

ALAMO TOWNSHIP BOARD

Alamo Township Hall
7901 North 6th Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

February 14, 2011

Present: Supervisor Vlietstra, Clerk Sportel-Bogard, Treasurer Stoneburner, Trustee Feniger, Trustee Potter-Williams and Deputy Supervisor Fisher

Also Present: 13 interested others

Supervisor Vlietstra called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

MOTION by Treasurer Stoneburner to approve the minutes of February 7, 2011, as written, **support** by Trustee Feniger. Carried.

ASSESSING REPORT

Supervisor Vlietstra stated Assessor Burd is holding office hours on Thursdays.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT

Deputy Supervisor Fisher reported January permits of 0 building, 1 electrical and 5 mechanical. (\$495.00) She providing a written summary of building department activity (2008-2010) highlighting a decrease of 2 permits and \$2,300 in fees from 2009. On a calendar year, expenses were not covered by revenues; on a fiscal year, per Clerk Sportel-Bogard, revenue more than covers expenses. She provided a draft contract (containing no dollar amounts) that Kalamazoo Township is proposing for Building Official Cardiff's services. The initially proposed fee structure (percentage of gross permit fees) is not workable due to the lack of building activity.

REPRESENTATIVE MARGARET O'BRIEN

Representative Margaret O'Brien provided information on several upcoming events for elected officials and/or the public. She is hosting meetings in areas she represents and will be establishing a time in Alamo.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Kizer reviewed his written January report. The Department responded to 23 incidents. Engine 111's recent service resulted in several expensive repairs. Jeremy Wilson will be promoted to Captain and Brian Ekema to First Lieutenant on March 1. Another officer slot will be used for officers in training. Two sets of turnout gear and other equipment will need to be purchased from the 2010 budget. A quote for the turnout gear will be obtained and provided to the Board prior to purchase. Gear purchases will impact planned upgrades in communication equipment. The Department hopes to participate in a communication equipment grant submission in concert with the City of Kalamazoo.

MUSEUM REPORT

Museum Committee Member Feniger reports repair of the window remains outstanding.

ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Clerk Sportel-Bogard provided the report prepared by Ordinance Enforcer Hoffman. January services totaled 2.75 hours. Supervisor Vlietstra will obtain information on a noise complaint referenced in the report.

PARK BOARD REPORT

Park Board Chair Landon reported the Board elected officers at its January meeting and finalized planning for the Winter Fest. John McCann made a presentation related to the Master Plan; soliciting grants was discussed. There are 3 remaining events scheduled for 2011: March 12, Car Show (6/25) and pavilion dedication (9/11).

He stated plans for March 12 (first recycling of the year) and policies for renting the pavilion will be determined at the next meeting. L. Conti provided thanks to Winter Fest helpers and hopes to see people at Winter Fest II in 2012.

Treasurer Stoneburner noted the January minutes contain an erroneous statement regarding a Board of Trustees' position; corrections will be taken up at the next Park Board meeting. She inquired about the January minutes which were reported as not available on February 7. Chair Landon reports they were hand delivered to Supervisor Vlietstra on January 28 and e-mailed to others on the same date. Supervisor Vlietstra reports no knowledge of receiving a hard copy or an e-mail. The Park Board was asked to send the minutes to all.

Treasurer Stoneburner noted she felt J. Ray's complaint letter deserved a response from the Board of Trustees. Supervisor Vlietstra felt it should be received as information only. Trustee Potter-Williams affirmed that the Park Board response had been sent to Mr. Ray as the Board of Trustees' response.

MOTION by Supervisor Vlietstra to receive John Ray's letter for information only, **support** by Trustee Potter-Williams. 4-1 (Stoneburner) Carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Chairperson Goyings stated there is no report. (cancellation of the February meeting due to weather)

TREASURER'S REPORT

(through January 31, 2011)

General Account:	\$144,005.26
Fire Truck Account:	\$ 18,304.94
Brokerage	\$249,971.00

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Sportel-Bogard reported \$16,105.98 in liabilities for the month of January.

