Irving Township Board Meeting

3425 Wing Rd, Hastings, Michigan 49058 December 21, 2021, 6:30 PM

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present: Dean Bass, Mike Buehler, Jamie Knight, Alesse Cross and Sharon Olson. Also present were 2 members of the public.

**Knight**, before we get started, three (3) items to add to agenda before approval of agenda, 1. Carpet Cleaning, 2. Barry County Road Commission Meeting date, 3. Determine Budget Review date.

Motion to approve Agenda with corrections made by **Knight** and seconded by **Buehler**. All in favor “Ayes.” “No” none.

Commissioner Report, John Smelker, presented yearend summary for 911 calls, around 50,560 and 500 under last year. We do not have as many road patrols out or as many traffic stops.

ARPA funds, we had the forum November 30. We got several items from that meeting for the Advisory Committee to consider. We are in discussion with lawyers and accountants to make sure compliance with the fund uses. There seems to be a lot of rules. Once the review is complete, committee plan to vote on them end of January.

Assessor, Freeport, Hastings Fire, presented by **Knight**, report attached.

**Knight**, Freeport Fire report. Total of 146 service hours. Congratulations to Fire Chief, Jim Yarger, for **42 years of service.**

**Knight**, Hastings Fire Report. November total of 66 runs, (25) in the city and (41) rural with (1) in Irving Township. (7) firefighters died in the line of duty in the US during month of November 2021. (1) one from Michigan, reports attached.

**Randy Eaton**, Fire Chief presented Thornapple Fire Summary. November total of 168 runs, fire ambulance both. Irving to (7) medical calls with a total year to date 61. Total fire and EMS calls to date 73. We average 5.6 calls per average, report attached.

Cemetery update. Olson, none. We received a couple genealogy calls.

**Public Input.** None.

**Assessor Report.** None. Due to illness.

**Clerk Minutes of November 16,** no changes, no corrections. Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler. All in favor “Ayes.” “No” none.

**Treasurer’s report** was presented by Cross, report attached. Winter tax bills sent on November 30. Winter Tax bills are due February 28, 2022.

Knight, bill payment lists. Olson, bills to be paid, (2) two ACH payments need to be approved. They were dropped from account and not auto paid with the recent bank switch. Olson, to work with bank and get reinstatement of direct payment. Knight, motion to pay bills in the amount of $1935.76, seconded by Bass. Roll call, “Yes”, Bass, Knight, Buehler, Olson, Cross. “No” none.

Board Member Comments: **Olson**, ARPA funds are frustrating to me. They took the money from Social Security, and it belongs to the people who live here. I don’t think that they should be telling us how to use our money that should have never been touched in the first place. What is the right thing to do? There is no fix to it with all the rules. Really frustrating. **Knight**, we don’t have to accept the funds. **Olson**, that isn’t the answer either because the money belongs to the people who live here. In my opinion, this money has created strife in communities and is taking up a lot of time and attention. **Knight**, do we have to accept or decline funds by a certain date? **Olson**, we applied for funds. **Cross**, they are not in any of our accounts. They are supposed to go into the general account, but we have not received them. **Knight**, should we discuss at our budget workshop? **Smelker**, I would discuss with MTA. I think you can put into the roads. The things they suggested water and sewer. The advisory committee thought that studies would be beneficial. **Knight,** I would like to see internet. **Olson,** whatever happen to Great Lakes coming through? **Buehler**, so this money can be spent multiple ways.  **Olson**, correct. If the Village of Freeport wants help with their water project, we could allocate their portion to them. **Olson,** they received their own ARPA funds, and our auditors indicated that we would have a hard time to justify the allocation based on the ARPA rules. **Cross**, this is a lot to consider. **Olson,** the ARPA funds are equivalent to one year of our revenue. It will take a lot of work to administrate it, account for it, report on it. **Olson,** I would like to see opportunities for our farmers to aid them in getting into regenerative farming. Fertilizer costs have skyrocketed. Do some educational things. Barry County has all the resources to survive just about anything, such as farmland, skills, equipment, livestock etc. The challenge would be fuel, but regenerative farming minimizes the need for fuel.

