

MECOSTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
19729 11 MILE RD. BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
September 13, 2022/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.
2. **PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**
3. **Roll Call:** James Cain, Mary Quinlan, Lois Brennan, Michele Graham – present, John Johnson – absent.
4. **Approval of the Agenda:** Motion made to approve the agenda as presented by Mary Quinlan, James Cain 2nd. All aye, motion carried.
5. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion made to accept the minutes from August 9th as presented, James Cain, Mary Quinlan 2nd. All aye, motion carried.
6. **Treasurers Report:** Per Treasurer Mary Quinlan reporting for the month of August 2022, fund balances are as follows: General fund checking \$540,926.76, First Responders: \$5,618.67, Fire-Equipment/Building (mileage account) \$134,734.68, Fire Fund -Operations \$23,298.13, Total funds \$704,578.24. Supervisor Graham accepted the Treasurer's report as presented and admitted it to the official record.
7. **Approval to Pay Bills & Payroll:** Motion to pay bills and payroll in the amount of \$32,685.14 by Mary Quinlan, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: Mary Quinlan – yes, James Cain – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

8. **Public Comment:** Mr. Mike Fish, of Birch Park Dr. again brought up the topic of the sunken boat located on township property along the Muskegon River. Supervisor Michele Graham will report on this topic during the Supervisors report section of the meeting. Mr. Fish refrained all other comments until the second section of public comment of the meeting. Trustee James Cain asked Supervisor Graham if the boat in question just happened, to which Supervisor Graham confirmed it has been there. Mr. Fish informed it has been there over a year.

9. **Reports:**

A. **County Commissioner Report:** Per County Commissioner Tom O'Neil-Mecosta Township Board members had asked Mr. O'Neil to inquire of the County Commissioners regarding a raise in First Responders funding. Mr. O'Neil reported that he had asked the County Commissioners at the last meeting, as reported by Mr. O'Neil the Commissioners answer was that the Responders already receives a tenth of a mill and if the Board is not happy with that, they will take it away. The Mecosta Township Board of course did not like this response. Mr. O'Neil continued with his report providing details from the Sheriff's Department regarding Catalytic Converters being stolen, the two main areas they are being stolen from are park and rides located in Big Rapids and on 8 Mile Rd in Stanwood. Also noted is that it is not just men committing these crimes, recently a woman was arrested while in the act of stealing the Catalytic Converters.

B. **Assessor/Supervisor Report:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham – **Assessors Report:** After completing the AMAR, Michele Graham presented the Board with a certificate she was sent for having 100%, not all in the County received this certificate because of having some errors. **Supervisors Report:** Consumers Energy will be hosting meeting at the Township Hall on September 20th starting at 5:30p with a presentation beginning at 6:00pm. The boat that has sunk was turned into the DNR, because the DNR has control of the waterways. Clerk Brennan provided pictures to be sent with the report. Clerk Brennan

also provided pictures to Supervisor Graham for the no wake zone. Supervisor Graham is hoping to have everything ready to send to the DNR by the end of the week.

- C. Clerk:** Per Clerk Lois Brennan- Office is busy with Election Prep for the November 8th General Election. Clerk Brennan provided a printout from Election Source which is a vendor used for election materials. The information included information on a Grant available to local clerks for election security. Clerk Brennan is asking the Board to research this matter to access these funds on behalf of the township. Clerk Brennan specifically would like to focus on security cameras as well as possible security personnel. The Township Board has before discussed camera surveillance for the township hall and offices. Discussed were possible locations to place the cameras. Clerk Brennan along with Supervisor Graham will work on quotes and bring them to the next meeting.
- D. Cemetery:** Per Clerk Brennan – there was one sale of 4 graves this past month. Clerk Brennan has also been researching cemetery mapping businesses and sought permission to contact a company used by another local clerk regarding having Ladner’s Cemetery mapped other than by current means of an excel spreadsheet. The Board agrees to at least seek information and pricing with the company. Per Supervisor Michele Graham – she has contacted Austin Township requesting records for the Stanwood Cemetery and still has not received them. For Ladner’s Cemetery the well was out in the spring, she had contacted a company that did come out and got the well working, however it was not guaranteed to keep working. The well currently is not working again at the cemetery. Supervisor Graham does a call into the well company and perhaps get on the schedule for the Spring.
- E. Budget:** Parks & Recreation is still out of line, however there are more possible payments needed before we are finished with the Grant

money paybacks. Waiting to have all payments made before adjusting the budget accordingly.

F. Planning Commission: Per Trustee James Cain – working towards the Master Plan, and what dealings will be happening with Consumers Energy regarding the Dam. Working towards getting the Master Plan going through ordinances and clean it up regarding clarity and continuity of ordinances. Trustee Cain did outline the options for Rogers Dam as well as 12 others within the State of Michigan. Supervisor Graham gave information from a representative of Consumers Energy. Trustee Cain also spoke with Senator Bumstead from Newaygo regarding the Dam issues. Trustee Cain also informed the Board of Boy Scouts of America conducting a scout's salute for 911 memorials around the State. Clerk Brennan has also spoken to a representative from the Kalamazoo area regarding the Dam issue, they are looking to put together a statewide committee to network and work on information to save the dams.

