

MECOSTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
19729 11 MILE RD. BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
January 12, 2021/UNAPPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
PREPARED BY CLERK, LOIS BRENNAN

1. **CALL Meeting to Order:** Supervisor, Michele Graham called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Meetings are being held via zoom due to Covid19 and State Orders. Anyone wishing to take part in the meeting can follow the link provided on the Mecosta Township.Org website.
2. **PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**
3. **Roll Call:** John Johnson, James Cain, Mary Quinlan, Lois Brennan, Michele Graham. All present.
4. **Approval of the Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda as presented made by Mary Quinlan, James Cain 2nd. All ayes, motion carried.
5. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to accept the minutes for December 08,2020 as presented made by John Johnson, James Cain 2nd. All aye, motion carried.
6. **Treasurers Report:** Per Treasurer Mary Quinlan, reporting for the month of December 2020, General fund checking \$298,698.01, First Responders \$1,520.35, Fire-Equipment/Building \$65,840.76, Fire Fund – Operations \$-11,397.31, the negative balance is strictly report related, this will rectify itself when another disbursement is done on the 15th of the month. Supervisor, Michele Graham added that it is important to note, that we receive our 1.25% (millage for Fire Department) from the winter tax bills, those funds have not been collected as yet. Total account balance \$354,661.81. The Treasurer’s report was accepted by Supervisor Graham and entered into the official record.
7. **Approval to Pay Bills & Payroll:** Motion to approve bills & payroll in the amount of \$32,544.19 made by John Johnson, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: John Johnson – yes, James Cain – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Lois Brennan - yes, Michele Graham - yes. Motion carried.
8. **Brief Public Comment:** None heard.

9. Reports:

- A. **County Commissioner Report:** Mr. O'Neil was not in attendance, no report given.
- B. **Assessor/Supervisor Report: Supervisor Report:** Continuing efforts to work with a resident on a junk complaint, there has been progress made. He is working on his truck to haul trailers out. There are no longer unauthorized living quarters on the property.

Special note that IRS mileage rates decreased this coming year to .56 per mile.

Assessors Report: Per Michele Graham, the assessment roll is balanced, Michele was the first to get the tax roll to the county and the first to balance as well. Michele will be printing change notices within the next week. Taxable value for our township is \$133,822,962.00. This amount is subject to change as personal property exemptions, veteran exemptions, along with a few poverty exemptions. That should settle taxable value around \$130,000,000.00 Last year we closed out at \$120,000,000.00. Michele assessed a little over 1.5 Mil in new construction for the township this year.

- C. **Clerk:** Per Clerk Lois Brennan- Election Audits are scheduled for January 13th. This is normal procedure after an election cycle and townships are drawn randomly. W-2's and 1099's is the focus for the upcoming week along with all reports going to the IRS as well as the State of Michigan regarding payroll, which will close out the payroll year of 2020. Everything else in the office remains routine and quiet.
- D. **Cemetery:** Nothing new to report, Supervisor Graham will contact Supervisor Vredenburg of Austin Township to see if a joint meeting will be held in March.
- E. **Budget:** Everything looks to be in order. We will need to move funds around before closing out the year and approving the budget for the next year.

F. Planning Commission: Per Trustee James Cain, there was a meeting held via Zoom in December. The focus of the meeting was set up and preparations to begin working on the Master Plan for Mecosta Township. Some concerns arose regarding some zoning issues. The Master Plan will take some time as it is a lengthy process.

G. Building Department: Per Amy Dalman, R2 zoning has no camping allowed, several people have asked and so she feels it is something that needs to be addressed. Dave Wright has made a vast improvement in our building department; he is very knowledgeable and does things by the book. Dave is also well received by the residents of the township. The building dept. is doing very well. The department is showing a savings with the recent changes within the department. Gross evaluations building permit decks - \$157,000., pole buildings - \$164,000., garages - \$139,000., additions - \$133,000., commercial - \$302,000., New Homes - \$ 1mil., Solar - \$51,000., this contributes to a revenue of \$4,100. Per month. Amy went on with commentary regarding solar as it is becoming more popular in our area. She is wondering if the current ordinance needs to be re visited. Dave Wright the current building inspector has voiced concerns regarding solar panels installed on roofs. Amy also took the time to self-evaluate her position with the township and the office efficiency and changes since she has joined the township building department.

10.Unfinished Business:

A. Fire Department: Per Chief Ron Palmer –

- **Reports:** Run report shows 19 runs from 12/08-01/12.
- **AFG Grant:** Re-applying for the grant for the Spring 2021 grant cycle.
- **Vinyl for the New Truck:** Vinyl for the new truck has been delayed due to lack of product availability. Once the vinyl is received it will be applied to the truck and hopefully the truck will be able to be put into service.
- **Pagers:** The newly approved and ordered pagers were received today, the department should not need to replace anymore pagers until April.

