

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP BOARD

Regular Meeting of March 10, 2008

Call to Order/Roll Call

Township Supervisor Frank Force called the regular meeting of the Grattan Township Board to order at the Grattan Township Hall at 7:00 p.m. Members present: F. Force, J. Fues, S. Freeman and P. Knoerl. It was noted that D. Heffron's late arrival is excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

F. Force led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

F. Force added under new business a discussion of the lagoon overflow as item 5, discussion of the proposed new farm land lease document as item 6, and Fireman trainee as item 7. J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve the amended agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

Officer's Report

Clerk's Report

Approval of Minutes

J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2008 regular Township Board meeting as written. All ayes. The motion carried.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2008 Township Board Budget Work Session #2 as written. All ayes. The motion carried.

Budget Amendments

Township Treasurer S. Freeman presented a budget amendment to transfer \$5000.00 previously budgeted for fire runs to an account for the purchase of radios. Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride explained the County's new division of fire department sections. Grattan Township will be in a section that will be using a new frequency. Because the Fire Department's existing radios are too old to reprogram, new radios must be purchased. J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to amend the budget as presented. All ayes. The motion carried.

Accounts Payable

J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve payment of accounts payable in the amount of \$36970.58 (checks 31779 thru 31814). All ayes. The motion carried.

Consent Agenda

Payroll

Treasurer's Report

Correspondence

P. Knoerl moved and J. Fues seconded to approve the consent agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

Working Agenda

Hearing of the Public

There were no public comments.

Department Reports :

Fire Department

Township Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride reported 2 fire runs, 7 medicals, 2 trainings, 2 meetings, 3 non fires totaling 16.

Fire Administration and Safety Committee

F. Force briefly reviewed the last meeting.

Zoning Officer Report

It was reported that there has been little activity.

Safety Board of Appeals

There was no meeting.

Sewer Report

F. Force gave a brief report on the 3-6-08 meeting.

Planning Commission

There was no meeting.

Zoning Board of Appeals

A. Berry reported denial of a request by Dr. Emily to purchase part of a non-conforming lot for a garden. The request would have created 2 non-conforming lots.

Building Department

The Building Department issued a total of 15 permits in February (3 building permits (1 new, 2 other), 3 electrical permits, 4 plumbing permits, 5 mechanical permits).

Old Business

PDR Update

There was no report.

Budget Review

F. Force read a letter from Daniel Durkee regarding repair and maintenance of gravel roads in the Township.

S. Freeman presented a 3/10/08 draft of the 2008/2009 proposed budget for review. The draft budget is based on an increased sewer rate of \$500.00 per year with \$465.00 allocated to O & M (operations and maintenance) and \$35.00 to capital improvement. The proposed Sewer Repair Replace Capital Improvement Fund would use \$225,000.00 for mechanical upgrades and nearly deplete sewer capital improvement reserves. P. Knoerl said there would be no money for repair of the Grattan/Vergennes irrigation site. The Township will have approximately \$4000.00 left for capital improvements in the 2009/2010 fiscal year budget if there are no additional repairs needed during the next fiscal year and the Township only does sewer repairs on the priority list. P. Knoerl said if the Township is using all of its reserves, the matter will need to be looked at next year. Chad Sosnowski, Township Engineer, said the State won't issue a discharge permit unless something is done. He said the water quality is okay, but not being evenly distributed. He said the preliminary permit application has been submitted and the Township will work with DEQ to come up with a solution everyone can deal with. He said the Township will be meeting with the DEQ March 11, 2008 to discuss lagoon discharge. This process can take months/years. The Township has met it's obligation by submitting a request for the discharge permit and the State probably will not shut the sewer system down.

Board members agreed to hear any questions from the audience. There were none.

Don Kurylowicz asked Board members to consider delaying any rate increases if possible and to make any increases slowly. He also said sewer customers should be advised to

monitor what they put in the sewer system. F. Force said he would include that in the next newsletter.

New Business

Oath Taking

J. Fues presented a draft resolution regarding oaths of office for Township officials, Board members and others. Board members reviewed the proposal. P. Knoerl asked what prompted this request. J. Fues said the Michigan Township Association recommends it. It was noted that the Fire Department has its own oath. J. Fues said those oaths must be recorded with the Township.

F. Force moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve Resolution 08-013. D. Timmons read the roll call. All ayes. The motion carried.

