

## Watson Township Board Meeting

August 1, 2024

Regular Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call- Present: Kevin Travis, John Caras, Tera Davis, Michelle Harris.  
Absent: Kelly Morris
4. Agenda Approval- Motion to approve made by John, support by Tera. It was passed unanimously.
5. Approval of Minutes- Motion to approve with correction made by Tera, support by John. This passed unanimously.
6. Approval of Bills- Michelle made the motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$7, 422.27. Passed unanimously.
7. Treasurer's Report was read. Approved with a motion from John and supported by Michelle. Passed unanimously.
8. Public Comment was opened at 7:05pm and closed at 7:05pm with no comments offered.
9. Reports-
  - a. Planning Commission- John shared that the PC was working with McKenna to review the Master Plan and how it fits with the current ordinances that are active.
  - b. Ordinance Enforcement- Jim Davis gave us a written and verbal report of the current cases being worked.
  - c. Sexton- Mr. Irish shared that there was one burial last month and no issues.
  - d. Libraries- there were no reports received from the libraries.
  - e. County Commissioner- Gale Dugan reviewed the activities of the BOC for two meetings in July. July 11<sup>th</sup> was a planning session along with the On Point Director who gave an update on the progress of the new building. There was discussion about the utilization of Allegan State Game area. A personnel request was presented. The board is looking at all requests. This first budget year they are looking at 2 million dollars' worth of positions. Decisions are needed by Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. The afternoon meeting highlighted an employee was recognition, 911 Procedures Policy

board being established and fixing the VHS system for emergencies. He reported environmental recycling participation has been great. The status update for 123 Net installation is available online. There was a slowdown in progress due to lack of workers marking the lines other companies have buried prior to 123 Net being able to start digging. A request to Lansing resulted in more workers being sent and they are back on schedule.

- f. Fire updates- HAFD rep Tim shared that last month they responded to 32 EMS and 19 fire calls; 12 of which were in Watson. John Caras informed them that their phone line is set up and working. We can now reach fire personnel.
10. Old Business-
- a. Park mowing & maintenance- Quote on tree removal- Brady Holden gave a quote of \$17,000 to remove standing dead Ash trees, remove logs off the property and burn the brush. Kevin walked the trail with him. Michelle asked if we had a second quote. There is not one. It was explained that the mulch would be used on the trail. Kevin made a motion to accept the bid. Tera seconded it. Discussion- John asked about the stumps and when he could be done. The reply by Kevin was that the stumps would be taken down to the ground and October was the finish time frame. Michelle made a motion to table this until we can get another quote for a comparison. Support by John. Motion passed. Michelle will contact another business for a second quote.
  - b. ORV resolution regarding opening all roads in Watson Township- This motion was voted on last month with a tie. It is being revisited this month. Kevin made the motion to adopt this resolution. Supported by Tera. Discussion: Michelle shared that since the last meeting, she was able to do some research and evaluation. She stated that she is always in support of freedom and that there is an element of personal responsibility that cannot be litigated. Kevin said most people are good people and follow laws. It makes sense to him to have a legal way to enjoy this activity. He is anticipating there will be an element of self-policing from fellow ORV drivers as there is in other sports and state game areas. John's comments centered around peers regulating as snowmobilers do. He questioned the road commissions

restriction of 33% of the roads being locked out. They had safety concerns and wanted a trial period to see if there were going to be any problems. It was noted that 14 townships have opened it up. Tera noted it was her preference that it be legal so people can be where they want to be. John pointed out that as the ordinance stands now, it limits some residents' ability to move around legally. The road commission will still need to respond in kind too. They will also need to pass this. There was more discussion about the money from the permits going to the state. There are two kinds of permits: road only and both trails and roads. Someone else mentioned the dirt roads could be torn up more because the ORV tires are a more aggressive tire. Gale Dugan added that we at the local level could ask for a fee from users. Roll call vote: Tera- yes, John- yes, Michelle- yes, Kevin- yes. The motion passed with 4-0 and one absent.

