

VOLINIA TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, November 13, 2023
6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Larry Davis at 6:31pm. Members present: Supervisor Larry Davis, Trustee Denny Grice, Trustee Nick Seelye, Treasurer Alex Williams and Clerk Annette Peters. Members absent: None.

Others present: Bob Rasmussen, Ryan Brown, Tyler Augst, Chuck Wilson, Glenn Blough, Brenda Blough, Beth Brooks, Chris Brooks, Stacey High, Sue Conklin, Gary Locke, Victoria Locke, Zach Morehouse and Steve Kent.

Prayer was given by Denny Grice.

Pledge of Allegiance was given by Larry Davis.

Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting October 9, 2023, were presented. Larry Davis made a motion to approve the minutes; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The October Treasurer's Report was presented with a balance of \$275,761.37 in the general fund. Balances in the other funds are as shown. Receipts are as listed. Annette Peters made a motion to approve the October Treasurer's Report; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

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

The Board approved the October Treasurer's Report.

Bills

The October Revised bills were presented with the total amount of \$22,882.47. Alex Williams made a motion to approve the October Revised Bills; Denny Grice seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

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

The Board approved the October Revised Bills.

The November bills were presented with a total amount of \$14,728.26. Larry Davis made a motion to pay the bills as listed; Denny Grice seconded the motion; all in favor; motion carried. Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes

Williams - Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

Grice – Yes

The Board approved the November Bills.

Cemeteries

Bill has done that last cleaning for the year. All the cemeteries were set up for Veteran's Day, and the flags will be picked up this week. There were 2 cremation burials.

Larry Davis and Stacey High said that cemeteries do look nice.

Denny Grice and Bob Rasmussen have been talked last week about computerizing the cemetery maps. Have got scans of the maps, but are not very clear. Denny is working on the map in Excel. Once the maps are done we will need to decide on a computer and where the computer will be stored. Denny has worked with Great Lakes Technology for computers in the past. Larry suggested that it be stored on a laptop, so it can be mobile to go to onsite to the cemeteries if needed.

Roads

The yearly ride around with CCRC was done a couple of weeks ago. Bob will have copies of the reports for the board at next months meeting.

There are bad areas in Nicholasville, the Dewey Lake Street and Lawrence Road intersection will be corrected in the spring, Penn Road need paved, the dip is out of Gards Prairie, so we can release the final payment now.

CCRC wants to know how much we will be spending next year. Bob has told them it will not be as much as this year.

The grader has been in the area since the ride around. CCRC is working at their own pace. The hole on Burr Street has been taken care of. Ends of Gards Prairie will stay on a possibility for next year. Penn Road from McKenzie to Dutch Settlement need attention.

LFL Cemetery Road - loads of gravel, the slope taken out fill dirt on the side of the driveway and the grader took down weeds.

McKenzie Street by Larry's house has no clue of a resolution.

Another CCRC worker has retired.

Larry said that the bumps on Gards Prairie are gone, but the beaver or muskrat are back on Penn Road.

Denny said that the 2015 CCRC Annual meeting information that he received from Don Huffs paperwork has a full calendar, very organized, project lists with deadlines and pricing and a map. Bob said that is something like what he will present at the next meeting.

Stacey High asked about Warner Road. She said that we can't go back in time. Bob and Larry said that we need 2 mils passed for roads funds and 2 mils for fire/ems passed.

Stacey High said that there was nothing wrong with the Dewey Lake Street and Lawrence Road intersection. Larry said that our township did not pay for the work that was all CCRC's doing.

Larry Davis said that culvert on Penn Road is full again.

Bob Rasmussen said that the resident's need to realize that our township has held back on raising taxes for a long time, and we cannot wait anymore.

Fire/Ambulance

We have received the call logs from Wayne Township Fire Department for August, September and October. Volinia had 4 calls in August, 3 calls in September and 3 calls in October.

Insurance

We need to verify that the tower is covered under the lease contract.

EMC has gone up in personal property 5% and real property 8%. The total renewal is \$6,651 annually with a \$250 deductible.

The property schedules are as follows:

Township Building \$532,063

Personal Property \$24,568

Cemeteries \$3,679 each

The comprehensive liability coverage is \$1,000,000 with a limit of 3 time per year.

Decker Agency has comprehensive liability coverage of \$1,000,000 with no limit on occurrences. The cemeteries have a collective total limit of \$25,000, and offer yearly Grants.

