

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Board Meeting of June 8, 2009

1. Call to Order

Township Supervisor Frank Force called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

F. Force led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

D. Timmons read the roll call. Members present: Supervisor F. Force, Clerk J. Fues, and Trustee P. Knoerl. Members absent: Trustee D. Heffron (excused) and Treasurer S. Freeman (excused). Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride also attended the meeting.

4. Approval of the Agenda

F. Force removed the closed session and inflation rate increases for sewer bills and added discussion of Main Tech's contract and senior meals. P. Knoerl moved and J. Fues seconded to approve the amended agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

5. Officers Report (Clerk's Report)

Approval of Minutes

F. Force noted a minor correction. J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve the amended minutes from the May 11, 2009 regular meeting. All ayes. The motion carried.

Budget Amendments

There were no budget amendments.

Accounts Payable

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve accounts payable in the amount of 122,229.32 (checks 32679-32726 inclusive). All ayes. The motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

Payroll

Treasurer's Report (all funds)

Correspondence

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

7. Working Agenda

Hearing of Public

Jeff Treynor asked Board members if there was anything in township ordinances regarding the use of port-a-johns at campgrounds. F. Force said the township has received complaints about this use and checked with the County. The County Health Department has no problem with the use. He said until the Township has evidence nothing further can be done. Mr. Treynor said a portion of Kehoe did not receive a dust control application by the County. He also said drains in that area have not been cleared by the County. It was agreed to have the Zoning Officer take pictures when available.

Dale Oberlin asked if tabled issues would be on the agenda at the next meeting. F. Force said he will add those items when he knows all Board members will be in attendance. F. Force explained closed meetings.

Jackie Vander Ploeg questioned why the Board was considering raising sewer rates based on the rate of inflation. It was noted that some sewer customers have indicated they would be in favor of Consumer Index rate of inflation as a basis for rate increases. There was a discussion about the need to raise rates. P. Knoerl said the Township is trying to build sewer capital improvement fund back up. He said the Township has upgrades to be completed in the near future. An audience member said the Board said there would be no raise in sewer rates at the last meeting. P. Knoerl said Township will not know if rates need to be raised until all the information about costs for upgrades is available.

An audience member asked if the sewer operations manual was used for bidding. P. Knoerl explained the process used by the Township when going out for bids. The contract with Infrastructure says operation costs may not exceed budgeted amounts. That contract will be evaluated after November 2009.

Department Reports

Fire Department

Fire Chief L. Kirkbride reported 2 brush fires, 3 personal injury, 9 medical calls, 1 service call, 1 non fire, 1 mutual aid, 4 training for a total of 21. L. Kirkbride gave a brief update on FEMA and DNR grants in progress, work on the ISO, the appointment of a fire millage committee and quotes on pump stations.

Fire Administration and Safety Committee

This was covered in the Fire Department report.

Zoning Officer Report

F. Force recommended using the township's building inspector, Casey Patterson, to review complaints while the zoning officer is recuperating. F. Force said C. Patterson has experience in this area and is willing to take on those duties. J. Fues recommended that C. Patterson be temporarily given the title of Zoning Officer so he will have the authority to carry out that position. F. Force said he will check into the legality of appointing C. Patterson on a temporary basis.

Draft: 06/14/09

Approved: 07/13/09

Safety Board of Appeals

The next meeting will be held June 9, 2009 to review a request for a dock on Murray Lake.

Sewer Report

John Rydbeck, Infrastructure Alternatives, gave a brief report on sewer operations. A request has been submitted to the DEQ for the temporary addition of an irrigation area at the Grattan site. P. Knoerl asked for an explanation of the condition of the guns at that site when Infrastructure took over operations. J. Rydbeck said the sprayers were not turning off. Repairs were made and the guns are now operational.

F. Force said Consumers Energy will be rerouting power lines around a wooded area at Big Pine Island in the fall in an attempt to reduce the number of power outages in the area.

An audience member asked if water level markers have been installed at the lagoons. J. Rydbeck said they will be installed in the fall when levels begin to rise. The audience member said they should be installed now.

Planning Commission

Tom Skipper's request to sell landscape materials was approved. Commissioners reviewed a request for a deck and small addition to a house on Big Pine Island and a request by Rockford Ambulance to install a substation in the Township.

