

MINUTES OF THE AU GRES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING August 8th, 2023 ~ 7:00 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE: Supervisor Jim Herzog, Clerk Michael Oxley, Treasurer Patricia Tremble, Trustee Penny Kurchak and Trustee Jan Bullock

ABSENT: None

ATTENDEES: Bill Bullock, David Enos, Art Gallop, Penny Thomas, Jesse Young and Chuck and Kay Woods

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting began at 7:00pm with the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL of AGENDA: Motion made by Trustee Penny Kurchak to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Treasurer Patricia Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Agenda approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Penny Thomas (Shenfield Road) asked when the 'Shenfield Extension' was going to be turned into a road, as it is nearly impassible now, having to drive on the shoulder to avoid the holes. Supervisor Jim Herzog explained that the land division paperwork, giving the township the road right-of-ways needed to turn the extension into a road, is ready to go. Then Road Commission should start work on the project in September.

APPROVAL of the MINUTES: Motion made by Tremble to approve minutes of the July 11h, 2023 Board of Trustee meeting. Motion supported by Clerk Michael Oxley. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Minutes approved.

PAYMENT OF BOOK OF BILLS: Motion made by Oxley to approve the July 2023 book of bills as presented. Motion supported by Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved

TREASURER'S REPORT: Read by Treasurer Patricia Tremble. Motion made by Oxley to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved

BOARD REPORTS:

AUGRES-SIMS-WHITNEY FIRE AUTHORITY: The meeting held at Whitney Township was called to order by Olen Swartz. Thomas Brandimore gave the treasurers report, stating that the Consumers Energy bill was \$2,005.85 as a result of a broken meter not reporting usage from March through July. There was discussion of the MMR ambulance service regarding the lease renewal at Au Gres Sims fire hall. There's been no word on the Michigan Fire Grant application (\$40,000 to buy new fire equipment). Fire Chief Kurt Hummerickhouse reported 34 alarms that were storm related and that fire crews were out for about 17 hours and Consumers Energy was billed for the time the fire department spent on down power lines. The Town and Country bar/restaurant donated pizzas for the fire fighters. There have been three new applicants to join the fire department. Next meeting to be held on Thursday, August 17th at Au Gres Fire Hall.

HERITAGE ROUTE AUTHORITY: Depot days will be on October 7th/8th (Saturday and Sunday). There was the usual discussion about the Santa Train and related topics. Jan Bullock presented the Depot's audit. Consumers Energy representative Bob Balzer spoke to the group about putting in charging stations for electric vehicles at the Depot. Overall the sentiment was that there were so few parking places at the depot now, as well as the space needed for the many events every year. Bullock mentioned working the AHRA Beer Tent and receiving \$30 in tips (low pay for six servers) but had a fun time.

CEMETERY REPORT: Trustee Kurchak reported that cemetery was looking good. The plant growth on the banks of the Amen drain ditch was now hiding the downed trees. Adding, again, that anyone who wanted the wood was free for the taking. Kurchak also complimented Dominic Ruiz for the grounds keeping work he did at the boardwalk park (Santiago road).

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Art Gallop Zoning presented his written report to the board, reading from it to the attendees. Fences going up in three different locations. His meeting with our EGLE representative on a Point Au Gres road property and if a home could be built there. Also spending many days during the month driving the roads, following up on issued permits and checking for activity needing a permit.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Amend the Au Gres Township Group Pension Plan to correct employee mandatory and voluntary contributions not being taxed when deducted from paychecks. Oxley explained that the having a pension plan for board members was a state law. But past voluntary contributions not being taxed as they should have been. The resolution (provided by our plan representative Amanda Dusenbery) being considered would correct that oversight. Motion made by Oxley to adopt the resolution as presented. Motion supported by Bullock. Roll Call Vote: Kurchak ~ Yes, Bullock ~ Yes, Herzog ~ Yes, Oxley ~ Yes, Tremble ~ Yes. All yeas. No nays. Resolution adopted. Herzog to sign the resolution. Oxley to send it to John Hancock (pension plan).
- b. Penny Kurchak spoke on her attendance to the Emergency Management meetings held through the county (and Red Cross org) on July 21st at the Community Center in Standish. Reporting that until early last year there was no written emergency plan for Arenac County. Emergency Manager for the county Mr. Mike Bowers was the driving force behind the plan. At first she was lost because people were speaking in acronyms such as LEPC and LPT (Local Emergency Planning Commission and Local Planning Team). What she came away with was that there are no stupid questions. And Stephanie Buffman is the one to ask. Now with the plan there are emergency shelters available, with rapid response in an emergency disaster (such as the 500 year flood). It was very educational.
- c. Clerk Oxley explained the need for an amendment to the townships 2023-2024 budget. How the normal routine is to adjust budget over expenditures at the end of the fiscal year as needed, by moving unspent monies to cover them. The treasurers office purchased a new desk, which Oxley thought exceed the budgeted amount. After closer examination there was no over expenditure - and no action was taken.
- d. Marijuana Processor applications (Medical/Adult Use) - Holland Farms at 560 E Huron road: A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on July 31st 2023 at which the PC board unanimously approved the application and motioned that the township board to approve the processing permits.

