

VOLINIA TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, January 8, 2024
6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Larry Davis at 6:30pm. Members present: Supervisor Larry Davis, Trustee Denny Grice, Trustee Nick Seelye, Treasurer Alex Williams and Clerk Annette Peters. Members absent: None.

Others present: Joe Bellina, Bob Thompson, Chuck Wilson, Glenn Blough, Brenda Blough, Deb Chambers, James Chambers, Chris Brooks, Beth Brooks, Tyler Augst, Zach Moorehouse and Sue Conklin.

Prayer was given by Denny Grice.

Pledge of Allegiance was given by Larry Davis.

Minutes

The minutes from the last Regular meeting December 11, 2023, were presented. Alex Williams made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections of On Page 3, under supervisor, should be the “The First 3 Months Contract” not “The second 3 months Contract” and same page last paragraph should be “Larry has contacted our attorney” not “Larry has contract our attorney”; Denny Grice seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

The November Treasurer’s report was presented with a balance of \$260,412.87 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are as listed. Annette Peters made a motion to approve the November Treasurer’s Report; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

- Grice – Yes
- Peters – Yes
- Davis – Yes
- Williams – Yes
- Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the November Treasurer’s Report.

The December Treasurer’s report was presented with a balance of \$272,659.15 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are as listed. Larry Davis asked about the \$6,769.58 in the Dust Control account and \$33,657.63 in the Leased Land account. Alex Williams said that possibly the last payments were not transferred, he will double check. Annette Peters made a motion to approve the December Treasurer’s report; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

- Grice – Yes

Peters – Yes
Davis – Yes
Williams – Yes
Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the December Treasurer's Report.

Bills

The December Revised bills were presented with the total amount of \$13,216.36. Denny Grice made a motion to approve the December Revised Bills; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Grice – Yes
Peters – Yes
Davis – Yes
Williams – Yes
Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the December Revised Bills.

The January bills were presented with the total amount of \$10,035.70. Nick Seelye made a motion to approve the January Bills; Denny Grice seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Grice - Yes
Peters – Yes
Davis – Yes
Williams – Yes
Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the January Bills.

Ambulances

Frank Butts, Supervisor of Wayne Township and Chair of CVBESA, was present with updates for the Ambulance services.

Frank stated that the last four and half months have been tough, been have been working well so far. We have been very fortunate that we have not had to pay for ambulance services for the last 12 years. They have been able to coordinate one ALS ambulance short notice, which is stationed south of Cass that covered 8 townships and the City of Dowagiac. Cass Family Clinic had paid for half of the SMACAS, but those funds will be running out in 6 weeks. There have been regular meetings, and are requesting a second ambulance, but SMACAS has bi-laws that can't they can't contract out, unless they own the ambulance, so they are working on their bi-laws. As of last Thursday, there is a 2nd ALS ambulance being prepared to be stationed in Dowagiac. It will take 8-9 months for it to come in, new, but there is a possibility of having it in service by the 1st of March, which will increase the costs. The board voted on a 1/3 Taxable Value, Census and Fixed split cost, the Volinia Township's portion would be \$60,536.34 for 2 ambulances. They are still looking into other funding options such as Tribal and County Grants. There have been questions about a maybe doing a county ambulance millage, there are 2 ambulance authorities interested, but the county is now showing interest in doing so at this point. Sue Conklin asked if both ambulances would be ALS. Frank said they would both be

equipped and hope to be staffed to be. Denny Grice asked when the second ambulance would go in effect. Frank said hopefully somewhere around the 1st of March. Frank said that the 3 month contracts have been a mess based on weeks and hopefully they will be going to quarterly.

Cemeteries

Nothing.

Roads

Nick Seelye said that he's guessing they are about as good as they can be. Annette Peters said that Penn Road is a mess.

