

MECOSTA TOWNSHIP BOARD
19729 11 MILE RD. BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
February 9, 2021/UNAPPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
PREPARED BY CLERK, LOIS BRENNAN

1. **CALL Meeting to Order:** Supervisor, Michele Graham called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**
3. **Roll Call:** John Johnson, James Cain, Mary Quinlan, Lois Brennan, Michele Graham. All present.
4. **Approval of the Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda as presented made by Mary Quinlan, Lois Brennan 2nd. All aye, motion carried.
5. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to accept the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes as presented by Mary Quinlan, John Johnson 2nd. All aye, motion carried.
6. **Treasurers Report:** Per Treasurer Mary Quinlan, reporting for the month of January 2021, Balance General Fund checking \$359,654.71, First Responders \$8,708.78, Fire-Equipment/Building \$92,833.06, Fire Fund – Operations \$ - 684.49, Total account balance \$460,512.06. We did receive two payments in for the First Responders in the amount of \$9,221.08 which really helped a lot. Supervisor Michele had one question, regarding the payment of the Fire Dept. loan, what is the total of the payment due. The answer to that is \$51,496.96, which is both payments due (April & October) and is paid out in February prior to the new budget hearing. The Treasurers report was accepted by Supervisor Michele Graham and entered into the official record.
7. **Approval to Pay Bills & Payroll:** Motion to approve bills & payroll in the amount of \$ 25,335.27 made by Mary Quinlan, James Cain 2nd. Roll Call: Mary Quinlan – yes, James Cain – yes, John Johnson – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.
8. **Brief Public Comment:** Mr. Ken Draves (8 Mile Rd.) only commented that while attending the meeting via Zoom, he was unable to hear all of the Board

members as our microphones were not tied into the Zoom system. Not that he expected us to fix it. The only person he could hear was Michele.

9. Reports:

- A. **County Commissioner Report:** Per Mr. Tom O’Neil, The Mecosta County Parks Commission at one meeting of the commissions had been denied a request to file for a millage on the May ballots, that being said the very next meeting they came back with a few changes to their original proposal and their request was passed by all but two County Commissioners. The Parks Commission will be asking for a .5 mil levied on county resident’s property taxes. Discussion with the board revealed that the prices at the gates have not been increased to campers or daily users for their use of the park. Which would actually generate more of an income than the proposed millage would. 52% of persons camping at the parks in the past summer were reportedly from Kent and Ottawa Counties, which would indicate that Mecosta County Parks already have lower rates than parks in those communities. Also, reported by Mr. O’Neil that the Parks Commission is currently “sitting on” a balance of \$800,00.00 in the bank. It was also reported, that Mecosta County residents that chose to use the parks would be granted a discount of \$2.00 for entry into the County Parks if the milage passes. Michele Graham noted that with her speaking from a representative of the Parks Commission that only two townships did want the millage proposal to be placed on the ballot for May and they were Big Rapids Township and Mecosta Township.
- B. **Assessor/Supervisor Report: Supervisor Report:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham, Northland Corridor Committee meeting, they are keeping an eye on the 8 Mile - Northland drive interchange. Michele has made multiple reports about semi’s taking U turns in the middle of that intersection. MDOT has all of the appropriate signage out, it is now a State Police issue. Ice Mountain is contacting all of the companies that send trucks in to make sure they are making their drivers aware.

March 4th is the bid opening of the Dragon bids for the Mecosta Township section, Michele will be on a zoom meeting along with everyone that is providing bids along with a Prime Professional from the Spicer Group and Jeff our Parks administrator along with the Parks Administrator from Newaygo County. Once the bids are shown there will be another meeting with the Executive Committee, Michele will report back to the Township Board after that meeting.

The Junk complaint on Northland Dr/12 Mile area has been in contact with Michele a couple of times a week, he has contacted MDOT to get a driveway permit to allow a driveway from his property onto Northland Dr. MDOT sees no reason that cannot be allowed. He will have to bring in some gravel and a culvert. He has brought a dumpster in to continue on clean up efforts. Being the weather has turned so cold, Michele is working with him.

Assessors Report: Per Assessor Michele Graham, assessment notices are ready to go. Michele did note that she was leaving for vacation on Saturday and would return the following Saturday the 20th. A jovial exchange between board members ensued with Treasurer Mary Quinlan saying for the record please do not call her. Michele besides being the Supervisor/Assessor for Mecosta Township is also a member of several organizations to help with economic development of the township as well as a member of a few committees. She also oversees the training of the new Building Admin./ Zoning Admin. Asst. Her vacation is well earned and warranted. We hope you enjoy your time Michele.

- C. **Clerk:** Per Clerk Lois Brennan- There is a May 2021 election scheduled, there is one question on the ballot to be voted, she and her deputy have already begun preparations. All of the end of the year tax filings are completed and mailed to the appropriate recipients, including w-2's and 1099's.

