

MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES

COPY

STATE of ILLINOIS **TYPE OF MEETING HELD:** Regular
LASALLE COUNTY, **SS.** **TIME MEETING BEGAN:** 5:00pm
TOWN of BRUCE **TIME MEETING ENDED:** 5:49pm

The January 11, 2017 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 December 14, 2016 Regular Meeting. Trustee Randy Baumrucker asked that the meeting minutes be corrected in the Public Comments section. The second to the last sentenced should read: "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."

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Baumrucker **2nd BY:** Trustee Bob Harrison
That the minutes of the December 14, 2016 Regular Meeting be approved with the correction as stated to the Public Comments section. No further discussion was required.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Steve Biroshchik, as a private citizen, requested to address the board. Supervisor Araujo acknowledge him and gave him the floor. Mr. Biroshchik read a prepared statement where he presented his findings from doing research on the way Supervisor Araujo has been managing the General Assistance (GA) Fund for the past 5 years. In his statement, Mr. Biroshchik quoted statistics on tax levies and monies paid to the poor. He expressed concerns over the drop off in the amount being paid to the poor while the amount levied each year increased resulting in over \$250,000.00 surplus. He referenced the Illinois Statue 60 ILCS 1/235-20 which states, in part, the township board may raise money by taxation deemed necessary to be expended to provide for General Assistance and shall in no case exceed the amount needed in the township for General Assistance. He noted that Supervisor Araujo had allowed trucks that had been purchased for the purpose of driving GA recipients to job sites to be used for other non-GA purposes. Mr. Biroshchik stated this is why he had requested having the township lawyers research Illinois Statue 305 ILCS 5/8A-5 entitled Administrative Malfesance. In closing, he asked for Supervisor Araujo to resign immediately. When Mr. Biroshchik concluded, Supervisor Araujo responded by asking both Mr. Biroshchik and Mr. Giuliani, reporter for The Times, what they expected of him. Supervisor Araujo indicated that when he cut the levy for GA the paper reported he took the money from the poor. Last month, the paper reported that the township had too much money in the GA fund. There was a brief discussion on what was to be done with the GA fund. Supervisor Araujo noted that the number of GA recipients had increased in the last month from 1 to 7. He noted that he never knows how many people will be on GA. In the past, Bruce Township had 45 to 80 people on GA per month. At that time the Supervisor had to take money out of the Town Fund to cover GA needs. Mr. Biroshchik noted that the Town Fund also has a large reserve at this time so an increase in GA needs would be covered. Mr. Bob Williamson requested to address the board. He commented that Mr. Biroshchik is using this meeting as a public forum to campaign for Supervisor in the upcoming election. He felt Mr. Biroshchik was grand standing in order to get his campaign message into the newspaper. He asked that Mr. Biroshchik take his campaigning to the proper forum where he could debate with Supervisor Araujo and allow this meeting to be used to address the business of the township. Mr. Biroshchik responded that he has a right to speak in the Public Comments section of the meeting just like anyone else. Trustee Baumrucker asked Mr. Biroshchik what year he started his 5 year review from and was told that Mr. Biroshchik started the review with 2012. Trustee Baumrucker noted that Mr. Biroshchik had been on the board during those 5 years and voted in favor of all the Levies he is now critical of. Mr. Biroshchik confirmed that he was on the board during those years and indicated that he was only following Supervisor Araujo's lead. Supervisor Araujo stated that the Bruce Township Board is working to address any mistakes

MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES

that may have been made in the past. He indicated that they are consulting with an attorney for advice on the matters in question. Mr. Biroshchik noted that consulting an attorney was at his request and felt that it was taking too long. He feels that he may need to report his concerns to the States Attorney but wants the legal opinion before he does so.

Following the Public Comments, Supervisor Araujo noted that Stephanie Kennedy, Supervisor of Assessments La Salle County, and Abbie Krafft, Deputy Assessor La Salle County, were in attendance and on the agenda to give a presentation later in the meeting. He acknowledged that both had traveled from out of town and was concerned that the road conditions might get worse due to the fog and rain that was occurring. He asked if the board would allow the agenda to be modified so they could present earlier than originally planned.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Steve Biroshchik

2nd BY: Trustee Jerry Christensen

To move the CCAO Presentation by Stephanie Kennedy up to this point in the agenda due to weather conditions.