She reported Deputy Clerk Forrest will be participating in an election related class in March. She reminded the Board that the ARRA grant project invoice must be paid by March 31 with receipt of grant dollars to follow. A quote of \$269.00 to fix the men's urinal has been received; full replacement would cost an additional \$100-\$150.

MOTION by Clerk Sportel-Bogard to repair the urinal, **support** by Supervisor Vlietstra. Carried.

She noted a desire to schedule the budget hearing and budget adoption for the end of February. Clerk Sportel-Bogard will notify Board members of a date by February 18. School elections for Plainwell and Otsego will be held on May 3.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

1. Assessor Salary and Working Conditions

Supervisor Vlietstra reports Assessor Burd charges \$10 per parcel and she is going to need some assistance. A lengthy discussion/debate ensued. The minutes of November 29 reflect the Board's unanimous decision to hire Assessor Burd, satisfied that an understanding had been reached on the \$20,000 salary and her job duties. Conveyance of the offer by Supervisor Vlietstra did not result in his apprising the Board in December or January that salary or other terms were of concern. The Board did not authorize the transfer of duties from Prein & Newhof nor authorize additional payment for address assignments or land splits. The Board discussed several potential solutions, noting its desire to preserve the relationship. Lack of support was expressed for putting the issue under a blanket and hiding it. Reference was made to the Board having years of opportunity to know assessments were problematic and expressions of the lack of effort put forth by the former assessor.

MOTION by Supervisor Vlietstra to pay Assessor Burd \$10 per parcel retroactive to December 6, 2010, **support** by Trustee Potter-Williams. Trustee Feniger – yes; Trustee Potter-Williams – yes; Supervisor Vlietstra – yes; Treasurer Stoneburner – yes; Clerk Sportel-Bogard – yes. Carried.

Clerk Sportel-Bogard will meet with Assessor Burd on February 17 and present the Board's actions in written form. The letter will contain salary (inclusive of address and splits), the approved job description, and that Prein & Newhof will complete deed work and legal descriptions for the immediate future.

Obtaining assistance for the Assessor is a separate issue and not one that needs immediate resolution. It was suggested that the Board have a clear handle on what type of help is needed prior to moving forward.

2. Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals

Supervisor Vlietstra recommended Mike Cramer to fill the vacancy. Planning Commission Chair Goyings noted positives related to Mr. Cramer and added she feels the Zoning Board of Appeals would benefit from the addition of someone with greater knowledge of zoning and recommended Steve Hoogstraten. Mr. Hoogstraten was present and stated he would serve. Trustee Potter-Williams suggested placing an article in the newsletter seeking candidates.

MOTION by Treasurer Stoneburner to appoint Steve Hoogstraten to the Zoning Board of Appeals, **support** by Trustee Feniger. Carried.

3. Ordinance – Zoning Amendment

Deputy Supervisor Fisher noted the Board approved the change in zoning at the corner of 12th Street and D Avenue at its September 2010 meeting; however, the actual Ordinance (46-65) was not approved.

MOTION by Supervisor Vlietstra to approve Ordinance 46-65, **support** by Trustee Feniger. Clerk Sportel-Bogard – yes; Treasurer Stoneburner – yes; Trustee Feniger – yes; Trustee Potter-Williams – yes; Supervisor Vlietstra – yes. Carried.

4. Resolution – Walk for Warmth

Supervisor Vlietstra referenced discussion at the work group meeting regarding support; no financial obligation is expected.

MOTION by Clerk Sportel-Bogard to adopt the Resolution supporting Walk for Warmth, **support** by Treasurer Stoneburner. Carried.

5. Policy – Poverty Guidelines

Deputy Supervisor Fisher noted upon further review by Assessor Burd, the policy as originally provided is correct. The federal guidelines will be contained in the cover letter accompanying the application.

MOTION by Treasurer Stoneburner to adopt the Poverty Guidelines policy and application as provided, **support** by Clerk Sportel-Bogard. Carried.

6. Policy – Escrow Accounts

Deputy Supervisor Fisher summarized and clarified various aspects of the policy. Most aspects of the policy are governed by statute; the policy will provide consistency. Concerns were expressed that holding citizen's funds in escrow is intrusive as well as the more prevalent view that holding funds in escrow protects the community.

