

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023 6:00 pm - 7:59 pm

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee Tom Balmes. Board Members Absent: None. Also Present: Ryan Walther, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Asst. Fire Chief Justen Knuttila, Matt Lang, John Carr, Jason Cain, Rex Cole and Duane Newton.

Supervisor Doucette opened our December 11, 2023 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge. Also acknowledged was the recent passing of former Treasurer, business owner and long time resident Ann Clapp, and icon of the community Ruth Carr, who died at 102.

Approval of the Agenda:

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota, to **approve the agenda** as amended. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Moved Doucette/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the November 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **pay bills**, including Board of Review, Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes, Miller, yes.. Motion carried. (General Fund #17030-17041; Fire Fund #9079-9112; Garbage Fund #2127).

Financial Reports:

Clerk Johnson presented the Financial Reports for November, 2023. No budget amendments were recommended. (Reports were emailed for review prior to the meeting).

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer - Balance as of November 30, 2023: General Fund \$273,575.62; Fire Fund \$89,854.23 + CD \$52,534.46; Garbage Fund \$278,035.01; Road Fund \$29,899.77. Winter Tax Bills are out. Treasurer will hold Office Hours on Friday, December 29th from 9:00-5:00. There is an upcoming Celebration of Life at the Hall for Ann Clapp on Thursday, December 28th.

Clerk -Since the November Meeting I have answered several emails, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board Members. We received a Petition for Rezoning for Charlton property that was forwarded to the ZA, Members of the PC, Township Board and Attorney Nordeen. I also discussed it with our Assessor. I am still waiting for a response from Attorney Nordeen on options to meet Mr. Charlton's request. This is on the Agenda to discuss further.

I received numerous information and FOIA requests from Duane Newton, which included his concerns about the response to his Administrative Appeal from ZA and our Public Comment Policy. Work continues with the website designer. We expect to go live by the end of the month.

Work continues on the filing system for all Zoning Compliance Applications and CUP's and scanning to google docs.

Continuing Education with the State for Election Administration is complete and am ordering supplies and preparing for the February 27, 2024 Presidential Primary.

November Financial Reports were reviewed for any needed Budget Amendments and provided the reports to Board Members prior to the meeting. The Amendment for the Public Comment Policy was prepared for consideration. Finalized details with Assessor Fuess regarding his new contract for Assessing Services.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes noted he would need to leave the meeting tonight at 8:00 pm. He attended the Fire Department Meeting, and met on site with a member of the US Forest Service at the ballfield. It was noted that everything appeared complete and that a written document will be forthcoming to confirm. He noted receiving calls from citizens regarding zoning changes, the previous moratorium on vacation rentals, and questions about when the Township will go live again for the meetings.

Trustee Miller noted he received comments about the upcoming CUP Hearings, and had a question about the process for a vacation rental.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette noted she received several phone calls and emails over the past month, and also continues to provide information about garbage carts. Also had questions about the Township going live with the meetings, and received a thank you from the US Fish and Wildlife for cooperation in the Au Train River lamprey control application.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Duane Newton.

Boards/Departments:

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file, she noted that the report does not include spreadsheets, but she will email them to the Board. There is a Planning Commission Meeting/Hearing scheduled for December 14th at 6:00 pm. She continues to scan zoning documents and will go as far back as 2020.

Planning Commission - Member Jake Miller noted that the Planning Commission did not meet in November and the next meeting is the CUP Hearings scheduled for December 14th. A January meeting will be scheduled as the organizational meeting. Zoning Amendments and the Master Plan are on the Agenda for 2024.

Zoning Board of Appeals - The Zoning Board of Appeals will be scheduling an Organizational Meeting for 2024 after the new year.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Fuess was present and provided information to the Board. His monthly report is on file. Cameron noted that the inflation rate increase for 2024 was capped at 5%. He also provided sales studies information and the value increases for residential properties in the Township. A recommendation to proceed with the BS&A Contract when presented next month was noted. Cameron also noted that the State of moving more requirements from the Board of Review, which allows for direct action by the Assessor.

Clerk Johnson noted that the MTA is offering Board of Review training on February 20, 2024, at Northern Michigan University in Marquette. Supervisor Doucette will check if any BOR members are interested in attending.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther present. Provided an update to the Board on recent activities. Noted the truck and plow were dropped off for repair, the ballot box will be installed, and Elcom installed the new repeater on the Au Train Fire Hall.

Supervisor Doucette noted that the LMAS District Health Department has moved the Township to required water testing quarterly.

Fire Department: Report received and is on file. Assistant Chief Knuttila was present. Noted there were 4 calls for the month, Two mutual aid with Onota Township and two car accident responses. As noted the repeater was installed at the Au Train Fire Hall and the Department participated in the annual food drive.

Unfinished Business:

1. Ballfield License Surrender - Trustee Balmes noted the lease was officially surrendered to the USFS and that we are just waiting for the official written documentation.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Clerk Johnson presented correspondence from the Friends of Valley Spur requesting funding support.

2. 2024 Meeting Dates - Clerk Johnson presented proposed 2024 Meeting dates, after discussion and a few amendments, Motion Johnson/seconded Miller to **approve the following Meeting Dates for 2024:** Regular Board Meetings: January 8, February 12, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 17, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, and December 9. Special Meetings: February 19 - Budget Workshop Meeting @5:30 PM and March 11 - Budget Public Hearing as part of the Regular Township Board Meeting. Motion carried.

3. Assessor Contract Review/Approval - Clerk Johnson provided the proposed Assessor Contract Renewal. It would be a 3-Year Contract, starting January 1, 2024, with a 1st Year salary of \$28,334.00. Motion Balmes/seconded Cota, to **approve the Assessor Contract with Greenstone Mapping, LLC, as presented.** Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Doucette, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

4. 911 Sign Replacement - Supervisor Doucette provided information to the Board regarding 911 Sign Replacement with Lang Enterprises, based on the estimate that was provided to Munising Township. It would be approximately \$62,500.00 to replace all the 911 Signs in the Township. This expenditure will be considered during the 2024-2025 Budget Workshop Meeting in February.

5. Public Comment Policy Amendment - Clerk Johnson presented information to the Board regarding an amendment to the Public Comment Policy that includes specific language to be considered a Special Presentation during a Regular Board Meeting. After further discussion, Motion Cota/seconded Johnson to **approve the amendment to the Public Comment Policy,** as presented. Motion carried.

6. Petition to Rezone - Clerk Johnson clarified the Petition to Rezone Application and associated \$1,000.00 fee was received from David Charlton to rezone a parcel located in the Christmas area to Town Development. This parcel, currently zoned R1/R2, is contiguous to another owned parcel, and would accommodate a parking area for a motel development. The application, which was reviewed by Attorney Nordeen, will be forwarded to the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission for consideration.

Public Comment: Comments were received from Duane Newton and John Carr.

Board Member Comments: Additional Comments were shared by Board Members.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Motion Johnson/seconded Miller to **adjourn at 7:59 pm.**

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson