

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: 6:42pm

The December 14, 2016 meeting of the Bruce Township Board of Trustees opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. 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 November 9, 2016 Regular Meeting. Trustee Jerry Christensen noted that there was a typographical error on the second page in the Highway Commissioner's Report. The word "posted" should be "posts".

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Jerry Christensen

2nd BY: Trustee Bob Harrison

That the minutes of the November 9, 2016 Regular Meeting be approved with the correction of the typographical error stated above.

No further discussion was required.

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. David Cooke stated he is a 30 year resident of Streator and currently a resident of Bruce Township. He addressed the board stating he had two concerns he wanted to discuss with them. The first was an objection to the recently adopted Township Officials Salaries, specifically as it pertains to the Trustees salaries. He stated that when he was a Trustee for Eagle Township 5 or 6 years ago, the Trustees were paid a per-diem when they attended meetings. He also objected to the idea that the Trustees were ever given an insurance benefit. A brief discussion on the Trustee's duties and the amount of time the Trustee's spend on those duties followed. Mr. Cooke expressed his belief that the salaries are too high given what he, as a tax payer, expects of the Trustees and what the Illinois State Statues require of the Trustees. A brief discussion followed where the duties of the officials were reviewed. Trustee Christensen responded that, as a Trustee, he did more than attend meetings. Trustees are trustees all year and there is a certain level of liability associated with the office. He noted that the duties included preparation for the meetings by reviewing documents, as well as, responding to residents calls with concerns and/or complaints. Mr. Cooke stated that he believed the Trustees should never attempt to address a resident's concerns/complaints but rather should direct residents to either the Supervisor or the Highway Commissioner who were already being compensated for that responsibility. He felt the Trustees biggest responsibility was looking out for the Tax Payers. Trustee Baumrucker asked Mr. Cooke how far his research on salaries went and whether he had compared Bruce Township to other townships of similar size up by Joliet, Kankakee or the collar counties. Mr. Cooke responded that he had not compared the salaries to those townships specifically.

The second issue Mr. Cooke wanted to address was the use of General Assistance (GA) Funds for non-GA related purposes. Mr. Cooke said he looked up on the internet to see what can be done with GA funds. Based on what he found, he felt that the use of trucks to pick up food to be given to the Salvation Army did not qualify as GA. He then asked questions concerning the number of GA clients on average are supported by GA in Bruce Township, compared that to the March 31, 2016 township document that stated there was \$12,900.00 in GA expenses and \$82,000.00 in GA reserve at that time and compared that to what was in the original levy proposal noting that in his opinion the levy proposal was too high. Supervisor Araujo noted that the current proposal for the levy was greatly reduced from the version Mr. Cooke was referencing. Mr. Cooke specifically asked about line items in the levy for Capital Outlay and Contractual Services to which Supervisor Araujo responded. Mr. Cooke noted that equipment purchased with GA-funds must stay within the guidelines of how they are levied. He felt the equipment should never have been used for non-GA related work activities such as clearing snow from the Bruce Township property. He felt the

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Highway Commissioner was responsible for that work and there were cheaper ways of doing it than purchasing a truck. Trustee Christensen noted the original reason for purchasing the size truck was to transport GA clients to perform work fare activities. Supervisor Araujo stated that he thought using GA equipment to help the community was an acceptable use of the equipment but perhaps he was wrong in his understanding. The board then went into a discussion on how to resolve the situation where the trucks and equipment were being used for non-GA township business. Supervisor Araujo noted that he had obtained quotes for the value of the trucks and had planned to present a proposal on addressing this issue during the agenda topic entitled "Equipment" under the New Business section of this meeting. Mr. Cooke cautioned the board that there may be legal penalties associated with violation of State Statutes. A brief discussion concerning the value of the trucks, what was paid for the trucks and the possible option of selling the trucks to the Bruce Township Town Fund via an inter-governmental agreement followed. A brief discussion on how the truck would be used if it was purchased by the Town Fund followed with concerns expressed by Trustee Biroschik that it not be used for charitable activities. Trustee Biroschik then suggested postponing any further discussion on this topic until an attorney versed in Township Law, such as Ancel and Glink, could be consulted. He noted that he had already contacted the Illinois States Attorney's offices concerning possible violations of the statute 305ilcs to find out legally whether this issue needed to be reported to them and was waiting on a call back.

TREASURER'S REPORT/APPROVAL OF BILLS

A summary of the bills was distributed for review. It was noted by Trustee Christensen that the Bruce Township Road and Bridge Vendor Balance Report was from February 28, 2015. Supervisor Araujo will follow up to ensure the correct report is made available to the board. Trustee Biroschik asked for an explanation of the line item in the Bruce Township Town Fund, Vendor Balance Report for \$270.00 to Connecting Point Computer. Assessor Sullivan reported that Connecting Point Computer is the vendor used to purchase computer equipment. The \$270.00 bill was for the replacement of 2 broken monitors in her office.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Randy Baumrucker 2nd BY: Trustee Christensen
That the bills for the December 2016 reports 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: Aye
Trustee Steve Biroschik: Aye
Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SUPERVISOR'S:

Supervisor Araujo indicated that he had nothing to report.

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER'S:

Highway Commissioner Barton reported that he has had the trucks out a few times so far this winter season and everything seems to be working fine. He reported that he has followed up on the issue raised at the November 9th meeting concerning the width of 2 miles of Richard's Road. He has a copy of the Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2012 where then Highway Commissioner Carl Barton had reported an estimate to widen that stretch of road could cost approximately \$500,000.00 because of the bridge and culverts impacted. Highway Commissioner Barton indicated that in the spring he may look into whether he could put a lip of black top on the sides of the road which were built up back in 2012. He would like to run it by the Superintendent of Highways before committing to such a plan. He also stated that a better use for that money, in his opinion, would be to widen the stretch of Skell Gas Road maintained by the township. He noted that Skell Gas Road has a higher volume of traffic than Richard's Road. Trustee Biroschik asked whether both projects could be accomplished if the Township could transfer funds from the Town Fund reserves to the Road and Bridge Fund. Supervisor Araujo indicated that it was his understanding that any

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funds transferred to the Road and Bridge Fund from the Town Fund would have to be a loan and would have to be repaid. Supervisor Araujo agreed to check with the township lawyer on this point, as well.

ASSESSOR'S:

Assessor Sullivan did not have anything she wished to report to the board.

TRUSTEE'S:

No reports were offered.

OTHER:

There were no other reports presented.

REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

HEALTH BOARD:

Supervisor Araujo reported that he did some additional checking on the possible location of the property owner for 234 W. 2nd Street. He believes the individual may be incarcerated and that may be why our attempts to reach him via US mail have failed. There was a brief discussion on what other option the board has with regards to getting this property cleaned up. It was suggested that Supervisor Araujo contact the Township's attorney and inquire about the legal process to be followed to clean up the property.

OLD BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo asked the board if they had time to review the proposed Ordinance No. 2017A – Tax Levy Ordinance Township that had been distributed at the November 11, 2016 Regular Board Meeting. He noted that the levy had an overall reduction of \$90,000.00 from the first version which was distributed at the September 14, 2016 Regular Board Meeting. He explained that the cut was actually larger than the across the board 10% cut proposed by Trustee Biroshchik which would have cut approximately \$50,000.00. He indicated that he was not able to make a 10% reduction across the board as suggested by Trustee Biroshchik as there are some line items that could not be reduced. He gave the example of the Assessor Personnel line item which could not be reduced and still allow the Assessor to increase the hours worked by her staff as requested by Trustee Biroshchik in a previous board meeting. Trustee Christensen offered a second example as the Social Security line item which could not be reduced when salaries are known to be increasing. Trustee Biroshchik reminded the board that he had voted against the salary increases.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen

2nd BY: Trustee Harrison

To approve the entitled *Ordinance 2017A – Tax Levy Ordinance Township* for Bruce Township with a Total Taxes Levied of \$470,250.00.

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

Trustee Bob Harrison: Aye

Trustee Jerry Christensen: Aye

Trustee Randy Baumrucker: Aye

Trustee Steve Biroshchik: Nay - stating he felt we could do more

Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 1

Motion: Carried

Supervisor Araujo asked the board if they had time to review the proposed Ordinance No. 2017B – Tax Levy Ordinance Road District that had been distributed at the September 14, 2016 Regular Board Meeting. He noted that no changes had been made to the original proposal. Supervisor Araujo and Highway Commissioner Barton explained that we need to levy as proposed to ensure that if we ever need state or federal aid for road or bridge repair we can demonstrate that we had been levying the proper amount in order to qualify.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Biroshchik

2nd BY: Trustee Baumrucker

To approve the entitled *Ordinance 2017B – Tax Levy Ordinance Road District* for Bruce Township with a Total Taxes Levied of \$259,900.00.

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

Trustee Bob Harrison: Aye
Trustee Jerry Christensen: Aye
Trustee Randy Baumrucker: Aye
Trustee Steve Biroshik: Aye
Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 5 Nay's: 0 Motion: Carried

Clerk Sedlock noted that the Levies had November instead of December as the approval month. So, both documents will need that minor revision made before they can be signed and submitted.

Supervisor Araujo distributed a draft of the *Ordinance No. 2017C – An Ordinance Establishing the Reimbursement of all Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses of Officers and Employees in the Township of Bruce, Illinois*. This was a slightly modified version from that distributed in the November 9, 2016 Regular Board Meeting. A discussion followed on the portions of the ordinance which required a choice be made of options or additional details were warranted. The following additions/changes to the draft were identified:

1. Section II, paragraph (1), sub item c., is not needed and shall be removed
2. Section II, paragraph (2), sub item c., is not needed and shall be removed
3. Section III, paragraph (1) shall be replaced by:
 - (1) Unless otherwise excepted herein, the maximum allowable reimbursement for an employee or officer of the Township shall be as followed when accompanied by receipts:
 - a. Mileage – current year's Federal Government Mileage Rates
 - b. Lodging – going rate for lodging in the area where the expense is incurred
 - c. Meals – up to, but not to exceed, \$75.00 per full day of meals (typically 3 meals)
 - d. Other Expenses (for example, Parking Fees)
4. Section III, paragraph (2), sub item a., shall be changed to:
 - a. None specified at this time
5. Section III, paragraph (2), sub item b., shall be removed.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Baumrucker

2nd BY: Trustee Christensen

To approve the entitled *Ordinance 2017C – An Ordinance Establishing the Reimbursement of all Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses of Officers and Employees in the Township of Bruce, Illinois* be approved after the above listed changes have been incorporated.

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

Trustee Bob Harrison: Aye
Trustee Jerry Christensen: Aye
Trustee Randy Baumrucker: Aye
Trustee Steve Biroshik: Aye
Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 5 Nay's: 0 Motion: Carried

Clerk Sedlock informed the board that she had made modifications to the Township's Website as directed at the November 9, 2016 Regular Board Meeting. She noted that she had changed the name of the menu tab from "Meeting Minutes" to "Documents" so that meeting minutes, agendas, ordinances and resolutions could be made available there. She asked the board members to review the changes and get back to her with any issues or concerns.

Trustee Biroshik indicated that he had two questions concerning the former practice of providing insurance stipends to the township officials and employees. He noted that the township has addressed this issue for the township officials starting with the new term. However, the township has not addressed the matter for the employees. He also indicated that we have not addressed how to handle this for the final year

