

**MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES**

**COPY**

STATE of ILLINOIS

TYPE OF MEETING HELD: Regular

LASALLE COUNTY, SS.

SS.

TIME MEETING BEGAN: 5:00pm

TOWN of BRUCE

TIME MEETING ENDED: 6:07pm

The October 12, 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 September 14, 2016 Regular Meeting.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Randy Baumrucker

2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Bob Harrison

That the minutes of the September 14, 2016 Regular Meeting be approved. No further discussion was required.

Aye's: 5

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.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Baumrucker

2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Jerry Christensen

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: Aye

Trustee Steve Biroschik: Aye

Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**SUPERVISOR'S:**

Supervisor Araujo did not have any items to report on.

**HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER'S:**

Highway Commissioner Barton reported that he is preparing for the winter season. He is getting salt and the plows ready. Trustee Biroschik reported that he had received a call from a resident who was concerned that a guard rail is needed along Marilla Park Road. Highway Commissioner Barton responded that he does have plans to put up a guard rail along that stretch of Marilla Park Road. He has a contact who has installed guard rails for Bruce Township in the past and will try to get it in place this fall but, if not, then it will be in place in the spring. He did note that there is actually a wider shoulder on the road now than before the embankment was reinforced. Highway Commissioner Barton shared that grass seed has been planted on the top of the embankment and is starting to grow. He will monitor the embankment through the coming years and determine if anything further is needed.

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### ASSESSOR'S:

Assessor Sullivan reported that she and Deputy Assessor Winterrowd are in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are out in the field Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays taking pictures and measuring new construction.

### TRUSTEE'S:

There were no reports given by the Trustees.

### OTHER:

There were no other reports presented.

### REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

#### HEALTH BOARD:

Supervisor Araujo reported that the Health Board has followed up on 2 properties on West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street that have complaints from neighbors of high grass and other issues. Pictures have been taken of the properties and letters have been sent to the property owners of 214 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 234 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on September 29, 2016.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Supervisor Araujo distributed several proposals for the Township Officials Salaries for the term to begin in May 2017. One was provided by Trustee Steve Biroshik, one was provided by Assessor Sullivan and three were provided by Supervisor Araujo each having a different raise component included. He proceeded to walk through his latest proposal which had suggested rolling in the travel pay stipend and insurance stipend into the salary for the first year of the term and giving roughly a 2% raise for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the term. This was done across the board for every official. He then revisited Trustee Biroshik's proposal which called for the elimination of the travel pay stipend and replacing it with an expense reimbursement approach for all officials, eliminating the insurance stipend unless it could be paid directly to the insurance provider and freezing the base salaries for all officials for all 4 years of the term. Trustee Biroshik voiced his concern over rolling the stipends into the base pay. There was a discussion on the history of the insurance stipend, the board members understanding of its original purpose and the fact that it can no longer be given as a stipend. During the discussion, Trustee Biroshik asked the original reason for the insurance stipend. He was told that the insurance stipend has been a part of the Salary Resolutions dating back over 26 years. It was put in place before any of the current officials were in office. Clerk Sedlock indicated that the board could look back through the meeting minutes to locate the original purpose of the insurance stipend. The current officials shared that they had been told by former officials that the insurance stipend could be used to pay any kind of insurance. Trustee Biroshik specifically asked if it could be used for car insurance and was told yes based on what the officials had been told when they took office. There was a discussion on whether it would be feasible to pay the insurance vendors directly. The board members had differing views on whether this was feasible. Trustee Christensen indicated that if the insurance stipend was rolled into the base salary for the Trustees that he felt there would be no need for a salary increase of 2% for the Trustees. He would support a salary for the Trustees of \$3,700.00 annually for the 4 year term. Trustee Biroshik voiced his concern on rolling the travel pay into the salary. There was a discussion on the travel pay stipend, what it covered in the past and whether a reimbursement policy for mileage would be a better solution than rolling the travel pay stipend into the base salary. Trustee Biroshik offered to teach a training class on how to fill out an expense voucher if anyone felt they needed it. Trustee Biroshik expressed the concern that Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), Social Security (SS) and Medicare taxes are all paid as percentages of the base salary and, therefore, any additions to the base salary will increase the Township's obligation for IMRF, SS and Medicare taxes, as well. Trustee Biroshik then revisited the Township Official of Illinois (TOI) Salary Survey results specifically with respect to the Supervisor's salary. Based on the survey, Bruce Township Supervisor is in the top 6% of the salaries for the other Townships in Zone 2. Clerk Sedlock reminded the board that the TOI Salary Survey was a voluntary survey that only about 60% of the townships responded to. There was a brief discussion on what a fair salary might be for the Supervisor based on the TOI Survey results. This led into a discussion on the number of hours worked by each official, the salaries being paid and how they compare to other townships. Trustee Biroshik stated that for the most part the Bruce Township Officials were part time positions working at most 30 hours a week. He noted the exception of the Highway Commissioner who likely

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worked a 40 hour week. He feels the residents of Bruce Township would not think 30 hours a week was a full time job. Members of the board suggested that there are plenty of companies cutting their full time workers to 30 hour work weeks. When asked for examples, Supervisor Araujo pointed to the former St. Mary's Hospital in Streator. The discussion continued on briefly until Trustee Biroshchik restated his proposal for freezing the salaries, eliminating stipends, instituting a reimbursement policy for mileage and expenses citing that Bruce Township Officials are highly paid compared to other LaSalle County townships responding to the TOI Salary Survey. When questioned about his proposal with respect to insurance benefits, he responded he would agree to pay insurance benefits directly to an insurance provider. Supervisor Araujo stated that there were two proposals on the table.

