

Johnstown Township Minutes

13641 South M-37 Highway. Battle Creek, Michigan 49017

Regular Board Meeting . September 13, 2023 . 6:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Supervisor Barb Earl, Clerk Sheri Babcock, Treasurer Karmen Nickerson, Trustee Deana Powell, Trustee Jeff Warren

Absent: None

Visitors: 16

Agenda: A motion was made by Powell to approve the agenda. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- A resident comment on answers given by Consumers Energy on solar energy going to the nearest sub-station and utilized locally. Recommended that we look into where the nearest sub-station is located.

Minutes: A motion was made by Powell to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 16, 2023, the Special Board Meeting for Bristol Lake Channel of August 16, 2023, the Special Board Meeting of August 16, 2023 for Blight Ordinance and 218 Agreement and the Special Board Meeting for the Blight Ordinance of August 28, 2023. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Karmen Nickerson

- Summer property tax payments are due by tomorrow, Sept. 14, 2023. The office will be open tomorrow from 9:00 to 5:00 or postmark date will be accepted.
- After September 14, 2023 property taxes can still be paid here but will include a 1% penalty.
- Expect a busy last two days of collection.

A motion was made by Powell to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Clerk's Report – Sheri Babcock

Election Update:

The Clerk attended a Clerk's meeting last week regarding early voting days. We have the decision to run our early voting days (EV days) independently vs. consolidation with other townships. There were pros and cons to both options but ultimately, we want to keep all our residents voting in one place here at our township. Early voting will happen in even year elections. Voting days will run Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday just prior to the Tuesday Election. These early voting days will be open for 8 hours each day. There are a lot of details to still work out.

Assessor's Report – Joyce Foondle

The Supervisor wanted to congratulate Joyce Foondle on receiving the Legacy Award from the Michigan Assessor's Association. Joyce is planning to retire at the end of this year.

- General: Have not received the Commercial, Industrial & Agricultural appraisal study yet.
- The Assessment Audit Review was provided last month. The Michigan Dept. of Treasury no longer designates 100% score if every item on the audit list passes. The 100% score is stated as Substantially Compliant.
- Joyce shared her Legacy Award from the Michigan Assessor's Association for Service and Contribution. She has been involved with MAA since 1989 and served as president in 1994. Since that time has served as Legislative Chair, Awards Committee Chair and taught classes in residential valuation and the State Land Division Act. For Joyce, this award was a great way to end her career.
- Land Division: None
- Michigan Tax Tribunal: Nothing to report
- Joyce also mentioned the PILT option for the township regarding the solar power fields.
- Also discussed the set-backs proposed by the Ordinance at Bedford of 100 feet probably won't hold up if challenged.

Fire Report – Fire Chief Chris Jozwik

- 38 total calls for the month of August. Total calls for 2023: 297
- 30 of the 38 calls for the month of August were MFR calls. Total MFR calls for 2023: 186
- Training completed: Pump Training, General clean-up day;
- Personnel changes: None
- Current Membership: 15 Active members; 1 on leave, 1 cadet;
- Department Activity: Department Picnic including Charter and Retired members. Over 40 members attended, went well;
- 1st annual Golf Outing/Fundraiser is scheduled for Sept. 16th at Cedar Creek Golf Course. There is still time to enter.
- The Fire Dept. is looking for new cadet candidates. High school students age 16 and above.

Next Quarterly Board/Fire Meeting: October 2, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Report - Bruce Campbell

- Update on new housing development next to the Friend of the Court building.
- Commission on Aging . facility information
- County L-4029 for millage rates completed
- Commissioners discussing board rules, By-Laws, public participation
- Board opening
- Johnstown Township Farmers Market was mentioned along with flyers distributed
- Next Tuesday Board of Commissioners meeting at 9:00 a.m. will have discussion on the Master Plan and Ordinance
- Bruce also hearing discussions on Early voting days with other townships
- Next Planning Commission meeting is Sept. 25th at 7:00 p.m.

A resident wanted to know if the County had any leads on a new Enforcement Officer with Planning & Zoning. Bruce stated they have had interviews but have made no offers at this point.

Old Business:

1. **Blight Ordinance:** A meeting was held on August 28, 2023, for further discussion on the draft of the ordinance, whether or not we will move forward with submitting to the lawyer at this time or wait to see how we might be able to work with a new Enforcement officer after the County gets that employee in place. Additional procedures and policies will need to be developed.
2. **Bristol Lake Channel .** Next special meeting and public hearing is scheduled for October 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. The time was changed from the agenda listing as we will need some additional time to complete Resolutions.

New Business:

1. **Farmer's Market:** The Farmers Market & Craft Show will be held this Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00.

Pay Invoices and Payroll:

A motion was made by Powell to pay the bills in the amount of \$100,395.00 as presented. Seconded by Warren. All ayes. Motion carried.

Additional Public Comments (3 minutes per person):

- Groups of local individuals meeting in homes regarding solar energy. People need to step up and use your voice. Concerned about our local farm land, unknown outcomes, what happens in 25 to 30 years when they are no longer functioning. Effects on our families, grandchildren.
- Resident discussed concerns over the amount of land usage for solar fields. The old plants didn't take up as much area and produced more power.
- Question on the time line for the bio-digester at Swiss Lane farms. Depends on the county process. Hopefully in 3 to 6 months, solar probably 6+ months.
- Resident ask Consumers Energy if the 345 line can handle the power once the solar fields are set up. They have already done studies to make sure it is not overloaded. No battery storage in the plans. Excess power goes on the grid on the 345 line.
- Ryan from Consumers Energy stated that concerning the comment from the Assessor regarding PILT, they have information on PILT and Greg and Ryan are available to the township for questions.
- Lindsay from Consumers Energy stated over the next 4 to 6 weeks they will be going to neighbors to talk about the solar fields around their properties.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Warren to adjourn. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Next Quarterly Meeting of the Fire Dept./Board is October 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Next Special Board Meeting & Public Hearing for Bristol Lake Channel Special Assessment is October 11, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Next Regular Board Meeting: October 11, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

**Attested to by:
Barbara Earl
Supervisor**



Sheri Babcock, Clerk