

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
Township Board
LiveMinutes
November 11, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Engstrom at 8350 Main Street.

PLEDGE

Supervisor Engstrom led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Township Board:

Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor	Present
Angela Westover, Clerk	Present
Kathy Braun, Treasurer	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present
Tracy Thomas, Trustee	Present

Planning Commission:

Janet Chick	Present
Marlene Chockley	Present
Brad Cousino	Absent with notice
Kenneth Dignan	Present
Sam Iaquinto	Present
Larry Roman	Present
Mark Stanalajczo	Absent with notice

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink
Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent
Tim Hardesty
Public Safety Director William Wagner
Community Center Director Tammy Averill
Township Attorney Paul Burns
Planning Consultant Laura Kreps, Carlisle-Wortman
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the community

CONSENT AGENDA:

- **Minutes of September 23rd special meeting and October 28th regular meeting**
- **Bills**

Dockett asked that minutes and bills be pulled for discussion. It was agreed to add these as agenda items 3 and 4.

ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA

Engstrom noted that the topic listed for discussion with the Planning Commission should be only Sewer Capacity Report (with "for Proposed Biltmore Development" stricken).

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

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Biltmore Request to Amend Master Plan. [Mary Devlin](#), 9211 Brookside, spoke in favor of development in the Township. [Dale Brewer](#), 11548 East Shore Drive, said Biltmore is following the process required by State law.

The following people spoke in opposition to the Biltmore request to amend the Master Plan:

[Ed Wojtys](#), 6235 Hellner Road
[Susan Wienckowski](#), 5558 Hellner Road
[Kitty Burkhardt](#), 6187 Nollar Road
[David Gordon](#), 5558 Hellner Road
[Heidi Braun](#), 5510 Hellner Road
[Robin Wojtys](#), 6235 Hellner Road
[Mary Christianson](#), 409 East Shore Drive
[Michael Galea](#), 6211 Hellner Road
[Laura Wojtys](#), 6235 Hellner Road
[Craig Warburton](#), 450 W. Joy Road
[Lenore Zelenock](#), 1440 Six Mile Road
[Mike Cicchella](#), 7789 Sutton Road
[Amy Grambeau](#), 5165 Hellner Road
[Pete Misangy](#), 409 E. Shore Drive
[Jeff Souza](#), 7641 Edmund Avenue
[Jim Nelson](#), 7777 Sutton Road

Engstrom thanked Kim Phillips for sending a note to the Board.

REPORTS

Department Heads

Fire. Public Safety Director Wagner read the report summary. In answer to a question from Dockett, Wagner said he is pursuing grant funding.

Police. Public Safety Director Wagner read the report summary.

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Thomas supported, that the sale of Police Department vehicles—2005 Dodge Dakota, 2003 Ford Taurus, and a 2012 Ford Explorer—be approved. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Engstrom supported, that the Police Department request to purchase a new 2015 Chevy Tahoe from Champion Chevrolet at a cost of \$34,534.10. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**
- ▶ *Wastewater Treatment Plant.* Superintendent Hardesty referred to his written report. In answer to a question from Dockett, Hardesty said the sludge hauling contract went out for bids three years ago for a three year period.

Senior Center. Averill referred to her written report and said she and Fink will have more information about the Meals on Wheels proposal at the next meeting.

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Other

Zoning Board of Appeals. Otto announced that Athena Trentin is moving out of state so is resigning in December. She asked that a search for a new member be opened up to the public. She noted that the ZBA is required to have one more Board meeting this year.

Otto also reported that a June variance applicant has asked for a discount on his ZBA fee. She noted that discounts are offered at February and August meetings.

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Dockett supported, that the Township Board apply a discount for Mr. Trim and give him a \$500 discount on his Zoning Board of Appeals fee.

Dockett asked for a roll call vote. Thomas said he would abstain because he does not have enough information. Chick also recommended tabling this.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Braun supported, that this request be tabled.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

Planning Commission. Chick reported that six public hearings were held on November 5th for a request for cell phone tower and zoning ordinance amendments.

Parks and Recreation. Thomas referred to the Township Manager's report.

Township Manager. Fink referred to his written report and answered questions from Dockett.

AGENDA ITEMS

**1.
Health Insurance**

Fink said he is recommending that (a) the Board remove the hard caps (i.e. opt out of Act 152), (b) choose the Silver HSA and Bronze HSA, and (c) increase the health insurance pool by \$40,000 to fund the HSAs. He said he cannot see another way to provide good insurance for employees and member of the Police Department, and without doing this some employees would have to pay \$12,000/year for their insurance.

Jack Schmitz of Burnham & Flower Insurance Group said 90% of the Townships he works with are opting out of the hard caps. He noted that age banding is increasing the costs for Townships more than for other groups.

Dockett objected to spending more money on health insurance.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Engstrom supported, that the Township opt out of Public Act 152. **Motion carried 6—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Westover supported, that the HSA Silver PPO and HSA Bronze PPO insurance plans be approved. **Motion carried 6—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Westover supported, that \$40,000 be transferred from the general fund to fund the cost of health insurance for the Township staff and Police. **Motion carried 6—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Engstrom supported, that the Silver HSA account be funded at minimum at \$5,000 for a family, \$3,300 for a couple, and \$1,650 for an individual. **Motion carried 6—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Engstrom supported, that the Bronze HSA account be funded at minimum at \$6,550 for a family and 3550 for an individual. **Motion carried 6—1 on a voice vote, Dockett opposed.**

2.

