## Proposed minutes Irving Township Regular Meeting 9-9- 2020 3425 Wing Rd, Hastings, MI 49058

.

Meeting called to order with pledge of allegiance 6:30pm

Board Members present: Dean Bass, Mike Buehler, Jamie Knight, Sharon Olson, Lynnette Wingeier and 6 members of the public.

Approval of agenda, **Motion-Knight, second-Buehler, motion passed.**

Reports from Fire departments, Commissioner, Cemetery Sexton, and Assessor were heard.

Supervisor’s minutes-August 12, 2020 Names were included in the public comment.

**Motion to approve these minutes-Knight, seconded- Buehler, Motion passed**.

Clerk’s minutes-August 17, 2020 Name “Olson” used rather than “clerk”. **Motion to approve-Knight, Seconded-Buehler. Motion passed.**

Treasurer’s report-Wingeier.

**Pay bills in the amount of $237,153.32 Motion-Olson, seconded- Knight, Roll call vote-unanimous. Motion passed.**

Olson addressed the board:

*2020 has been a year of irregularities and the Pandemic and all the responses to it have been stressfull on everyone. Irving has had the Presidential Primary and a State, Local, National Primary and is going into the National, State, Local General Election. Due to the pandemic and the closing of the schools, I did not have the assistance from my deputy I had hoped for. Therefore, I completed the bulk of tasks required to prepare, log, mail the Absent voter ballot applications and the preparing, logging, mailing Ballots going out and coming in. The SOS mailed out inadequate AVBA which required some problem solving on my end to turn smartphone pictures into useable documents. There were some that I had to request better images from to fulfill their request. We normally have 150 to 200 Absent Voters. I processed over 650 Absent Voters myself as well as the over 500 that were voted and returned.*

*I am asking the board to approve the hours for Rhonda Van Pollen to assist with the processing of the November Absent Voters. Rhonda has agreed to act as the chair for the In-person Poll when we are able to make that appointment.*

***I, Sharon Olson, make the motion to pay Rhonda Van Pollen at the Election Inspector rate of $17.00 an hour to assist the Clerk with the processing of Absent Voter Ballots for the November 3, 2020 General Election in Irving Township and for the planning and set up of the In-person voting Poll.* Seconded-Buehler, Roll Call-unanimous. Motion passed.**

Facility preparation for election **- Amramp quote-$1560.00 for the installatio of a temporary ADA ramp for the East exit from the Poll. Motion- Knight, Secnoned-Bass, Roll call-unanimous. Motion passed.**

Sheriff’s Posse $13.00 hr for traffic and parking direction.

Locked and keyed USPS mailbox-It was brought to the attention of Wingeier a resident had looked in the mailbox and stated they thought the mail was not getting collected in a timely fashion. Wingeier responded that this is very concerning and a security risk that needs to be fixed with a locking mailbox. Wingeier made the motion for approval to spend not more than $400.00 on a locking mail box. Seconded-Bass, Roll call-unanimous. Motion passed.

Knight- The last order of business is the publication of meeting minutes. In the past we have only published a synopsis and the last 2 meetings were published in full. Knight proposed publishing only the synopsis and not the entire minutes in the paper and making the full minutes available online. When asked about people who do not have internet access, Knight said she would be happy to print off and mail a copy to anyone who wanted them.

Olson refered to the Clerk’s Guide “The complete text or a summary of the meeting must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the township within 21 days after the meeting. If a summary is published, the clerk must have the wording approved by the supervisor before it is published.(MCL 41.72a)

Olson addressed the board stating (in summary)

The Clerk’s Guide states that the complete text must be published and that IF a summary is published instead of the full minutes, THEN, the supervisor must approve the wording of the summary. So the default is to publish the entirety of the meeting and the exception that requires approval is the summary so that your obligation is to inform. Generally the clerk decides if the minutes get published or if a summary is sufficient to inform the public depending on the meeting. To have the board require that a synopsis only be published and not the minutes is backward. That is flipped from the way it normally happens. The Clerk publishes the minutes and if the clerk wishes to publish a synopsis, she must get approval of the wording of the synopsis from the Supervisor. On these two occasions, the public came out and spoke (regarding the moving of the voting poll for 2700 plus voters). That doesn’t often happen. So I thought that that was something the rest of the public needed to be informed about and I believe it is our obligation to be as transparent as possible as to what happens here and what the public’s concerns are. That was the purpose for publishing the lengthy minutes. The conversation was a volley of comments and there was no good way to put that into a synopsis and do any justice to what the conversation was that would make any sense. I think our duty needs to be to inform. That’s my job as the Clerk, to make sure the public has the information of what happens in the meetings.