- D. Cemetery:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham, Supervisor Kenn Vredenburg of Austin Township sent a copy of the proposed budget for the Stanwood Cemetery for the Mecosta Township Board to review. Discussion between board members lead to bringing the topic back for the March meeting.
- E. Budget:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham, there will be a need to move things around a bit before the budget hearing in March, otherwise the budget is in good shape.
- F. Planning Commission:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham, Michele received two letters one from Aaron Pieri the other from Jessica Walsh which she read into record. Both are stepping down from the Planning Commission. Michele also provided a copy of the Building Clerk/Zoning Administrator Assistants contract for review before she will send it on to the Township's attorney. There are two applicants for the Planning Commission, with 3 spots now available. The meeting for March has been cancelled. A special note, the February Planning Commission meeting that was conducted via zoom was hacked into by several persons which disrupted the meeting and forced it to be ended, no business could be conducted.
- **Members:** Motion to accept the two applications for the Planning Commission, Troy Beeney and Mark Kidd made by James Cain, Mary Quinlan 2nd. All aye, motion carried.

10. Unfinished Business:

- A. Fire Department: Per Chief Ron Palmer** – There were 13 call since the last meeting. There will be one incident that will be turned into the clerk for billing for services. Chief is awaiting proper billing information.

The numbers for the AFG grant for the Spring of 2021, are all turned in and done. Supervisor Michele Graham assisted with that.

Chief is also setting up the ID programing and will set up a time for each township official and employee to have their pictures taken and ID's made.

The \$1,000.00 donation from Cleveland Integrity was used to purchase two thermal cameras that are in service.

SCBA evaluations continue.

Engine 1 and 2 will be going to GR for pump testing at different times in March of 2021.

Structural Fire Hose 1.5" and 3" is needed by the department. Once hose is used on a fire it needs to be washed and dried before it can be reloaded onto the trucks for use. On large fires this leaves the department with very little or no hose left on the trucks in the event another fire happens, purchasing new hose in the amount of approximately \$2,000.00 would be both beneficial as well as a necessity. Chief Palmer would like to obtain quotes and purchase new hose prior to the 2021 budget year. And may need to also purchase hose out of the 2021 budget as well. Motion made to purchase required amount of hose and type of hose needed in the amount of up to \$2,200.00 by Michele Graham, James Cain. Roll Call: Michele Graham – yes, James Cain – yes, John Johnson – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Lois Brennan – yes. Motion carried.

Chief Palmer informed the board of assistance provided from Mecosta Township Fire & Rescue with other area departments to cover Big Prairie Fire Departments area, there has been an incident of great sorrow for their department. Mecosta Township Board would like to extend their condolences, thoughts and prayers to the Chief as well as the staff of Big Prairie Township Fire Department.

- **Pest Control:** Chief Palmer solicited a quote from Awesome Lawns and Pest Control for pest control only at the Fire Department as there has been a problem with bees and spiders at the department. The quote was \$600.00 for the spring to fall season with 3 applications of pest control. Motion made to accept the quote for \$600.00 and enter into contract with

Awesome Lawn and Pest Control, by Lois Brennan, Mary Quinlan 2nd. Roll Call: Lois Brennan – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, John Johnson – yes, James Cain – yes, Michele Graham – yes. Motion carried.

Special note from Chief Palmer, The Bureau of Fire Services which Chief Palmer is a member of as a training coordinator for the State, there is \$5,500 for 27 districts that were created in the State of Michigan. We have \$5,500 for mental health needs for firefighters/responders of Mecosta County, Isabella County, Claire County, Osceola County. Given the current situation all communities find themselves in especially our front-line workers. Depression is an issue with what they are enduring.

- B. 2021 – 2022 budget:** Per Supervisor Michele Graham, provided to Board members was a second draft of the proposed budget, areas of change were highlighted in yellow. Reminder the budget does appear inflated as to regards of the Dragon Trail Grant. Supervisor Graham continues to work on the budget and breaking it down by line item. There will be one more “rough draft” presented at next months meeting prior to the Budget Hearing.
- C. Wage Review:** Treasurer Mary Quinlan spoke to wanting an increase in her wages by \$1,800.00. Treasurer Quinlan has had an increase of her duties and responsibilities within her office as well as assisting Building and Zoning after the loss of employees due to retirement and covid. Motion made in the form of Resolution 2021-002 to accept the wage resolution recommendations for all positions with the township as well as the increase requested by the Treasurer, by James Cain, John Johnson 2nd. Roll Call: James Cain – yes, John Johnson – yes, Lois Brennan – yes, Mary Quinlan – yes, Michele Graham – yes.
- D. Roads:** There is roughly \$125,000.00 budgeted for roads for the new budget year. Mecosta County Road Commission would like an idea of what Mecosta Township is wanting to accomplish this next year. The Board needs to be thinking about the roads they would like to see done for the March meeting. Trustee John Johnson opened for

discussion, asked if there was any ability for Mecosta Township to assess a road millage on for our area. Mecosta County Road Commission is rumored to be placing a millage of their own on for the county. Discussion ensued as to the way the Mecosta County Road Commission is laid out thus far, with the county being split into 4 quadrants, it does seem unfair and unbalanced amongst the differing townships.

11. New Business: Nothing new.

12. Brief Public Comment: none heard.

13. Announcements/correspondence: Trustee John Johnson would like to pass along his gratitude in the form of an “atta boy” to maintenance personnel Gary Helmus for doing a great job on plowing and snow removal this year for the Township. Thank you, Gary you are very appreciated.

14. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 7:00p, made by John Johnson, Lois Brennan 2nd. Supervisor Michele Graham adjourned the meeting.

**Lois Brennan, Clerk
Mecosta Township**