

**NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP
Township Board
Notes
November 23, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Supervisor Mozurkewich at 8350 Main Street.

PLEDGE/INVOCATION

Supervisor Mozurkewich led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and Pastor Dan Flynn provided a prayer.

ROLL CALL

Roll call:

Debra Mozurkewich	Present
Michele Manning	Present
Cynthia Wilson	Present
Wayne Dockett	Present
Samuel Iaquinto	Present
Daniel Rowe	Present
Dan Smith	Present

Also present:

Police Lt. Tim Greene
Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble
Members of the community

CONSENT AGENDA:

- **Bills**
- **Minutes of November 9, 2010**

Mozurkewich noted that the Clerk had made some corrections to the minutes.

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Rowe supported, that the bills be approved as presented and the minutes be approved as amended by the Clerk.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA

Mozurkewich noted that Item 1 under Discussion/Action Items—*Post Retirement Benefits*—had been removed at the request of the Township's Labor counsel. She suggested a brief discussion about the budget process instead.

- ▶ **Motion:** Iaquinto moved, Mozurkewich supported, that the balance of the agenda be adopted with the addition of a budget discussion as Item 1 in place of the previously scheduled discussion of Post Retirement Benefits.
Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

REPORTS/UPDATES

Supervisor. Mozurkewich noted that the Façade Improvement Plan program and the results of the comprehensive survey (which the planning consultant is now reviewing), will be reviewed by the Board at its December 14th meeting. She noted that almost 400 surveys were completed and she invited anyone interested to look at them. Dockett said this was not a scientific survey. Mozurkewich said opinions never are.

Mozurkewich suggested a joint meeting with the Whitmore Lake school board. Rowe agreed it is always a good idea to stay in touch with the school board.

ZBA. Smith said there was nothing to report.

Planning Commission. Iaquinto reported that the Planning Commission has recommended approval to the Board of the *Privately Owned Community Sewage Systems Ordinance*, they agreed to set a public hearing on changes to the *Home Occupations* ordinance, and discussed the issues surrounding a medical marijuana ordinance for future action. In answer to a question from Mozurkewich, Iaquinto said in addition to input from Board members the Township's Public Safety officers have provided input on the medical marijuana ordinance.

Downtown Development Authority. See comments under *Supervisor's Report*.

ACTION ITEMS

**1.
Acceptance of Easements
for Barker Road Pathway**

Mozurkewich referred to the two easements included in Board packets. She reported that both of the owners of these properties have agreed to the easements.

- ▶ **Motion:** Mozurkewich moved, Iaquinto supported, to approve the resolution for dedication of the Permanent Sidewalk Easement on Parcel 02-06-300-019. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote. Resolution adopted.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Mozurkewich moved, Rowe supported, to approve the resolution for dedication of the Permanent Sidewalk Easement on Parcel 02-06-300-003.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Mozurkewich said there is a difference in compensation for the two easements because one property owner is losing many more trees.

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Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote. Resolution adopted.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**1.
Budget Discussion**

Mozurkewich asked if the Board would be willing to change the budgeting process to one in which the Department heads present their own budgets. Rowe said it makes sense to involve Department heads in this way, and he noted that has been done in the past.

Mozurkewich said she would also like to see the Board set up goals and objectives with priorities stated to be referred to whenever the Board needs to make a decisions about whatever discretionary funds the Board has control over. Rowe said whenever the Board faces those decisions it always has that type of discussion. He added that the needs of the community may change based on a many variables and he would not like to see the Board bound by a list of priorities which were previously set. Dockett agreed and said things can come up unexpectedly. Mozurkewich said emergencies always arise that the Board can take into account, but she would like to see a plan or guidelines in place, though they would not be set in stone.

**2.
Appropriate Appointments
to Boards/Commissions**

Mozurkewich questioned whether the Board would like to have a policy about considering improprieties committed by potential candidates for Township boards and commissions. Smith said he has no objection to such information about Board or Commission candidates being taken into consideration when the Board makes such appointments, but he would not like to see a policy about it. He added that the Board can also choose to rescind an appointment if some impropriety occurs or is discovered after an appointment.