**Unfinished business**:

**Knight, Thornapple Ambulance Contract**, attached. $4500 per year for ambulance coverage. **Olson,** this is for the areathey cover now. **Knight,** no. This is for the area that is presently covered by Birch. Birch would continue with the fire coverage; however, the ambulance would be covered by Thornapple. **Knight,** so we would have Thornapple and Freeport as ambulance support. **Olson**, do you have a proposal from Mercy? **Knight,** Mercy does not have a cost. They were going to have a cost; however, they received added funding from MI for Medicaid and Medicare. The reason we asked for this contract some residents concerned about Mercy’s ambulance service, employee training and quality of equipment. **Knight,** that is the reason we asked Thornapple to cover that area. **Smelker**, question to **Eaton**, did Thornapple get these same funds. Yes. The funds (payer landscape) put Medicare and Medicaid at almost level for reimbursement to the ambulance service. **Eaton** provided examples of the benefit. **Buehler,** going to Thornapple versus Mercy, do you lose response time for the residents in that corner? **Eaton,** yes. We did not look at the time distance. We thought about it, but we did not do a study. **Buehler**, the folks who work for Mercy and Thornapple all hold the same certifications correct? **Eaton**, yes.

**Knight,** Mercy Ambulance want to change their contract dates to start on January, and not June. The Hastings City manager was at last Birch meeting and recommended this change. In addition, Mercy is looking to purchase new equipment and need to know their signed commitments. **Smelker**, they would be zero cost. **Knight,** correct. **Cross,** to Knight, so how many contacted you? **Knight,** a handful of people who expressed concerns about the quality of care.

**Bass, Motion** to accept the ambulance contract from Thornapple for a cost of $4500 a year. Roll call vote: “Yes” Knight, Buehler, Bass, Cross; “No” Olson.

Knight, start with a year contract and see how it goes.

**Records room update**: **Knight** talked to JD Forbes regarding fireproof steel doors. His quote: (2) two steel fireproof doors, locks, hinges, seal and installed for $2050. Quote strictly for doors. Sharon received a bid, Eric Mahler Remodeling, $12,480. Mahler’s bid provided a complete solution for a fireproof room, including, blocking of two exterior windows, block one interior doorway, one (1) fireproof door, painting walls and epoxy wall and floor treatment. Board discussed bids and tabled a decision to next month’s meeting, January 18

In addition to records room, **Olsen** raised concern regarding mold in the basement. **Olson** and her deputy, Lorraine Bush, have completely cleaned basement area; however, the wood paneling still shows evidence of mold.  **Olsen** contributes the ongoing mold issue from water damage that leaked between the mold panels.

**Wood School and Eckert Road Intersection**. **Knight** updated members on her conversation with the Barry County Road Commission, Jake, and the DANGEROUS intersection at Wood School and Eckert that exists. Even with road strips, flags and signage, people are STILL running that Stop Sign. There was another close call involving a fire truck. Barry County Road Commission has made a difficult decision and will move forward with a FOUR-STOP. **Smelker** and **Buehler**, both agree that people’s actions are intentional and run it. With the road strips and signage, they will keep running it. **Smelker**, **Buehler** feel that the four-way will cause accidents. **Bass** indicated that with a four way perhaps it gives you a better chance. **Olson** suggests cameras and tickets. Cross, you can’t miss the rumble strips and signage.  **Buehler**, it is main connect between Freeport and Middleville for a lot of people. **Smelker**, you will still have people run it. A four-way stop sign is not going to prevent people from running it.  **Knight**, there are pros and cons for a two-way and four-way stop. **Knight** indicated Barry County Road Commission Board of Directors made the difficult decision to move forward with a four-way stop at the intersection of Wood School and Eckert Road.

**Land behind township hall.** **Buehler** is in discussion with a landowner to secure an approximate one-acre parcel to add to property line south of township building. The price $15,000. **Buehler** to follow-up to get a square acre to match existing property line.

Board discussed property at the corner of Grange and Sisson and possible trade with another piece of property north of township hall building. **Knight** to investigate and determine feasibility.

Board discussed property at Irving cemetery and the need to secure property for future cemetery plots before it goes into a farm preservation program. **Buehler** to meet with Sexton and landowner and provide update at next meeting.

**New Business.**

**5-year Mercy Contract**. No discussion. Board had roll called to change to Thornapple.

**Carpet Cleaning**. **Knight**, Key Cleaning to get the carpets cleaned for $375.  **Olson** do not recommend cleaning the carpet. It is thread bare and 30 years old. We should remove the existing carpet and fix floor. **Knigh**t, we will table carpeting cleaning for spring.

**Road Commission.**  **Knight**, The Road Commission will attend January 18, 2022, meeting and provide annual road report.

**Public Comment.** None

Upcoming dates:

January 18, 2022, Township Board Meeting 6:30PM

January 25, 2022, Budget Workshop, 6:30PM

Meeting adjourned 7:48 PM, Motion by **Knight**, seconded by Cross.