

Supervisor's Report

From: Marlene Chockley

Date: March 11, 2017

Dear Board of Trustees,

Below are brief synopses of the various activities with which I have been occupied in no particular order.

Salary Study for Staff and Staffing Needs

I am continually impressed by the quality of people we employ and they go the extra mile for us, but I am concerned about burn out. Our staffing levels are not adequate and a priority has not been put on the training and tools that can give our staff confidence and boost morale. We need to look at better compensation and organization or we will lose good people to better paying jobs elsewhere where the work load is not abusive.

We are a small township in population, but we still need to provide the level and consistency of customer service in the main office that our citizens expect. To do that, I believe we need to rethink the part-timer policy for some of our staff positions or look at creative job sharing and prioritize toward what is most valuable to our citizens and businesses.

The economy is improving. We have seen an increase of \$35,000 in our building receipts since the fiscal year started last July, yet we have done nothing to help our staff and make sure our processes can efficiently handle the extra work load. Some of our customers are experiencing difficulty because we cannot turn around projects timely enough. We need to look at having regular office hours for our zoning administrator and building official.

2017-2018 Budget

I attended a budget training seminar put on by the Michigan Township Association on February 16th. The training included examples of best practices and priority-based budgeting that I believe will be very helpful to us as we consider how our goals as a board can be accomplished.

We operate on a shoestring. Last fiscal year we took in a mere \$263,500 in tax revenue for the general fund—that is the 0.79 mills that we levy. While we do get state revenue sharing dollars, that only amounted to \$652,000. Our total general fund budget is \$1.28 million. We need to take a hard look at how we prioritize those dollars to create value for our citizens. We had the board retreat, but we still need to prioritize the actions we identified. I would like us to do that in the next month so we can use that information in the budget process.

Farmland and Natural Areas Preservation Committee

The Farmland and Natural Areas Preservation Committee met twice last month discussing purchase of development rights and transfer of development rights programs. We heard a presentation on those and conservation easements. We will start to draft some recommendations in April.

Downtown Planning Group

The Downtown Planning Group met at the end of February to receive a draft of the Master Plan for the North Village (aka, the Northfield Community Park). We are currently providing feedback so that we have a more complete version for the presentation for the joint meeting of the planning commission and the board of trustees on March 28th. The DDA and the Parks and Rec Board are also specifically invited to that meeting.

DDA

The DDA will meet on March 15th. Barb Watkins and I met about its agenda and are hoping to rejuvenate the group.

North South Commuter Rail Study Group

I attended the North South Commuter Rail Study Group on February 21. They are looking at a multi-modal stop at 8 Mile Rd and US 23. Such a stop could be a boon to the downtown area and encourage businesses that serve a commuter population. There will be a community meeting held here at the township hall at 6:30 PM on March 21 to discuss the project.

Meetings with Businesses

Several businesses are hoping to locate or expand in the township. I attended a concept meeting for Bobber Down and a meeting to clarify some of the fire suppression issues related to converting a building previously classified as a mercantile into an assembly use for Living Water Church. Both are making progress. We have very recently been approached by a realtor looking for land on which to build a senior housing development. I provided him a link to our master plan and will be meeting with him next week.

Wastewater Treatment

An ongoing issue is that the township's limited sewer capacity is a barrier to attracting residential development in several areas of the township where the master plan would allow subdivisions. I have been discussing our options with Tim Hardesty, Dan Willis, and Brian Rubel and hope and expect that we as a board can develop a policy that would address the situation. The discussion is on this agenda so that we can begin to make progress.

Closed Session Items

I have had several conversations with our attorneys concerning pending or potential litigation and negotiations that the board will be apprised of in closed session.

Controller

Lenore Zelenock, Jennifer Carlisle, and I (with Tawn Beliger and Janet Chick for 2 of the candidates) have interviewed three controller candidates as of this writing. Two of the three candidates have resumes in the packet. We will likely have a recommendation at the meeting after we complete a check of references.

Redevelopment Ready Communities

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation has been holding training sessions on best practices as it relates to planning efforts and promoting your community. I attended a training on recruitment and education for boards and commissions, identifying redevelopment ready sites (such as the many empty storefronts in our downtown), developing an economic development strategy, and marketing

and promotion. This program offers very valuable tools to help us provide excellent customer service and attract the high quality projects that we desire.

Utility Evaluation

Jennifer Carlisle and I met with representatives of the company whose equipment heats the public safety building. We are looking into a system improvement that would increase its efficiency and save us in energy costs.

Code Enforcement

The code enforcement officer has been hired and will begin to work through the complaints on file. He is receiving training with our building official, Kurt Weiland. I have done some follow up on various code complaints that we have received in the meantime. I have also taken many calls on a multitude of other issues and worked through or referred many of them.

Intergovernmental Coordination

I have attended several intergovernmental meetings representing the township: the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS), Urban County, and Middle Huron Watershed Council. Upcoming meetings include SEMCOG and the Whitmore Lake Chamber.

Parks Parcels

We completed the purchase of the three parcels in the Summer Homes area to add to the natural areas parkland.

Personnel Committee

The personnel committee met last week to review the employee manual and job descriptions, but we were only able to begin to review the job description for the township manager. Jacki Otto was charged with taking our comments and developing a draft job description. In the meantime, the township manager position was posted with a link to a more descriptive recruitment piece on our website. We do need to define the duties much better and identify the goals that the person needs to meet to be successful. I hope that the committee can reconvene in the near future to continue the work.

Communication

While Facebook has a place, the information is not always accurate or helpful, nor is it accessed by a majority of the community. Even our e-newsletters only hit a small percentage of the community. And then, how widespread is the readership? Messaging will be very important as we move forward and it would be helpful to have a positive and useful means of disseminating information to reflect well on our community. I plan to look at the costs associated with mailing a quarterly newsletter to our citizens and businesses.

Please feel welcome to contact me about any of these topics. Thank you.

Marlene Chockley