G. Fire Department: Per Chief Ron Palmer –

- **Reports:**
- There were 45 calls for the past month (35 medical/10 fire)
- There are no injuries to report.
- The Fire Department received an AFG Grant at a 95/5 match that includes 14 packs and 28 bottles, a total amount of \$4,928.70 payable to Morton Twp. for Mecosta Township Fire & Rescue. Morley Fire Department, Morton Twp. Fire Department and Wheatland Twp. Fire Departments, were included in the joint grant. The Township will be required to maintain annual maintenance and give a copy of the report to Morton Township for the next 4 years.
- New RIT bag and masks not in the grant, RIT bag and tank \$4,800.00, 8 masks at \$318.00 each. 8 regulators at \$1635.00 each. For a total of \$20,424.00 plus shipping.
- SCBA fit testing is completed.

- Rescue cart for the Dragon Trail should be here in approx. 4 weeks.
- Fire Department Chaplin: Chief Palmer introduced the Board to Pastor Jeremy Wick; Pastor Wick has agreed to come on board to the local fire departments as a chaplain/grief counselor. Pastor Wick is the pastor of Big Rapids United Methodist Church. He is available for all area firefighter/first responders to speak with. Pastor Wick will need to be added to payroll as well as insurance. Pastor Wick will be paid as to whomever is primary department on scene.
- Chief Palmer informed The Board that he had applied to a position with the DNR back in April to be a sworn in as a fire fighter for the DNR, Chief Palmer has accepted their offer to be a fire officer in the Baldwin fire division. He begins this new position on Monday, unfortunately this means he cannot be a sworn in Fire Officer for any other department. Chief Palmer informed the Board that he has cleared staying on with the Mecosta Township Fire & Rescue department until November, this way he will be able to move forward in the process of selecting a new Chief. By November he is not allowed to be Chief anymore. More information will be prepared by the October meeting and will bring proposed new Chief candidates with him to the meeting. Chief Palmer will work with the new chief for training purposes for at least 6 months. And will stay on the department as a fire fighter/responder.

TRAINING REPORT:

- TECC initial training has been completed. 85% of the Mecosta Township Fire & Rescue is certified to respond to an active shooter call. It is not a requirement to be on the departments team.
- Rope Rescue Training
- Extrication Training
- Joint Drafting training with Morley Fire Department.

Chief Palmer was asked by Supervisor Graham if he found out more regarding the GPS situation with The Dragon Trail. Chief Palmer confirmed he had spoken to Ryan Coffee and that the GPS will not be completed until the Trail itself is completed. More meetings will be scheduled to aid in the communication between counties for reporting needs.

Motion made to spend \$26,000.00 for grant match requirement on SCBA's and to purchase other required equipment of masks and RIT bag not included in the grant, by James Cain, Mary Quinlan 2nd. Roll Call: James Cain – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

10. New Business:

A. IT Right: Per Supervisor Graham, annual contract renewal. There is basically a monopoly on services as they are the only company licensed to work with our BS&A software. Motion to accept the contract as written and maintain the ability to revoke with a 90-day notice with no penalty, this contract is for 3 years on a progressive pay schedule that will be locked in and allow Supervisor Graham to sign the contract, by Lois Brennan, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: Lois Brennan – yes, James Cain – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

B. Great Lakes Energy – Bilateral Access: Resolution 2022-005 passed allowing Great Lakes Energy Bilateral Access to the township. This is in conjunction with the Metro permit passed in May of this year. Motion made to accept Resolution 2022-005 by James Cain, Mary Quinlan 2nd. Roll Call: James Cain – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Resolution passed.

11. Unfinished Business: nothing currently.

12. Brief Public Comment: Mr. Mike Stegewans had requested a ZBA application from Treasurer Quinlan on Sept. 12th. Mr. Stegewans inquired if the application had been brought to the meeting. Supervisor Graham informed Mr. Stegewans that his situation does not qualify for a ZBA hearing, because the decision regarding rezoning his property was a legislative decision made by the Township Board. That he would need to contact an attorney. Mr. Stegewans explained that had been advised by his attorney to apply for the ZBA. Supervisor Graham advised Mr. Stegewans have his attorney contact the Townships attorney.

Mr. Mike Fish had comments regarding concerns on the river. He pointed out that there is a lot of excitement regarding these concerns and that he knows there is interest by the township board. But he feels that it is not a concern of all members of the board. Much discussion regarding these topics ensued. Mr. Mike Fish voiced his frustrations with topics being discussed then dropped. His opinion was that the Board needs to make some real solid statements regarding the river and protecting the river especially with the Consumers Energy discussions on the dam. He suggested to the board that the river be an agenda item on every agenda. Ideas were swapped regarding cleaning of the river and banning together to save the dam. And keep the river as it is. A point was brought up regarding the township owned boat launch that has been ignored for years and years. Suggested was a poll of residents if they would use the ramp if it was repaired and in proper working order. The DNR has been contacted in the past regarding the launch and first step would be engineered drawings. There is also a fire hydrant located at this location that would have to be factored in and repaired. A grant will need to be written to help aid in the expenses to do the repairs.

13. Announcements/correspondence: nothing to report.

14. Adjournment: Motion made to adjourn at 7:22pm by James Cain, Lois Brennan 2nd. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned by Supervisor Graham.

**Lois Brennan, Clerk
Mecosta Township**