

Essex Township

Clinton County, Michigan

Lynn Ferguson, Supervisor
Angela Bunn, Clerk
Patti Warnke, Treasurer
Rex Ferguson, Trustee
Aurelio (Hank) Zamarron, Trustee

6/18/2014 REGULAR MEETING

Township Supervisor Lynn Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Maple Rapids Community Center. He began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Supervisor Lynn Ferguson, Trustee Hank Zamarron, Trustee Rex Ferguson, Treasurer Patti Warnke and Clerk Angi Bunn

VISITORS

Deputy Supervisor Carla Wardin, Deputy Treasurer Kathy George, County Commissioner Kam Washburn, Louise Ferguson, James and Ida Bancroft, Sue, Scott and Sydney Ferguson, and Madison Simmon

VISITOR CONCERNS AND STATEMENTS Kam Washburn

County Commissioner Kam Washburn reported on recent activities and actions taken by the County Commissioners. Washburn said the County has received and accepted their annual audit. The audit had no significant findings or recommendations, and the County Commissioners were very pleased with the findings.

The County Commissioners have received the equalization report. The County's assessed value is up 3.4% - \$3,600,000,000.00. The taxable value is just under \$2.5 billion, which is up 1.49%. Washburn anticipates the report will be approved at the Commissioners next meeting.

Washburn explained that DeWitt Township is undergoing an improvement project of Business 27, which the County Commissioners opted out of the overall project at the onset; however, DeWitt Township approached the Commissioners with a small project within the overall development, which the County is contributing \$100,000 toward. Washburn explained while the County may not participate in a large development project (for any particular Township), they may contribute toward a project area.

APPROVAL OF 3/19/2014
MEETING MINUTES

The reading of the 4/16/2014 meeting minutes was waived. There being no changes or corrections noted, Warnke moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Supported by R. Ferguson. Motion passed and carried (MPC).

ADDITIONS/ APPROVAL
OF AGENDA

Bunn asked to add Clerk; D. Elections, R. Ferguson asked to add to New Business; E. Veterans markers.

OLD BUSINESS
Roads and bridges millage

The Board discussed a millage request on the November general election ballot. Zamarron motioned to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Township Board of Essex Township, realizes the importance of maintaining local roads, and wishes to continue to repairing, improving, rebuilding, repaving and generally maintaining the integrity of the Township roads; and
WHEREAS, townships may impose and levy ad valorem property taxes to finance lawful public service services, as authorized by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and
WHEREAS, townships may also levy a property tax for the maintenance or improvement of county roads within the township, as authorized by Public Act 51 of 1951, MCL 247.670; and
WHEREAS, the Essex Township Board wishes to levy 0.5000 mil to provide maintenance for the Township rural roads;
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Essex Township Board of Clinton County, approves the following millage ballot question language and directs the Clerk to submit it to be placed on the November 4, 2014, election ballot:

Shall Essex Township impose an increase of 0.5000 mil (\$ 0.50 per \$ 1,000 of taxable value) in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution and levy it for four years, 2014 through 2017 inclusive, for maintaining, rebuilding, repaving, repairing, and improving the rural township roads, which 0.5000-mills increase will raise an estimated \$26,300.00 in the first year the millage is levied?

[] YES

[] NO

Motion Supported by R. Ferguson.

Upon roll call vote the following voted

“Aye”: R. Ferguson, H. Zamarron, L. Ferguson, Warnke, Bunn

“No”: none

Supervisor Ferguson declared the resolution adopted.

Bunn will file the ballot language with the County Clerk.

Zamarron suggested putting the informational article which was included in the summer newsletter, on the Township website.

Warnke added letters to the editor can also inform voters of the millage proposal and the reasons behind the request.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The Treasurer reported the income since the last meeting. The balance in the general fund is \$104,737.08.

Bunn moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, supported by R. Ferguson. MPC.

Summer tax bills

Warnke and Deputy Treasurer Kathy George have been preparing the summer tax bills. The newsletter is complete and will be mailed with tax bills.

Budgeting software

Warnke and George are investigating new budgeting software, as the old software does not work with their new operating system. They anticipate having a new program in place by the August meeting.

Audit

Abraham and Gaffney auditors were in Maple Rapids, conducting the Township audit on June 11 and 12. Warnke and Bunn anticipate having an audit report by the August meeting.

CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk reported on expenditures 5274-5317. There have been no new fire runs since the last meeting, and payments have continued to come in for the Bailey run. R. Ferguson motioned to approve the Clerk’s report, supported by Zamarron. MPC.

