

MINUTES OF THE AU GRES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING November 14th, 2023 ~ 7:00 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE: Supervisor Jim Herzog, Clerk Michael Oxley, Treasurer Patricia Tremble, Jan Bullock and Trustee Penny Kurchak

ATTENDEES: Bill Bullock, Bruce Dancy, Art Gallop, Aretta Gates, Duane Hadley, Kirk Olson, County Commissioner Lisa Salgat, and Perry Tremble. (Jeff Czymbor picked up an agenda packet and left).

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting began at 7:00pm with the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL of AGENDA: Treasurer Patricia Tremble made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Trustee Penny Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Agenda approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kirk Olson gave a presentation on further research he had done on a proposed bike path trail from Manor Road/Green Drive, north across private property to Midshipman Drive/Court Street in Au Gres City. Olson mentioned available grant monies (expiring on January 9th). Clerk Oxley reported on his meeting with Dale Wiltse, Au Gres City manager, who viewed the project as longer term, suggesting applying for monies through Tribal 2% distribution next spring. Olsen gave the board handouts and reported some cost estimate figures of \$8,000 for SSI to survey the multiple properties, and \$265,000 per mile for construction. The board had concerns of whether spending taxpayer dollars on a project in Au Gres City's jurisdiction was a legal expenditure. Olson seems dissatisfied that the city and township seemed to be moving too slowly, especially after all the research work he had done so far.

APPROVAL of the MINUTES: Motion made by Tremble to approve the minutes of the October 10th, 2023 Board of Trustee meeting. Motion supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Minutes approved.

PAYMENT OF BOOK OF BILLS: Motion made by Tremble to approve the October 2023 book of bills. Motion supported by Clerk Michael Oxley. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Read by Treasurer Patricia Tremble. Motion made by Oxley to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Supported by Oxley. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved. Oxley pointed out to the attendees that nearly \$3,000 was earned in interest on CD's over the past month, thanking Treasurer Tremble for her attendance to the funds.

BOARD REPORTS:

AUGRES-SIMS-WHITNEY FIRE AUTHORITY: The meeting held at the Whitney Fire Hall was called to order by Olen Swartz. Thomas Brandimore gave the treasurers report, reviewing the usual monthly bills and Board members signed the checks to pay those bills.

There was brief discussion about hiring someone to clean the Au Gres Fire Hall, ending in the hiring of Dennis Blaszkiewicz (Booth Rd) the same person who cleans the Au Gres Township hall.

There was no report from a member of the fire department. Next meeting to be held on Thursday, November 16th at the Au Gres Fire Hall.

HERITAGE ROUTE AUTHORITY: Trustee Jan Bullock reported that there would be a Christmas Junque Sale at the Omer Courthouse November 17th/18th. The Christmas parade in Standish was Friday the 24th, the day after Thanksgiving. The Santa Train was scheduled for December 2nd from 9:00 to 10:00am.

CEMETERY REPORT: Supervisor Herzog reported that the tree which lost a large branch in the high winds last month would not need to be removed. Dominic Ruiz, cemetery maintenance, was to do some basic clean up before the snow fell and has agreed to stay on as groundskeeper in 2024. Trustee Kurchak had spoken with Barbara Manor about the cemetery records being out of date (3yrs), and suggested she could work with her, helping to bring the up to date. Mr. Sanford drained the water system at the cemetery for the winter, and billed the township for his annual service.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Art Gallop spoke on the building activity in the township over the past month (see attached report). Adding that he spoke with someone wanting to put a manufactured home on the foundation on a North Green Drive parcel (Jessica Rhodes lot). Gallop stressed the 1020sqft minimum footprint per the twp zoning ordinance, also pointing out that this was a seasonal road. He then spoke about the phragmites being sprayed by drone on booth road, paid for by residents. And was looking forward to a controlled burn of the remaining dead plants. Asking if people knew that cattails, or what we see as cattails as also an invasive species. Finishing with reporting on assorted phone calls.

OLD BUSINESS: Herzog stated that the right-of-way properties on either side of the Shenfield 'Extension' were now owned by the Township. Work on making it into a township/county road would have to wait until Spring 2024. But for now the extension is being graded and graveled for the winter. Herzog pointed out that this prep work for the winter season was included in the cost of the project (\$61,550.00).

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Au Gres Township owns 40 acres on the corner southwest of Swenson and Noggle roads. This was the location of the transfer station (i.e, township dump) up until 1986 or so when the state of Michigan DEQ forced its closure (and roadside trash pickup with Waste Management began), Now that a township has to pay taxes on properties which it owns, that are not in the public use, it was decided to sell the property. Oxley presented the Arenac Realty sales agreement. The selling price suggested by John Stanley was set at \$99,500. The board discussed the issue of being transparent about the property being a former dump. Duane Hadley (attorney) chimed into the discussion with his take on possible contamination, and being sued down the road. Other questions arose as well, until the board moved to table the topic for further thought and research to address these issues.
- b. Oxley explained why the BS&A assessing package being proposed for purchase. How the State of Michigan had mandated that parcel property card and tax information be accessible online to the general public. The solution would be to set up a 'Cloud Server' making the assessing information online, something Barbara Jones has been requesting for many months. BS&A quoted a price of \$7025.00 for software, setup and training (1st year). Motion made by Oxley to buy the software/training package as described in BS&A proposal dated October 11, 2023. Motion supported by Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion to purchase is approved.
- c. Arenac County Road Commission work order for Manor road from Hale Road to Davis Road: Herzog presented the possibility of paving Manor road over this 3 mile stretch of road as a way around US-23 should there be an issues. This has been a consideration for many years, usually abandoned due tot he costs involved. A work order was presented by Brad Stafford, engineer at ACRC, which would involve 6 -10 foot deep borings in the Manor road-bed per mile, to get an idea of how involved the base road work would have to be in order to pave it. Cost of the work order for the borings was set at \$5,000. Board members made suggestions for funding of such a large paving project, including Tribal 2% distribution and ask Mike Bowers emergency manager (as a needed alternate route). Motion was made by Bullock to approve the work order. Motion supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved, work order was signed by board members. Herzog to deliver the approved work order to the Road Commission.
- d. Ordinance Enforcement Officer (OEO). Oxley explained that an OEO is one who not only delivers citations to property owners found in violation of township zoning ordinances, but also to appear in court if lack of compliance leaded to a lawsuit. County Sheriff Tim Robbins has already agreed to serve citations if issues arise, but it was not clear on the point of representing the township as an OEO was something which our 'Patrol Office Agreement' with the county would allow. Herzog stated that Robbins had checked with County Sheriff Mosciski, and there was no objections. Oxley motioned to have Officer Robbins be the townships OEO, with compensation to be determined. Motion supported by Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion to designate Robbins as OEO for Au Gres Township is approved (compensation rate to be determined).

e.

Gate wishing to be erected by Jeff Czymbor (and some residents) to close off private property section of Green Drive (approximately from White Street North to Humpback Bridge properties). Oxley explained what Czymbor's intentions were (to protect the private road from 4-wheeler abuse), approximately where the gates would be (showing the board members using a GIS map), and Czymbor's reported concept that if a majority of property owners were for the idea, he could proceed - as it is private property, not a township or county road. Oxley pointed out that this was just to inform the board members of Czymbor's concept, and not to make any decision. Clearly there are many questions. Herzog and Oxley to discuss the issue with the Road Commission, and equalization.

BOARD COMMENT: Kurchak reported that the Michigan legislature voting on bills 5120/5121 had passed. The bills gave energy companies exemption from local zoning rules with respect to wind and solar projects. Thanking all those who had contacted their state representatives on these bills, as the board had urged last month. There is an amendment to the bill, which gives some control, but only so far as state zoning rules apply, not local control.

Bullock reported that Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson has issued a list of candidates which will appear on the February 27th, 2024 presidential primary ballot. A copy of the letter could be sent to anyone interested, and not able to find it themselves on the internet.

Oxley explained the nine days of early voting to the attendees. Also how the absentee ballot application would now have a check box allowing a voter to received any future absentee ballots, without having to fill out an application each election.

Tremble reported that winter taxes bills were currently in the process of being printed, and they would be mailed out during the last week of November. The Winter 2023 Township Newsletter would be included with each tax bill mailed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: TIME – 8:25pm. Motion made by Tremble to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No Nays. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes approved at the regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____

James Herzog, Supervisor _____

Michael Oxley, Clerk _____