

**Bertrand Township Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 14, 2018**

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

Supervisor Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Special Guests: Brad Paquette, Republican candidate for District 78 State Representative.

Consent Agenda *(see attachments)*

Motion made by Zelmer supported by Kuhn to approve Consent Agenda as presented:

- Township Board Meeting Minutes from May 10, 2018
- Accounts Payable for the period 05/11-06/14 as presented:

Total General Fund Expenses	\$45,409.97
Total Fire Dept. Fund Expenses	\$31,944.15
Total WRT Fund Expenses	\$102.48
Total Expenses	\$77,456.60

- Treasurer's Report as of May 31, 2018:

General Fund	\$1,416,819.47
Total Fire Dept. Fund	\$305,240.23
Total WRT Fund	\$2,530.08
Total Fund Current Assets	\$1,724,589.78

Roll call vote: **Motion carried unanimously**

Reports

Sheriff's Department *(see attached)*

Deputy Sutherland delivered the monthly report. Nothing extraordinary to report.

Fire Department *(see attached)*

Chief Knisely submitted the June, 2018 monthly Fire Department report, including statistics for the month. Chief has two candidates going through the adult firefighter class and is aware of three others in the township expressing interest. He informed the board that for the first time in many years no one attended the firefighter I & II class this year and expressed his personal concern that Berrien County Training Council has too stringent requirements that should be loosened to attract more qualified individuals.

Hose testing resulted in 700' of failed hose (smaller diameter hose), and chief will be ordering new hose.

Treasurer Kuhn informed the board and Chief that he increased by \$13,000 (from the refurbishment account) to \$150,000 the FD's expired CD and renewed it at a rate of 2.4% at Country Heritage.

SMCAS

Chief Knisely gave a verbal report:

- Josh Kay is the new Operations Manager and has great rapport with the employees. There's been a positive attitudinal shift with the staff as they like Josh and the work he's doing.
- Net revenue continues to stay in the black and increasing (\$379,881 YTD).

SE Berrien County Landfill

Trustee Zelmer gave a verbal report:

- Financial audit coming up
- Sentencing Monday 18th for former GM

Sexton

Nothing to report

NATS

Nothing to report

Public Comments

None

Unfinished Business

1. 1880 S Redbud Demo Bids

Motion made by Vite, supported by Payton to accept Deau Excavating's proposal of \$7,375 to demo the Hein house and garage but preserve the well.

Discussion: Trustee Zelmer expressed reservation in demoing the house when perhaps a lot line adjustment would allow the board to sell the house and recoup much of the purchase price while retaining the corner property for future use. Supervisor Hicks he had conversation with Assessor Story about splitting possibilities that would cause this to work but that there wouldn't be enough frontage per zoning requirements since the house falls right in the center of the property.

Vite rescinded his motion and Hicks said he'd look further into the board's options of selling off the house and keeping the corner property.

New Business

1. Township Ordinance #66 – Reimbursement for Charges Incurred by the Fire Department for Certain Emergency Medical Services

Background: Treasurer Kuhn introduced an ordinance to establish a basis for reimbursement to the township of charges, costs and fees incurred by the township for providing certain emergency response services. He began looking at the number of calls our Fire Department responds to in emergencies on the St. Joseph Valley Parkway and US12 from motorists residing outside Bertrand Township, and discovered there are enough to warrant further investigation into recovering some of our expenses. He researched the issue with other Michigan jurisdictions and discovered some of these having an ordinance in place for this very issue – especially those like Bridgman with major roadways intersecting them.

Discussion: While this is a good starting point, it was quickly concluded by the board through energized discussion there are too many ambiguities and missing items in this draft for any vote, such as:

- A missing schedule of fees
- Handling of mutual aid calls / MAVIS agreement (not charging other departments for our services)
- Enforcement – the township’s attorney suggested it wouldn’t stand up in court

Conclusion/Action Item: Each board member will review the ordinance language and be prepared with additional questions and comments. Chief Knisely will work with the board to come up with a schedule of fees including personnel wages, vehicle and equipment expenses, and other expenses. Continue looking at other jurisdictions with similar ordinances and asking them questions pertaining to their success in implementing.

No motion made.

2. Broadband to Bertrand Crossing

Background: There is a need to get more affordable broadband internet connectivity to the Bertrand Crossing industrial park and ultimately make it more widely available in Bertrand Township. The solution that is most promising is Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC), who has worked extensively with the city of Niles. The cost of getting internet from Niles to Bertrand Crossing (BC) is approximately \$100,000. Thus far, MEC has pledged \$20,000, and the city of Niles has pledged \$25,000. SMEGA is asking for a financial commitment from Bertrand Township. The balance of the funding will be secured by SMEGA. SMEGA has submitted a questionnaire to each of the companies in BC asking them their level of participation. At least 70% of the businesses have to commit to taking at least 100mb of service to move the project forward.

Motion made by Hicks, supported by Kuhn, to pledge \$25,000, matching the City of Niles pledge, toward the cost of getting broadband internet to Bertrand Crossing.

Discussion: While it is widely recognized there is increasing demand for internet connectivity in the township, there was lively discussion and disagreement among the board members as to whose responsibility it is to fund this kind of project. The Nays essentially believe it is the financial responsibility of those demanding the service. The Ayes essentially believe helping cover the initial cost of getting broadband internet to the township will have a net positive by retaining and attracting both businesses and households in the future if the township has internet more readily available.

Roll call vote: Ayes – Kuhn, Vite, Hicks; Nays – Payton, Zelmer

Motion carried 3-2

Public Comments

- Rhonda Hicks, Planning Commission secretary, presented each member of the board with a copy of the Feb 1, 2018 revision of the Zoning Ordinance.

Board Member Comments

- Clerk Vite said the annual audit that was to begin on June 11 was postponed by our auditor Derek Hall for personal conflicts. New date TBD.

Communications

- Supervisor Hicks won't be able to attend next month's board meeting.
- Treasurer Kuhn said the Planning Commission has created a survey for residents regarding the Master Plan and will go live on the township website on July 1.
- The newsletter to be included with the summer tax notice went to the printer today.

Miscellaneous / Announcements / Schedule

- The next township board meeting will be Thursday, July 12, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Hicks to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Don Vite

Bertrand Township Clerk

June 18, 2018

Dated