Larry asked what the price difference is. Denny said the difference is \$1,500, but Decker does have a higher deductible.

Denny asked if we want to hash it out now, or wait. Annette said that we need to make a decision now, since our renewal is December 1, 2023. Denny said that he's comfortable staying with EMC for another year, even though it is more money, and working to raise the deductible, the township has had 2 claims in the last 10 years.

Nick said that it's a high deductible. \$900 is \$900 that could be used else where. But there is history with EMC.

Denny Grice made a motion to continue with EMC insurance with increased deductible to \$1000; Annette Peters seconded the motion; Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – No

Williams – No

Davis – No

Peters – Yes

Grice – Yes

The motion failed.

Alex Williams made a motion to accept the Decker Agency Insurance offer; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

Seelye – Yes

Williams – Yes

Davis – Yes

Peters – Yes

Grice – No

The Board approved accepting the Decker Agency's Insurance offer.

Supervisor

The Ambulance Authority will be meeting December 4, 2023 at 5:30pm at Wayne Township Hall, and the meeting is open to anyone. The authority has been working hard, but the ambulance crew is getting worn out.

Camp Matziv – there have been emails with the Attorney and the Assessor. The camp is not on the tax bill. 3/3/23 they were declined to be on the tax rolls. Our Attorney has advised to contact the owner. Kevin will be contacting the owner to get property use and determine the tax.

Chuck Wilson said that as of 10-15-23 there was a Facebook post on the Little Fish Lake page that there are 15 cabins available for rent.

Denny asked how the property is zoned. Alex said that they file as a 501c3 for religious use, we don't need to give special treatment, in the beginning of the year should have been removed from the special tax assessment due to publications.

Nick asked if it's an active 501c3 or just an application.

Steve Kent said that he heard that the camp is making an offer to purchase the property to the East of them.

Larry said that he was told and under the understanding that they were on the tax roll. Our attorney said that she cannot contact the land owner, jus their attorney.

Chris Brooks asked if the Assessor goes and assess the property when they will be on the tax roll. Larry said that he will know more once Kevin gets back to him.

Chuck Wilson asked that the Camp is not on the Tax Roll. Larry said that is correct, he is pushing to them on it. Alex Williams said that they can then dispute going on the tax roll, and it will go in front of the tax tribunal.

Alex asked what and how actions can be taken if they the camp is found to not operating under the zoning. Annette Peters said that Zoning Solutions said that notices are sent, and then Legal actions can be taken in front of the courts.

Beth Brooks said according to Facebook the camp has been offering rentals since 2022. Alex said that the first time the board was notified was during the end of 2022 to the beginning of 2023.

Chuck Wilson said it looks like there have been a couple of weddings. Larry said that he's heard that they hired a bartender from Swiss Valley.

Nick Seelye said that he doesn't think its right for them to apply after the fact, or for us to make amendments to accommodate them, for breaking the rules.

Alex said that it shows bad presentment if we make exemptions.

Board

Denny Grice said that Decker Agency gave a quote for \$750,000 coverage of property/contents for \$5,057 or \$550,000 coverage of property/contents for \$4,910.

Denny Grice made a motion to accept the Decker Agency's \$750,000 coverage with a premium price of \$5,057; Nick Seelye seconded the motion; Larry Davis requested a roll call vote:

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

The board approved the Decker Agency's \$750,000 coverage of property/contents policy.

Alex Williams said that tax bills are going up. Bills will be printed shortly and mailed in the beginning of December. He said that if anyone has anything they want included in the newsletter to let him know. Annette Peters asked to put something looking for

election inspectors in. Jeff Conklin asked that we had a newsletter. He then asked if we can put in that Volunteer Fire Fighters are needed for Wayne Township.

Public Comment

Tyler Augst from the MSU Extension gave out information for the upcoming Van Buren County 2024 Citizen Planner Program. He said that they are winding down for the 2023 winter. The MSU Extension is looking into a Zoning for Short Term Rentals program in Berrien County.

Brenda Blough asked if there were any updates on the High Grade Special Use Permit \$1,000 escrow. The escrow is to cover costs that the township inquires. Alex said that there has been no new activity, but he has to note the special designated monies. It is escrow not funds. Brenda asked if they are still trying to get a permit. Alex said yes. Brenda also wanted to say Thank You for not grading in front of their house.

Adjournment

Larry Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Alex Williams seconded the motion; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Peters
Volinia Township Clerk