

VOLINIA TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, July 10, 2023
6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Larry Davis at 6:34pm. Members present: Supervisor Larry Davis, Trustee Harry R. Rasmussen, Treasurer Alex Williams, and Clerk Annette Peters. Members absent: Trustee Denny Grice.

Others present: Ron Butts, Nick Seelye, Brian Lamoreaux, Charlie Kantz, Cindy Hemenway, Sue Conklin, Jeff Conklin, Glen Blough, Brenda Blough, Tyler Augst, Nate Robinson, Brock Yordy, Peg Yordy, Bob Lehigh, Dave High, Stacey High, Bill Personette and Steve Kent.

Prayer was given by Bob Rasmussen.

Pledge of Allegiance was given by Bob Rasmussen.

Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting June 12, 2023, were presented. Alex Williams made a motion to approve the minutes; Bob Rasmussen seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The April Revised Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$440,700.19 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are as listed. Annette Peters made a motion to approve the April Revised Treasurer's Report; Larry Davis seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen – Yes
Williams - Yes
Davis – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved the April Revised Treasurer's Report.

The May Revised Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$375,585.75 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are listed. Annette Peters made a motion to approve the May Revised Treasurer's Report; Bob Rasmussen seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen –Yes
Williams – Yes
Davis – Yes
Peters – Yes

The Board approved the May Revised Treasurer's Report.

The June Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$314,759.24 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are listed. Larry Davis made a motion to approve the June Treasurer's Report; Annette Peters seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

The Board approved the June Treasurer's Report.

Bills

The June Revised bills were presented with the total amount of \$75,183.19. Bob Rasmussen made a motion to approve the June Revised Bills; Annette Peters seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

The Board approved the June Revised Bills.

The July Bills were presented with the total amount of \$15,141.24. Bob Rasmussen made a motion to approve the July Bills; Annette Peters seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

The Board approved the July Bills.

Cemeteries

New signs for Little Fish Lake and Crane Cemeteries have been ordered and should be ready any day.

Little Fish Lake had a tree come down before the Holiday that Bill had taken care of.

People are driving over plots. New Leaf had given a quote of \$400 to put down top soil, spread and seed, along with the cost of the tree that he took care of.

The trees at Rosehill have been marked.

There are trees on the South side of Crane street that are leaning towards the cemetery. Rasmussen talked to Bob to see if he would take them down.

One plot was sold.

Barb Huff had prepaid opening and closing of a grave when Bob first starting doing the cemeteries. She has since moved away and has now passed. Her family is requesting a refund since she has been cremated.

We are still in need of a L-shaped fence at LFL. Larry is going to follow up on the quote that he received in the fall.

Roads

Lawrence Road should be done in August. CCRC will be tearing up Dewey Lake Street and making a T-intersection at Lawrence, so they will do our project at that time.

We have not received an answer on the chip and seal timeline yet.

Bob asked CCRC to smear patch Penn Road, McKenzie Street to Dutch Settlement. He recommends possibly seal coating next year. Same with North Gards Prairie.

Grading has been started for the upcoming, delayed dust control application.

Stacey High asked who determines what roads are paved. Requests that Warner Road be put on the list for next year.

Supervisor

Rand Cuthbert is working with Cass County to get the Master Plan done.

The contract with Appraisals Plus Group LLC is expiring September 30, 2023. They had submitted a two year contract renewal at a rate of \$1,166.67 monthly (\$14,000 yearly). Annette Peters made a motion to approve the two year contract renewal with Appraisals Plus Group LLC; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor motion passed. Larry Davis requested a rollcall vote:

Rasmussen – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

The board approved renewing the two year contract with Appraisals Plus Group LLC.

Bob Rasmussen has submitted his letter of resignation as Township Trustee due to health reasons, after 37 years with the Township. His resignation would be effective after tonight's meeting. He would like to stay on Cemetery Manager, as it hasn't been as stressful and effecting his health. Stacey High Thanked Bob for his services. Alex Williams made a motion to accept Bob Rasmussen's letter of resignation as Township Trustee; Larry Davis seconded the motion; all in favor. Motion passed.

Zoning

Doug Kuhlman as supplied the zoning administratin permit log.

There is zero new information on the gravel yard. There has been no word from them. Doug recommends there be discussion with respect to the townships legal advice that the board not be influenced.

Alex Williams asked if the Church falls under our zoning. Doug said that there is not local authority needed, as they fall under the state due to the school.

Board

Alex Williams said that it is Summer Tax Collection time. There was a Newsletter and his office Collection hours included with the tax bills.

The July BOR will be meeting next week. Anything that anyone would like to have renewed needs to be submitted to Kevin by Friday.