CCRC

Joe Bellina and Bob Thompson were present to answer any questions about the roads. Annette Peters asked about the Nicholasville Culvert. The Drain Commission has some issues in the area and CCRC is hoping to tie all the work together. Nick Seelye asked about the 10 year gravel road treatment list that was presented last month, mainly Fosdick Street. Joe said that Fosdick has not had gravel in the last 10 years, only about 25% of the townships gravel roads have received gravel in that time span. Larry Davis said that there are a lot of pot holes and dirt roads that are not getting attention. Dirt roads are washing out into hay fields, the culvert on Penn Road is full again and the East side is crushed and buckled again. The Seal Coat on Parker/Oak and Stevens Forest that was done in the fall you can see cracks in already. The Plows came through and threw stones into yards. Joe told him that's just how it is. Nick said that he went down Parker/Oak 2 days after the seal coating was done and the cracks were not filled, the road was already horrible before the plows came down it. When Fosdick was done everything was filled, Parker didn't look anything like that. Nick doesn't believe there was enough material put in. Bob Thompson said that they will make it right, and asked if Fosdick has similar size cracks, Nick said yes, Parker may have even been better condition before treatment. Larry Davis said that he thinks that the material was too runny. Annette Peters said that there have been pot holes at the Penn Road/Dutch Settlement intersection for 6 months that have skipped over. Nick Seelye asked who decides what roads get gravel. Joe and Bob both said that is the Townships decision. Nick said that he knows that Brenda will pull road rocks and uses them in her flower beds and the road edges are pushed out into fields and yards. Joe and Bob said that the township has done a fantastic job over the last 3 year and spent approximately \$600,000 on the roads, the previous 10 years before that they spent \$275,000 total. Decisions that were made 13-15 years ago are affecting us now. If the township can put a 10 year plan into place and spend \$480,000 they could have the best system in the county. Nick asked how much it would be to gravel the section of Fosdick. Joe and Bob said approximately \$30,000-\$35,000 per mile for 3 inch thickness. They do match \$41,000 in contracts per season. Nick asked if our Road Liaison really does call them with our complaints. Bob said yes they hear from him frequently, he's actually the one who called and set up the road tour. Most townships have 3 participants join the road tours and they do encourage that. Nick and Larry asked that the road tours be scheduled with the supervisor from now on. Nick asked if there is a list of contacts to report road issues to. Bob said to call the CCRC line. Annette asked if

the 2024 recommendations are the grey areas of the 2023 Project list and doing an additional road tour. Bob said yes and anytime, just call. Nick asked if CCRC would come to our meetings quarterly. Bob said yes, they would put us on their schedule. Nick asked how long the road tour takes. Bob said approximately an hour; they will even do them on Saturdays. Bob came back to the Nicholasville culvert, said had met with Dave, and even ran truck. They did a 10 foot extension on each side and put in move gravel. They did not pave around it, as they wanted it to settle and didn't want to pave it twice. They did not get back to Gards Prairie until the very end of the season to finish up due to high priorities and contract that had to get done for the season. They had no problem with us holding that final payment until the work was done. Joe said that they widened the cemetery entrance at Little Fish, took down some trees by the cemetery on Decatur Road and paved South Gards Praire at their cost.

Supervisor

CVBESA meet January 4, 2024. Larry was not pleased phase decision for ambulance. They took a roll call vote for the 1/3 TV, Census, Fixed Phase option, with passed 7/1 with Larry being the No. Larry does not think the 2 mills will cover this phase. He did talk to the attorney who said that we can still ask for the 1 mill renewal in August. But next month they do want a decision from all townships. Nick asked what happens if the millage does not pass. We either have no ambulance or we take the money from the general fund, if its there. Alex suggests that we send a post card to all the residents explaining what the millage is for. Denny said that 2 mills are not going to be enough to cover the increase. Tyler Augst said that informational mailings should be okay, but we cannot tell people to vote for something. Alex said that he will reach out to Roxanne for help coming up with a post card mailer for a fire/ambulance millage postcard. Nick

Seelye made a motion to spend up to \$1,000 for a fire/ambulance millage postcard mailing; Denny Grice seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Grice – Yes

Peters – Yes

Davis – Yes

Williams – Yes

Seelye – Yes

The Board approved to spend up to \$1,000 for a fire/ambulance millage postcard mailing.

Annette Peters said that there should be a deadline that the postcards need to be out to the residents by January 23, 2024 since absentee ballots will be going out this week.

Larry said that he still needs a decision from the board on the 2 ambulance contract. Denny Grice said that it's a one year commitment. It will probably with stand for one year until we know more. Denny Grice made a motion to agree to the 1/3 TV, census, Fix phase, 2 ambulance contract for \$60,536.34; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion passed. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Grice – Yes

Peters – Yes

Davis – Yes
Williams – Yes
Seelye – Yes

The Board approved the 2 ambulance contract for \$60,536.34

There was one fire run for Volinia in December. The Wayne Township Fire department was awarded a \$157,000 grand for new SCBA's and new 45 minute bottles.

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department sent notice of Priority Over Building Permits. Alex called and was told our township is a violator. Well and Sewer permits are suppose to be applied for before building permits. Larry has called the zoning and building administrators and advised and was told there are a half a dozen townships that do it this way.

Kevin Harris, assessor, has sent over a packet that was distributed.

No new updates on the gravel pit.

Email from Roxanne about Camp Mastiv was distributed. Alex said that we really need to talk to the camp folks, they can't travel due to Sabbath is only somewhat believable. We don't know these proposed changes for ordinances. We should see if the camp would come and chat and probably settle some of the issues. We don't need to make special exemptions for them. Denny agrees; that's what permitting and zoning is for. Why is the attorney negotiating? Did we give her stuff to negotiate? Nick said that the attorney is dragging her feet/showing conflict of interest. Denny said we need to have a sit down with the attorney. Nick said that we need a second opinion. Larry said that Kevin hasn't been at the camp. Alex said that he was wrong, they camp did not get a tax bill, and it was just their portion of the special assessments. Denny asked about zoning enforcement. Alex said it's not zoned for what is being used for. Larry said that they now have security cameras up. James Chambers asked what amount is the amount the township is losing with the camp not being on the tax bill. Alex said that he doesn't know without the assessment. Denny said it's probably \$1,000 to \$1,500. They would probably they will pay but will want the zoning updated to accommodate them. Larry asked what the board wants to do. Nick said the get a second opinion. Alex said that we need clarity. Denny said that we need a second opinion and clarity; this has been ongoing since our meeting in July with no changes. Nick said this shows that zoning means nothing; he should just do a wedding venue since no one will do anything about it. Alex said that Kevin is mostly waiting on us to add them to the tax bill. Nick said that it's not about the money; it's about breaking the rules. Larry said that he will get a hold of Roxanne to have a sit down meeting, at a regular meeting.

Board

Alex said that his work schedule has changed so he will now be at the hall on Thursday and Friday.

Public Comment

Chuck Wilson said that he thought that the camp had posted 15 units were available for rent, he will double check. He said if he gets out ice fishing, he will check it out. There have been lots of improvements. What does the Camp want to do?

Tyler Augst has updates from the MSU Extension. There is a webinar tomorrow on Renewable Energy, and there will be a recording available afterward for anyone interested but can't attend. February 1st will be a Housing Options in Three Oaks. Citizen Planner will be Tuesday nights in April and May. Denny asked if the Citizen Planner is a 6 week course. Tyler said yes, there are 6, 3 hour sessions. Denny asked if there is a cost. Tyler said yes, it's \$250 per person.

Chris Brooks asked if there's a Blight Ordinance and if so if he can get a copy of that ordinance. Larry will get him that information. Who is the Blight Officer? Zoning Solutions.

Sue Conklin asked who to address concerns to about the Decatur Road/Marcellus Highway Intersection. Those go to CCRC since those are both district roads. Nick Seelye said that we have been told there are no reasonable solutions for that intersection.

Glenn Blough said that the stop lights at the Decatur Road/Marcellus Highway Intersection aren't working again.

Adjournment

Annette Peters made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 8:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Peters
Volinia Township Clerk