Knight-I did talk to MTA and asked their opinion on it and they said it is a board decision on how we want to publish the minutes. If we want to go back to a synopsis approach and say check the website for the full minutes, it is a decision that the board makes.

Olson- And again, that is a flip of the way it normally happens. Normally the clerk publishes the minutes and unless she publishes the full minutes then she gets the approval of the wording of the synopsis from the Supervisor.

Knight- Is there any other discussion from anybody else on how they would like to see this done?

Wingeier- It seemed like those were important meetings and it’s important that the public knows that we have considered COVID because you’re going to see longer lines and it’s going to be a big election, so going forward I just wonder if we go to synopsis but when we have important things like that and think it is important that they know more of the details of the meeting, at the end of the agenda we could say synopsis or minutes. I think most of the time a synopsis, it would be a waste to spend that much money for the content of what we’re doing of a ritual of paying the bills the normal mundane stuff.

Knight- so each month, under new business, the board will decide if the minutes of the meeting will be published as a synopsis or as full minutes?

Discussion of the breakdown of the J-ad bill.

Olson-Okay, again, generally speaking, the way a board functions, the Clerk determines if a synopsis is sufficient. If that is the case, the wording of that synopsis has to be approved. Otherwise, the default is that you publish the minutes. So the intent is to give as much information as possible to the public on what happens here. If you choose not to do that as a Clerk, then the clerk has to get the Supervisor’s approval to do that. So, I’m just going to say, this is backwards to me.

Van Pollen- A few months ago there were some people here that complained about excessive noise and that wasn’t detailed minutes. I think you have to be very careful about consistency.

Forbes- You can’t do it depending on what the meeting is about. I think you have a motion on the floor Jamie.

Rick Olson- I don’t think there was a motion. Were still in the discussion phase.

Forbes- She made a motion to discuss. (Not found on the recording)

Knight- **My motion was to go back to the synopsis approach with the full minutes being published on the website. Bass- seconded**

Knight- all in favor say aye.

Rick Olson- Are we going to get any public input on this or not?

Knight- This is a board discussion

R. Olson- I thought we were going to be able to have input like we did in the last meeting.

Knight- Public input will be next. /we are going to finish approving our motion.

R. Olson- Well don’t you want the public input on the decision you’re about to make?

Knight- It’s a board decision.

R.Olson- But you work for us.

**Knight-All in favor say Aye. Four-yes. Olson- No Knight- Okay, motion passed**.

R. Olson- Had a discussion with the Sheriff about this because we kinda knew it was coming. His take on this was that the motion you just made isn’t worth the paper it’s written on because it’s not enforcible. Aside from that conversation, Larry Brummel, who used to be a trustee on this board for years made a comment to me when we were discussing one time about how to do the job of Trustee, his philosophy is let people live their lives in Irving Township and do what they are going to do. Don’t make any ordinances or policies that we can’t enforce. To tie that back to what the Sherriff said, There’s a similar situation going on down in Yankee Springs Township that Mark Engler has been dealing with and the point was it was’nt enforceable. They did’t want him to talk to the Township Attourney for whatever reason and he told him to go ahead and talk to the attourney, they cant stop you, they can’t fire you. You’re just making a whole bunch of problems for no reason. The public needs to be informed, as the Clerk has mentioned, this is supposed to be an open meeting, yes the public could be here but we’ve got restrictions as we can see because of the limited space because of COVID Chinese virus that I’m sick of the fraud being perpetrated on all of us by that. So If we’re going to have the public information out there, my parents don’t have internet at their house so they can’t get the minutes. So you’re making them go through a whole bunch of hoops or they can open the paper like they did a few weeks ago and read the last two meetings’ minutes. It’s up to public information to inform our residents. Yes, that was expensive for the last meeting but it is what it is and that’s not the normal case and has been stated the normal businessis almost so short that the full minutes could just about be a synopsis. I personally think this is about you covering up some of your intentions and causing some problems where they really don’t need to be. But you didn’t want the public to see your full actions at the last meeting and I think this is a revenge motion.