One (1) Medical Marijuana Processor and one (1) Adult-Use Processor permit at 560 East Huron Road, Omer MI 48749 ~ property ID #003-0-017-300-005-00. Applicant Holland Farms, LLC an existing facility, previous permitted by the Township for Medical and Adult-use grows.

Oxley reminded the board that this is a previously permitted facility, in good standing for three years, and made a motion to approve the processing permits for Holland Farms. Motion supported by Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Permits approved. Oxley to issue certificates and the \$10,000 payment to be deposited in the marijuana fund.

- e. Annually, for the past 5 years or more, the township has donated money to the Au Gres Historical Society. Oxley related to attendees that the state only allows township funds to be spent in very limited ways. One of which is to support history of the township. Last year we donated \$500.00 to the AGHS. Asking the board if we wanted to do the same this year, and did we want to donate the same amount (or more since we just received \$100,000 in excise tax rebates from the state). Motion was made by Oxley to donate \$500.00 to the AGHS. Motion supported by Tremble. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion approved. Bullock to cut a check when she pays next months bills.1
- f. Tremble, the township's board representative on the Planning Commission spoke on the topic of a Solar Farms ordinance. Explaining the difficulties and unknowns with solar farms, and how the planning commission worked for months, struggling with the reduction in farmland compared to the benefit of solar farm income for land owners. How the county itself did not have a solar farm plan and how they looked at other jurisdictions solar ordinances and still were so many questions. Board member Ross Maser suggested that there be a 5 year moratorium on commercial solar farms, which resulted in the following recommendation to the township board:

Motion made by Maser to place a five (5) year ban on commercial solar farms in Au Gres Township, in order to study long term effects, at the same time not to stifle companies wishing to approach the Planning Commission with solar projects. Motion supported by Wilson. Voice vote. All Ayes. No Nays. One Absent. Motion approved. Oxley to inform the township board at an upcoming meeting.

A motion was made by Bullock to adopt the moratorium as recommended by the Planning Commission. Motion supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No nays. Motion adopted. Oxley concluded that the topic would be revisited at the same time as the 5 year master plan is due to be re-evaluated.

- g. Brush hogging the township roadsides. Herzog presented a work order for cleaning up roadside intersections. The Road Commission's work order was for \$5600/00 (total of 40 hours at \$140.00/hr). The board agreed that it needed to be done, as it was each year. Questions were raised whether a local contractor would be less expensive. Topic tabled until Herzog could follow up on pricing.
- h. Herzog reported to the board members that Consumers Energy was interested in using our property (corner of US-23 and Swenson) as a staging area for Santiago Substation Project. Offering \$2000 per month. Herzog had made an appointment with Nicole King our EGLE representative to see if there was a conflict as the property has a pond and could be designated wetlands.
- i. Other Road Commission work orders: Herzog spoke about being approached by Brad Stauffer from ACRC about using the ground up concrete from the Standish round-about construction on some of our roads - at \$15.00 a ton it sounded like a good deal. A caveat was that there may be bits of metal in the mix, which would be scanned by a magnet after the mix would be spread on a road. Herzog to visit a road site where the material was already used, and report back to the board. If it was worthy there was discussion on using it as a base on Manor road from Davis to Hale, looking towards a possible paving project on that stretch of road. Herzog presented some figures on the subject.

BOARD COMMENT: Tremble asked about the 2nd pass of brining the roads, when it was going to be done, noting that there has been grading done of some township roads, destroying the previous brining. Tremble praised Ken Swartz's job he did mowing the roadsides. Then asked about the Road Commission and how last year they sprayed herbicide rampantly on some of our roads. Was that going to be done again, as it was so unsightly and for what purpose? Finally Tremble compliments Chuck Wood's work on straightening out the crooked planks on the board walk. Great job!

PUBLIC COMMENT: Dave Enos requested that the Shenfield extension be graded before any brining was put down. Anticipating the next question from Enos, Herzog related the current status of the project turning the extension into a township/county road. Enos asked about what he had heard that a resident at a bread and breakfast rental assaulted a neighbor and his girlfriend. Herzog replied that he was aware of the situation, and had been confidentially told by the officer who followed up on the complaint that what transpired was not what was being purported.

ADJOURNMENT: TIME – 8:30pm. Motion made by Tremble to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Kurchak. Voice vote: All yeas. No Nays. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes approved at the regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____

James Herzog, Supervisor _____

Michael Oxley, Clerk _____