

**BERRIEN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JULY 11, 2017**

The Berrien Township Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. the township hall. Supervisor Bryan Bixby called the meeting to order and opened with the pledge to the flag.

Members present: Supervisor Bryan Bixby, Treasurer Paul Sprung, Trustees Julie Burke, Howard Henderson, Jeff Marks, Harold Bishop and Clerk Mary Jane Dean.

Also present: Deputy Julius Grau, Fire Chief Norm Carl, Jr., Auditor Robert Gerbel, Greg Trail from the Road Commission, Ross Rogien Building Inspector, reporter Mary Simko and approximately 20 residents.

AUDIT:

The audit for the year ending March 31, 2017 was prepared by Gerbel & Company and presented by Robert Gerbel. He reported that the Township remains in excellent financial condition with no debt. Total revenues for 2017 were \$712,585.00 (\$690,216.00 2016). Expenses were \$669,666.00 (\$726,322.00 2016). Therefore revenue increased by \$22,369.00 and expenses decreased by \$56,656.00 during the year. The Township is above the target range set by many Township Boards of three to six months of operating as the Township is about 15 months.

AGENDA:

Julie Burke made a motion seconded by Mary Jane Dean to approve the agenda by switching Jones Rd. to number 1 and move the other issues down one under unfinished business. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

JONES RD.

Previously the Board had requested that Carrie Grellmann to get a petition signed by residents living on Jones to state if they wanted Jones Rd. paved or not. Carrie was present and stated that some residents had concerns about how much it would cost them, others thought to resolve the dust problem more gravel should be applied, more chloride more often, no speed limit if paved it would only make traffic faster, some liked living on gravel roads their houses set back from the road. Some comments made during the meeting: Jim Sinkiewicz had an article from the Journal Era in May 1988 that the Board voted to have the road posted 25 mph what happened his house is one that is close to the road therefore can't open windows very often. Mark Ranzinger thought the road should remain gravel, it would change the character of the road if paved, seems that there would be other solutions. The Township has two natural beauties Jones Rd. and the St. Joe River. Craig Moore had lived 25 yrs. on the road. Dust is considered a cancer issue in his line of work you have to water down on job sites for excess dust. Howard Henderson thought we need to coordinate the grading with the chloride application. Greg Trail from the Road Commission explained that Calcium Chloride needs moisture to work otherwise it won't activate it takes 1800 gal. per mile. Its 2 ½ miles from Snyder Rd. to Fairland Rd. 3in. of gravel would help. The question was asked why did True Rd. in 2015 get chipped and sealed Supervisor stated that a request had been received in 1976 since it had never been done the township wanted to honor its commitment. Linda Shelton remarked that the road is a wash board and stated that there have been rollovers on the curves. Michigan Department of Natural Resources recommends speeds of no more than 25 mph for Natural Beauty Rds. No speed limit signs are posted except on the two curves. Laun Reinholtz remarked people use Jones as a bypass also farm tractors as well. Carrie Grellmann asked if it was cheaper to gravel and chloride rather than pave? Greg Trail responded if Jones were to be paved a 2-3 ft. shoulder would be needed, ditch work and stump grinding, you would lose trees and part of your front yards. Jones Rd. is about 2 ½ miles estimated of chip and seal surface about \$40,000 per mile plus the cost for preparing the road. The road will get an application of gravel from Snyder to Long Lake as soon as the truck is back in the area and the entire road will get an application of chloride. Next year gravel will be applied from Long Lake to Fairland. Doug Shelton remarked that the road needs to be maintained more. Don Paul felt the speed limit needs to be reduced. Supervisor stated that the Township cannot commit to paving Jones Rd. at this time other roads are on the list for the next two years. He will check about the speed limit.

MINUTES:

Julie Burke made a motion seconded by Paul Sprung to approve the June minutes. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

BILLS:

Julie Burke made a motion seconded by Harold Bishop to approve the Township bills in the amount of \$25,393.64 with an additional amended bill from Knuth Excavating that had been previously approved in the amount of \$3,271.00 for the hall playground equipment as it was decided that pea stone wasn't needed amended bill amount for \$2,396.00 making a total of bills for payment in the amount of \$27,789.64. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

FIRE BILLS:

Mary Jane Dean made a motion seconded by Julie Burke to approve the fire bills in the amount of \$18,158.34 with the township share of \$11,730.29 for payment. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT:

Fire Chief Norm Carl, Jr., Supervisor Bixby and Ross Rogien need to get together for laying out the holes for the hall playground equipment.