Knight- I have nothing to hide.

R. Olson- Well you don’t have any choice.

Knight- I have nothing to hide. I don’t know what that statement meant. But I have nothing to hide. If you have questions, I will be happy to answer your questions. And this is not revengeful in any way. This is goig back to how we used to do minutes. Doing a synopsis and the minutes on the website. It’s nothing revengeful against Sharon, it not hiding information from the residents. The information is there and I even just offered to print the minutes for people who want them. If you want me to mail minutes to your parents every month, I’d be happy to do that.

R.Olson- that’s not the point. People have to go out of their way to do that and get that information and it has to go through you. The information that took place in the meeting that you’re trying to filter, then you are the person getting in the way of that being sent out accurately. However, if it’s just published fully as a transcript of audio or video, then it is what it is. People said what they said everything was printed as it happened.

Knight- And I would not alter Sharon’s minutes. If somebody called and asked me to sent minutes, I would go right to the website where Sharon sends them, I would print them and I would send them. There’s no way I have time to alter someone’s minutes.

R. Olson- That’s not what I’m saying. You misunderstood my point. My point is if she has to put in a synopsis instead of the details of what happened then you get to approve that synopsis. So, some of that information, if you refuse to print it the synopsis that she prepared, and it has anything to do with you then that’s kinda like the wrong person being the filter.

Knight- Sharon, let me ask you this question, as long as we have worked together and you have done the synopsis, have I ever changed the wording”

S. Olson- No, you’ve made some corrections to errors that needed to be corrected. But I don’t think that was the point.

Knight- Okay. I’ve corrected minimal errors. I have not changed the wording of her synopsis ever in the four years I have worked with her.

R Olson- Understood, but we didn’t get to this situation until August of this year. So all that really doesn’t matter. It’s not pertainate to that point.

Knight-Okay. Any other board member comments or comment from the public?

Forbes- I am concerned about the fact that the minutes that were printed in the paper were not marked “draft”

Those were not approved minutes and so therefore you spent all that money and it was never marked as “draft”

It seem like there have been issues, depending on what the subject is. This is the first time I’ve ever seen the full minutes printed in the paper. That was an unusual circumstance and that was not the norm as opposed to what has always been the norm in the past. I have a question about if Rhonda will be in charge of all the Absentee Ballots that are requested, because my husband was one that requested a Ballot to be mailed and never received it and then came here to vote and was given a hard time by the voting people because they didn’t know what to do with the fact that he never received a ballot. Will Rhonda be in charge of that and making sure that is a proper process?

Rhonda- I can’t be in charge of that. It’s Sharon’s job. She oversees that. I’m just helping her do what needs to be done because of the work load.

Forbes-But you said you’d be getting all the absentee ballots out? Isn’t that what you said?

Rhonda- No, I’m going to help her. It’s her job. She has to oversee all that. Basically, I’m just a laborer.

Forbes- I know of 2 or 3 others that didn’t get their ballots for absentee that never received it in the mail either so.

Rhonda- You have got mail too though. You can go online and watch for that. I watched mine to see when it went out. As soon as it’s in QVF and it says it’s going out, it will show you on Michigan voter on the Secretary of State website. You can track your own ballot. I can say from working the election in August, Ballots don’t always get here, they don’t. There are circumstances where Ballots do not get returned.

Letter from Carol Ergang

Olson- I did not ask Carol to write this letter. When Carol gave me this letter and I read it, I asked her to sign it. So she made five copies and signed them.

(See attached)

Knight- I will reach out to Carol.

Next meeting 10-14-2020, 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned 7:29pm