- **Cleveland Integrity Service:** A donation of \$1,000.00 was given to the Mecosta Township Fire Department. The donation will be used to purchase two Thermal Cameras for a total of \$1,085.98 from MES services. The cameras should arrive on 01/13/2021. Thank you on behalf of the firefighters to Cleveland Integrity Service.
- **SCBA:** The Department continues to evaluate SCBA units. Covid has been hindering this process because of availability of equipment.
- **MASKS must be worn when in the Fire Station and while driving apparatus by all employees at all times including when outside and 6' distancing can't be maintained.**
- **Injuries:** There are no injuries or illnesses to report. All team members are in good health.
- **Training Report:** Rope rescue training continues, next week the team will be training with Big Prairie, Morley and Big Rapids City Departments.
- **Equipment Operation:** training is scheduled and continues as usual.
- **Rescue Reports:** Everything is operating smoothly, there has been an increase in Covid calls. Rescue supplies that have been on order including masks and other PPE items are being received.
- **Dragon Trail:** Chief Palmer would like to discuss the Dragon Trail and equipment/training needed before the summer months. This topic will be addressed during the February Board meeting.

B. 2021 Poverty Guidelines & Asset Test Amendment: The law through the State of Michigan has changed for poverty exemptions, stating that eligibility guidelines and asset amounts must be listed on paper along with the guidelines. Assets cannot exceed over \$10,000.00. Motion in the form of Resolution # 2021-001 as an addendum to Resolution # 2020-009 to add a check list and eligibility guidelines including current assets to not exceed \$10,000.00, made by Mary Quinlan, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: Mary Quinlan – yes, James Cain –

yes, John Johnson – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes.
Resolution carried.

- C. New Planning Commission Member:** There were two applications received for the position available on the Planning Commission. Gary McCarthy and Mark Kidd. The Board discussed the two applicants. Motion made to accept Gary McCarthy as a new member of the Planning Commission by James Cain, Mary Quinlan 2nd. All ayes. Motion carried. Mr. Mark Kidd will be asked if he would like to join the Zoning Board of Appeals. Thank you to both applicants for your interest in your community.

11. New Business:

- A. Truck Tires:** The townships truck is in need of new tires. They do not have traction for snow plowing and there is also a nail in one of the tires. The last time the truck had new tires was 2008. Supervisor Graham provided a quote from DP Tire for \$562.00, DP is where the tires were purchased before. Discussion from board also brought about having an oil change done as well. Motion made to spend up to \$600.00 to have the tires replaced, mounted and balanced also an oil change, by Lois Brennan, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: Lois Brennan – yes, James Cain – yes, John Johnson – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.
- B. Wage Review:** Supervisor Graham provided a wage review sheet. The wage review would include raises for employees as well as board members. Discussion as to cost of living raises for Board members. Clerk Brennan has requested a \$5,000. Raise. First Responders and Fire Fighters increased to \$15.00 an hour. Deputy's increase to \$15.00 an hour. The Building Administrator would increase \$1.55 which is a 10% increase per hour, 3% retirement and it was decided that there needs to be a contract put into place with the position. Building Inspector would increase to \$31.00 per hour. Maintenance position will increase to \$16.00 an hour. Michele requested Assessing wage be increased to \$14.00 per parcel. All wage increases would begin on April 1, 2021 with the new fiscal budget year 2021/2022. Clerk Brennan, has taken on additional duties in her office that were previously hired out to accountants, saving the Township money and

time. Clerk Brennan also provided a clerk's wage study sheet provided by the County Clerk, which was conducted in 2019. Assessor Michele Graham provided information regarding pay for assessors throughout the township. Motion to accept the wage resolution review sheet as discussed with the changes made, by James Cain, John Johnson 2nd. Roll Call: James Cain – yes, John Johnson – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

- C. **2021-2022 Budget:** Supervisor Graham provided a first draft of the 2021/2022 budget for review of Board members. Explanation was given as to the inflated budget amount which is due to the grant contributions for the Dragon Trail. A second draft will be presented in February.
- D. **Budget Hearing:** Budget hearing is scheduled for March 29, 2021 at 5:00 pm. At the Township hall, unless meetings are still required to be held via zoom.
- E. **Roads:** The Mecosta County Road Commission sent some informative paperwork to the Board regarding their entertaining a possible millage question for a May election. Townships are now required to pay for all dust control applications, it used to be a buy two get one three applications. Motion made to have MCRC apply 3 treatments of dust control on Township dirt roads in the 2021 year, by Mary Quinlan, John Johnson 2nd. Roll Call: Mary Quinlan – yes, John Johnson – yes, James Cain – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

12. **Brief Public Comment:** none heard.

13. **Announcements/correspondence:** none

14. **Adjournment:** Motion made to adjourn by John Johnson, James Cain 2nd. Supervisor Graham adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.

**Lois Brennan, Clerk
Mecosta Township**