- c. Road Maintenance- Ryan Kenttainen, an engineer from the road commission shared information pertaining to gravel and paving projected projects and the costs.
  - i. Currently, four townships co-maintain parts of 24<sup>th</sup> St. The remainder paving is from M-89 to 112<sup>th</sup>. This cost would be either \$360,843.39 (all season road) or \$310,264.56 (NOT all-season road). Kevin explained that we have \$200,000 in the "Dust" fund (this is mislabeled), \$288,000 in the Road Fund and \$584,000 in the General Fund. We use \$80,000 in gravel per year. We could do a payment plan with the road commission to be billed over a couple of years. Kevin suggested we should spread this out over time. The construction for this would be 2026 IF the other townships are on board. Becoming a primary road maintained by the road commission would be a possibility once it is paved.
  - ii. 12<sup>th</sup> St- 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave to 124<sup>th</sup> Ave (124<sup>th</sup> would be paved next year) cost \$240,000 which consists of crushing and shaping the existing roadway along with placing tow 1.5" lifts of asphalt along with new gravel shoulders. The discussion was that 12<sup>th</sup> st is a feeder to two different campgrounds and a new private road.

124<sup>th</sup> will be paved next year so it may be a cost savings to do 12<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> at the same time. It is not cheap at \$240,000 per mile. Kevin recommends doing this. Proposed is setting 12<sup>th</sup> st in 2025 and 124<sup>th</sup> Ave in 2026. Other townships are on board for having the 12<sup>th</sup> St. project done. The motion that we plan on paving 12<sup>th</sup> St. in 2025 at an estimated \$240,000 from 122<sup>nd</sup> to 124<sup>th</sup> Ave was made by Kevin. John gave support. All were in favor. Motion passed. There was a second motion given by Kevin that we plan on paving 24<sup>th</sup> St in 2026 amended to reconstructing 24<sup>th</sup> from M89 to 112<sup>th</sup> Ave (Watson Township only) in 2026 as an all-season road. Supported by Michelle. Motion passed with all supporting, no nays. Ryan clarified the \$361,000 only for reconstruction; 4” thick paving for one mile is \$280,000 and 3” thickness is \$220,000.

- d. 123 Net- John suggested that we switch from Star Link to 123 Net at \$59.99/month but that we would still need a static IP. This is tabled for now. John made a motion that we seek pricing on 250mbs with static IP address. Tera supported. Motion passed.
  - e. Fire dept phone line status- John informed us that the \$10/month code is all set. It just needs to be ported to Trevor’s phone then the fire dept will be accessible to residents with a direct line.
11. New Business-
- a. Private road moratorium 6 months as recommended by the PC- We have been asked to give the planning commission and the firm of McKenna time to work on a private road ordinance that will align with our Master Plan. This was noticed in the paper. Kevin read the purposed ordinance in whole. He then made the motion to adopt with support from John. Discussion followed saying we need to decide what kind of density can the roads maintain for the future as we currently do not have the infrastructure to support. Then Master Plan supports it, but our ordinance does not. Six months will give the PC time to bring the two into alignment. Roll call vote; Michelle- yes, Tera- yes, Kevin- yes, John- yes. The motion passed.

- b. Notice for special assessment renewal in September- it was noted that we need to do this
- c. Unifi controller HD failure invoice- John shared that the hard drive is failing and the cost to replace is \$65 for the hard drive and \$50 is install it. John made the motion to pay this invoice #24731 with support by Tera. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. HVAC issue (cooling)- 2 of 3 compressors are not running. Kevin will contact Boniface for the repair.
- e. Exterior security cameras (2 in west lot)- John informed us that two cameras are not working. The plastic conduit is no good; steel would be better. The camera's themselves are working fine. The inside wire needs to be replaced. His suggestion is that we put one camera out and repurpose the other to the voting box. The quote is \$1500 maximum. Kevin made the motion to allow this work not to exceed \$1500 in labor and supplies. Tera supported. Motion was passed unanimously. Then Michelle made a motion to add the item "f" under new business. Kevin supported. It passed.
- f. Board round table- Michelle suggested we have a standing "round table" item added monthly giving the board an opportunity to discuss anything else they feel pertinent. John's input currently is to focus on having continuity from new business items to old business items from meeting to meeting. Kevin requested that the board contact him regarding any agenda items in a timely manner so he can be sure they are added to the agenda.
- g. Motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. ws made by Kevin and seconded by Tera. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Harris

Township Board Trustee