

**JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP**  
24725 Jefferson Center Street  
Cassopolis, MI 49031

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
July 11, 2024

**Call to Order:** Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

**Additional attendees:** James Wierman, Willie Eltzroth, Jean Schultz, Ron Bellaire, Richard Wood, Dallas Austin

**Pledge to the flag:** Led by Supervisor Hass

**Correspondence:** None

**Public Comment:**

Jean Schultz, resident of Calvin Township and representative of the Cass County Historical Society shared that the original Red Brick School House has been donated to the historical society for the use of events. They are planning to hold events including an upcoming event titled "Back in School, Back in time". The ceiling is in good condition, but they are looking to solicit funds to repaint the walls. They are seeking bids and asked if the township had funds to support this project. Brunner asked if they have solicited funds from other townships. Ms. Schultz replied "no" because the school is in Jefferson Township. Brunner asked if the school will be used for County-wide events and if they had solicited funds from townships where other historical buildings reside, such as the Bonine House in Penn township. She replied they had not. Currently, Jefferson Township does not have funds allocated for these types of projects. The board will need to discuss this at another meeting.

Ron Bellaire informed the board that the property that burned near his home was up for repossession by the bank due to unpaid back taxes. The bank cleaned up the property, removing left over debris from the demolition of the burned home. The owner paid part of the taxes to keep it from repossession and called the sheriff's department to report the bank had removed some personal property.

Richard Wood, resident of Hess Rd. inquired what action has been taken regarding the property at 65931 Hess Rd that was addressed by neighbors at last month's meeting. Brunner explained that we would address that during the Zoning/Code Enforcement Inspector Report.

**Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Brunner, supported by Bundle to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Hass, supported by Gillam to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2024, BOT meeting. Motion approved unanimously. Moved by Bundle, supported by Hass to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2024, Annual Budget Hearing. Motion approved unanimously.

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

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

**Old Business:** None

## New Business:

1. Brunner handed out the audit bid from Gabridge & Co. The bid is for a three-year annual contract. The township has opted for bi-annual bids but discussed the benefits of having annual audits. Brunner shared that she attempted to solicit bids from 8 companies and only Gabridge was taking on new clients. There are various reasons why the other companies declined to bid. The board discussed options. Moved by Bundle, supported by Hass to move forward with the three-year contract with Gabridge & Co. Motion approved unanimously.
2. Consideration of placing Road Millage Renewal on the November 2024 ballot. The current Roads millage was a two-year millage expiring December 2024. The township has always placed this millage on the May special election ballot along with the annual Edwardsburg School millage. Edwardsburg Schools passed a three-year millage in February 2024 so there will be no May election in 2025. To avoid a lapse in the millage, Brunner recommends placing it on the November 2024 ballot. She presented Resolution 2024-10 Roads Millage Renewal Ballot Language. This would be a renewal of the current millage beginning in 2025 and expiring December 2026 for 1 mil. Assessor Northrop needs to provide the estimated revenue. Brunner shared what the revenue collected was for the Winter 2023 taxes for reference. Moved by Brunner to adopt resolution 2024-10 to be placed on the November 2024 ballot, supported by Bundle.  
Roll Call Vote: Bundle-yes, Hass-yes, Gillam-yes, Mendenhall-absent, Brunner-yes.  
Motion approved.
3. Brunner and Hass spoke with a representative of our township municipal liability insurance through EMC and brokered through Hartlieb Agency. We reviewed the coverage. No changes recommended.
4. Two of our township desktops have failed. Kerry Collins was able to provide temporary fixes and recommends the purchase of new desktops for the Administrative Assistant, Clerk, and Deputy Clerk. The computers are all over 9 years old. He estimates that we can purchase 3 new desktops for around \$3000.00. This would be covered under the Township Hall budget. Moved by Gillam, supported by Hass to approve the purchase. Motion approved unanimously.
5. Bundle requested board approval to attend an MTA conference in Gladwin, MI. Topics covered will be Creating a Vision for your Township, Linking with the Community, and Strategic Planning for Townships. The board discussed the benefits of these courses and agreed a representative should attend and share with the board the information. Moved by Brunner, supported by Hass to approve the cost of the courses and two overnight stays for Bundle to attend. Motion approved unanimously.
6. Election Update: Brunner shared there is an upcoming Primary Election on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Inspectors Reports:

1. **Zoning/Code Enforcement:** Steve Allen, code enforcement officer, submitted his monthly report. A letter has been sent to the resident of 65931 Hess Rd. informing the resident what steps need to be taken to bring the property into compliance with blight. It also explains next steps if no action is taken.
2. **Building:** No report submitted.
3. **Plumbing/Mechanical:** No report submitted.
4. **Electrical:** Ron Bellaire reported that there have been no major issues.

### Emergency Services/Utilities Reports:

1. **Cass Ambulance:** Next meeting set for July 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm
2. **Central Cass Fire Department:** Chief Locke was present and requested a copy of the minutes from June approving the fire budget. Brunner will make those available now that they are approved.
3. **Edwardsburg Fire Department:** The next meeting set for August 6<sup>th</sup>.
4. **CAUA:** Next meeting set for July 15<sup>th</sup>. Hass reported that at the last meeting there was discussion regarding problems with the interceptor between Cass and Dowagiac. Pipes are starting to break down. They have sent samples in to try to determine the cause of the breakdown.

### Township Board Reports:

1. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Next meeting is scheduled for July 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm
2. **Zoning Board of Appeals:** Variance hearing scheduled for July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm
3. **Construction Board of Appeals:** No business.
4. **Board of Review:** Annual summer meeting in July.

### Public Comment:

1. Jean Schultz thanked the Board for the Kamp Kozy Road paving project completed last summer. She would like to see the trees along Kamp Kozy Road and Eagle Pointe cleaned up, removing weeds and vines to restore the trees and to have stumps removed. She requested funding from the township to have this done. Hass expressed that the Road Commission has removed stumps and that they would be the entity to remove any remaining stumps.
2. Richard Wood asked for clarification if the motor home would be addressed on the Hess Rd. property. Hass explained that right now we are concentrating on the trash and blight issues. When addressing the actual residence, we may look to the County Land Bank to address that and the motor home.
- 3.

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: August 8, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

With no other business before the Board at 7:15 p.m. Moved by Brunner, supported by Budnle to adjourn. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Brunner, Clerk