

Regular Meeting Vernon Township Board
August 8, 2022
6108 S. Durand Rd, Durand MI 4829

Present: Supervisor Bert DeClerg, Treasurer Mary Jane Edwards, Clerk Susan Bannister, and Trustee Janet Sprague. Absent: None

The meeting was called to order with the saying of the Pledge at 7:00 pm.

Township Supervisor Bert DeClerg read Charlotte Clark's resignation from the Township Clerk position. That resignation was accepted and approved at a special meeting on August 6, 2022. At that meeting, Susan Bannister was appointed to the role of Township Clerk for the 2-year term.

The minutes from August 6, 2022, meeting were reviewed. There were no minutes for the special session on July 14, 2022. A motion was made by Janet Sprague and seconded by Mary Edwards to approve the August 6, 2022 minutes. All ayes; motion passed.

The Fire Chief gave an overview of the monthly fire activities and runs. He also mentioned that they were looking into the costs of replacing two older trucks with a new fire truck. The estimated cost for this new truck would be around \$750,000.00. There were questions and discussions around this purchase. A motion was made by Mary Edwards and seconded by Janet Sprague to approve the submitted report of the Fire Chief. All ayes; motion passed.

The Fire Chief requested that he be allowed to send three firefighters to an Emerging Issues in Emergency Services training hosted by MTA. Registration for this class would be \$128.00 per person. A motion was made by Mary Edwards and seconded by Janet Sprague to pay the registration fee for three firefighters to attend the training. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

The planning commission presented a letter from the township attorney regarding the next steps in assuming Zoning responsibility within the township. A motion was made by Janet Sprague and seconded by Mary Edwards to direct the planning commission to recommend temporary zoning ordinances. These should be presented to the township board no later than October 2022. All ayes; motion passed.

The township supervisor gave an overview of building permits issued for July 2022. There were 12 permits totaling \$2,921.00 in permit fees. A motion was made by Susan Bannister and seconded by Janet Sprague to approve the report submitted by the building inspector. All ayes; motion passed.

Janet Sprague gave an overview of the ambulance activities and staffing. Staffing is up, filling the shifts for July and moving forward look much better. They expect a letter from the City of Durand regarding the staffing issues and breach of contract, but she has not seen it yet. SESSA will be offering an MFR class in the future; anyone interested in that class should contact Perry Fire Chief Guy Hubbard.

There was no Sherriff's report this month.

Sara Talbot of Hoerner and Geer reviewed the audit at the meeting. She relayed several deficiencies noted during the audit. The clerk will receive an email from the State regarding these deficiencies and what action plan will be taken to remedy these deficiencies. It is believed that reporting and accounting practices will improve with a new person in the clerk position. She also noted that at least quarterly, the township board should receive a revenue and expense report along with current budget projections.

Janet Sprague gave an overview of the library meeting held on July 13, 2022. The new librarian is providing a lot of various reports. Some of these reports reflected the number of individuals utilizing the library and budget.

Citizen Concerns:

Tina Holmes requested that she be compensated \$20.00 per hour while assisting the township clerk in administering the elections. Susan Bannister motioned, and Janet Sprague seconded, that Tina Holmes be paid \$20.00 an hour when helping the clerk administer elections. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

Brian Marks from Great Lake Fusion spoke about his company's request to rezone a portion of their improperly zoned property. The township has received this request and will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for recommendation at their next meeting. His company intends to open a storefront in that location, and he is hoping for support from the township board.

Melanie and Steve Pratt, owners of HQ Bunker, requested funds that are available through the American Rescue Plan Act for businesses that have suffered an economic loss related to Covid19. Ms. Pratt presented what her loss of income totaled and that she had received some other funds to assist but still had a deficit of \$70,000.

A representative of the VFW thanked the township board for funds distributed to them from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Russ Hilliker presented an overview of the loss of funds on behalf of Greenwood cemetery. The Cemetary is asking for funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. They are asking for

assistance in replacing the limestone at the top of the mausoleum, which will cost approximately \$27,000, and the roof, which will cost roughly \$25,000.00.

The Fire Department would like to request five sets of fire gear, totaling \$13,000, and 16 pairs of boots for \$6,704.00. The money for this request would come from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Mary Edwards motioned, and Janet Sprague seconded to give \$52,000.00 to Greenwood Cemetary from the American Rescue Plan Act monies to assist in their loss during Covid19. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

Susan Bannister motioned, and Janet Sprague seconded to give \$35,000.00 to HQ Bunker from the American Rescue Plan Act monies to assist in their loss during Covid19. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

Janet Sprague motioned, and Mary Edwards seconded to give \$20,000.00 to the fire department from the American Rescue Plan Act monies to purchase five sets of gear and 16 pairs of boots. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

Janet Sprague motioned, and Mary Edwards seconded an October 31, 2022, deadline for anyone wishing to request assistance from the money issued to Vernon Township through the American Rescue Plan Act. All ayes, motion passed.

Brain Marks, on behalf of the SEDP, gave an update on efforts to order studies on the land located on Lansing Highway. These studies will aid in marketing this area to prospective businesses interested in purchasing the property.

The clerk presented a resolution to place the renewal of the Fire Millage and the renewal of the Fire Equipment millage on the November ballot. Mary Edwards motioned, and Janet Sprague seconded to approve the resolution and language contained in the resolution, placing them on the November ballot. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

The clerk presented the payroll and monthly bills to the township board for review and approval. A motion was made by Mary Edwards and seconded by Janet Sprague to pay all bills as presented. Roll call: Sprague, yes; Edwards, yes; DeClerg, yes; Bannister, yes. Motion passed.

Due to conflicting schedules next month, the Supervisor has requested that the regularly scheduled township board meeting be rescheduled. Mary Edwards motioned, and Janet Sprague seconded to move the September regularly scheduled township board meeting to Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 7:00 pm. All ayes, motion passed.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Susan Bannister,
Township Clerk.