effect at the 2024 Presidential Primary, which will be held in either February or March of next year. The estimated cost to the township for this election is \$6,500.00, which includes costs for required equipment. Costs should be lower with future elections. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to authorize Clerk Oswalt to sign the agreement with Jackson County for Nine Days of Early Voting, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.* A motion was made by Sutherland, seconded by Oswalt to approve funding of \$7,000.00 for the 9 days of early voting, but withdrawn after further discussion.

Funding for Ahrens Park Pavilion Drawings

Supervisor Sutherland stated the Ahrens Park Pavilion needs maintenance work, it's not ADA accessible, and is partly located on State of Michigan property. He proposes having plans drawn up for a new, larger ADA accessible facility, constructed on park property. Marty Taylor, township building inspector is proposing a 40 ft by 24 ft structure with a 4- or 5-foot ADA compliant concrete walkway. Plans will need to be drawn up for this project, and he is requesting the board approve having Woodard & Associates do the drawings at a cost not to exceed \$500.00. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Haystead to approve payment of up to \$500.00 for plans for a proposed new pavilion at Ahrens Park, as proposed. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.*

Funding for Tree Removal at Ahrens Park

Supervisor Sutherland presented two price quotes for the removal of five trees at Ahrens Park. He then explained these trees were not practical for shade or recreational activities, had broken branches and would need to be removed anyway for any future projects. The bids were \$2,200.00 from Burman's Tree Service, and \$3,500 00 from Action Outdoor Services, LLC. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Francis to approve funding of \$2,200.00, per the bid by Burman's Tree Service for the removal of 5 mature trees at Ahren's Park. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.*

Agenda Policy

Supervisor Sutherland informed the board of a web training session he had participated in on September 20th 2023, entitled the Art of the Agenda. At this training it was recommended that township boards adopt a formal agenda policy to promote an orderly and efficient meeting. In light of that web training session, he has prepared a draft policy for the board to review. Discussion followed, with board members suggesting changes and adjustments to wording. Supervisor Sutherland will make the proposed changes and bring the issue back to the board at the November meeting.

Public Comment Policy

Supervisor Sutherland also stated that at the previously mentioned training session on September 20th it was also recommended that the board adopt a public comment policy. He then explained the reasoning behind the recommendation, which would be to minimize disruptions during meetings, promote civility in discourse with members of the board, ensure all who wish to speak are treated equally and given the opportunity to speak, and prevent meetings from becoming unnecessarily long. He has created a draft policy that has been reviewed and approved by the township attorney. Discussion followed, with board members requesting changes and adjustments. Supervisor Sutherland will make the proposed changes and bring the issue back to the board at the November meeting.

2023 Delinquent Sewer Bills

Treasurer Sauers asked the board to approve placing sewer bills that were more than three months in arrears on the winter 2023 tax bills. *A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Trustee Francis to approve placing sewer bills that were more than three months in arrears on the winter 2023 tax roll. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.*

Resolution 2023-11 Local Control over Local Land Use

Trustee Haystead spoke to the issue, informing the board that the state is planning to introduce a bill that will remove control of renewable energy from local control to state control. He is requesting the board approve Resolution 2023-11, a resolution opposing any legislation that would remove local control and allow the state to set zoning for renewable energy sources, mining and short-term rentals. He also requested that if the resolution is approved, that it be sent to all state officials. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Haystead to adopt Resolution 2023-11, Local Control over Local Land Use, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead, and Francis. Nays: None.*

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Blight/Nuisance Ordinance

Supervisor Sutherland explained this proposed ordinance is for discussion only, and asked the board for input. Discussion followed, with board members suggesting several changes, among them the removal of the noise issues portion. Supervisor Sutherland will make revisions and bring this item back to the board at the November meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Sutherland – reminded residents of the upcoming Trunk or Treat at Ahrens Park on Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 1 to 3 p.m.

BOARD COMMENT

Supervisor Sutherland thanked the board for the opportunity to attend the MTA’s Supervisor’s Retreat last week, stating it was a very useful program and great networking with other jurisdictions.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Haystead to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Oswalt,
Norvell Township Clerk

Garnet Francis,
Deputy Clerk/Recording Secretary