

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP
24725 Jefferson Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2024

Call to Order: Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Brunner-present, Bundle-present, Gillam-present, Hass-present, Mendenhall-absent.

Additional attendees: Ron Bellaire, Alan Sheteron, Richard Wood, Brian VanderWerf, Jeff Locke

Pledge to the flag: Led by Supervisor Hass

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

Approval of Agenda: Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to approve the agenda with the addition of the following agenda item: Discuss Verizon's proposal to erect a cell tower on township property. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Bundle, supported by Gillam to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2024, BOT meeting. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report: Moved by Brunner, supported by Hass to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Motion approved.

Payment of Bills: Moved by Gillam, supported by Hass to approve the payment of bills as presented. Motion approved.

Old Business:

1. Electrical Inspector update; Supervisor Hass and Mr. Bellaire had a discussion after the previous board meeting about retaining Mr. Bellaire as the township electrical inspector. Mr. Bellaire will continue in his capacity as electrical inspector for the township. The special meeting scheduled for September 24, 2024, was cancelled.

New Business:

1. Verizon contacted Mr. Hass about erecting a new cell tower on Jefferson Township property. If approved, it would provide some revenue for the township. The board discussed being open to the idea but would like more information as to the safety of the cell tower to residents who live near it, maintenance, etc. Mr. Hass will ask them to send a representative to provide answers to questions the board or community has. Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to table a decision until a representative can provide more information.
2. ARCEM doors evaluated the bay doors and provided an estimate to replace the operator on the northwest bay door that is non-functional. The estimate for an Electric Operator installation is \$3500.00. They also recommend new weather seals on all four doors at a cost of \$795.00 each. The total estimate is \$6680.00. The board discussed options for proceeding and ruled out the need for replacing the weather seals. The other 3 doors are operational, and we are able to utilize the space for vehicle storage without replacing the non-working motor at this time. The board also discussed seeking out other quotes if we decide to move forward with replacement. Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to table further action at this time. Motion approved.
3. Custodial Update: Ms. Brunner informed the Board that Erica has not yet returned to work, nor has she communicated with the township her intent or responded to calls and texts. The township will post the opening for a custodial employee on the website.

4. **Gemstone Solar Update:** Ms. Brunner and Ms. Bundle spoke with Aaron Mendenhall during office hours on Tuesday when he stopped by to meet with Mr. Hardin. Clenera/Gemstone are now projecting with the delays they have faced to begin construction on the substation by 2026 and installation of solar panels in 2027. All parties involved are updated on the status of the project.
5. **Election Update:** The General Election will take place Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Ms. Brunner invited anyone with questions or concerns about the election process to contact her as there is a lot of misinformation floating around and many groups sharing voting information that can be confusing.

Inspectors Reports:

1. **Zoning/Code Enforcement:** Steve Allen, code enforcement officer, submitted his monthly report. Ms. Brunner also followed up on the status of the home at 65931 Hess Rd. He has been unable to get a sheriff's deputy to accompany him to get a full view of the property. A neighbor who has a view of the back of the property had offered to allow the township to use her property to see the back of the property in question. We will pass that on to Mr. Allen as an alternative.
2. **Building:** No report submitted.
3. **Plumbing/Mechanical:** Supervisor Hass approved the hiring of John Dobberteen as our new inspector.
4. **Electrical:** Mr. Bellaire has an updated permit form that he would like residents to use. He will provide a copy for the office and to post on the website.

Emergency Services/Utilities Reports:

1. **Cass Ambulance:** Meeting held September 26th. Newberg Ambulance is looking for some compensation for providing mutual aid. They had been billing the CCAA townships \$700 per run. The CCAA townships do not want to agree to a per run billing to the townships for mutual aid. The CCAA board would like to offer a one-time payment of \$8000.00 divided by the 4 townships. We are still working to get a permanent contract with SMCAS. SMCAS is now up to 2 full-time ambulances so we hope that the need for mutual aid will continue to go down.
2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Chief Locke asked about funding for the 2024-2025 FY. Ms. Brunner expressed we are waiting on a corrected invoice to send our allocation.
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** Nothing to report.
4. **CAUA:** Nothing to report

Township Board Reports:

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** October 16, 2024, at 7:00 pm for a regular meeting and public hearing for a SLUP.
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** No business
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.
4. **Board of Review:** No business.

Public Comment:

1. Mr. Jeff Locke questioned how long the building permit is active for the Gemstone Solar project as it doesn't appear they are making any progress and now the project is delayed further. The board stated that the building inspector would be the contact point for questions regarding the building permit. He is very frustrated and feels the project should not be allowed to continue.
2. Mr. Richard Wood is very frustrated with the township and what he feels is a 20+ year lack of response to the property at 65931 Hess Rd. He stated they are burning stuff and there is an electrical smell that carries in the air. He has felt harassed by the people living there. We stated that he needs to contact the fire department for the burning and the sheriff's office for the harassment. We are limited in our authority to zoning/blight issues, and we are working with our code enforcement officer to move forward on resolving those issues. Mr. Wood feels the township board has more authority to deal with the other issues as well. Mr. Hass expressed that previous boards

have tried working with residents to address zoning issues over going in and taking property away. We are taking his concerns and those of his fellow neighbors seriously.

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: November 14, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

With no other business before the Board at 7:22 p.m. Moved by Bundle, supported by Brunner to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Brunner".

Jennifer Brunner, Clerk

APPROVED