Tax Tribunal Case: Mary L. Wolowiec Living Trust vs. Township of Northfield

- ▶ **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, that the negotiated settlement in Tax Tribunal Case 14-005631 be approved. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

3.

Minutes

Dockett made two corrections to the minutes of the October 28th meeting.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Engstrom supported, that the minutes of the regular Township Board meeting of October 28, 2014, be accepted as amended, and to dispense with the reading.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.
- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Engstrom supported, that the minutes of the special Township Board meeting of September 23, 2014, be accepted as presented, and to dispense with the reading.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

4.

Bills

Fink and Wagner answered questions from Dockett about several expenditures including a water heater for the Community Center, repair to a Fire Department utility vehicle, and purchase of uniforms

- ▶ **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Chick supported, that the bills be paid. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

**JOINT SESSION WITH PLANNING COMMISSION:
Sewer Capacity Report**

Brian Rubel of Tetra Tech provided an overview of the current sewer system which currently operates at about 600,000 to 700,000 gallons/day, has a permit for discharge of up to 1.3 million gallons/day (for an average day)—which would allow for approximately 1900 additional residences—and has capacity to expand to 3 million gallons/day. He noted that during rains of several

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inches upwards of 3 million gallons/day have been processed while meeting permit requirements.

Rubel noted that many sewer systems have storage tanks to hold overflow temporarily and that has been something the Township has wished to have for many years. He said it is difficult to tell how many additional homes could be added before a difference in flow would be noticeable, and while the system is not near a situation of creating an environmental problem, it is near the capacity where storm condition flows could be handled without adding a storage tank.

Dockett questioned what commitments the Township has for providing service to Green Oak Township and existing sewer districts. Rubel said he has seen only one document committing 250,000 gallons (740 REUs) to Green Oak. He said the issue of whether capacity is reserved for the North Territorial district is a Board decision.

In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Rubel said the cost of a sewer system expansion would be paid for only by those who use it through connection and use fees. Braun said no developer would pay for a sewer plant expansion, so the cost would have to come from a millage or the general fund.

Dignan said it is an embarrassment that the need identified 26 years ago for a storage tank has not been addressed. In answer to a question from Otto, Rubel said some communities order sewer studies every five years, while others may wait 15 years. He said if growth areas are identified they could be included in a master plan and a capital improvement plan.

There was more discussion about what the actual available capacity of the current system might be and whether capacity should be reserved for property owners in districts who have paid their frontage fees. Dignan said a vision for the community has been lacking, and the Township needs to make desired development more attractive to developers and be prepared to provide services when projects are proposed. Engstrom said developers are sometimes willing to pay for some of these costs.

Burns said the plant is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources and also by Livingston County court order as a result of an environmental protection lawsuit which limits expansion to 2.25 million gallons/day. He said the Township also has a legal obligation to fulfill requests for service from people in special assessment districts (SADs), so an inventory of those districts and all other areas potentially requesting services is needed, and the Township currently does not have that. He said lawsuits have resulted when governments have not been

able to provide services for parcels that have paid in advance for it.

Rubel said preparation of an inventory would best be done jointly by him, Burns, and Hardesty. In answer to a question from Braun, Burns said the equalization basin discussed in a court order was never built, but that is what Rubel is suggesting needs to be provided. Dockett said many studies have been done, and if another is to be done there needs to be a commitment to carry through on the findings. Thomas said the Township has legal and moral obligations to people—including those in other Townships—to figure out what the situation is now.

Fink said he, Burns, Rubel, and Hardesty can develop a list of questions that have to be asked and bring that to the Board so a study can be ordered to find the answers. Rubel said within a month he can provide a very broad range of costs for that work.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Sewer Capacity/Study. [Pete Misangy](#), 409 E. Shore Drive, said putting a storage basin right away makes sense and updating the last plan and coordinating it with the master plan is what residents want to see. [David Gordon](#), 5558 Hellner Road, said he hopes the study the Board orders includes figures for the costs if subdivisions are allowed all the way down US-23. [Amy Grambeau](#), 5165 Hellner Road, said including information about the financial problems encountered in Sylvan Township should be included. Udo Huff, 6451 Whitmore Lake Road, said the Board did not plan properly when it created the sewer district he is in.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sewer Capacity/Study. Planning Commissioners and Board members agreed it was useful to have this discussion, but noted this is the very start of the project.

Biltmore Development. Iaquinto recalled that at the last joint Board/Commission meeting many people spoke in favor of the Biltmore Development. Chockley and Chick said all of the information the Board and Commission have is discussed at public meetings, nothing is being hidden, and no elected officials are courting Biltmore.

Election. Westover said turnout was excellent and thanked the volunteers and everyone who voted.

ADJOURNMENT

Engstrom adjourned the meeting at 10:18 P.M.

Minutes Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;

Wording added is underlined.