Zoning Board of Appeals

There was no meeting.

Building Department

There were 2 new and 4 other building permits, 4 electrical, 1 plumbing and 1 mechanical for a total of 12 in the month of May.

Unfinished Business

PDR update

There was no report.

Kent Conservation District

F. Force said Kent Conservation District did not receive funding for this project. Stimulus money was sent to Michigan Works. F. Force said the Township may be able to qualify for help from Michigan Works, but it will be more difficult.

New Business

Closed Session to Discuss a Letter of Opinion from the Township Attorney

This item was removed from the agenda until all Board members are in attendance.

Outdoor Wood Burner Ordinance

Board members reviewed the revised outdoor wood burner ordinance. J. Fues recommended changing the allowed zoning to include any except lake residential. Board members agreed to return the ordinance to the Planning Commission for further review.

Inflation Rate Increases on Sewer User Bills

This item was removed from the agenda until all Board members are in attendance.

Combination of Grattan and Grattan Vergennes Irrigation Upgrade Special Assessments

Board members discussed how to fund upgrades to the Grattan and Grattan Vergennes irrigation systems. J. Fues and P. Knoerl were not in favor of combining the two upgrades. P. Knoerl said there would be minor upgrades at the Grattan site. P. Knoerl explained the proposal for the Grattan Vergennes upgrade. He said this upgrade is required by the DEQ. The upgrade must start in the fall of 2010 and be completed by spring of 2011. Board members discussed a proposal by Valley Irrigation for the Grattan Vergennes site.

P. Knoerl said at the last meeting sewer customers said they would prefer an increase in the quarterly sewer bill rather than a special assessment. An audience member asked if the quarterly rates would go down after the upgrade was paid. Board members discussed and agreed to see how the bids come in and then use as much cash as possible and then loans. Jackie Vander Ploeg asked if the Township has looked into low interest loans from the State. F. Force said in order to take advantage of those loans an engineering study of the whole sewer system is required. The cost of that study would be \$15,000-\$20,000 and the Township would have no assurance they would get the low interest loan.

Safety Board of Appeals Fees

F. Force asked for Board member's opinion on increasing the Safety Board of Appeals fees. He said costs for a recent application for variance to the dock ordinance were not completely covered by the application fee. Board members discussed raising the application fee to \$500 and requiring an escrow (the same requirement as a ZBA application). P. Knoerl will bring this matter up at the next Safety Board of Appeals meeting.

Permit Approvals

J. Fues said he recently approved a request from St. Patrick's church to apply to the state for a liquor license for their summer celebration. This approval tells the state Grattan Township agrees to allow the state to provide the church a liquor license.

Draft: 06/14/09

Approved: 07/13/09

J. Fues also approved a request for fireworks by the Big Pine Island Lake Association.

MTA Dues

J. Fues asked for an opinion from Board members on the value of MTA membership. There was a discussion and Board members agreed to continue membership and review ~~the~~ how the township uses services from MTA.

PDR Land Preservation Applications

J. Fues presented an application from Marian Gregory Coalton for 75.95 acres of which 40 acres are eligible for PDR. J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded approve the application to the Kent County PDR program. Roll call: All ayes. The motion carried.

Amend Zoning Ordinance 2.32 Institutional or Public Uses

Board members reviewed a request from the Planning Commission to amend zoning ordinance section 2.32 regarding institutional or public uses. F. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to amend the ordinance as presented. Roll call: All ayes. The motion carried.

Main Tech Contract

F. Force the Township's contract with Main Tech, secondary sewer contractor, will expire July 1, 2009. He said Main Tech agreed to work as needed at the current rates. Board members agreed to allow the contract to expire.

Senior Meals

J. Fues said the current contract with Senior Meals will expire June 30, 2009. The Township funds this service with money from a block grant.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to authorize F. Force to enter into contract with Kent County Senior Meals from July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010. Roll call: All ayes. The motion carried.

8. Board Member Communications

Meeting Dates

The second Board meeting date (if needed) is June 22, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The next regular Board meeting date is July 13, 2009.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, F. Force declared the meeting adjourned at p.m.

Jim Fues, Township Clerk

Date

Draft: 06/14/09

Approved: 07/13/09

Franklin J. Force, Township Supervisor

Date

Diane Timmons
Recording Secretary