

NORVELL TOWNSHIP
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Regular Meeting-March 13, 2024

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

Supervisor Sutherland informed the board of several changes to the agenda. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried*

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 Regular meeting and the corrected minutes of the February 28, 2024 Special meeting. Motion carried

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Clerk Oswalt to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPORT

County Commissioner Walz reported to the board on activities of the County Commissioners for February of 2024.

NAPOLEON HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY BASEBALL COACH – MIKE BLANCHARD

Coach Blanchard spoke to the board about the possibility of Napoleon Schools using the Ahrens Park Softball fields for practice, sharing usage with Trackside baseball who currently has usage. He then answered questions from board members. Supervisor Sutherland will meet with Napoleons Athletic Director and coaches and bring details back to the board at the April board meeting

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Sheriff's Deputy Jay Truchan spoke, giving board members information regarding his activities for the month of February 2024. He patrolled 720 miles, worked 172 hours, and handled 40 complaints.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT

Supervisor Sutherland reported the voting area for the Presidential Primary was available for both Precinct 1 & 2 to vote, as promised by M-R Builders, and favorable comments were received on the overall structure. Project management has now shifted to interior work with Todd Haskell of M-R Builders taking over. Drywall installation in the office area is underway, interior wall sound insulation has been provided at no added cost, a mail slot has been installed in an exterior wall of

the Treasurer's Department, there will be two weatherproof display cases on the exterior front of the building, and the exterior doors and vertical steel siding still need to be done. Communication wiring needs to be installed before installation of the drop ceiling and the parking lot and exterior walkways need to be bid out.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Clerk Oswalt mentioned that under paid bills, the \$110,000 payment to M-R Builders is shown twice, first as a transfer to the General Fund and again as a payment, making the paid bills number \$110,000 higher than it actually is. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to approve payment of bills, as follows: Unpaid bills, \$27,323.73; Paid bills of \$390,194.66; Payroll of \$19,372.98, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

OLD BUSINESS

Inclement Weather & Emergency Office Closing Policy

Supervisor Sutherland presented a comparison of our closing policy with surrounding townships, but no comparable policy was listed. Discussion followed, with the comment that new employees should be required to work 6 months before being granted forty (40) hours of comp. time, but no changes to be made to the current Inclement Weather & Emergency Office Closing Policy. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to take no action on the current Inclement Weather and Emergency Office Closing policy at this time. Motion carried.*

Accountant to Assist with General Ledger

Supervisor Sutherland updated his memo on the subject by informing the board that the deputy treasurer of Summit Township may be interested in performing the work needed here. He has scheduled a meeting at 9:00 a.m. on March 15th and will bring the information back at the April Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Publishing of Master Plan for Public Comment

Trustee Haystead spoke to the issue and status of the Master Plan, stating the board needs to approve publishing the proposed Master Plan and Future Land Use Map for public comment. Supervisor Sutherland thanked both Trustee Haystead and the Planning Commission for all of their hard work on this project. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Haystead to approve the distribution of the proposed Master Plan and Future Land Use Map on the township's website, The Exponent newspaper and copies available at the township hall. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

Propane Contract for M-124 Lift Station

Both Supervisor Sutherland and Treasurer Sauers explained the need to have a contract for propane for the M-124 Lift Station now that the township is in control of Norvell Township's Vineyard Lake Sewers and responsible for costs related to the operation of the station. Three bids are submitted, and it is recommended the township continue with Avery Oil and Gas, the rental fee to be \$165.00 per year and fuel costs of \$2.149 per gallon. Current usage is less than 500 gallons per year, although that can vary based on power outages. Discussion followed. *A motion was made*

by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to renew the contract with Avery Oil and Gas for 1 year, ending March 31, 2025. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.

Sunrise Assessing Contract

Supervisor Sutherland presented a renewal contract with Sunrise Assessing, informing the board this company currently serves 10 municipalities in Jackson, Lenawee and Ingham counties and has done a good job for our township. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Trustee Francis to approve the renewed contract with Sunrise Assessing for 5 years with a 4% increase each year. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

New Computer for the Clerk's Department

Supervisor Sutherland informed the board the township hall had experienced a loss of network access on March 5th, and after VC3 corrected the problem, the Clerk's computer was still unable to connect with the network. The technician was able to correct the problem but stated the computer should be replaced due to issues with the CPU fan. He gave further details as to the age of the computer and further stated a new computer and monitor could be purchased from VC3 at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. A short discussion followed. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Sauers to approve the purchase of a new computer and two monitors from VC3 at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

Job Description for Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer

Supervisor Sutherland presented a draft job description for the position of Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer for Norvell Township, due to the resignation of Richard LaRowe. Discussion followed, with the board agreeing an ad needs to be run in the newspaper and on the township website. *A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Treasurer Suers to approve the draft job description for Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswald, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

Disposition of 106 E. Commercial Building

Supervisor Sutherland asked for discussion regarding the disposition of the old township hall, once the township moves to 300 Mill Rd. Discussion followed as to who owns the building, comments from residents as to the historical value of the building, questions about the accessibility and safety of the building as it stands. It was suggested that since residents feel the building should be saved and utilized in some way, maybe a historical preservation committee could be formed to look into costs and ideas for preserving and using the building if it's determined the township has ownership. This issue will be brought back to the board for ideas at the April board meeting.

Contractor Registration Fee

Supervisor Sutherland informed the board that currently, the township charges a \$10.00 fee to contractors when they wish to work in the township, with the fee covering a 3-year period. It is felt this is an unnecessary fee, that the contractor still has to present his license to be copied for our records, and since the contractor has to renew the license on a regular basis, he often has to

pay this \$10.00 fee more often than the 3-year allowed. Of the three options suggested by the permit administrator, it's suggested the township eliminate the fee entirely. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Trustee Haystead, seconded by Trustee Francis to eliminate the \$10.00 Contractor License fee, effective March 14, 2024. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Sutherland, Sauers, Oswalt, Haystead and Francis. Nays: None.*

Matt Dame Ethics Complaints

Supervisor Sutherland read the memo in the board packet regarding the Ethics Policy complaints submitted by Matt Dame, against Supervisor Sutherland and Clerk Oswalt. Supervisor Sutherland then (7:15 p.m.) turned the gavel over to Clerk Oswalt and proceeded to the podium and read his response to Matt Dame's allegations. He then took back the gavel and sat down. Clerk Oswalt then approached the podium (7:25 p.m.) and read his response to Matt Dame's allegations. At 7:35 p.m. both Supervisor Sutherland and Clerk Oswalt vacated their positions, left the room, and Treasurer Sauers assumed the position of chair of the meeting. The remaining members of the board discussed the allegations Matt Dame had presented via email to the board members and Supervisor Sutherland and Clerk Oswalt's responses to those allegations. Discussion followed. *A motion was made by Treasurer Sauers, seconded by Trustee Francis that they believe there were no violations to the Ethics Policy and no action is required. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Ayes-Sauers, Haystead, & Francis. Nays: none. Excused: Sutherland & Oswalt.*

At 7:40 p.m., Supervisor Sutherland and Clerk Oswalt returned to the meeting and Supervisor Sutherland resumed his position as Chairperson of the meeting.

Public/Board Comments

Matt Dame – responded to comments made by Supervisor Sutherland and Clerk Oswalt.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Supervisor Sutherland, seconded by Trustee Haystead to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Oswalt,
Norvell Township Clerk

Garnet Francis,
Deputy Clerk/Recording Secretary