MOTION by Trustee Feniger to approve the policy on Insurance Escrow Accounts, as written, **support** by Supervisor Vlietstra. Trustee Feniger – yes; Trustee Potter-Williams – no; Clerk Sportel-Bogard – yes; Treasurer Stoneburner – yes; Supervisor Vlietstra – yes. Carried.

Fire Chief Kizer requested a copy of the policy for a packet he is developing.

7. Ordinance – Park Board Amendment

The initially drafted Park Board Ordinance Amendment sets the Board size at 5 and reflects what was discussed earlier. Supervisor Vlietstra requested a second version establishing the number of Board members by Resolution.

MOTION by Treasurer Stoneburner to establish the number of Park Board members at 5 by Ordinance, **support** by Trustee Feniger. Trustee Potter-Williams – yes; Treasurer Stoneburner – yes; Supervisor Vlietstra – yes; Clerk Sportel-Bogard – yes; Trustee Feniger – yes. Carried.

8. Outdoor Furnaces

Several citizens expressed lack of support for various aspects of the Ordinance and application process; support was expressed for limiting furnaces in more densely populated areas. Planning Commission Chair Goyings noted experts were consulted and numerous ordinances from other areas were reviewed.

MOTION by Clerk Sportel-Bogard to send the Outdoor Furnace Ordinance (59-M) to the burn pile, **support** by Trustee Potter-Williams. Treasurer Stoneburner – no; Trustee Feniger – no; Trustee Potter-Williams – yes; Clerk Sportel-Bogard – yes; Supervisor Vlietstra – no. Failed.

MOTION by Supervisor Vlietstra to send Ordinance 59-M (Outdoor Furnaces) to the Planning Commission for review, **support** by Treasurer Stoneburner. Trustee Potter-Williams – yes; Clerk Sportel-Bogard – no; Treasurer Stoneburner – yes; Trustee Feniger – no; Supervisor Vlietstra – yes. Carried.

Supervisor Vlietstra stated it would not be appropriate to suspend the Ordinance while the review is conducted.

9. Road Selection

Opinions were varied on the various road projects presented as well as options for proceeding. Road Commission deadlines/processes for participation funds were reviewed. Inquiries were made regarding tackling a larger project by combining par funds over more than one year and establishing an ad hoc group of citizens to provide input. Inquiry was made whether additional information could be sought on the remainder of DE Avenue or B Avenue if a multi-year approach was adopted. Inquiry was made regarding years of life left on various roads and using this information to guide Board action. The need for complying with policy and developing a multi-year plan was promoted. There was a consensus to seek additional information, invite Travis Bartholomew/Terry Tilley to the upcoming special meeting (which would need to be moved to February 24 or 25 to accommodate Road Commission deadlines). Clerk Sportel-Bogard will let Board members know if this is possible given the preparatory work and notice requirements for the budget hearing.

AUTHORIZATION OF LIABILITIES

MOTION by Trustee Potter-Williams to pay the liabilities, **support** by Trustee Feniger. Carried.

BOARD MEMBER TIME

Trustee Potter-William states Kalamazoo County is seeking municipal policies on garbage disposal and policies governing chickens and other livestock are also being sought as the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage grapple with backyard chicken coops.

CITIZEN COMMENT

J. Endres (Inquired about the Board's decision on carpet on the public side). Discussion included mixed feeling on the topic; however, the Board had acted in January to not pursue carpeting the area.

E. Westra (Inquired about mechanisms for business owners to receive personal property tax notices and stated he removed a sign in the County right-of-way given the lack of action on the Township's part)

J. Spitzner (Expressed dissatisfaction that per Assessor Burd, his file is marked that he attended the Board of Review when this was not the case as he could not obtain an appointment; this precluded him from appealing his tax assessment to the State in 2010)

A. Sweitzer (Met with Tom Holmes, Road Commission; work on 12th Street will commence in May or June)

T. Kizer (Reported he is investigating the potential for impacting the ISO ratings which affect insurance rates)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Trustee Potter-Williams to adjourn, support by Trustee Feniger. Carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Garilyn Sportel-Bogard
Alamo Township Clerk