

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD**

Monday, August 19, 2024

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, Deputy Clerk Linda Paradiso, Treasurer Mary Long, Trustee Tom Hall, Trustee Steve Kline

MEMBERS ABSENT: Clerk Wanda Kolb

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

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:

- Motion by Tom Hall, seconded by Steve Kline, to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2024 Regular Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion by Tom Hall, seconded by Steve Kline, to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion by Steve Kline, seconded by Tom Hall, to approve the payment of bills. Motion passed unanimously by roll call.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS: None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Letter received early August 2024 from Ryan C. Plecha, attorney for the Fitzgerald Restaurant, regarding the Fitz request for the Township to vote on the requested disclaiming of its rights and interest to the ROW property. Linda Paradiso read the letter aloud. The Township received a reply letter from the Township attorney, Pat Greeley, advising the Township to abstain from voting at this time. Ray Chase read the letter aloud. Due to not having a full Board present and on Township attorney's advice, the Township abstained from voting at this time.
- BOE has reported that reimbursement for the February 2024 Presidential Primary will be issued on October 31, 2024.

- MTA Fall Regional Meetings are scheduled in Sep and Oct 2024. The meeting in Marquette will take place on October 3, 2024. MTA members are encouraged to attend. A flyer was passed out to Board members regarding the meeting and registration.
- MiEHDWIS web portal enrollment: Linda Paradiso has activated an account for Houghton Township water supply.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Elimination of Keweenaw County Zoning responsibilities. Ray Chase has reported to the County that Houghton Township is not able to perform its own zoning.
- Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO). MTA has a draft ordinance that would give Townships more input into the process of zoning for renewable energy projects, such as wind farms. The State would still have the final say in zoning approvals within a Township. The Township decided to take no action at this time.
- Cemetery Ordinance. Linda Paradiso prepared the following draft documents for Board review: revised Cemetery Ordinance (2024-01), Plot Purchase Agreement, Burial Authorization, Cemetery Price List, Procedures, and an updated comparative price list between Chassell, Eagle Harbor, Lakeview (Calumet) and Sherman township cemeteries. Grant and Allouez Townships were contacted but no ordinance or price information was available. Tom Hall and Sheryl Becker mentioned that the Ordinance might contain a clause that if an active service member or veteran is to be interred, the Clerk be notified so that appropriate service-related acknowledgements may be made. The Board was requested to review, provide edits and/or suggested changes, and to vote on the final documents no later than October 2024 Board Meeting.
- FOIA Cost Itemization review and approve. The Board reviewed the costs included in the FOIA Detailed Cost Itemization document. It appeared there may be a typo in 1. Labor Cost for Copying/Duplication, in that the Hourly Wage Charged is \$16.00, but the Charge per increment was stated as \$0.10. It would appear the Charge per increment should be \$4.00, per the other Labor costs listed in the document. The Board tabled a decision until this discrepancy is explained or rectified.

- Rethinking Township Board meetings. The Board briefly discussed the possibility of going to less frequent meetings due to the limited number of Township year-round full-time residents to serve as Board members. MTA allows for no fewer than quarterly meetings (4 meetings/year). Less frequent meetings would allow for more full-time residents not present year-round to become Board members. All MTA requirements would need to be met to enable Houghton Township to do so, including post-audit review of bill pay, etc. It was reported by Mark Erhart, Houghton Township Assessor, that Elm River Township meets less than monthly (6 times/year), and we were encouraged to reach out to John Reynolds, Elm River Township Supervisor, to learn more about how this works effectively for the Township.
- Music in the Park Thrive Drive fundraiser. The event raised \$1817.00 minus \$74.00 for the food license for a net revenue of \$1743.00. The largest donation came from the sale of food kindly donated by the Fitz (\$630.00) followed by the 50/50 raffle (\$257.00) and bake sale (\$256.00).
- Expenditure Authorization and Approvals Policy. The Board agreed to review this document in detail by next Board meeting. Having a Township credit card was discussed. It was reported by Mel Jones that the Township had a credit card in the past and it proved problematic logistically to access the card when needed. Having a debit card also was discussed but would pose the same logistic problems with only 1 card issued. Having multiple cards may solve this issue but may create other problems.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- **Assessor:** Mark Erhart was introduced as our new Assessor. He reported the computer, key and files were all in good order from our previous Assessor and he is ready to go to work. Welcome Mark!
- **Water Department:** Mel Jones reported a leak at Les Ferge's home which was repaired by Mel, Dave Schumacher and Hyrkas Plumbing. Monthly samples remain good.
- **Cemetery:** Ray Chase discussed with Ed Cole the possibility of donating land around the perimeter of the Cemetery to include the graves currently outside of the cemetery boundary with an additional buffer zone, and Mr. Cole has kindly agreed to donate said land. A drawing was prepared by Steve Kline that includes a new two-way drive with turn-around on the east side of

the cemetery. A certified survey is required to make the deed transfer. A survey cost proposal has been received from UP Engineers and the Board is obligated to speak with an additional certified surveyor before making a final decision on awarding a survey contract.

- **Elections:** Linda Paradiso reported Houghton Township Early Voting July 27 – August 4 in Eagle Harbor had 4 voters the Primary Election on August 6 in Houghton Township had 28 voters for a total of 32 Houghton Township voters for the August 2024 election.
- **General Maintenance:** Dave Schumacher reported the sand was distributed under the merry-go-round, slide and swing set and repairs were made to the slide. Jim Huovinen and Steve Kline reported that the two damaged platform sections on the merry-go-round over which an X was placed with blue tape previously now have holes through the surface. The Board requested that Dave tape off these sections immediately so they are not used and to repair/replace the damaged surfaces with plywood.
- **Park:** Dan Steck reports no issues.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **EGLE DWSRF FY 2025 application.** Linda Paradiso reported EGLE has provided a preliminary score of 70 for our application; same as last year. We would not expect it to change, however, if there are fewer applications that contain less lead pipe and PFAS/PFOS remedies, a score of 70 may provide partial funding. We will have more information from EGLE in Sep – Oct. If unsuccessful, we may want to work with the USDA Rural Development (RD) to secure a loan to build the storage tank, make pump house improvements and water line replacement. Sherman and Eagle Harbor townships both secured their water system improvement loans via RD. Linda has a contact there, courtesy of Traverse Engineering and had one preliminary discussion with them in 2023.
- **UP Engineering Bridge Evaluation:** Gary Bays reported they are planning to conduct the bridge safety inspection in Oct – Nov.
- **Water system training.** Robby Fischer is the emergency back-up designee. Mel and Robby are in the process of organizing the training.
- **Deer Park Cleanup:** Gary Erickson had volunteered to take this on with his son. Gary was not present at this meeting but had reported earlier that he was waiting for his son's availability and cooler weather this fall. Dave

Schumacher reported the septic tanks may need pumping. Ray Chase said he will contact Gordy's to get them pumped.

- Houghton Township building design considerations. Steve Kline reported this document is posted to our website. He encourages anyone who plans renovation to their structures or new construction to take these design suggestions into consideration in order to preserve the historic nature of the Township.
- Leak Freeze Sensor. Steve Kline reported the leak freeze sensor, which was provided free to the Township, makes the connection is via cell phone. Given the difficulty with cell phone coverage in Eagle River, Steve worked with the company representative, was able to get it to connect while in Larium, brought it back to Eagle River and connected it in the Township office near the intake water line. It may work intermittently or not at all given the poor cell connection. He will work with other full-time residents to activate the app on their phones so that if there is a leak/freeze, they will be contacted.
- Dumpster relocation and enclosure. Tom Hall provided a drawing noting where the dumpster location might be at the east side of the Houghton Township Square Park near Pine Street. He has staked out a possible site. After some discussion, the Board will continue to explore options for exact location and enclosure.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Sheryl Becker suggested the Cemetery Ordinance contain a clause stipulating if a veteran or active service member is to be interred, the Clerk be notified.

Steve Kline mentioned that Michigan townships are spending an inordinate amount of time hosting Early Voting in small townships with few voters at great expense to resource-limited townships. Linda Paradiso mentioned that many townships have expressed same via MTA blogs.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Tom, seconded by Steve to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Next regular meeting – September 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Linda Paradiso, Deputy Clerk
Houghton Township

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, Linda Paradiso, the Deputy 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 August, 2024

Linda Paradiso, Deputy Clerk, Houghton Township