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

Stephanie Kennedy and Abbie Krafft distributed copies of a presentation that they have put together with the intent of educating all the townships on the Township Assessors roles and responsibilities. The presentation consisted of 35 slides. Stephanie started by introducing herself and her deputy, giving a brief background of her experience and noting that she became the Supervisor of Assessments for La Salle County in August of 2015. She indicated that Bruce Township has the most qualifying (excludes farm land and commercial) parcels at 5,689 requiring assessment by a township in La Salle County. During the presentation, Stephanie gave a history of property assessment in Illinois dating back to the 1800s. She reminded the board that in July of 2016 the LaSalle County Board had passed a resolution allowing the Supervisor of Assessments to assess properties on behalf of townships that are not able to complete their assessments as required by law. The resolution stipulates that the Supervisor of Assessments office will charge the townships for this service at \$180.00 per parcel. This fee is in place to help recoup the cost of the 2 field employees they would use to meet this need. Stephanie then walked the board through what the Assessors responsibilities are and how Assessors do their job. She indicated that every assessor must have a Certified Illinois Assessing Officer (CIAO) designation and she indicated that the assessors are required to take additional training each year. She went into detail on the new tools that are available to help the assessors and noted that they must be trained in order to use them. Stephanie highlighted the importance of the Quadrennial Year (coming up in 2019), where during the 4 year period, the assessors are required to have assessed, in person or by deputy, every property. For Bruce Township, that is equivalent to assessing 1,422 parcels per year. She noted this has not been happening in many townships across the county and it is not because we do not have good assessors. In addition to assessing properties, the Assessor's office must accomplish other work such as following up on demolition and building permits and exemption filings. She stressed that the assessors have to have the appropriate amount of staff to be able to meet all the requirements. She used Bruce Township and LaSalle Township as examples. Assessor Sullivan asked Stephanie if she knew how LaSalle Township was staffed. Stephanie shared that LaSalle Township has a full time Assessor, 2 full time staff and 1 staff member who helps with exemptions during the filing period. She also noted that, even with that staffing level, LaSalle Township is having trouble completing all the parcels required. During the presentation, Stephanie reiterated the importance of the Assessors job, the importance of having up to date and accurate records, and the time it takes to properly assess each property. In conclusion, she thanked the board for having her and she stated that Assessor Sullivan and Deputy Assessor Anne Winterrowd have done a fantastic job and have been fantastic to work with. She said they are one of her top assessors in LaSalle County. In her opinion, Bruce Township does not currently have enough staff to achieve what is required by law. When asked by Trustee Biroshchik if the new tools will help the Assessor do the job faster, he was told that the Assessor must still go out and measure each property every 4 years to comply with state law. The tools help with accuracy and consistency but will not eliminate the need to view and measure the property. Trustee Biroshchik also asked how many townships have been assisted with their assessments under the new resolutions. Stephanie indicated the resolution has only been in effect since July 2016 and has not been applied to any township yet.

MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES

TREASURER'S REPORT/APPROVAL OF BILLS

A summary of the bills was distributed for review.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen
That the bills be allowed and paid.

2nd BY: Trustee Baumrucker

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SUPERVISOR'S:

Supervisor Araujo informed the board that he has met with an attorney from the firm of Heyl Royster Attorney at Law. He presented the attorney with the list of questions from the December Regular Meeting and is expecting a response from the attorney with their legal opinion in a couple of weeks. He will provide an update to the board at the February Regular Meeting.

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER'S:

Highway Commissioner Barton shared with the board that he had been in contact with Bruce Township's attorney Mr. Jerry Drendel who drafted a letter to the City of Streator in an effort to recoup some of the cost for the guard rail installed along Marilla Park Road in the late fall of 2016. He confirmed that it was the opinion of Mr. Drendel that the portion of Marilla Park road in question is the responsibility of Bruce Township to maintain but that since it borders Marilla Park, which is the responsibility of the City of Streator, requesting to share the cost of the guard rail was reasonable and justifiable. Highway Commissioner Barton will inform the board of the outcome of the request.

ASSESSOR'S:

Assessor Sullivan distributed copies of the Assessor's Budget request for the coming year. She asked if anyone had any questions concerning the request. Trustee Biroshik asked if line item 400 Personnel at \$55,100.00 was for salaries as it seemed lower than he would have expected. Assessor Sullivan responded that the line item was for wages for her department and reminded him that the Assessor's salary is not included in the line item because the Assessor's salary is included in the budget for the Town Fund. There was no further discussion on the request.

TRUSTEE'S:

No reports were offered.

OTHER:

There were no other reports presented.

REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

HEALTH BOARD:

Supervisor Araujo shared with the board that he has received 3 additional complaints concerning the condition of the property at 234 W. 2nd Street. He contacted LaSalle County and was told a representative from the county would be out to look at the property on Monday, January 9th. He stated he planned to view the property with them but the representative never came and did not call.

OLD BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo reported that he had met with the owner of Bodas Electric Inc. concerning the need for a light for the flag pole in the court yard of the office building. He received a verbal estimate of \$387.00 for

MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES

the cost of the light, cost to run the necessary wiring and the cost to mount the light to the building. Mr. Bodas indicated that he pays his workers prevailing wage and provided a copy of his insurance. Bodas Electric Inc. is licensed and registered with the City of Streator. When asked how long it would take to get the light in place, Supervisor Araujo responded that the light will need to be ordered after the township agrees to the work and he will request that it be installed as soon as possible, weather permitting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo reported that he is no longer using the Township truck to pick up food at the Bloomington Food Pantry and deliver it to the Salvation Army here in Streator. The Salvation Army has paid for a truck, including the gas, for him to use instead. Supervisor Araujo indicated that he would hate to see the families in need here in Streator miss out on the opportunity of this extra food. He also indicated that in the summer, he does the same delivery service for fresh vegetables donated from a local farmer. If the Salvation Army cannot provide a truck in the future, he is considering using his own personal resources for this worth while cause.

Clerk Sedlock shared with the board information she had received from the Illinois State Board of Education concerning the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) which helps communities close the meal gap for children during the summer months. The information included 6 ways that townships, municipalities and other organizations can help with the program. Trustee Biroshchik indicated that he was aware of the program and shared that Streator Township High School has already volunteered to meet the needs of this program for K-12 in Streator. There was no further discussion on the topic.

Clerk Sedlock distributed a draft of the Bruce Township Regular Board Meeting Schedule for upcoming fiscal year. The schedule was drafted based on the standing meeting schedule of the 2nd Wednesday of the month with the exception of April when the meeting is moved to the 2nd Tuesday to align with the Annual Town Meeting. Supervisor Araujo asked the board to review the schedule and come prepared to take action on it at the February Regular Board Meeting.

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

2nd BY: Trustee Christensen

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

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

