

**MINUTES - BOARD of TOWN TRUSTEES**

**STATE of ILLINOIS**

**TYPE OF MEETING HELD: Regular**

**LASALLE COUNTY,**

**SS.**

**TIME MEETING BEGAN: 5:00pm**

**TOWN of BRUCE**

**TIME MEETING ENDED: 5:58pm**

**COPY**

The March 8, 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.

Supervisor Araujo began the meeting by instructing the board that all in attendance are to be treated with respect during the course of the meeting. He noted that questions should be addressed to him, as the Chairman, and he would decide if they should be addressed or not. Trustee Steve Biroshchik made a point of order stating that according to Robert's Rules the public is only allowed to speak during the Public Comments section of the agenda. Supervisor Araujo acknowledged the point and clarified that he was not referring to public comments but rather to questions raised by the township officials during the meeting. There was no further discussion on the topic.

**APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING'S MINUTES:**

The first order of business was to read and approve the minutes from the February 8, 2017 Regular Meeting.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Randy Baumrucker                      2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Jerry Christensen  
That the minutes of the February 8, 2017 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 Bob Harrison  
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 Biroshchik: 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 at this time.

**HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER'S:**

Highway Commissioner Barton reported that he plans to seal coat about 4 miles of Bruce Township roads this summer. The County Highway Commissioner has notified him that the cost of the project will be \$46,843.29 with \$32,817.47 being covered by the Motor Fuel Tax. This leaves \$14,025.82 to be paid out of the Road and Bridge Fund. He then distributed a copy of the Resolution that needed to be approved to

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allow the transfer of funds from the Road and Bridge Fund to the Township Motor Fuel Tax account. When asked if this work included Skelgas Road, Highway Commissioner Barton indicated that this work did not include any improvements to Skelgas Road. However, he stated that he is still investigating whether Skelgas Road could be widened as a part of a future improvement project. He also confirmed that he is still planning to try to work with the City of Streator when they put storm sewers in the Eastwood area. He hopes to be able to put in some catch basins that would tie into the storm sewers. The City of Streator seemed receptive to the plan but the cost of those improvements needs to be better understood before Highway Commissioner Barton can move forward. When asked which roads would be included in the seal coat project represented by this Resolution, Highway Commissioner Barton responded that work will be done on the following roads:

- Approximately 2 miles of Richards Road from Rt. 23 to Kangley Road
- N 16<sup>th</sup> Road (known as Hillcrest Road) north to Richards Road
- NE 14<sup>th</sup> Road to the west end of Bruce Township toward Sandy Ford

Highway Commissioner Barton explained that in the past smaller sections of roads were done so transfer of funds was not always required. When asked when the Resolution needed to be approved, he indicated that the Resolution should be approved at the township's earliest convenience and sent with a check for the approved amount to the La Salle County Highway Department. Highway Commissioner Barton indicated that the bids have been let, the contractor was selected and the work should be done in the June/July timeframe.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen 2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Harrison  
 To approve the Resolution to transfer \$14,025.82 into the Bruce Township Motor Fuel Tax account from the Bruce Township Road and Bridge Fund for the above listed road improvements.

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

### ASSESSOR'S:

Assessor Sullivan reported that beginning next week her office will increase their field work. The Assessor and her staff will be in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They will be in the field on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays collecting data for updating their records. She also noted that the senior citizens have been notified of the office hours. When asked if the web site reflects the new hours, Assessor Sullivan indicated that the web site should be correct but would follow up to make sure that it also reflected the correct hours.

