

**Bertrand Township Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 14, 2016**

Bertrand Township Hall
3835 Buffalo Rd., Buchanan, MI 49107

Supervisor Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led with a prayer for the family and friends of the two slain Berrien County Courthouse Bailiffs, Joe Zangaro and Ron Kienzle. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Hicks, Kuhn, LeClaire, Vite, Zelmer

Special Guests: Mac Elliot and John Campbell – attorneys for Signal Point; Dean Hill, Democratic candidate for the State Legislature 78th District.

Consent Agenda (*see attachments*)

Supervisor Hicks amended the Agenda as follows:

- Add item #4 in New Business – Recommendation for a firefighter candidate.

Motion made by Zelmer supported by Vite to approve Consent Agenda as amended:

- Township Board Meeting Minutes from June 9, 2016.
- Accounts Payable for the period 06/10 - 07/12 as presented:

Total General Fund Expenses	\$34,545.77
Total Fire Dept. Fund Expenses	\$14,670.23
Total WRT Fund Expenses	\$ 83.99
Total Expenses	<u>\$49,299.99</u>

- Treasurer's Report as of June 30:

General Fund	\$1,460,386.94
Total Fire Dept. Fund	\$283,965.23
Total WRT Fund	\$3,301.69
Total Fund Current Assets	<u>\$1,747,653.86</u>

Discussion: Kuhn reminded the board that the \$5,000 annual matching fund with the BCRC was being terminated and wondered what would become of funds in the account. Hicks will follow up and also reminded the board we have \$37,916.77 as of 2/15/16 (per BCRC/Township Annual Meeting minutes) in accumulated funds in that account coming back to the township.

Roll call vote: **Motion carried unanimously**

Reports

Sheriff's Department

None submitted.

Fire Department (*see attachments*)

Chief Knisely submitted the July, 2016, monthly Fire Department report. The new Spencer pumper fire truck is about 90% complete and expected to be finished by the end of July. He

would like to have an open house mid-September to welcome the truck. Kuhn asked what the status of the parking lot refinishing at Station 1 was, and the paperwork was misplaced in the shuffle of scheduling at MPM until recently, and they will schedule the job shortly.

SMCAS (see attachment)

Chief Knisely submitted the June 16, 2016, report.

Sexton

Sexton Wolf returned yesterday from the MTA Conference “Cemetery Solutions and Challenges” where she gleaned a great amount of very useful information and helpful contacts.

A Cut Above Tree Care company never responded to bids for removing two trees in Mt. Zion and 4-5 trees in Bakertown cemeteries, which remains a top priority. Jean will look elsewhere.

There was one cremain burial in Bakertown cemetery and two plots purchased in Bakertown cemetery.

There are loiterers after dark at Mt. Zion cemetery on too many occasions. The neighbors have been surveilling the cemetery and taking upon themselves to keep the loiterers out. LeClaire suggested the board should take a position of not endorsing enforcement by residents.

Public Comments

Dean Hill, Democratic candidate for State Legislature 78th District, briefly introduced himself.

Unfinished Business

1. Signal Point Liquor License Reclassification

Motion made by Hicks, supported by Kuhn to grant the reclassification of Signal Point’s liquor license from a club license, Class C, to a golf course license, Class G-1.

Discussion: Attorneys Mack Elliott and John Campbell representing Signal Point presented their case for reclassifying Signal Point’s liquor license, essentially to bring Signal Point up to current code.

Hicks said he conferred with attorney Bell and there were no issues that raised flags for her.

LeClaire and Zelmer felt the board hadn’t performed the due diligence with Signal Point that they had done with Steve Lecklider/Lehman’s Orchard. Further, there are possible implications with Signal Point’s SLU permit that should be further looked into.

Above Motion was rescinded by Hicks and Kuhn rescinded his support.

Motion made by Zelmer and supported by Kuhn to direct Supervisor Hicks to clarify the SLU of Signal point from township attorney Sara Bell, and to request her response in writing.

Discussion: Attorney Campbell requested a special meeting to bring the issue to a vote since this issue has been on the table for two months and to help reduce attorney costs.

Voice vote: **Motion carried unanimously**

New Business

1. Septic system bids

Motion made by Vite, supported by Kuhn to approve Deau Excavating, Inc.’s proposal for \$3,923.92 to replace the septic field at the township hall.

Discussion: LeClaire pointed out that while Deau Excavating was the least expensive proposal, it was also missing certain important specs the other two estimates included, specifically crushing and filling the old septic tank, and backfilling and grading area to a plantable condition.

Vite **amended the motion**, supported by Kuhn, to approve Deau Excavating, Inc.'s proposal for \$3,923.92 to replace the septic field at the township hall, subject to their agreeing in writing to crushing and filling the old septic tank, and backfilling and grading the area to a plantable condition.

Roll call vote: **Amended motion carried unanimously**

2. Blight properties

Motion made by Hicks, supported by Vite to recommend building inspector Dave Swanstrom to inspect for condemning three sites identified as blight properties.

Discussion: Three properties have been identified as blight properties: 3540 W Bertrand Rd; 5955 Depot, Galien; 2870 Oak Forest. LeClaire asked how they are identified and what constitutes blight. Hicks said two of the three had specific complainants while the third is on a busy road seen daily by motorists and neighbors. He also said there are very specific state blight codes that Swanstrom must follow.

Roll call vote: **Motion carried unanimously**

3. Community Hall Plumbing

Motion made by Vite, supported by Zelmer to approve Advantage Plumbing, Inc.'s proposal of \$598.50 to remove restroom toilets and install new ones supplied by the township, as well as repair the kitchen faucet, both at the Community Hall.

Discussion: Zelmer asked if we looked for plumbers in the township and suggested Pro Plumbing. Hicks said it is increasingly difficult to find a local, personal plumber the township can call on. Most are large, impersonal companies.

LeClaire will talk to Plumbing Inspector Cole to point out since the restroom doors aren't ADA compliant, the toilets don't have to be either, helping save the township money in the cost of the toilets.

Voice vote: **Motion carried unanimously**

4. Recommendation for firefighter candidate

Motion made by Vite, supported by Zelmer to accept Fire Chief Knisely's recommendation of hiring Laine Hicks as a fireman candidate.

Discussion: Zelmer thought hiring was at the end of the candidate process, but Knisely clarified that hiring them at the beginning gives them the opportunity to get experience before their class.

Roll call vote: **Ayes – Vite, LeClaire, Zelmer, Kuhn; Abstain – Hicks**

Passed: 4-0

Public Comments

Resident Scott Wooster asked where he can get the criteria used to condemn a property. Hicks told him to see Building Inspector Dave Swanstrom at the township hall during his office hours - Tuesday mornings, 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Board Member Comments

Vite sent a letter to all qualified voting residents aged 60+ years old asking them if they would like to be placed on the Permanent Absentee Voter list. Response has been very strong. The county clerk has recommended this to help reduce lines at the polls for the General Election since straight ticket voting was eliminated earlier this year.

Communications *(see attachments)*

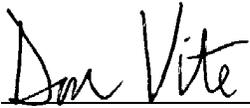
- Berrien County Road Commission Township Annual Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2016. There is \$37,916.77 as of 2/15/16 in the township’s matching fund account. Hicks will follow up to determine what to do with the funds.

Miscellaneous / Announcements / Schedule

- The State Primary Election is Tuesday, August 2. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the township hall.
- The next township board meeting will be Thursday, August 11, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Hicks to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Don Vite
Bertrand Township Clerk

July 21, 2016
Date