MOTION MADE BY: Supervisor Araujo

2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Baumrucker

That the travel pay stipend and the insurance stipend shall be rolled into the base salary of the Supervisor, Highway Commissioner, Assessor and Clerk in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the term, a 2% salary increase for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, a 2% salary increase for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year and a 2% salary increase for the 4<sup>th</sup> year. The Health Board stipend will remain at the current level of \$300.00 annually for the Supervisor, Assessor and Clerk. The insurance stipend shall be rolled into the base salary of the Trustees in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the term with no salary increases for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of the term.

Trustee Biroshchik made a point of clarification that this motion is a modified version of the one distributed at the beginning of the meeting. He noted that the Trustees are not receiving the 2% raise. Supervisor Araujo confirmed that the motion is a modification for the Trustees salary making them \$3,700.00 annually for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of the term. The salaries for all the other officials will be as stated in the proposal.

Clerk Sedlock took the roll call vote:

Trustee Bob Harrison: Aye

Trustee Jerry Christensen: Aye

Trustee Randy Baumrucker: Aye

Trustee Steve Biroshchik: Nay for the reasons previously stated that the officials are well compensated and he does not agree with rolling the stipends into the salaries

Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 1

Motion: Carried

Supervisor Araujo stated that the proposed Tax Levy Ordinance Township (Ordinance No. 2017A) and the proposed Tax Levy Ordinance Road District (Ordinance No. 2017B) for tax year 2016 payable in 2017 was distributed at last month's meeting. He asked if the board was ready to discuss the proposals. Trustee Biroshchik shared with the board that he is proposing a reduction of 10% across the board on the Levies. He distributed a summary of the proposed changes. He noted that Bruce Township has 1.2 million dollars in reserve and he felt a 10% reduction was appropriate. He believes that this reduction would not stop any services. Highway Commissioner Barton stated that we need to be careful that we levy correctly for the Road District to ensure the township would be eligible for state aid for road and bridge repairs in the future, if needed. If the township does not levy adequately, the state could deny aid leaving the township to pay the entire cost of future work. There was a brief discussion on the details of the proposal. Assessor Sullivan asked the board to consider that she is trying to build up her budget to allow for hiring another part time employee to help meet the state requirements for the number of parcels to be assessed each year. The La Salle County Board has recently passed a resolution stating that if the township does not complete the required number of parcels the La Salle County Assessor's office will do the assessments and charge the Township \$180 per parcel. If the county were to assess all 1,400+ parcels (which are 1/4 of the residential properties in Bruce Township), it would cost Bruce Township approximately \$260,000.00. There was a discussion that followed on the number of hours being worked by the Assessor, the value of increasing the Deputy Assessor's hours for the week, the value of adding additional staff verses the cost of having the county do the assessments. Trustee Biroshchik suggested that the Assessor and Deputy Assessor should increase the hours worked from 30 to 40 per week if they are behind. Assessor Sullivan noted that it isn't always a matter of needing extra hours to do the job but the need for extra personnel. She indicated that there are safety issues to consider. Having a third person would allow the work to be done safely and

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efficiently. She also indicated that she would have no problem with working a 40 hour week as she has worked more than 30 hours a week when necessary. She was willing to increase the hours worked by the Deputy Assessor but noted that increases in the Deputy Assessor's hours per week would impact her budget, as well. Assessor Sullivan also noted that these changes in work load have been very recent. The Supervisor of Assessments has introduced 2 new programs just in the last month added to the LaSalle County Boards Resolution which was passed earlier this year. The discussion then turned to what might occur if the township had a less experienced Assessor. The discussion included the credentials required to be an Assessor, the fact that a candidate for the upcoming election must have those credentials before being placed on the ballot and what may happen if there is a vacancy in the Assessor's office at the end of the current term (December 31, 2017). Supervisor Araujo came back to Trustee Biroschik's proposal for the Levies indicating that it might be a good proposal and he plans to take a closer look at it before the next meeting. There was a brief revisit of the current 2 year reserve the Township has, as well as, the pros and cons of having a 2 year reserve. Supervisor Araujo asked that the board come prepared to discuss the Levies further at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Trustee Biroschik asked some election related questions and a brief discussion followed.

Trustee Biroschik expressed concerns that the truck purchased for General Assistance, with General Assistance funds, is being used for non-General Assistance work. He expressed his understanding that once you buy something with General Assistance money it must be used for General Assistance business only. Supervisor Araujo indicated that to his knowledge there was no issue with the townships use of the General Assistance equipment. Trustee Biroschik asked Supervisor Araujo to check into whether this is a violation of any sort. Supervisor Araujo indicated that the truck is used to pick up supplies for the needy, aged and sick. There was a brief discussion on who qualifies for General Assistance, what services are being provided as General Assistance and whether we are using the General Assistance resources appropriately with respect to the use of the trucks by the Assessor's Office and for plowing snow. Supervisor Araujo agreed to check into whether our current practice of allowing the Assessor's office to use the General Assistance truck is a concern.

Highway Commissioner Barton asked if the board has a policy concerning the use of Social Media for the distribution of information. He was concerned that incorrect salary information for the Highway Commissioner's position was placed on a Facebook site other than the Township Facebook site by a Township Official. A discussion followed on the topic including the difference between a wage, a salary, a benefit, taxes, total compensation and the cost of employment to the Township. Trustee Biroschik suggested that the board post salary information on the Township's web site so the public has direct access to the information.

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

2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Harrison

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

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