### TRUSTEE'S:

Trustee Biroschik gave the board an update on his recent request to review the check registers for each of the township funds (Town Fund, General Assistance (GA) and Road and Bridge Fund) from the past 8 years. He identified a number of purchases and payments which were made from the GA Fund which he was requesting further information on. He noted \$35,000.00 was paid toward the building of a garage on the township property. Supervisor Araujo responded that the garage was used to house the trucks that were purchased for the GA program which he acknowledged were later used for more than just GA purposes. Trustee Biroschik next focused on purchases of fuel from 4 different sources during the 8 years. He asked which vehicles the fuel was purchased for and was told that the fuel was only purchased for the GA trucks. Fuel for other township vehicles were purchased from separate accounts. Trustee Biroschik asked if there was any documentation that shows which vehicles the fuel was put in. Supervisor Araujo responded that the credit cards for the fuel account are closely monitored. Trustee Biroschik indicated that the trucks were used to make 64 trips to NAEIR in the 8 years. He had questions about the supplies which had been

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purchased through NAEIR. He noted that there were no records kept as to which charities those supplies were donated to. Supervisor Araujo responded that the supplies were donated to schools, nursing homes, residents who come to the township office, GA recipients and the Salvation Army. Trustee Biroshchik expressed concerns that the named organizations serve more than Bruce Township residents. Furthermore, he felt the majority of the supplies were likely not given to GA clients. He was concerned that the Salvation Army might have sold the items which were donated. Supervisor Araujo assured him that none of the donations made to the Salvation Army were ever sold. It was made clear to the Salvation Army that the supplies were to be given away and they were placed in boxes marked FREE. Trustee Biroshchik noted the need for better documentation of purchases and distribution of items going forward. Trustee Biroshchik asked about the purchase of a freezer. Supervisor Araujo confirmed the freezer was purchased for storing food that was donated to the township and later distributed. The freezer is in the township office building. Trustee Biroshchik then addressed several purchases of equipment including lawn mowers, a Kubota tractor and a spreader. Supervisor Araujo noted that the mowers were used by GA clients for mowing grass over the years and never lasted for more than a couple of seasons. Supervisor Araujo noted that all the purchases that were being discussed had been reviewed with the board at the time they were purchased. He went on to indicate that the Kubota tractor and spreader would be addressed along with the trucks through the transfer of monies to reimburse the GA Fund for the equipment that was purchased for GA use but then later used for GA and other general Township business. Trustee Biroshchik expressed concerns about the increase in the GA Fund given that he felt it already has a large surplus. He asked why portions of the Supervisor's and Office Manager's salaries were not being paid for out of the GA Fund since part of their work load is directly in support of the GA program. Trustee Christensen responded that in the past there was not enough money in the GA Fund to pay salaries. The practice of paying the salaries from the Town Fund just carried forward through the years even after the GA Fund was built up with a reserve. Supervisor Araujo indicated that he was not opposed to transferring funds from GA Fund to the Town Fund once a year to cover portions of the Supervisor's and Office Manager's salaries going forward. Supervisor Araujo indicated that he has a plan for addressing the money that will be added back into the GA Fund. Supervisor Araujo shared with the board that he is looking into re-instating the Emergency Assistance (EA) program for Bruce Township which would grant emergency assistance money once per year to families that qualified. Supervisor Araujo noted that this program could help more people than those that qualify for GA and that he was working on the details of how the program could be implemented. Trustee Biroshchik indicated that he is almost to the point of requested a forensic audit be done to go through the books in more depth. He then passed out copies of the Illinois State Statutes 60 ILCS 1/85-13, 305 ILCS 5/8A-5 from Chapter 23, par. 8A-5 and 305 ILCS 5/8A-6 from Chapter 23, par. 8A-6. Supervisor Araujo stated that the legal opinions that have been received on this matter have indicated that we can resolve the issue of using the GA Funds as they have been used by reimbursing from the Town Fund to the GA Fund for all monies that were spent that were not 100% used for the purposes of GA. Trustee Biroshchik noted that that could be as much as \$100,000.00 and was concerned about adding that money to the already large GA Fund.

Related to this topic, Trustee Baumrucker had asked the board to read section 25 on page 61 of Township Officials of Illinois Laws & Duties Handbook, Revised 2015. The section is entitled "Distribution to Not-For-Profit Agencies. The board had a brief discussion on this section and the Illinois Statutes that are referenced. It was noted that the township has funds that are generated through the rental fees on the Township Hall. It was suggested that those funds may be able to be used for any future donates to not-for-profit agencies and also may be used to reimburse the GA Fund for any past purchases of NAEIR supplies. Trustee Biroshchik felt that the statutes limit where the funds can be given. Trustee Baumrucker pointed out that the town residents at the Town Meeting can determine where they want the non-tax generated funds to be spent. It was noted that the agenda for the upcoming 2017 Town Meeting would be discussed and approved later in this meeting.

