

**Motion carried 6—0—1 on a voice vote, Smith abstaining.**

Smith said decisions about zoning ordinance issues should be made in favor of property owners. He also said it may be that the Township's ordinances are overly complex, and he suggested that the Planning Commission be instructed to simplify and reduce the amount of the text in the zoning ordinance. He said it should not be necessary to be a lawyer to understand Township ordinances.

### **Building Department Deficit Elimination Plan**

Wilson noted there was a deficit in the Building Department at the end of the year, and she referred to the resolution to eliminate that deficit.

- ▶ **Motion:** Wilson moved, Rowe supported, that the Deficit Elimination Plan Resolution for the Northfield Township Building Department be adopted as presented.

Mozurkewich asked what is being done to make sure this doesn't happen again. Wilson said she has given the necessary information to the Controller to prevent future instances of this.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.  
Resolution adopted.**

### **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

#### **1. Request from Udo Huff to Use Fire Station #2 for Meetings**

Acted upon earlier in the meeting.

#### **2. Recommendations on Counteroffer for 75 Barker Road**

Mozurkewich said she feels more time is necessary to consider options. Iaquinto reported that he and Mozurkewich met with Doug Anderson, Executive Director of Northfield Human Services (NHS) to discuss the offer from NHS to purchase the property. He noted that George Brown was also present. He said Anderson said that the Township would, at any point in the future, be permitted to buy back the property from NHS for the original sale amount plus any out-of-pocket costs incurred by NHS.

Iaquinto said Anderson also indicated NHS would be improving the parking lot, and they would be open to the addition of a thoroughfare to run between the parking lot and Margaret Street to improve access in the downtown area. He said the option for the Township to buy back the property would not exist if the property were sold to a private developer. He added that NHS plans a variety of improvements to the building, including restoration of the

second floor, and use of the building would be opened up to a variety of public uses.

Dockett said he is concerned that NHS will not be successful, and the Township would not be prepared to buy back the property in the near future. He said the taxpayers have the right to have the property listed for at least six months to see what it might be sold for. Smith agreed with Dockett. He said without knowing the market value of the property, it is not possible to know the value of the intangibles being offered by NHS.

Rowe said he would certainly like to see NHS in the building, but he is concerned about the strings that will be attached to any grant money they seek, including requirements that NHS use the building for a certain number of years before they sell it to the Township or anyone else. He agreed that it would be good to know the true market value of the property before the Board makes a decision, even though this is not currently a strong real estate market. Dockett said this is a large piece of property, and the Board might be surprised at what it would bring.

Manning asked if the committee considered getting a new assessment of the property. Mozurkewich said the Township Assessor looked at a variety of information and came up with an estimate of \$153,000. She said she and Iaquinto also requested comparables from real estate brokers, but there have not been many comparable sales recently. She said a parcel of similar acreage, but which was vacant, recently sold for \$100,000. Iaquinto noted that an appraisal done about five years ago valued the property at \$130,000. Mozurkewich noted that valuation was based on the land being vacant.

Mozurkewich said the committee will continue to pursue comparables from real estate brokers. Smith asked if there is consensus that the property should be listed for sale. Rowe said there is no risk in doing that.

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Smith supported, that 75 Barker Road be listed for sale by Northfield Township.

Iaquinto said he would like the listing agreement to be for only 60 days. Dockett said he would like it to be listed for six months.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

Dockett asked if there is any way the Township could keep the building. Mozurkewich said the Township can retain it, but the question is whether the Township wants to continue to pay the expenses of maintaining it.

#### **3. Auditor's Findings: Late Disbursements and Diversification of Assets**

Mozurkewich noted the auditor had a number of recommendations, but asked that these two items in particular be discussed by the Board. Regarding diversification of assets, Smith said the \$3 million in question could be split into 12 \$250,000 Certificates of Deposit (CD).

**Northfield Township Board Meeting  
Notes of Regular Meeting  
Public Safety Building; 8350 Main Street  
January 12, 2010**

Regarding late disbursements of tax payments last year, Wilson said all payments have been made on time this year with the exception of one case when she was out-of-town for three weeks.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no questions about communications included in Board packets.

**SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Cynthia Best thanked the Board for supporting the 4-H Club. She said because of her daughter's involvement with this group for four years, she will be studying equine management at Michigan State University this fall.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**Pond Hockey/Public Skating.** Iaquinto invited everyone to attend the Pond Hockey events this weekend. He also noted skating rinks will be maintained throughout the winter, and he encouraged the public to use them. Mozurkewich said she watched the firefighters who worked yesterday to create the ice surfaces, and she appreciates the work they did.

**Thank you.** In answer to a question from Dockett, Greene said when a new position was created a vehicle was included. He said the vehicle was purchased out the narcotics fund.

**Moving of Township Offices.** Manning reminded the public that Township offices have moved to the Public Safety Building. Mozurkewich thanked everyone who helped with the move, noting that the work staff did to

pack everything saved the Township about \$5,000. She noted that signage still have to be added to the building to direct the public to the Township offices and the new Fire Department entrance.

**Snow Removal Contractor.** Manning noted that the Township has hired PBTS LLC for the Township's snow plowing this year. She said their bid was \$8,000 less than the next lowest bidder.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Smith asked attorney Paul Burns if this matter could be discussed in open session, and, if not, if he would provide information to the public about it. Paul Burns noted that the Grand Sakwa trial has been set for March 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, and it would be in the best interest of the Township to discuss details concerning that in private. Iaquinto noted this lawsuit was inherited by this Board.

- ▶ **Motion:** Smith moved, Iaquinto supported, that the Board go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.258(8)(e) to discuss pending litigation with Grand Sakwa. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Smith moved, Iaquinto supported, that the Board return to open session. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 P.M.

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Submitted by Lisa Lemble.