Rowe said after an appointment is made there usually must be some kind of evidence that the person is not performing the duties of their position. He said, however, that the Board should look into what kind of authority the Board has to rescind an appointment based on something like non-payment of taxes. Dockett questioned what other criteria are being referred to in additional to non-payment of taxes—non-attendance at meetings, etc. Rowe said he thinks that question needs to be considered.

Manning said she agrees with Smith. She said this could be part of the Supervisor's process when filling of such positions is brought to the Board. She added that there are State laws about some requirements for serving in various positions which could not be overruled by a Board policy.

Mozurkewich questioned why someone should be appointed to a Township position if they owe the Township money.

**3.
Township Board Opening**

Manning noted she had provided copies of all four letters of interest she had received. Mozurkewich said the best way for representatives of the public to be chosen is through an election, but she would like to avoid the cost of that. She suggested that candidates for the position being vacated by Trustee Smith due to his election to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners make presentations to the Board about their qualifications and interest. Dockett said he does not see the need for that. Iaquinto agreed, noting that other appointments are made based on letters of interest.

Iaquinto noted that Dockett will be out of town for a month or two after this meeting, so he would prefer that the Board make an appointment soon.

Smith read his letter of resignation from the Northfield Township Board effective November 24, 2010, noting that he also serves on the Zoning Board of Appeals. He said he has enjoyed serving with the other Board members and made comments to each of them individually about their accomplishments and service to the Township. Mozurkewich congratulated Smith on his election to higher office, thanked him for his kind remarks, and said she hopes he will represent the Township well on the County Board.

Mozurkewich questioned whether a special Board meeting should be scheduled to hear from potential Board members. Rowe said he does not think it is appropriate to ask each candidate to be interviewed in that way, but if it is done it would be most appropriate at a regular Board meeting. He said he would not like to see the expense of an additional meeting, and he will not be available next Tuesday. In answer to a question from Mozurkewich, Rowe said it is a different thing for Board candidates to be grilled by sitting Board members than for the public to ask questions of candidates prior to an election. He said he has no objection to allowing candidates to make statements to the Board at a regular meeting.

► **Motion:** Dockett moved, Iaquinto supported, that Mark Stanalajczo be appointed as Trustee to fill the Township Board position being vacated by Dan Smith.

Mozurkewich asked if Dockett had reviewed the information about all four candidates. Dockett said he did not call the person with a 989 cell phone number because that is not an exchange from this area. Mozurkewich said that is a cell phone exchange for this area. Iaquinto said one of the candidates has lived in the community for less than a year, and he does not think that is sufficient. He said he supports the motion.

Mozurkewich said she has not lobbied any Board members about appointing anyone in particular, but it seems that the Board came prepared to support this particular candidate and that makes her sad. She said she does not this as representing the public well. Iaquinto called the question and said Mozurkewich is using this as a forum to give her own opinion.

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Motion carried 6—0—1; Smith abstaining on a voice vote.

Mozurkewich congratulated Stanalajczo and welcomed him to the Board.

- Iaquinto moved, Manning supported, to formally accept Dan Smith's resignation as a Board Trustee with regret effective November 24, 2010.

Board members thanked Smith for his service, said they enjoyed working with him in the past two years, and wished him good luck on the County Board.

Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

**4.
Online Publishing of
Salary and Compensation Package**

Mozurkewich passed out copies of the document *Washtenaw County's Open Book* which is available on their website, and she listed the various items posted there including audits, budgets, and quarterly updates. She noted that Northfield Township already posts budgets and audits, but Northfield does not post the checkbook registry, flex spending accounts, credit card charges, and salaries as the County already does or will soon do. She said this is an excellent example of transparency.

Iaquinto said he definitely supports this even if it means the Clerk has to rely more on her deputy including increasing some of those hours. Rowe said the only thing he is concerned about is making sure that personal information that is not protected by law is not revealed on-line. He said he does not want the Township to inadvertently be made subject to a lawsuit.

