

# Johnstown Township Minutes

13641 South M-37 Highway. Battle Creek Michigan 49017

## Special Board Meeting ARPA Budgeting & Resolution for ACH Financial Transactions and other pertinent business June 12, 2023

Special Board Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m.

### Pledge of Allegiance

**Present:** Supervisor Barbara Earl, Clerk Sheri Babcock, Treasurer Karmen Nickerson, Trustee Jeff Warren, Trustee Deana Powell & Township Attorney, Catherine Kaufman

**Absent:** None

**Visitors:** One (1)

**Agenda:** Addition to the agenda for Budget Modification for Elections needs to be added to new business.

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

It was noted as questioned in prior meeting that we are not allowed to add to the items to agenda, in checking with MTA, we have a printout, that states the board can add to the agenda items not listed in the notice, as long as all board members are present. If any board member is absent, the board is restricted to only the items posted in the notice.

**Public Comments:** None

**Supervisor Comments:** Introduction of our Attorney, Catherine Kaufman. This meeting is being held to discuss the need for a **Blight Ordinance** and how this might be accomplished.

- Overall discussion on how we go about establishing an ordinance. What we may and may not want in our ordinance, how it would be prioritized and enforced. It is clear that the board does not want a complicated, far reaching, ordinance but concentrate on ~~junk~~ that is a concern with public health and safety. The enforcement process would be complaint driven with the enforcement officer reporting to the board each month. If there is no compliance after the stated process, the Township could provide clean-up of the property and attach that cost to the property tax bill.
- The Attorney will send the Township several DRAFT ordinances for review by the end of next week which can be forwarded to the board before the next board meeting.
- Once the Ordinance is adopted, we will need to publish it in the local newspaper and after the 30-day waiting period, it would become effective.
- Hiring an enforcement officer would also have to happen. An individual would need to have very good social skills in dealing with people, the ability to issue tickets, appear in court and report to the board. The ideal candidates are retired law enforcement personnel. Trustee Warren will seek information from Dar Leaf to determine if deputies could be employed to do that with our township or if he has

recommendations of a retired officer. Other board members should also seek recommendations for candidates.

- The Board could contact Yankee Springs or Hope Township to see how enforcement is working for them in their Township.
- The board will need to have further discussions on the budgeting of the costs associated with this ordinance and the employment of an Enforcement officer. Rough estimates discussed at an average of 5 to 10 hrs. per week at a rate between \$18.00 to \$25.00 per hour. It was further recommended that one individual from the Township go with the enforcement officer to build up a process initially.
- The Critical Path determined: We want a litter ordinance tailored to our Township, an enforcement officer with the ability to work well with people but yet strong in getting compliance, we want compliance over fines, and when nothing else works, having the ability to clean up and attach this cost to the property tax bill.
- **Audit Engagement Letter** . assign the Clerk as responsible party to sign. The audit is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> through June 21<sup>st</sup>. A motion was made by Warren to allow the Clerk to sign the engagement letter for this year's audit. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Powell to require an RFP for the audit for next year. Seconded by Warren. Ayes: 2, Nay 3. Motion denied.

Discussion: Clerk and Treasurer feel very confident that current Auditor is great to work with and brings in other staff members to audit a portion of the work. Other board members feel we should seek RFP for costs but not necessarily change auditors.

- **Joyce Foondle, Assessor**, would like to change the job title of Kara, Assistant Assessor to Deputy Assessor to be consistent with what she is doing in other Townships. The State refers to them as Assistants and that was also advised by the law firm as there is no statutory deputy for the assessor. It was deemed that there is really no difference in the title and we will allow the change as requested. A motion was made by Warren to change Kara Dougherty's job title to Deputy Assessor, effective immediately as discussed. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Elections**: It has been determined by the State that the Township will need to purchase an additional tabulator and E-Pollbook computer for use Only on early voting days. Additionally, we will need to purchase new printers for the VAT's (2) that will allow for printing of the full-size ballots. It was asked if we could only get one printer instead of two, but that is allowable. The cost of the equipment will be approximately \$10,000. A motion was made by Warren to authorize the purchase of this equipment, not to exceed \$10,000. Seconded by Powell. All ayes. Motion carried.
- The next board Meeting is scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.
- **Consumers Power/Solar Power- Barry County Master Plan**. In a phone conversation with Jim McManus by the Clerk and Treasurer regarding the Barry County Master Plan, it was concluded that it is very important that the Township Board provide input on the Ordinance that will be drafted after the finalization of the Master Plan. We need to have them address our concerns, i.e., equity of numbers between townships, set-backs, decommission/surety bonds, and wildlife fencing. We need to attend tonight's meeting and provide our concerns in writing.

The Township Attorney will help us prepare that letter for tonight's meeting.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Powell to adjourn the Special Board Meeting at 4:16 p.m. Seconded by Warren.  
All ayes. Motion carried.

**Attested to by:**

**Barbara Earl, Supervisor**

  
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**Sheri Babcock, Clerk**

**Next Regular Board Meeting: June 14, 2023**

APPROVED