

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD

Monday, September 18, 2023

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Supervisor Ray Chase called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Board and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Ray Chase, Clerk Wanda Kolb, Trustee Tom Hall, Treasurer Mary Long, Trustee Steve Kline

ABSENT: None

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL: Motion by Tom, seconded by Steve to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:

- Motion by Steve, seconded by Tom, to approve minutes of August 21, 2023 Regular Meeting and the August 28, 2023 Special Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
 - Treasures Report. Motion by Tom, seconded by Steve to approve the treasurer's report for July and August. Motion carried unanimously.
 - Motion by Steve, seconded by Tom to approve payment of bills. Motion passed unanimously via roll call.
 - Motion by Wanda, seconded by Steve to approve the payment of \$26,900 to Traverse Engineering. Motion passed unanimously via roll call.
 - General Fund: Check: #5801 to UP and Running for \$125, #5802 to Northland Lawn Sport and Equipment for \$342.40, #5803 to Fastenal Company for \$106.98, # 5804 to Accident Fund for \$14.00, #5805 to Tom Hall for \$78.50, #5806 to Ray Chase for \$387.87, #5807 to Steve Kline for \$78.50, #5808 to Sara Huuki for \$369.40, #5809 to Dave Schumacher for \$392.75, #5810 to Mary Long for \$695.24, #5811 to Wanda Kolb for \$571.73, AP waster management for \$501.44, AP Verizon for \$29.14, AP for \$180.00 (Total: \$3,872.95)
 - Water Fund: Check: #1745 to US Postmaster for \$66, #1746 to Mel Jones for \$73.88, #1747 to Traverse Engineering for \$26,900. (Total: \$27,039.88)
 - Cemetery Fund: Check: #1173 to Dave Schumacher for \$207.79 (Total: \$207.79)
 - For a final total of: \$31,120.62

BUDGET AMENDMENT:

- Motion by Wanda, seconded by Ray to increase account 215727 supplies to purchase a shredder for \$88.00 with ARPA dollars. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Ray, seconded by Steve to increase the workers comp in the water fund by \$267.00. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Wanda, seconded by Steve to increase insurance in the water fund by \$22.00. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Ray seconded by Steve to increase general liability insurance by \$155.00 in the general fund. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Ray, seconded by Steve to increase workers comp by \$5.00 in the general fund. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following was provided for information: The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs has approved a conditional license for the Cliff View Bar & Inn. Since this is a transfer no action is required of Houghton Township.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Heartland Project: Guest Julia Petersen, Keweenaw Peninsula Project Manager, The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Business Unit, provided an overview of plans for the 32,000 acres purchased from The Rohatyn Group (IRG). The purpose of the visit was to explain goals which include maintaining access to the public, maintaining or increasing revenue to local government, preserve and maintain a healthy forest and to transition the land over three to five years into primarily state, county and local governance, ownership and management through the development of a 17 member

stakeholder group in which all Townships would have representation. More information can be obtained by going to the Keweenaw Community Foundation webpage.

- Road Commission Millage on hold: Ray explained that since we will not be doing the 2024 water project, Road Commission money for street repair is not needed. However, he has requested that the budgeted amount be held over for 2025.
- Water Project Update (DWSRF FY 2024): Linda Kline reported that we did not receive funding for 2024. The new grant cycle for 2025 is now open and she will reapply using data previously provided by Traverse Engineering.
- Water Ordinance Revision: Steve reported on the need to update the water ordinance to include a rate increase. He will submit a revised ordinance at the October meeting for approval.
- Community Center Grant: Linda reported the grant was submitted and we will be notified on October 23 if awarded. Steve reported that \$580,000 has been requested to replace the mechanical system and bring the electrical system to code, add a LULA ADA elevator, repair the exterior of the building, and remodel the basement area along with other improvements.
- PAR plan risk assessment follow up: Motion by Steve, seconded Mary to approve the following documents: At Will Employment, Playground Equipment Checklist and Employment Application. Multiple other forms are needed including an Employee Handbook which is being developed for approval at a later date. Dave S. will purchase and install 2 carbon monoxide detectors. We will be able to apply for an MTA risk reduction grant which will be available in the spring.
- Early voting: Wanda explained that voting changes in Michigan for 2024 include a requirement to provide 9 days of early on-site voting to residents. Each precinct does not have to provide an early voting site, but at least one site must be available in the county. Motion by Ray, second Steve to allow Houghton Township to join with other townships to allow voting at a consolidated site. Motion carried unanimously.
- Pumping of septic tanks and other routine maintenance: Discussion regarding the need to establish a regular schedule to pump out the deer park septic. Discussion revealed that the Houghton Township Square Park septic system is not well understood. The board recognizes that a better understanding of the operation is needed. Ray will handle these matters.
- Lawn mower: A decision was made to continue using the recently repaired lawnmower. We will evaluate the need for a new lawn mower in the next fiscal year.
- Cemetery roads: Steve has received one bid for road repair and construction. He will get two other estimates prior to making a recommendation.
- Strategic Planning: Wanda suggested that strategic planning be completed prior to the end of the year utilizing a SWOT (**S**trengths/**W**eaknesses/**O**pportunities/**T**hreats) analysis. In order to obtain input from all residents a survey will be developed. More information will be available in the future.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS.

Assessing – Sara Huuki: Not in attendance. No report.

Water Department – Mel Jones: Mel reported no problems. Water samples good.

Cemetery/Committee – Wanda Kolb/Steve Kline– Steve is planning another work day this month to add additional markers. Funeral directors have commented on the ease of finding grave sites because of the marking system.

Elections/Preventive Maintenance – Wanda Kolb: Dominion voting has done an inspection of all voting equipment and has completed an upgrade.

General Maintenance – Dave Schumacher – no report.

Parks – Dan Steck: no report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- EGLE information about backflow prevention testing credentials requirement. Mel reported that this does not affect us. There are only a few people with this system and it is being handled correctly by them.
- Curbside Trash pickup: Tom reported on the September Allouez Township meeting he attended in which Waste Management (WM) was present to answer questions. The cost of curbside pick up is \$24/month. Depending on the cost of gas, a surcharge of up to a maximum of 5% is possible. Rates are for 6 months or 12 months. WM will not travel down private roads. Residents would have to bring

their trash to the main road. WM will deal directly with the customer for billing. Houghton Township would provide a list of names and addresses of those persons who wish to participate. It was suggested that we invite WM to the November meeting to be available to answer questions. The clerk will send out a notice to residents. The treasurer will provide a list of names and addresses. Tom will follow up with waste management.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Elaine Hall reported that October 7 is the last day that the museum will be open. Jim Huovinen provided a memo to board members regarding a new possible location for a dry hydrant in Eagle River and suggested that Allouez Township fire department should see if they can pump out of the dam. Following a discussion Ray indicated he would follow up with Don Piche, Chairman of the Keweenaw County Commissioners. Gary Bays acknowledged Linda Kline for her effort in attempting to obtain grant money for the water project. Ken Johnson asked about the dying cedar trees in the deer park. Dave Schumacher indicated he will get to them as time permits. Kathy Johnson commended Dan Steck on the Park grand opening celebration.

Meeting adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m. Motion by Tom, seconded by Steve, motion passed unanimously.

Next regular meeting – October 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Wanda Kolb, Clerk
Houghton Township

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, Wanda Kolb, the appointed Clerk for the Township of Houghton, Keweenaw County, Michigan, DO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the certain proceedings taken by the Township Board of said Township at a regular board meeting held on the 19th day of June, 2023.

Wanda Kolb, Clerk, Houghton Township