

Minutes of
Makanda Township Board of Trustees
November 9, 2021
Makanda Township Fire Station #2
Giant City Road

CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL: Supervisor Sara Lipe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Supervisor Lipe and Trustees Clay Kolar, Debbie Stanley, Fred York, and Clerk Regina Einig. Also present were non-voting Officials: Road Commissioner Ed Hoke and Fire Chief Jimmy Bilderback. Trustee Michael Holub was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS: Dennis Leitner addressed the Board of Trustees concerning an item on the agenda, namely the establishment of tentative levies. From the Supervisors Annual Financial Reports going back to FY2013, he noted that there has been a surplus in the Town Fund between \$20,000 and \$60,000 each year. He recommended that the proposed levy for the Town Fund this year be reduced by \$10,000, i.e., from \$135,000 to \$125,000. He also recommended that the process of determining these Fund Levies include more involvement by the Board of Trustees and the community. See Attachment 5 for his complete statement.

MINUTES: Regina read the minutes of the October 12, 2021, Board of Trustees meeting. Sara corrected the minutes under Approval of Bills by Fund: change “unemployment insurance bills” to “worker compensation bills” and change “IDES” to “Liberty Mutual.” Under the supervisor report, Sara suggested the inclusion of another sentence regarding the changing to payroll responsibilities to Sara: “Sara offered take over the payroll responsibilities prior to the new term but Regina declined the offer.” Regina added the statement: “Regina said that she was unaware at the time that the responsibilities belonged to the Supervisor.” The minutes were approved as corrected.

FUND BALANCES AND REVENUE - see attachment one.

APPROVAL OF BILLS BY FUND:

Township bills: Sara moved that the Board pay the town bills except for Diederich Insurance for Regina’s bond and Liberty Mutual for the workman’s compensation. Clay seconded it and the motion passed unanimously. A decision on workmen’s compensation was tabled until later. (At a later time, it was decided to hold a special meeting on November 23, 2021, to decide the matter.)

About the clerk's bond, Sara recommended that we table it for another month because of issues getting the quotes. Clay moved to do so, and Fred seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department bills: Fred moved, and Clay seconded to pay the Fire Department bills. Motion passed unanimously. Clay moved to pay the Fire Department Capital Fund Bills. Debbie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Road and Bridge bills: There was discussion about paying mileage to Daniel Schall for using his own vehicle. It was suggested that when his contract comes due, it should mention specifically if he does or does not get mileage. Fred moved and Debbie seconded that we pay all the Road and Bridge bills. Motion passed unanimously.

There were no New Bridge or General Assistance bills.

REPORTS:

Fire Department: Jimmy reported that they had two fire calls last month, seven EMS calls, one cancelled en route, and one traffic crash. There were eleven runs. We have seventeen firefighters.

Highway Commissioner: Ed reported that he:

1. Leased a storage shed from Money Storage for tractor storage.
2. Began the last mow of roadsides for the season.
3. Bought a Wood's heavy duty 3-way hydraulic 8 ft. blade for tractor, \$2,002.00
4. Set up a meeting on November 16 7 p.m. at Firehouse number two with the residents of Wagon Wheel Road to discuss improvements and safety features to the road.
5. Installed "Stop" and "Stop Ahead" signs on School House Road at its intersection with Springer Ridge Road.
6. Attended the Township Highway Commissioners of Illinois training at the Doubletree Inn in Bloomington November 5, 2021.

CWPP. Forest Service Cohesive Strategy Grant application period is open, for which the township may be eligible. Clay asked about how eligibility is determined, and Sara said that David Allen is working on that. Sara said that we would have information by the next meeting.

Supervisor: Sara reported that:

1. First Southern Bank informed her that our accounts are collateralized, meaning they have extra insurance for when our accounts exceed \$250k FDIC insurance. No further accounts need to be moved.
2. Transferred \$60,000 from CD to Fire Protection Capital Fund checking account; reinvested the rest.

3. Met with Jimmy, then Clay regarding options for Regina's work.
4. Applied for township credit card because of the difficulty of meeting with Regina for every check and to provide timely help for General Assistance applicants. There is no annual fee.
5. Distributed PTELL worksheets to trustees so they could be thinking about levies.
6. Communicated with Diederich Insurance, Oliver Insurance, and Freedom Brokers regarding bonding a second signer and workers compensation insurance.
7. Communicated with Oliver Insurance regarding the Frontier bill.
8. Communicated with Diederich Insurance regarding the firefighter accident.
9. Contacted Illinois Local Records Disposal group to dispose of payroll records dating back to 1991.
10. Received audit from Sarah Gibbens. (Note: copies were distributed to the Board of Trustees and others attending the meeting.)
11. Will be attending TOI virtual conference next week.

Assessor: no report.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Debbie moved to have the board recognize the General Assistance committee as a STANDING committee. Clay seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
2. See Attachment 3 for Debbie's General Assistance report.
3. See attachment four for Michael's Broadband report.
4. Approval of revised budgets. There are no revisions to the New Bridge budget and the Road and Bridge budget must be tabled until later. That leaves the Town budget to vote on. Clay moved to approve the revised Town budget and Debbie seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Regarding the clerk bonding: take no action with Fred's bonding until things are clarified with Regina's bond.
6. Township official address and office location for elected township officials. Clay stated that the motion passed at last month's meeting will be moving forward as approved. Discussion followed. Eventually Clay agreed to reconsider the use of the table and one desk in station number one for a township office. He strongly requested an answer to the question of why John Dickson is not willing to share the office at station number two. The discussion ended with an agreement that Clay, Jimmy, and others would reconsider the last proposal.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Parliamentary procedure. Clay asked that, beginning at the next meeting, the township citizens should introduce themselves and state their position clearly and briefly on agenda items.
2. Tentative levies. Sara distributed the proposed levies to the board. See attachment two for the full information.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Jill Adams asked if the proposed levies will be available to the public. Sara said the proposed levies could be posted on the website. Clay said that the public can comment verbally or in writing on the proposed levies. Clay moved, and Fred seconded, to post the tentative levies to the website. Town fund - \$135,000. Fire Protection - \$104,000. Road and Bridge - \$135,000. New Bridge - \$53,000. General Assistance – 0. Motion was approved unanimously.

Josh Lipe asked if the motion passed last month to move the township office into the back bedroom will go forward. There has been a new proposal, so is the former motion set to go into effect this Friday? Clay moved to table the decision until the next meeting. Fred seconded it. Discussion followed. Clay amended his motion to postpone the execution of that order until the Friday after the next meeting if no accommodation can be reached. The motion passed with the following votes: Trustees Kolar and York voted yes. Trustee Stanley voted no. Supervisor Lipe voted yes. Motion passed.

Clay expressed appreciation for all the citizens present who were wearing masks.

Josh Lipe announced that the plaque honoring Brian Pierce has arrived and will be hung in the fire station to honor him now and in the future. There are also Brian Pierce challenge coins available for \$10 as a fund raiser for the training of firefighters.

ADJOURNMENT: Clay moved, and Sara seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Regina Einig, Clerk

Attachment 1 – Fund Balances

Makanda Township Fund Balances as of 11/9/21	Receipts since 10/12/21	Remaining Budget
Fire Protection	80,019.88	19,451.42
Fire Protection Capital Fund	168,530.78	180.63
General Assistance	95,962.53	3.81
New Bridge	29,425.44	9,719.20
Road & Bridge	61,334.35	22,469.50
Town	124,948.52	25,166.85
Brian R Pierce Jr 517 Memorial Fu	670.01	100.00
	<u>560,891.51</u>	<u>77,091.41</u>

Additional Expenses

Fire Protection		1,248.74
Egyptian Electric	Station #2	82.95
Ameren Illinois	Station #1	240.71
Ameren Illinois	Station #2	48.83
South Highway Water District	Station #1	22.25
South Highway Water District	Station #2	22.25
Mediacom	Station #1 internet & phor	176.76
Mediacom	Station #2 internet	60.99
Liberty Mutual	workers compensation ins	594.00

Town		10,790.69
Payroll	see agenda	
Country Life Assurance	Jimmy's IRA	200.00
Verizon	Assessor monthly service	25.02
Diederich Insurance	Clerk bond for second sig	1,925.00
Liberty Mutual	workers compensation ins	3,633.00
Staples	flash drive	7.67
Sarah Gibbens	FY21 audit	5,000.00

Assessor Expenses 2021		624.71
Verizon	Assessor monthly service	250.20
John Dickson	mileage & supply reimbur	374.51

Attachment 2 – Levy information

Trustees,

Levies must be established by the end of the calendar year. The tentative levy will be set at November meeting and finalized at the December meeting. Since setting levies can be a confusing process, the following background and instructions are provided by the Jackson County Clerk's office.