Public Comment

Brian Lamoreaux would like the board to enforce the ZBA's decision. Says that Doug Kuhlman is not following the determination and that the Department of Ag does not enforce. Doug said that he did go to the ZBA about their decision, even after the previous Supervisor said that we won't deal with it, it's a civil matter at the time of the complaint. The board has the authority to determine how complaints are handled, and recommends the board determine if they want every complaint to be investigated. Doug has talked to the Department of Ag, who says they see no problem with the site selection. If they send a Letter of approved Site Selections, that will trump anything that the Township Board determines. The problem comes into play because the ZBA followed the Flag Lot standards and the lot is irregular not a flag lot. Doug contacted the Planning Commission and was ready to go back to zoning if the interpretation was not what they intended, but was told No. 2.2c.3 states Fences used in association with agriculture are zoning permit exempt. Doug did contact the property owner and told him he could reapply. He did reapply for the same fence, this time as Ag. Doug said that he is not going to document every complaint and he is done with the fence issue. Brian said that the permit was contested, brought to the board and a site plan was never done. The fence goes from the front of the garage all the way to the road. The ZBA was all happy, then Doug says go to the Department of Ag. All he is asking is for the Board to enforce the ZBA's decision, nothing more, nothing less. He believes there is a cover up going on, the property is not actually AG. Steve Kent said the ZBA said that everything that needed to be said was said. Brian said that he is not done. Bob Rasmussen said that he believes that the ZBA makes a determination, that is what should be done. Doreen Williams asked Brian why he can't work with the neighbors. Brian said that he has tried, even offered to purchase the stuff and help.

Alex Williams made a motion that the ZBA made a decision and that should be what done; Bob Rasmussen seconded the motion, all in favor. Larry Davis Requested a roll call vote:

Rasmussen – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – No

Peters – Yes

The board decided to stand behind the ZBA's decision on the fence.

Larry Davis said that he does not receive the minutes from the ZBA or Planning Commission's meeting.

Doug Kuhlman said that he will call Mr. Poulsen tomorrow.

Peggy Yordy questioned about Mr. Cuthbert meeting with Cass County on the Master Plan. She was told that there are holes in the Master Plan, where someone might let the mining slip through. Larry said that the Planning Commission's Chair person is who works with Cass County for the Master Plan. Doug said that the Master Plan has to be reviewed every 5 years and rewritten every 20 years. The mining is a zoning ordinance, and completely different than the Master plan. Zoning is approved by the township. Mining is in just about every jurisdictions ordinances, unless otherwise "excluding." Legislation is still in limbo about gravel operations. EGLE is a department of the State of Michigan. If the state approves the legislation, they would be able to override any townships authority.

Tyler Augst from the MSU Extension office gave the board flyers on the upcoming Fiscal Sustainability Community Webinars coming up. The Master Citizen is on summer vacation. Citizen Planner with the Van Buren Planning Commission possibly in the fall.

Brenda Blough asked who will be taking Bob's position. Larry said that the board has 45 days to fill the position. Peggy Yordy wants to be put on the list of interested parties. Thanked the township for the dust control on the gravel roads. CCRC came today to grade.

Nate Robinson tried to keep the gravel pit in the local authority. He doesn't want it to go to the state level. He could have sold the property, but he decided to lease it instead. Nobody as gone to the mines to see for themselves, they just complain. Nobody has even asked what he was planning to do with the money. He thought he was doing the right thing for his community. Nate feels assassinated, this family has been here for over 6 generations. Now he doesn't know what to do. He will sell to a corporation if needed.

Brenda Blough said that the mining was stumbled upon, it was brought to them. She asked to please move the driveway, Nate asked where to, Brenda said the middle of the property, Nate said that CCRC will not allow him to move it there. Nate said that he can control turning off the beepers, for sound. Brenda said you have the right, it's your land.

Brock Yordy said that the due diligence has to been done for the ground water. Thinks that House will not make a decision until late term limits. He wants EGLE to be involved in the gravel pit. If it can pass, then the decision will be supported, but he wants the resources protected.

Bill Personette from New Leaf Landscaping introduced himself. He has been doing the cemetery maintenance for 14 years. If anyone needs to contact him, his hours are 8-5 Monday – Friday and 9-12 on Saturday.

Bob Rasmussen said that every ordinance that comes up is posted in the paper. It's there for people to come check over before it gets approved. He asked that people pay attention to what's going on in local government. Then they could have had a hand in changing it in the beginning. Get involved.

Cindy Hemenway, on behalf of Kaye Bough, said that they never got a notice, even though they were on the list of them being mailed too. Asked that next time any notice like this goes out, that it be sent registered mail with signature required.

Adjournment

Bob Rasmussen made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Peters
Volinia Township Clerk