Auditor

J. Fues said the audit firm currently used by the Township (Siegfried and Crandall) has increased their fees. Mr. Fues has received quotes from other firms. He spoke with Joe Walls, the Township's current auditor, who cautioned the Township when considering other quotes. Mr. Walls said those quotes may not always reflect the actual costs incurred. Mr. Fues said he was disappointed that the Township has not yet received a post audit report from Siegfried and Crandall and that last years recommendations from that firm did not seem to warrant the increase. The other firms being considered are smaller and it sounds like those firms would be more apt to work toward just an audit.

F. Force said the downside of selecting another firm may be just what Mr. Walls cautioned and the Township will pay as much for their services. S. Freeman said she was undecided about the matter, noting that the current firm knows the Township well. Board members discussed the matter. It was noted that Gaybridge and Company said they would match any quotes. P. Knoerl suggested the Township try Gaybridge and Company for one year at a cost of \$3900.00. F. Force and J. Fues agreed. S. Freeman was undecided. J. Fues will have a representative from Gaybridge and Company meet with the Board to discuss the matter. P. Knoerl asked that the Board be provided with copies of the bids.

(D. Heffron arrived at 7:50 p.m.)

Resignation from the Zoning Board of Appeals

F. Force announced George Poulias' resignation from the Zoning Board of Appeals and said the Township has greatly appreciated Mr. Poulias' many years of service.

Mr. Force suggested moving one of the two ZBA alternates to a regular position on the ZBA. Board members discussed that matter. F. Force moved and D. Heffron seconded to

approve John Jakeway to fill the newly vacated spot on the ZBA. All ayes. The motion carried.

Citizen Planner Training Manuals

J. Fues said he would like the Township to provide the Citizen Planner manual to members of the Planning Commission and the ZBA. A total of 18 manuals would be needed at \$40.00 each. F. Force said the manuals would be a valuable reference and was in favor of the proposal.

J. Fues moved and D. Heffron seconded to approve the purchase of 18 Citizen Planner manuals. All ayes. The motion carried.

Lagoon Overflow

F. Force explained the recent Grattan sewer system lagoon overflow. Dave Versluis, Sierra Consultants, Chad Sosnowski, Prein & Newhof, and Board members discussed the overflow and ways to prevent a reoccurrence. Mr. Versluis said most sewer systems can begin discharging April 1 st , but Grattan's discharge date is May 1 st . The Township will request an earlier discharge date in order to lower the levels in the lagoon. D. Versluis said Sierra would like to remove more water this year and evaluate the capacity of that system. Both D. Versluis and C. Sosnowski said the lagoon should hold unless we receive a lot of rain. C. Sosnowski said the lagoon should be checked frequently. If the water is getting too high the Township will have to hire tanker trucks to haul water to the Grattan/Vergennes site or a similar location.

Farmland Lease

Board members reviewed the new farmland lease agreement. D. Kurlowicz noted that the Township is extending the length of the lease and suggested an option for the Township to break the lease if there are any problems. D. Heffron said farmers should be reimbursed for soil applications and other improvements if the Township should break the lease. Mr. Heffron said he uses Michigan State University 's recommendations for soil treatment based on soil testing. He said a farmer could treat the soil with lime that will last for five years. If the lease is broken after one year, the farmer should be reimbursed 4/5 the cost. Mr. Kurlowicz asked if there is a record of those applications. D. Heffron said the DEQ regulates that and it shouldn't be a problem to provide the Township with the information. F. Force asked if Prein and Newhof's yearly soil samples could be used. D. Heffron said they could be used, but was worried about the timing of those tests might not work for the farmer. He said the Township might want to consider GPS soil samples.

The group also discussed types of crops to allow. D. Heffron said the Township shouldn't restrict crops as long as they meet DEQ requirements.

J. Fues will make revisions to the lease agreement, but said there is not enough time to bring this matter to another meeting. The bids need to be accepted by the Township

before the next meeting. The sealed bids will be opened at the Board meeting. Board members agreed that this matter did not require a vote.

Fireman Trainee

F. Force introduced Joel Steenwyk, applicant for fireman trainee. Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride said Joel has been recommended by the Fire Department's Officers Board. P. Knoerl moved and J. Fues seconded to hire Joel Steenwyk as a Grattan Township Volunteer Firefighter. All ayes. The motion carried. D. Heffron commended the Fire Department and Chief for attracting young firefighters. Chief Kirkbride said Mr. Steenwyk will be a welcome addition to the Fire Department.

Board Communications

Meeting Dates

There will be a Sewer Customer meeting March 20, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. F. Force said he would appreciate participation of Township Board members at that meeting.

A public hearing regarding the Township's budget for the next fiscal year will be held March 24, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

The next regular Township Board meeting will be held April 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, J. Fues declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Jim Fues, Township Clerk

Franklin J. Force, Township Supervisor

Recording Secretary,

Diane Timmons