- Jackson County is a tax capped county. This means that the levy can only increase by the amount of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (or 5%, whichever is lower) plus new properties at the full tax rate.
- If the Makanda Township levies are set higher than legally allowed, it's no problem according to the Clerk's office. They will reduce any levy that is above the legal limit so that the Township is in compliance with Illinois PTELL law.
- A recommendation is to establish the levies to cover the cost of inflation and that new properties are contributing their share of property taxes.
- Levying too little would mean the roads, fire dept., etc., might feel pinched on operating expenses and that future levies are constrained further because the Township didn't raise the levy enough to cover inflation and new properties.
- The Clerk's office suggested that we start with the **Jackson County Total Extension** figure and multiply it by 1.05, then adjust upward for new property. Using that suggestion and rounding up, the tentative levies could be:

Town \$135,000
Fire Protection \$104,000
Road & Bridge \$135,000
New Bridge \$53,000
General Assistance - \$0

These figures are merely a starting point for discussion.

Terms & Definitions

Aggregate Ext. Base – highest extension figure from three previous years

1+Limit – Consumer Price Index for 2020; for 2021 the CPI will be 1.4

Current EAV – Estimated Assessed Valuation from 2020

New Property is still being determined. John Dickson turned in new property totaling EAV of \$238,738 but the Board of Review may make changes.

State Multiplier – established by State of Illinois. Multiplier for 2021 is tentatively 1.0158. Won't be final until after Board of Review completes their work and submits figures to State. State then finalizes multiplier.

Attachment 3 – General Assistance Report

Makanda General Assistance Committee Wednesday 10/27/2021

Present: Debbie Stanley, Julieta Leitner, Tammy Pierce, Jill Adams, Sara Lipe

Discussion with Sara about how GA currently works:

People find out GA exists by Google, word of mouth.

People contact Sara by calling her. If they want an application, Sara meets them in a mutually agreed upon public place, often Fire Station 1.

Sara usually interviews people interested in GA at Fire Station 1. Others are in the building but not in the room where she is interviewing.

Sara often refers people to other agencies that may be able to help, but does not maintain a master list of such agencies

There are usually one or two applications a year, but there have been none during Covid. She currently has one application that she is reviewing.

No one during Sara's tenure has ever appealed a denial of GA

If someone qualifies, they get a flat rate of \$319 a month. That amount is set by DHS.

All GA records are kept 7 years in a locked filing cabinet in Sara's house.

People are not eligible for GA if there are minor children in the household—TANF and other aid is available. If someone has used lifetime TANF aid, ineligible for GA

Applicant is ineligible if applicant has a felony drug conviction.

Sara said the committee could help most by getting the word out about the availability of GA.

We agreed to help get the word out. Tammy agreed to create a flyer with basic info about GA. Distribution sites include: Makanda Boardwalk, Dollar General, Makanda Post Office, Churches in Makanda (Boskeydell Baptist, South County Line Christian Church, Union Hill Christian Church, Unity Baptist Church, Makanda Baptist Church). There may be other social service agencies in the county we ought to provide info to (Carbondale library social work intern, for example)

We discussed the separate Emergency Assistance Program which Makanda currently doesn't have. We need to investigate the Emergency Assistance Program to see if Makanda should adopt it. We will contact other Jackson County Townships to see whether they have Emergency Assistance Programs or other auxiliary programs, funded by donations or other funds.

Debbie will email us contact info for the supervisors of other Jackson County Townships and assign which ones we should each call to see if they have emergency assistance or other programs.

Next meeting will be 11/3/21.

Makanda Township GA Committee 11/4/2021

Present: Julieta Leitner, Debbie Stanley, Jill Adams, Tammy Pierce, Sara Lipe

We reviewed the flyer Tammy had created and suggested edits. She said she would send the edited flyer to us by email.

Julieta agreed to translate the flyer into Spanish once final edits are made.

We discussed that in addition to places mentioned at last meeting, we should provide the flyer to Makanda landlords. Tammy said she would give it to the landlords she knows. She will also provide it to Dollar General and the four churches in Makanda other than Boskeydell Baptist. Sara will distribute it to Boskeydell Baptist. Debbie will place the flyer at the Post Office and Makanda Boardwalk.

We discussed whether there should be a place to physically pick up applications for GA but did not determine a good place for pick up.

Debbie reported on the conversation she had with Murphysboro Township personnel. They provide transitional assistance of \$100 a month to people waiting for an SSI or SSDI determination.

Murphysboro also has a workfare program for people on GA. Workfare can include classes that help people get job skills or personal health skills. A job fare worker might be a flagger on a Township road project or work cleaning Township offices. GA funds would be spent on the cleaning supplies for such work.

We agreed to further explore what kinds of classes or work might count in a workfare program.

Other possibilities for the Township: clothes closet for work clothes. Sara shared a story of how she helped someone acquire interview clothes from the Boskeydell Baptist yard sale supply.

Tammy agreed to check whether DMV had resources for people who don't have the means to pay for a state ID or driver's license.

We agreed to continue to survey other Jackson County Township supervisors. We are to ask the following questions:

1. Does your Township have an Emergency Assistance Program in addition to General Assistance?
2. How many GA applicants do you have a month? How many recipients do you have a month?
3. Do you have a workfare program?
4. How do you get the word out about the availability of GA?
5. Do you have any other supplemental programs besides GA such as a clothes closet, food pantry or other kinds of assistance to the indigent? What are they and how are they funded?

No future meetings were scheduled. We will finalize flyer by email and will share the information we gather about other Townships by email.

Attachment 4 – Broadband Report

The broadband committee has devoted substantial time to researching both funding opportunities and success stories from other jurisdictions in obtaining assistance from both state and federal resources. There are numerous approaches to making broadband service both more readily available and more affordable. This ranges from grants to install service where it doesn't currently exist and upgrade current service that is inadequate to subsidies for both the cost of the service and the necessary equipment to access it. We are still evaluating what is the best fit for our township's situation. Although there have been a few townships that have succeeded in doing so, they have mostly been more heavily populated. Cunningham Township in Champaign County is a prime example.

Most of the success stories have taken place at the county level or **even** through a consortium of counties. We have been corresponding with Julie Peterson of the Jackson County Board on this subject. Julie is also the County's representative on the Greater Egypt Planning Commission, a five-county association. We are exploring with her the most effective use of resources to pull together a grant application that would provide funds for upgrading internet service that would include Makanda Township. She reports that there has been discussion at that level about broadband. In addition, we are talking to Board member John Randleman on this subject. We are prepared to throw our time and whatever knowledge we can toward whichever entity decides to pursue the money necessary to accomplish this effort.

As a representative for the Township's broadband committee, Jim Renshaw attended the September meeting of the Jackson County Board. It was announced at the board meeting that a couple of substantial grants for infrastructure (\$19 million) had been secured, but nothing that included broadband. Unfortunately, the Board went into executive session before there was an opportunity to ask for action in this area. So, we are still in the correspondence stage currently. In short, this is a work in progress.

Attachment 5 – Dennis Leitner's statement

My name is Dennis Leitner. I'm a citizen of Makanda Township. I'd like permission to speak for no more than 3 minutes on an item on tonight's agenda – namely, New Business item #2 Tentative Levies.

I've looked at the Supervisor's Statement of Financial Affairs for the Fiscal Years 2013 to 2021. In those 9 years, a total of \$543,000 has been declared surplus and transferred: \$383,000 transferred FROM Town Fund and \$160,000 transferred FROM Fire Protection; \$60,000 transferred TO General Assistance, \$143,000 transferred TO Roads and Bridges and \$340,000 transferred TO Fire Protection Capital Fund.

In summary, in the past 9 years there has an annual surplus in the Town Fund of between \$20,000 and \$60,000 and an annual surplus in the Fire Protection Fund of \$20,000. The process of levying the Makanda Township taxpayers is overtaxing us resulting in surpluses of between \$40,000 and \$80,000 each year.

During your report, I'd like you to address a few questions. Do you consult with others (outside the Township meetings) to determine the proposed levies? For example, do you consult with the Fire Chief about the levy for Fire Protection? Do you consult with the Highway Commissioner about the levy for Road and Bridges and New Bridges? Do you consult with Clerk about the Town Fund levy?

It seems that the process to determine the levies needs to be reconsidered. The current process recommends the maximum possible levy OR MORE than the maximum possible levy, knowing that Jackson County will reduce the levy to the maximum.

I suggest that you consult with others when revising the "your starting point" levy recommendations DOWNWARD. For example, I'd like to see the following:

1. A committee of four people working on the Town Fund Levy: You, Regina, a board member, and a member of the community picked by the board.
2. A committee of four people working on the Fire Protection Levy: You, Jimmy, and member of the board and a member of the community (picked by the board not connected to the Fire Department).
3. A committee of three people working on the General Assistance Levy: You, Debbie and a member of the community picked by the board.
4. A committee of four people working on the Road and Bridge and New Bridge levies: You, Ed, a member of the board and a member of the community picked by the board.

I believe this revised process will involve community input and provide for more transparency. It will reduce the Makanda Township portion of the real estate taxes we pay. I also think it can be completed by the end of December deadline.