UNION CHURCH:

Supervisor reported that the first coat of paint is on and we will be contacted when we need to get the equipment to get up to the bell tower.

MULTI FAMILY DWELLING:

Mary Jane Dean made a motion seconded by Julie Burke to remove from the table the multi family dwelling request that was tabled during the last meeting. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.** Supervisor reported that the request was a dead issue as she couldn't get funding. Julie Burke made a motion seconded by Paul Sprung that we make null and void the Planning Commission recommendation to approve the Special Lane Use for a multi family dwelling at 11450 S. Lake Chapin as it was contingent on the closing of the property. All ayes, none opposed. **MOTION CARRIED.**

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE:

Julius Grau reported on the Property Maintenance Ordinance that originally the committee had combined the ordinance with the Litter and Debris but the Board decided that it should be separate. The main concern is building structures the safety and health issues. They looked at what other municipalities have done.

We needed a process to implement the ordinance. Something that would be enforceable by the Board in regards to buildings that are unsafe that need to be torn down. Julius stated that the ordinance is complaint driven which contains many checks and balances. Howard stated that the committee has put a lot of work into this ordinance and he felt that it is needed. Julie felt that the ordinance was intruding possibly they lack the money to make the improvements. Jeff stated with his line of work he sees many homes that don't meet these standards so is he suppose to report the problems he sees, they have a roof over their heads and are content. Julius replied yes for their safety. Clerk Dean stated that this is too much people usually take pride in their homes if they had the money they would do the repairs. Harold wondered if the ordinance would continue to be implemented fairly when new board members are elected. Supervisor stated that as long he was supervisor he will make sure the process is not abused. Howard Henderson made a motion seconded by Paul Sprung to adopt the Property Maintenance Ordinance No. 37 as presented. Ayes: Howard Henderson, Paul Sprung, Bryan Bixby and Harold Bishop. Nays: Julie Burke, Jeff Marks and Mary Jane Dean. **MOTION CARRIED.**

BERRIEN CENTER/DEANS HILL:

At the annual meeting with the Berrien County Road Commission the Board was informed that the speed limit would be removed in Berrien Center on Deans Hill Rd. Previously it was posted 25 mph but no one seems to know why as the Court records indicate it should have been 35 mph so any tickets that were issued were not enforceable. As of 2006 residential areas are now defined as roads located within a platted subdivision and no longer include local county roads or roads that bordered a subdivision. One side of Deans Hill is in the village and the other side isn't. The children from the streets in Berrien Center Village all get on and off the bus on Deans Hill Rd. which with no speed limit doesn't make it very safe for them. Supervisor will try to get a speed

study done. Also send a letter to Rep. Dave Pagel with the Boards concerns and the residents for the safety of everyone.

FIRE REPORT:

Fire Chief reported that the Dept. had a total of 11 calls of which 8 were Berrien Township and 3 were Pipestone Township for the month of June. Labor cost were \$1,384.00 with training on water supply and (2) Lamson Hall pre plan for \$1,092.00.

BUILDING PERMITS:

Building Inspector issued (4) building permits for an estimated amount of \$88,900.00 for the month of June. Electrical inspector finalized (5) electrical permits for a fee of \$890.00.

ROADS:

Jones Rd. from True Rd. to Snyder Rd. will be graveled, prime and double seal coat this year. Hochberger Rd. to Eau Claire will be resurfaced in 2018. Deans Hill from paved portion this year to M-139 seal coated in 2019.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

Julius Grau reported that the Berrien County Emergency Preparedness Guide is finally completed. Lakeland is having a training session on Sept. 26 at St. Joe and Oct. 31 in Niles mostly for hospital staff.

CEMETERY:

Clerk Dean reported that there was the first burial at the addition at Franklin Cemetery. She is getting a little frustrated about getting the vandalized markers repaired. St. Joe Monument is so busy just getting new markers placed, will keep trying.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Treasurer Sprung reported that revenue for the month of June was \$24,171.53 with expenses at \$60,184.58. The 2017 summer taxes have been mailed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

MARY JANE DEAN BERRIEN TOWNSHIP CLERK

BRYAN BIXBY BERRIEN TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR