

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP Township Board Minutes January 24, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Supervisor Chockley at 8350 Main Street.

PLEDGE/INVOCATION

Supervisor Chockley led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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|------------------------------|---------|
| Marlene Chockley, Supervisor | Present |
| Kathleen Manley, Clerk | Present |
| Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer | Present |
| Tawn Beliger | Present |
| Janet Chick, Trustee | Present |
| Wayne Dockett, Trustee | Present |
| Jacki Otto, Trustee | Present |

Also present:

Controller Richard Yaeger
Township Assessor Tom Monchak
Township Attorney Brad Maynes
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the community

ADOPT AGENDA

Beliger asked that *Assignment of Non-Statutory Duties previously held by the Township Manager to the Supervisor* be added. After discussion it was agreed to make all items Agenda items (rather than Discussion items) and to include Beliger's item under *Township Manager Options*.

- **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

David Gordon, 5558 Hellner Road, and Mark Stanalajczko, 8352 Kearney Road, commented on the purpose of Workshop meetings, the issue of whether to hire a Township Manager, and appointments to the Planning Commission.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dockett commented on recent Police overtime hours worked. Chick, Chockley, and Dockett responded to public comments. Otto, Zelenock, and Chick made comments about the history and issue of hiring a Township Manager and about assigning non-statutory duties to elected officials and Trustees.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chockley provided information about property assessments and the Board of Review meeting schedule. Beliger and Chick read messages from two residents, one in favor of hiring a Township Manager and one opposed.

AGENDA ITEMS

1.

Resolution 17-533: Poverty Exemption Guidelines

Township Assessor Tom Monchak explained the purpose of the guidelines and the need for the Board to adopt them. He noted new language had been added which may make it unnecessary for the Board to act on this each year.

- **Motion:** Chick moved, Otto supported, to adopt Resolution 17-533, Northfield Township Policy and Guidelines for Property Tax Poverty Exemptions. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote. Resolution adopted.**

2.

Pond Hockey Parking Fees

The Board discussed the recommendation made by the Downtown Planning Group on November 29, 2016, regarding use of the new downtown park for parking for the Pond Hockey civic event. They discussed details including how to manage the collection of the parking fees and insuring site restoration, as well as the need to establish policies about the use of Township facilities.

- **Motion:** Otto moved, Beliger supported, to approve the recommendation of the Downtown Planning Group to charge a fee of 5% of parking proceeds up to \$500 for the Pond Hockey event, and that those monies collected be allocated to the Northfield Community Park for any maintenance and upkeep. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

- **Motion:** Otto moved, Chick supported, that the Michigan Pond Hockey Association is granted an extension through February 28, 2017, to run their event, contingent upon them updating the dates of their permits and inspections with the Township. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

3.

Bills from January 10, 2017, Consent Agenda

Chockley explained that these bills were not paid on January 10th due to questions about specific items. Zelenock answered questions from Dockett, and Dockett noted higher than usual Police overtime.

- **Motion:** Chockley moved, Otto supported, to approve the bills from the January 17, 2017, Township Board agenda. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

4.

Budget Explanation with Cash Flow and

5. Fund Balance Policy

Controller Rick Yaeger made a slide presentation about the budget, the budgeting process, funds the Township maintains, and cash flow. The Board asked questions and discussed various matters, including the Board policy

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regarding maintaining the fund balance level at a level of 85% of the annual Township budget. It was noted that expenditures for large items in 2016, including the downtown park, brought the balance below 85%.

**6.
Township Management Options**

The Board reviewed materials and discussed options for managing the Township including hiring an Interim Township Manager, beginning a search to fill the vacant Township Manager position, and assigning non-statutory duties to one or more people and compensating them for that work. Subjects discussed included the history leading up to the hiring of a Manager, what duties should be assigned, what the salary range should be, whether an official search is required (as opposed to hiring someone already known to the Board), how a manager and elected officials would work together, how office duties have been handled since the Township Manager left, and the idea of having an elected official staffing the office at all times.

The Board also discussed whether Chockley should be hired in lieu of a Manager, Howard Fink's accomplishments as Manager, whether a postcard should be sent inviting public comment at a special meeting, and whether the changes in staffing during the past several years would make it possible to proceed without a professional manager.

David Gordon, Craig Warburton, Udo Huff, 6431 Whitmore Lake Road, and Jim Nelson, 7777 Sutton Road, spoke in opposition to hiring a Manager. Patrick Kelley spoke in favor, and Chuck Steuer, 760 Six Mile Road, said management of the Township is the Board's responsibility regardless of the management structure.

Chockley called a five minute recess

Chockley noted that she had learned during the break that the hiring process for Township Manager Fink lasted more than a year.

- ▶ **Motion:** Dockett moved, Otto supported, to advertise for and hire a Township Manager.

Beliger asked that the motion be amended to add language about assigning non-statutory duties in the interim. Dockett and Otto declined to allow the amendment.

The Board discussed options for management of the office prior to someone being hired, the idea of asking for more public input, the cost of a manager, and other models that might work including becoming a charter township or using an office manager position.

Motion failed 3—4 on a roll call vote, Zelenock, Chockley, Manley, and Beliger opposed.

- ▶ **Motion:** Beliger moved, Manley supported, to assign the Supervisor the non-statutory duties that were held by the previous Township Manager and for the Supervisor be compensated for such duties to reflect the workload, the term of which assignment may be terminated at any time, and that this be for an interim period of time until a final decision is made by the Board to either hire a Township Manager or not.

There was discussion about what the duties would be, and whether there would be a conflict of interest.

Beliger withdrew her motion and asked that the topic be added to the next agenda.

The Board discussed the merits of whether to solicit additional input from the public, and which duties would be appropriate for the Supervisor to take on.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Beliger supported, to direct the Township attorney, with labor counsel, if necessary, to review Township Manager duties and evaluate what is appropriate for elected officials to perform. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

David Gordon, Chuck Steuer, and Jim Nelson objected to actions being taken at meetings advertised as workshops and made comments about hiring a Township Manager.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board members made general comments about the positive discussion during the meeting, invited public comment on the Township Manager issue, requested a presentation from the Township's consulting engineer about the sewer study, suggested establishing a tornado protocol before spring, and reported on the Board retreat on January 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Chockley moved, Chick supported, that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 P.M.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble. Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:
Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~; wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on February 14, 2017.

Kathleen Manley, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/