Manning said she is open to this idea, and she is familiar with what can legally be published on-line. She said she has checked with the Township's employment attorney about several things of this nature and he confirmed that there was no problem with the information that was published.

Smith said he has heard that expenses have already been reduced at the County level by publishing this information, but he cautioned that care should be taken to use convenient methods of reporting this information to avoid increasing the work burden on staff. Mozurkewich said it seems that the Board wants the Clerk to pursue this.

**5.
Grant for Tire Cleanup**

Mozurkewich referred to the information in the Board packets and noted that there are options for applying for funds for either clean-ups where the public brings things to a central collection area or for a contractor to go out and pick up tires when the Township receives calls about them. She noted that the grant would pay \$1 per tire collected, and one local contractor indicated their charge

would be \$3/tire, so the Township would still incur an expense for doing this. She said the application deadline is November 30th.

Iaquinto said this would be very beneficial to the Township, noting that he thinks a more thorough clean-up would be done by hiring a contractor to find and pick up dumped tires. Mozurkewich suggested that Police and citizens could be called upon to call in locations of tires as they see them. Dockett said he is in favor of this. Rowe agreed.

**6.
Post Audit Discussion**

Manning said she spoke with auditor Pfeffer on his offer of following up on the recommendations contained in his audit, and she reported he is willing to proceed at a certain cost. Rowe said he believes the items identified should be addressed as soon as possible. Dockett agreed. He said the money to do this needs to be found somewhere in the budget.

- **Motion:** Rowe moved, Iaquinto supported, the Township authorize the office staff to hire personnel to complete the work in the Treasurer's department for up to \$20,000 to be taken from the general fund contingency budget to complete the critical tasks that are not being completed in the Treasurer's office as recommended by the auditor.

Rowe said as much as he would like to bid out this work, at this point action is needed from experts to clean this up as quickly and efficiently as possible, and if that costs an extra \$5,000 or \$10,000 that's the price that's necessary. He said if the State comes in and does this it will cost the Township hundreds of thousands of dollars. Iaquinto said he would like those hired to give assistance in cleaning up the personal property tax situation, too, because that is also important to the school district's budget.

Mozurkewich said she shares the concerns already expressed, but she has reservations. She said caution should be exercised to be sure money is not simply being thrown at the problem. She said statutorily the Treasurer is the only person who can collect taxes, make deposits, and disburse funds, so without her cooperation nothing can be done no matter how much money is spent. Rowe said he hopes everyone on the Board shares his concern about the Township's liability and wants this cleaned up as soon as possible. In answer to a question from Smith, Rowe said it was not his intent by his motion to usurp any of the Treasurer's authority. Mozurkewich said she is concerned that help is being ordered that has not been requested. Rowe said the Board has offered help before and the offer has not been accepted. He said the Treasurer needs to get on board and get things done. Dockett suggested that the Treasurer be asked about this.

Wilson said she does need help, and although she has a deputy, that deputy can commit only a small amount of time because she holds four positions. She said she would have no problem giving up some of her duties to someone else. She noted that she and the Controller have been working on many of the things listed in the audit and have

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gotten many of them under control already. She noted that a computer system crashed that had to be recreated, some programs were corrupted and they were unaware of it, but those have now been corrected.

Wilson said she has needed help since last November because of a medical problem she had and she would appreciate help. Rowe said he wants to be careful about using the Controller to do some of this work because the auditors have had a problem with that concerning the maintenance of checks and balances in the Township. Wilson said she understands that. Smith said he wants it made clear that the Board is not making any statements about the Treasurer's duties and how she is performing them.

Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

**7.
Police Car Purchase**

Lt. Tim Greene referred to the letter from the Controller about using Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) funds to purchase a vehicle to significantly reduce the interest cost. He said at the time the budget was approved 2010 pricing was used and 2011 pricing is a bit higher. He , but it is actually \$20,774.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Lt. Greene said equipment in the existing vehicle will be reused in the new vehicle to save money. Iaquinto said the total purchase price with outfitting would be \$26,233 which is \$1,233 over the amount included in the budget. Dockett noted that interest would be in addition to that; Lt. Greene said the amount of the interest would be up to the Board.

