

MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES

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TYPE OF MEETING HELD: Regular

LASALLE COUNTY,

SS.

TIME MEETING BEGAN: 5:00pm

TOWN of BRUCE

TIME MEETING ENDED: 6:21pm

The November 9, 2016 meeting of the Bruce Township Board of Trustees opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Trustee Randy Baumrucker was absent from the meeting. Highway Commissioner John M. Barton and Assessor Mary Sullivan were in attendance. The meeting was conducted by Mr. Henry Araujo as chairman and recorded by Clerk Sheryl Sedlock.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING'S MINUTES:

The first order of business was to read and approve the minutes from the October 12, 2016 Regular Meeting.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Steve Biroshchik

2nd BY: Trustee Jerry Christensen

That the minutes of the October 12, 2016 Regular Meeting be approved. No further discussion was required.

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments raised at the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT/APPROVAL OF BILLS

A summary of the bills was distributed for review. Trustee Biroshchik asked for clarification on the line item for Wholesale Direct, Inc. for \$329.00. Highway Commissioner Barton indicated that he had purchased strobe lights for his equipment from Wholesale Direct, Inc. because he could get a better price.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen

2nd BY: Trustee Biroshchik

That the bills be allowed and paid.

No further discussion was required. Clerk Sedlock took the roll call vote:

Trustee Bob Harrison: Aye

Trustee Jerry Christensen: Aye

Trustee Randy Baumrucker: Absent

Trustee Steve Biroshchik: Aye

Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SUPERVISOR'S:

Supervisor Araujo reported that he had followed up on the request of Trustee Biroshchik to check on whether the use of the General Assistance (GA) Truck by the Assessor's Office was allowed. Supervisor Araujo indicated that he had called the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI) Office in Springfield and been told that the use of the GA Truck by the Assessor's Office is acceptable if there is an Inter-governmental Agreement in place between the GA Administrator and the other governmental bodies. Supervisor Araujo distributed a copy of the agreement which had been drawn up as indicated. Trustee Biroshchik respectfully disagreed with this and indicated that he had also contacted TOI and was told that GA equipment, brought with GA funds, are to only be used for GA related work. He indicated that he felt the board should get a legal opinion on the matter to protect the township. There was a brief discussion on the topic. Assessor Sullivan suggested taking advantage of the upcoming TOI Conference where there would be attorney's available who understand township law to get the answer. Both Supervisor Araujo and Trustee Biroshchik agreed to investigate the matter further with attorneys during the upcoming TOI Conference. Trustee Biroshchik asked whether Supervisor Araujo has a written policy and procedures for the management of the

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GA programs. Supervisor Araujo responded that he follows the policies and procedures in the GA Handbook. Trustee Biroshchik asked to see a copy of the written procedures for Bruce Township and was told that he would be given a copy.

There was a brief discussion on the recently received notice from the City of Streator of Annexation of 9 properties in Bruce Township including units of Williamsburg Terrace on Eastwood Avenue. Highway Commissioner Barton indicated that the map that was enclosed with the notice seemed to indicate that the property that the Bruce Township Highway Commissioner's Shop is located on is already a part of the City of Streator. He was unaware of this and asked if the Board members remembered when the property was annexed. There was a brief discussion with no one remembering if/when the annexation occurred. Assessor Sullivan agreed to follow up with the City of Streator and La Salle County to verify whether the property was ever annexed and, if so, when.

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER'S:

Highway Commissioner Barton reported that as a follow up to the work to stabilize the embankment on Marilla Park Road that was completed recently, the guard rail along that portion of road is scheduled to be installed on November 10, 2016. He shared that the decision was made to use 9 foot posts for the guard rail so they would be set deeper than is normally warranted for a guard rail due to the location of the guard rail along the embankment. He also informed that board that he had a conversation with the La Salle County Highway Department Superintendent of Roads concerning that portion of Marilla Park Road and the portion of Otter Creek Road including the bridge that border the east end of Marilla Park. The question was raised whether the roads and bridge abutting Marilla Park are the responsibility of Bruce Township to maintain. According to the Superintendent of Roads, generally when property is annexed, the roads that abut the property are also annexed. Given this, there is reason to believe that Marilla Park Road and the portion of Otter Creek Road to the east of Marilla Park would be the City of Streator's responsibility to maintain. Following this discussion, Highway Commissioner Barton contacted the township's attorney and asked him to investigate whether Bruce Township is responsible for maintain the roads and bridge in question. He has also contacted City Engineer Jeremy Palm suggesting that the \$10,000.00 cost of installing the guard rail may be the responsibility of the City of Streator. For public safety reasons, he has decided to proceed with the installation of the guard rail even though there is a question on who is responsible for maintaining the road. If the City of Streator is proven to be legally responsible for the maintenance of the road, the Highway Commissioner will look into the possibility of being reimbursed by the City of Streator for the cost of the guard rail. When asked about the costs for the other work recently done on Marilla Park Road to reinforce the embankment, Highway Commissioner Barton noted that the City of Streator had contributed to the cost of that work and that it was done before the question of responsibility was raised. Therefore, he didn't feel it should be part of the reimbursement request. He noted that Jeremy Palm had asked that a letter be sent to him documenting this matter. The board agreed that Highway Commissioner Barton should have the township attorney draft and send the letter to City Engineer Jeremy Palm.

ASSESSOR'S:

Assessor Sullivan reported that her office is still out doing follow up on the cases filed with the Board of Review including measuring and taking pictures.

TRUSTEE'S:

No reports were offered.

OTHER:

There were no other reports presented.

REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

HEALTH BOARD:

Supervisor Araujo reported that the letters mailed to the owners of 214 W. 2nd Street and 234 W. 2nd Street, back in September, have both been returned "Return to Sender Not Deliverable as Addressed Unable to Forward". There was a discussion on what the next steps should be with regard to these properties given that the Health Board has been unable to notify the owners of the concerns related to the condition of their

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properties. It was noted that before any further action can be taken the board will need to understand the procedures, liabilities and legalities associated with a potential clean up of the properties and placing liens on the properties to cover the costs. It was also noted that the township does not have the proper equipment or sufficient personnel to conduct the required clean up. A third party would need to be hired to complete the cleanup. Supervisor Araujo stated that after the property has been initially cleaned up the township has the equipment to maintain it, if necessary.

OLD BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo reminded the board that Trustee Biroshchik had proposed a 10% reduction across the board in the draft version of the Township and Road and Bridge Levies distributed at the October 12, 2016 Regular Meeting. He then distributed a revised version of the draft Township Levy which included a \$90,000.00 reduction. He noted that it was hard to reduce the Levy across the board as requested so the majority of the reductions were made to the General Assistance portion of the Levy. He explained his reasoning for this approach being that funds can always be transferred from the Town Fund to General Assistance, if needed. However, the opposite is not true. Funds cannot be transferred from General Assistance to the Town Fund to cover a short fall. The discussion then turned to the Road and Bridge Levy. Supervisor Araujo agreed with Highway Commissioner Barton that the Levy for the Road and Bridge should remain as drafted with a 4.9% increase over last year. He reminded the board that not levying at this rate could cost the Township county and state support if a major road or bridge issues were to arise during the year. Trustee Christensen summarized the levy percentages as having a reduction of approximately 16.5% in the Town Fund Levy and having an increase of approximately 4.9% in the Road and Bridge Levy which results in a reduction of approximately 12.5% in the overall Township levies from last year. Trustee Biroshchik asked what the tax rate will be for the coming year given this levy proposal. Supervisor Araujo did not have the exact tax rate that residents would see on their tax bills but agreed to get that number for the board by the next meeting. There was a brief discussion on when the board needed to complete the process of setting the Levies and it was noted that December 7, 2016 is the deadline for determining whether a Truth in Taxation Hearing is necessary based on the proposed levy. The board agreed to finalize the levies next month and approve them at the December 14, 2016 Regular Meeting. It was noted that the last date to approve the Levies is December 27, 2016.

Trustee Biroshchik asked to revisit the topic of removing the crown and widening the 2 miles section of Richard's Road which has been discussed in previous meetings. He feels the road is too narrow in its current condition. Highway Commissioner Barton reminded Trustee Biroshchik and the board that this concern was investigated by then Highway Commissioner Carl Barton a few years back. Supervisor Araujo recalled that Highway Commissioner Carl Barton spoke with the state and county engineers and determined that the road was within the state standards. Highway Commissioner Barton recalled that Highway Commissioner Carl Barton also spoke with the Superintendent of Highways and that everyone was in agreement that the road is in good shape. Trustee Biroshchik acknowledged that the road is in good shape but asked if there was any documentation that could be reviewed concerning the findings of the investigation. Supervisor Araujo indicated that Highway Commissioner Carl Barton's reports would be a part of the Meeting Minutes from that timeframe. Trustee Biroshchik noted that the road gets a lot of use from farmers and there are 2 nice businesses that are accessed from that road. He requested Highway Commissioner Barton consider getting an estimate of what it would cost to widen the 2 mile stretch of road.

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo acknowledged the email received from Trustee Biroshchik concerning the requirement that all Townships adopt an Ordinance for Travel, Meal and Lodging Expense Reimbursement by January 1, 2017. He distributed a template for such an ordinance downloaded from the Township Officials of Illinois website. There was a discussion on things the board should consider when reviewing the template. Several examples of possible expenses associated with the annual TOI Conference were given. Specific focus was paid to Section III which will need to be modified to reflect what rates will be allowed for specific expenses. Assessor Sullivan distributed copies of the Reimbursement Schedule of the Governor's Travel Control Board for the board to consider. Supervisor Araujo asked the board to consider what specifics they would like to see added to the ordinance template to meet the townships needs, come prepared to discuss it and adopted it at the December 14, 2016 Regular Meeting.

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As a follow up to the concern stated at the November 9, 2016 Regular Meeting that unclear or inaccurate information about Bruce Township was being posted on private facebook pages, the board discussed what information should be placed on the Bruce Township website and facebook page to ensure the correct information was being made available to the public. Clerk Sedlock reviewed what was currently posted on the website and indicated that the board is in control of what information is to be placed there. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that in addition to what is currently posted the following three items would be posted going forward:

- All Meeting Agendas
- Approved Resolutions for Township Officials Salaries with a note concerning benefits
- Approved Ordinances for Town Fund and Road and Bridge Levies

Trustee Biroschik, as a follow up to the approved Resolution for the Township Officials Salaries for the Term to begin in May 2017, asked for clarification that the Trustee's are no longer being paid per diem. He believes being paid a salary means there is no longer a penalty for the Trustees having unexcused absences from meetings. There was a brief discussion on the topic with Supervisor Araujo explaining that the Trustees have always been paid a salary but that there was a policy put in place to discourage unexcused absences from meetings. It was noted that this has been a long standing policy which was documented in the meeting minutes when it was adopted. Trustee Christensen also stated that there is a provision in The Township Officials of Illinois Laws & Duties Handbook concerning unexcused absences. It was noted by Trustee Biroschik that there is no documented policy concerning withholding a Trustee's monthly pay check for unexcused absences from 3 board meetings. Supervisor Araujo agreed to draft a written policy concerning the penalties for unexcused absences from the board meetings for the board to review at the December 14, 2016 Regular Meeting.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Biroschik
That the meeting be adjourned.

2nd BY: Trustee Harrison

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

Bruce Township
216 N. Sterling St.
Streator, IL 61364

