

SEPTEMBER 2009

The regular meeting of the Heath Township Board was held on September 14, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Heath Township Hall. Trustee Schipper was absent.

Supervisor Jones called the meeting to order and Boerman opened with prayer. The previous months minutes were approved.

Township resident Stephanie McPherson questioned what could be done about the ravine behind her home on M-40 being used as a drain. Ron has met with Becky Ringer from the Allegan County Drain Commission in regards to this problem and water/drain problems Vern Rankens has been experiencing since the June flood. Becky had told Ron she would handle their concerns but has never met with them. When they contacted the drain commission office, they were told they would need to petition the drain office for a drain, or hire an attorney. Stephanie wondered if the township could guide her in how to do a petition. Resident Chris Wicker would like to see the board be responsible for paying for fixing and repairing these problems. Ron informed him that this board is not in the ditch business. After much discussion, Ron will set up a meeting with Becky, Stephanie and Vern. The drain commission also told Mr. Rankens that they have a staff engineer who would meet with residents.

Jeff Eding was concerned about an issue their farm is having with Hutt Trucking sand mining and causing water drainage in their celery farm fields. The drain commission has been in contact with Mr. Hutt and PCI has checked it out for zoning issues in regards to sand mining. Jeff wonders if the pit owned by Hutt Trucking is exempt from new mining because it is grandfathered in under old zoning laws. Hilda will contact PCI, find out if Hutt is in violation, and let Jeff know what she finds out.

Hilda updated the board on the planning commission work session. In regards to Sheila's question about the camper on Sink Lake, it is now gone. During their work session, they realized the Auto Value parcel of land is zoned incorrectly. The planning commission is requesting permission from the township board to send a letter to the owner letting him know his parcel is not zoned legally and needs to be rezoned at a cost to the township. A motion was made by Meiste and supported by Lindholm to approve the sending of the letter. All ayes. Motion carried.

The township board members received a letter from Pat Foster of West Michigan News requesting an appeal of a FOIA request, which was denied by the clerk to see and photograph the ballots from the 2008 General Election. Sheila explained the reason for the denial and suggested the board accept the letter as information and take the 10-20 day window to respond. Our lawyer is looking into this and will get back to us with a recommendation. The board will hold a special meeting to address this issue.

The township auditors, Campbell and Kusterer, have requested the board approve their continuing service contract for 5 years at a cost of \$3,600 per year. A motion was made by Boerman and supported by Lindholm to approve. All ayes. Motion carried.

Straight Line Lawn Care and Landscaping contract with the township will be ending in December 2009. Nate, the owner, is requesting a 6-year extension of this contract. They would like to make an investment in a new snow blower at a cost between \$20,000-28,000 and trade in our existing tractor/blower for an \$8,198 credit. This would enable them to contract out to the township snow removal at \$75 per hour. He proposed keeping the lawn mowing, the fall cleanup, the cemetery mowing and the fertilizing price at the same rate. He is requesting a \$5 per hour increase in his labor rate and a \$5 per hour increase in a load rate at the cemetery for leaf clean up.

Sheila commented that she believes Straight Line is doing an excellent job and likes working with Nate. She agrees with our lawyer in a letter he sent wherein he states "there is no state requirement for bidding but many townships require sealed bidding anyway as a matter of good public policy. I, (the lawyer), think it is a good policy for the Township to have a bidding procedure so people cannot accuse the Board of favoring certain companies, etc., in awarding contracts." Sheila also feels the gentleman's agreement Nate has with Cal Bosch and Paul Wolfram gives them a monopoly of their largest accounts. Hilda agreed she would like to see at least two more outside bids. Sheila also feels the board should handle the lawn maintenance, leaf pickup and snow blowing as separate items. The board has never discussed whether they want to contract out sidewalk snow removal or have a township resident take care of this. The matter was tabled until next months meeting.

The township bills were presented. A motion was made by Boerman and supported by Lindholm to approve. All ayes. Motion carried.

The fire department bills were presented. A motion was made by Boerman and supported by Lindholm to approve. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Boerman and supported by Meiste to adjourn at 9:20. All ayes. Motion carried.

Sheila Meiste,
Clerk