Iaquinto suggested that the Police Department be charged only what the borrowed funds would be earning if left in the WWTP fund. Smith said it may be difficult to determine what that amount might be, and he suggested accepting the Controller's suggestion of using half the interest charged by Ford Motor Company.

► **Motion:** Manning moved, Rowe supported, to finance the new Police Department vehicle through the Wastewater Treatment Plant fund at an interest rate of 3% for a three year term.

Rowe noted the vehicle cost is higher than budgeted and the Police Department will have to deal with that, but it makes sense to borrow the funds from the WWTP.

Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.

In answer to a question from Lt. Greene, the Board confirmed that he can order the vehicle.

DELINQUENT PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES

Dockett thanked Wilson for collecting another \$1,875.

SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Audit. Linda Lupi, 9077 Butternut, said people have been looking for the audit on-line, and the Clerk should stay on top of this given the discussion about posting additional information. Lupi said if the Treasurer cannot perform her duties she should consider reducing her hours and pay voluntarily—the only way it can be done—in favor of her health and the good of the Township. She said the things listed in the audit that need to be done are basic and she is very concerned about this. She said lesser problems in neighboring Townships have created big problems. She said if the deputy is not doing her job or has too many responsibilities that should also be addressed. She said this is a tough subject, but the Board must address it to be accountable to the public.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

DDA. In answer to a question from Dockett, Mozurkewich said the Chair of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has solicited and received about \$2,000 in donations to use as matching funds for a grant.

Senior Center Driveway. Dockett said he spoke with a contractor today who would be willing to fill holes with temporary patching at no charge. Manning said she has not received the lower quote from Northfield Human Services so she has not been able to make progress on this. Rowe said it is important to get this done as quickly as possible with or without the NHS bid.

Posting of Board Member Meeting Attendance. Dockett said he supports the Supervisor's suggestion that Board member attendance at meetings be posted on the Township website and said that should go back to the time the current Board started their service. Iaquinto said it is important to post this information for all members of all Township Boards and Commissions.

Smith's Resignation. Iaquinto echoed the previously expressed appreciation from other Board members for Dan Smith's service on the Board. Rowe said he sincerely appreciates Smith's input on the Board. He said it is has been of great benefit both to him personally and to the community as a whole.

Meeting Broadcast Problems. In answer to a question from Iaquinto, Mozurkewich said work continues on addressing the technical problems regarding broadcasting of public meetings, but the next step is determining how much of the funds authorized by the Board have been spent. Manning said she is still following up on technical problems. Smith said from the information provided by Iaquinto earlier in the month it is clear that the problem with the sound is due to the way Charter Communication distributes its digital signal through its cable boxes. Iaquinto said this is something the Board takes seriously and is working to clear up.

Web Posting of Audit. Manning said she has not been provided with an electronic copy of the audit yet, but she will follow up with the auditors immediately.

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Greetings. Dockett and Iaquinto wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Mozurkewich thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting, and extended a warm welcome to Stanalajczo as the new Board Trustee.

CLOSED SESSION

- ▶ **Motion:** Mozurkewich moved, Rowe supported, that the Board go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.258(8)(e) to discuss Tax Tribunal cases involving The Links of Whitmore Lake and Fagin Family Real Estate. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Smith moved, Iaquinto supported, that the Board return to open session. **Motion carried 6—0 on**

a voice vote, Mozurkewich not present.

- ▶ **Motion:** Rowe moved, Iaquinto supported, to authorize the Township attorney to proceed with the settlement action as offered in closed session. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

ADJOURNMENT

- ▶ **Motion:** Wilson moved, Iaquinto supported, that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned 9:11 PM.

Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

These notes are an expanded version of the official meeting minutes adopted by the Board of Trustees. Minutes and notes for all meetings are available on the Township's website at http://twp.northfield.mi.us/boards/twp_board