### OTHER:

There were no other reports presented.

### REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

#### HEALTH BOARD:

Supervisor Araujo noted that the property at 47 Helen Street, Streator has been cleaned up. He also reported that the township's attorney advised him that the township cannot do anything concerning the property at

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234 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as long as La Salle County is working a solution. Trustee Biroschik asked if we knew who owned the property. Supervisor Araujo indicated that we do know who owns the property. Trustee Biroschik indicated that he would like the township to partner with La Salle County to get the property cleaned up. He felt the county has failed to clean up the property and if the Township offered to assist in the cost perhaps that would motivate the county.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Supervisor Araujo reported that the cost of purchasing a Knox Box for emergency access to the Township Office Building and Hall would be \$324.00 plus shipping. There would also be a cost for having it mounted on the building. He explained that it is a secured box that would contain a key to the building that only emergency personnel would have access to. He noted that by providing Police and Fire Department access during non-business hours, in the case of emergency, we would save the township money in the long run as the cost of replacing windows or doors would be far greater than the cost of purchasing and installing the Knox Box. Scott Orbin gave a brief account of how the Knox Box system works in our community. Highway Commissioner Barton suggested that it would be good to also consider putting a Knox Box on the Highway Commissioner's Maintenance Building for the same reasons it is important for the Township Office Building and Hall. There was a brief discussion on whether the Highway Commissioner's Maintenance Building was within the City of Streator or under a different fire district. It was noted that there doesn't appear to be a clear record of the property ever being annexed. Highway Commissioner Barton agreed to investigate the issue further to get resolution on the question of whether the property is within the City of Streator or not.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen    2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Harrison  
To purchase and install one Knox Box at the Bruce Township Office Building and one Knox Box at the Bruce Township Highway Commissioner's Maintenance Building.

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

Supervisor Araujo distributed a copy of a letter from Mr. Jerry J. Justice, The Justice Law Firm, P.C. which provided the board with an opinion on the use of inter-governmental agreements within a Township. This question had been discussed in previous meetings with respect to the use of the trucks and equipment between the Assessor's Office, GA, Road and Bridge and the use for general township business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Supervisor Araujo distributed a draft copy of the 2017 Annual Town Meeting Agenda for the board to review. He noted that the board should make any changes needed, finalize and approve the agenda before the upcoming deadline to post it on or before March 27, 2017 (15 days before the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for April 11, 2017). Trustee Biroschik asked for clarification on what was being proposed in the Agenda Topic VIII D Transfer of monies for General Assistance (GA) Vehicles, Equipment, Supplies and Donations. There was a brief discussion on what would be covered by the funds transfer (i.e. the trucks, portion of the cost to build the garage, Kubota, spreader, etc.). He then asked what those items would be used for going forward. There was a brief discussion on what the various pieces of equipment could be used for and how the garage might be used going forward. Trustee Biroschik felt that at any time those trucks may be needed for GA purposes again. Supervisor Araujo explained that the trucks could be used for GA purposes once the transfer was complete by implementing an inter-governmental agreement between the Township and GA.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Harrison    2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Trustee Baumrucker

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That the 2017 Annual Town Meeting Agenda as it was presented be approved for the April 11, 2017 meeting.

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: Nay

Supervisor Henry Araujo: Aye

Aye's: 4

Nay's: 1

Motion: Carried

Supervisor Araujo asked Trustee Biroshik if there was something he wanted changed in the agenda. Trustee Biroshik responded that he did not like the agenda item concerning the transfer of the equipment to the Town Fund until we find out what is going on down the road. He did not want to see any equipment sold. Supervisor Araujo indicated that the proposal for the equipment did not include selling the equipment but rather having the use be under the general control of the township where the use could then be shared through inter-governmental agreements.

MOTION MADE BY: Trustee Christensen

2<sup>nd</sup> BY: Supervisor Araujo

That the meeting be adjourned.

Aye's: 5

Nay's: 0

Motion: Carried

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