

Blendon Township
Board Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2021

1. **The meeting was called to order** at 7:00 pm by Supervisor, Kevin Peters
2. **Invocation** was given by Trustee, Jeff Meyer
3. **The Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by attendees.

4. **Roll Call: PRESENT:** Kevin Peters, Supervisor
Greg Golembiewski, Treasurer
Jeff Meyer, Trustee
Don Vander Kuyl, Trustee
Robin Overway, Clerk

ATTENDING: Kurt Gernaat, Fire Chief (absent)

5. **Motion to approve the agenda** with the following additions was made Greg Golembiewski, support by Robin Overway
 - *New Business: (b) Resolution 2021-11.01 then adjust all the letters accordingly.*

Motion Carried 5-0
6. **Motion to approve the October 18, 2021, meeting minutes** with the following correction was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Jeff Meyer:
 - *Strike 14(a), last bullet point, from the record.*
 - *(Was not approved at the meeting as worded)*

Motion Carried 5-0
7. **Motion to approve the invoices dated October 19, 2021, to November 15, 2021,** was made by Greg Golembiewski, support by Don Vander Kuyl.

Motion Carried 5-0
8. **Public Comment for items on the agenda:**
 - Joel Hoving:
 - Questioned why some of the hardwood trees were removed during the selective cutting process, board stated that they would remain.
 - Supervisor Peters stated that the additional trees that were removed, at the recommendation of the harvester, were approved by the township to allow the existing undergrowth to fill in and prosper.
 - Questioned what was proposed for the trails at the cemetery.
 - Supervisor Peters stated that the details would be presented under new business.
 - Trisha Henderson: 6766 – 64th Ave
 - Comments on the Township Manager position.
 - Encouraged the board to be diligent in making sure the correct process is in place for the selection of this individual.
 - ✓ Possibly consider an interview committee made up of board members, staff, and residents.

- Encouraged the public posting of the position through a wide variety of places like posting companies, websites, social media, print, therefore covering a wide area.
 - ✓ Golembiewski assured Ms. Henderson that the Board would take everything that she addressed into consideration.

9. Treasurer's Report:

- As Submitted
- Winter 2021 taxes to be mailed 12.01.2021

10. Clerk's Report:

- As Submitted

11. Supervisor's Report:

- Verbal
- Working on the following:
 - Securing the easements for the bike path
 - Township Manager Ordinance
 - Township Manager Job Description
 - Finishing the Employee Handbook

12. Monthly Reports:

- a. Fire Department Activity Report
 - None Submitted
- b. Building Permit Report
 - As Submitted
- c. Building and Grounds Report
 - None Submitted
- d. Preliminary Planning Commission Minutes
 - As Submitted
 - Highlighted by Trustee, Jeff Meyer

13. New Business:

- a. **Cemetery-Fire Station Trails:**
 - Supervisor Peters highlighted the details of email correspondence that has taken place between himself, Chief Gernaat, and the designer-donor.
 - Resident-donor presented his concept of a trail system to the Board.
 - Feels that it is a great existing space in the township that could be utilized by the residents for activities such as walking, jogging, cross country skiing, etc.
 - Just needs a little clean-up of debris left over after the harvesting of the trees and some then some added signage.
 - Explained that the trail heads and trails would all be clearly and properly marked therefore allowing users to be respectful of private property and property lines.
 - 70%-80% of the trails in the proposed concept already exist, they just need to be cleaned up.
 - Resident, Shane Herrema, owner of Integrity Tree Service has offered the use of his machinery for the construction of the remaining new paths.
 - Supervisor Peters went to the site and walked the proposed plan. He stated the following:

- Feels that the proposed triple loop be revamped by omitting the outer loop therefore moving the path even further from private property lines.
 - The path that is being proposed is at least 100 feet from the Hoving property.
 - The donor is aware that the location of the proposed trails is on property that is planned for future cemetery expansion.
- Vander Kuyl: Questioned the next steps. Sympathy for the private property owners.
 - Golembiewski: Applauded the donor for their generous offer. Questioned items such as the availability of restrooms, maintenance, and upkeep. Concerned that the board turned down the idea of a skatepark and the donation for that is currently just sitting in an account, how would it look to now approve another use in the same area.
 - Vander Kuyl: Stated that the trails would not need amenities such as bathrooms. Many of the existing parks in Ottawa County do not have any amenities. A plus is that this proposal is not a 'gathering park' like a playground/skatepark would be, therefore a nicer option for the surrounding residents. Questioned the availability of parking.
 - Peters: The previous donation was not earmarked specifically for a 'skatepark.' Does not feel the need for public restrooms – the property is already being used as proposed. He will reach out the previous donor for input on the use of the funds.
 - ***Motion to table the discussion of the cemetery-fire station trails until the December meeting was made by Kevin Peters, support by Don Vander Kuyl.***

Motion Carried 5-0

b. **Resolution 2021-11.01**

- Supervisor Peters read the resolution to the Board
 - Resolution recognizing the years for service of Jim Van Farowe
- Peters read a letter that was submitted from Jim Van Farowe to the Board.
- A luncheon is being held as a thank you.
- ***Motion to approve Resolution 2021-11.01 as presented was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Robin Overway.***

Roll Call: Yay: Peters, Overway, Golembiewski, Meyer, Vander Kuyl
Nay:

Motion Carried 5-0

c. **Ordinance 2021-11.02:**

- Lois Kossen Rezone request
 - AG to R1
 - Applicant's representative was present
 - Trustee Meyer highlighted the request
- Supervisor Peters addressed a comment that was made at the Planning Commission to the applicant concerning the construction of the 231 bypass; this is not a concern of the applicant.
- ***Motion to approve the rezone of parcel #70-13-31-400-012 from AG Agricultural Preservation to R-1 Low Density Residential was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Keven Peters.***

Roll Call: Yay: Peters, Overway, Golembiewski, Meyer, Vander Kuyl
Nay:

Motion Carried 5-0

d. **Large-Scale Scanner Proposal:**

- Advantages: the ability to scan and save the numerous blueprints that we receive from PCI. Therefore, alleviating the need for physical storage.
- Comparison pricing shown between three companies; Epson, Applied Imaging and Ottawa County IT
- Discussion ensued
- ***Motion to approve the purchase of a large-scale scanner from Ottawa County IT was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Jeff Meyer.***

Motion Carried 5-0

e. **Lawncare and Maintenance:**

- Current Building and Grounds staff will not be returning at the end of the 2021 season.
 - Jim Van Farowe and Bob Beelen are retiring
 - Jake Boverhoff has started his own lawncare company that he is trying to grow.
 - Tyler Peters will be pursuing other career opportunities.
- Supervisor Peters stated that currently the township budgets \$27,600 a year for salaries, fuel and maintenance relating to lawncare.
 - What would be the best interest of the Township moving forward?
 - Try and hire individuals to fill the vacant positions?
 - Get bids for outsourcing to Lawncare Companies?
 - Golembiewski – Stated that the township should look at hiring a large company to do the entire care and maintenance.
 - Lawncare, Fertilizer, Mulch, Leaves, Sprinkler Repair, etc.
 - Golembiewski – advised to go with a one-year contract to see how the company works out.
- Supervisor Peters asked Treasurer Golembiewski if he would head the bidding process by obtaining 4-6 bids and presenting them to the Board.
 - Golembiewski accepted.

f. **2020 Audit Results:**

- Treasurer Golembiewski highlighted
 - It was a clean audit
 - Revenues were up
 - There were no significant differences
 - The Township is in good standing and debt free

g. **ARA Funds:**

- Treasurer Golembiewski reported
 - The first of two checks have been received
 - \$355,000
 - Stated that we should start considering capital projects with the surplus on revenue.
 - Discussion to follow at the December Meeting

14. Old Business:

a. Township Manager:

- Board reviewed the revised ordinance as prepared by Township Attorney, Jim Scales.
- Supervisor Peters reminded the Board that approval of the ordinance does not mean that a Township Manager will be hired. All the ordinance does is give the Board the authority to hire a Township Manager if it so chooses.
- ***Motion to approve Ordinance 2021-11.01, an ordinance giving the Township Board the authority to hire a Township Manager was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Kevin Peters.***

Roll Call: Yay: Peters, Overway, Golembiewski, Meyer, Vander Kuyl
Nay:

Motion Carried 5-0

- Township Manager job description:
 - A formal job description was presented to the Board.

b. Employee Handbook:

- Supervisor Peters expressed his disappointment in the lack of commitment and follow through that has been presented by the Board and Staff. Therefore, the amount of time needed for discussion is considerably lengthened and leads to the possibility of always carrying items from month to month under 'old business' resulting in longer meetings every month.
- Supervisor Peters recounted a timeline of events from the past 2-months concerning the requested revision of the handbook.
 - Board members were asked to provide input to Administration concerning questions, wording, corrections etc. prior to the meeting
 - Apart from Supervisor Peters, this was not completed.
 - Chief Gernaat stated he would contact legal counsel to obtain advice on wording of certain items and how that affects the fire department.
 - This was not completed
 - Based on lack of follow through, and the discussion that ensued among the board, the following items were decided:
 - The cover of the Handbook will be changed to reflect that the content of the Handbook excludes the Fire Department Employees.
 - ✓ The Fire Chief will be responsible for creating a Fire Fighter Employee Handbook that is applicable to his staff.
 - Decisions will be made by the Board on the edited revisions that are currently listed that do not pertain to the fire department.
 - Supervisor Peters went through the Handbook Draft page by page, and each revision was addressed and decided on.
- ***Motion to approve the Employee Handbook with the discussed revisions was made by Kevin Peters, support by Don Vander Kuyl.***

Motion Carried 5-0

15. Public Comments for items that were not on the agenda:

- None from the Public.

- Supervisor Peters stated that Georgetown Township Manager, Dan Carlton, would be retiring in the spring of 2022.
 - Peters has had a conversation with Carlton regarding his future plans and if he might be willing to be used as a resource or consultant to Blenden Township in the development of infrastructure in the township.
 - Carlton stated that he would entertain proposals and offers.

16. Correspondence for Information Purposes:

- a. Letter from EGLE
- b. Bass River / Bass Creek Restoration Project
- c. Ottawa County Department of Strategic Planning

17. Upcoming Events:

- a. Planning Commission Meeting – **December 7, 2021**
- b. Township Board Meeting – **December 20, 2021**

18. Adjournment:

- a. With no other business to be brought before the Board, a motion to adjourn at 8:56 pm was made by Don Vander Kuyl, support by Greg Golembiewski.

Motion Carried 5-0

Recorded by Tina Vander Schuur
Submitted by Robin Overway, Township Clerk