Unauthorized burial in Lowe Cemetery

There was a cremains burial in the Lowe Cemetery. Bunn has spoken with the family and the identity of the interned has been established. After discussion, the Board decided the estate of the deceased should be billed the \$200 opening and closing fee, as well as \$150 equipment fee. The Clerk will include a copy of the Township’s cemetery ordinance as well as a letter notifying the family that inappropriate and unauthorized burials are in violation of the ordinance.

Cemeteries

Bunn has been approached with a request to plant trees in the Sowle Cemetery as a 'living memorial'. Bunn expressed concern on trees posing problems when digging graves and broken branches, etc. in the long-term. A family has also approached Bunn to request a set of mausoleum keys be made available to people whose family members are interred in the mausoleum. Warnke would like to know if Mt. Rest Cemetery in St. Johns has a.) a site plan, or established strategy for planting trees in their cemetery, and b.) issues mausoleum keys to family members. Bunn said she would ask the Mt. Rest sexton and report back at the next meeting.

Jim Bancroft has located refurbished port-a-jons for \$250. He is requesting one be located in the Sowle Cemetery. The Board expressed concern about the maintenance of the facility. Deputy Supervisor Carla Wardin said she would contact Fulton Township, as they have two port-a-jons in their cemetery. She will report back at the August meeting.

Election public test

The Public Test of the Township's voting equipment, held one week prior to all elections, is a public meeting of the Township's election commission. The election commission is comprised of the Clerk, Supervisor and Treasurer, or their authorized assistants.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
Transfer of funds

The Township funds will be transferred to Kathy George as Treasurer on June 26, 2014 at 12:30 pm at the Firstbank in St. Johns.

CCEA to attend August meeting

The Clinton County Economic Alliance has requested to attend the August meeting and address the Board.

Jandernoa road improvements

Tony Jandernoa is having gravel applied to his road, as the road is in very poor condition due to the use of heavy equipment on Jandernoa's farm. The Clinton County Road Commission will provide the gravel and scraping services, and they will bill the Township. Jandernoa will reimburse the Township for the expense.

Approval of road projects

Upon further review of road projects for 2014, L. Ferguson motioned to approve gravel and grading on Bauer Road between Colony and Stone Roads, and Grove Road between Paxton and Colony Roads. Also brush control throughout the Township. The cost of these projects is \$41,716.20, which is under the Township's projected budget for road maintenance. Motion supported by R. Ferguson. MPC.

DNR land acquisition

Supervisor Ferguson has been contacted by Chad Fedewa of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding a parcel of land the DNR wishes to purchase within Essex Township. The three-acre parcel is located just west of the Village of Maple Rapids, beyond the dead-end at Maple Rapids Road. The DNR has requested a letter of support from the Essex Township Board for this acquisition. Bunn moved to send a letter of support to the DNR for the acquisition of this land, supported by Warnke. MPC.

Veteran's grave markers

R. Ferguson informed the Board that the VFW has found a distributor for Clinton County Veteran grave markers. They anticipate making the markers available for \$20. Bunn will look into ordering approximately 30 markers to have on-hand. The purchase would be within the cemetery supplies budget.

Lowe Church site plan review

The Lowe Church has presented a final site plan for review. R. Ferguson motioned to provide a letter of support to the County Planning and Zoning Board for the site plan. Motion supported by Zamarron. MPC.

Warnke resignation

The Board was presented with a letter of resignation from Treasurer Patti Warnke, effective June 30, 2014. Warnke cited personal reasons for leaving office. Bunn motioned to accept Warnke's resignation. Supported by R. Ferguson. MPC.

Nomination of George

Warnke nominated Deputy Treasurer, Kathleen George, to assume the duties of Treasurer for the duration of the elected position. Bunn supported the nomination. MPC.

L. Ferguson resignation

The Board was presented with a letter of resignation from Supervisor Lynn Ferguson, effective August 1, 2014. Ferguson also cited personal reasons for leaving office. Warnke motioned to accept Ferguson's resignation. Supported by R. Ferguson. MPC.

Nomination of Wardin

L. Ferguson nominated Deputy Supervisor, Carla Wardin, to assume the duties of Supervisor for the duration of the elected position. Bunn supported the nomination. MPC.

The other Board members expressed deep appreciation for Ferguson's 14 years and Warnke's 14 years of dedication to Essex Township.

Zamarron letter of intent

The Board was presented with a letter of intention to resign December 31, 2014 by Trustee Hank Zamarron. Zamarron would step down prior to that date if a suitable replacement is found.

Zamarron cited changes in his work hours and personal reasons for leaving office.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Zamarron motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm, supported by R. Ferguson. MPC All visitors were invited to stay for a reception in honor of the Board retirees.

The next regular meeting of the Essex Township Board will be August 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm at the Maple Rapids Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Bunn
Essex Township Clerk