

Irving Township Board Meeting

3425 Wing Rd, Hastings, Michigan 49058

February 15, 2022, 6:30 PM

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present: Mike Buehler, Jamie Knight, Alesse Cross, Sharon Olson, Dean Bass. Also present were ten (9) members of the public.

Knight, Motion to approve Agenda with addition of discussion of Election Precincts made by **Knight** and seconded by **Buehler**. All in favor "Ayes." "No" none.

Knight, read report on Thornapple Township, attached. **Forbes**, read report on Freeport Fire. In addition, still waiting on tankers to be complete. Filed a grant for \$164,000 for SCBA's.

Smelker, Commissioner Report, no update on Court and Laws Building, meeting tomorrow. We are waiting on Friend of the Court furniture warranty work to be finished. We discussed changing by-laws in public meetings; however, this discussion postponed for more information from the lawyer.

Bush, cemetery report. Two purchases and one burial. **Bush**, question regarding cemetery contract. Is there a backup plan in the event the Sexton is not available: retirement or sickness? **Knight** to discuss with Jim. Jim's contract up to approval at the next meeting.

Public Input, **Forbes**, on the previous minutes it states that I said, you "will" be a partner and you "will" be paying ... I believe I said, you "would be" a partner and "would be" paying for water tower. It sounds like I was being demanding that you would do that. **Olson**, will recheck recording. **Forbes**, on polling, I will state what I have been stating ... concern about safety and security of our residents and the increase of traffic on Wood School Road. **Forbes**, I had mentioned in a previous meeting to come to Irving Township about dollars from ARPA. I was incorrect in my statement about the dollars. Freeport did receive their own ARPA funds.

JD Forbes, because I sit on Board of Review, people come to me to complain. We all get it. Biggest concern about polling, I feel like we are losing voters. They do not trust the mailing. I feel, it is a disservice to our voters.

Bush, as it pertains to the polling, all of a sudden this topic is added to the agenda. I was part of the meetings held in August 2020, when this topic came up. This room was full of citizens who did not approve the two precinct idea. It is unfair and I believe that we should be more transparent about this discussion by soliciting input from all Irving Township; and not just a select few and giving advance notice. Based on the last election numbers (AV), absentee voters, 1130 and walk-ins 1025. When you talk about polling place and wait times, well consider the small amount time versus that soldier's time in the trench. The best way to handle the polling place is to get the broad-spectrum input from the citizens. I am the only one her that was here when there was a packed house of citizens against two polling places.

Lake, I also did not know when polling would be addressed, but a text went out to 13 people. I do not feel that a large group was notified of this topic being on the agenda. I do not want to see the precincts

split. I am a military wife. My husband said that these folks could wait. I do not know what the added costs would be, manpower, equipment, mailings, etc., I think what slowed it down was personnel and equipment.

Angela Rigas, introduced herself, born and raised in Hastings and resides in Caledonia. Running for 79th district as a Republican Candidate for State Representative, AngelaRigas4MI2gmail.com. Barry County will have 4 State House Representatives.

VanPolen, regarding polling, it is important to know why it was consolidated. I did look into who voted from Freeport and a total of 248 voted, 160 came to this building to vote and 88 AV.

Karen Scobey, I have been a resident here for over 20 years. We have an easement issue and I intend to make sure that nothing happens to my property.

Clerk Minutes of January 19, 2022. Olson to listen to recording, and if it is different, submit to Board Members via email with correction. **Knight**, will wait to approve January minutes until March meeting.

Treasurer's report presented by Cross, report attached. February 28, 2022, is the last day that I can receive tax payments. I cannot take payments after that. All payments then go to the county. Review of reports, attached.

***Angela Rigas**, compliment. You have excellent reports and reporting. No other township is doing this. I have visited so many townships and this is fantastic.*

Knight, Bill Payment List, motion to move \$100 from ADM Misc., to dust control account, Buehler seconded. Roll call, "Yes" Knight, Buehler, Olson, Cross, Bass. "No" none.

Knight, Bill Payment List, change Walker & Fluke to \$85.00, subtraction, **Knight** motion to approve \$52,2556.72, which also included Birch Fire Department and Thornapple Fire Department contracts that had been approved, seconded by Bass. Roll call, "Yes" Cross, Bass, Knight, Buehler and Olson. "No" none.

Knight, Board Member Comments, Olson, a little about the poll, referring back to the meeting at the time, our county clerk had relayed that the state was asking boards to consolidate where possible due to the ballot proposals on the ballot "no reason" (AV) absentee voting which would reduce the people at polls, and the likelihood of Absent Voter Counting Boards being established. The result, it did. In addition, the fact that you could register and vote the same day. This required the clerk to be in the office. The clerk could not supervise a poll (6) six miles away and be available to registered voters. Those were the factors considered before it was talked about with the commission to consolidate the poll. Furthermore, at the time the the Village of Freeport and surrounding area had not quite 600 voters registered to vote at that poll versus 1800 in the other poll. Each poll can have up to 2999 before a split if required. Inactive voters and Absent Voters do not count into that decision. The village has their own revenue sharing directly from the state since they incorporated. The township receives approximately 6% of the total in property tax from Freeport. We put all of that back into the roads. Residents don't only drive in the village. So when I hear that we are not servicing the residents for the funds that the

townships receives from the village, that is not fair. We have supported independent projects in the past, \$10,000 roof. It is not in the interest of the voters to have a poll so far away from the person who has the statutory duty to administrate that poll. With these constraints it makes it prohibitive to have a poll 6 miles away from the Clerk.

Knight, one comment, Bush stated that it was just added to the agenda, the clerk asked to put two precinct discussion on the agenda. It was not something that I just put on agenda. Clerk had given date to when line had to be drawn to determine one or two precincts. **Olson**, to the point of the deadline, April 4, is the deadline to the State for any precinct to be divided this year. Olson suggested a highspeed tabulator, approximate \$15,000. In addition, need (5) five personnel, 20 hours each committed to the election polls. **Smelker**, is there a population increase that you reach to have two (2) polls? Olson, 2999 active voters in a poll, but it does not count the permanent AV's (Absent Voters) which I pull out of that total. **Forbes**, would a highspeed tabulator make the voting go faster? **Olson**, yes. Presently, we can only do 200 an hour and this is if you are standing right there feeding it. **Forbes**, maybe instead of purchasing property and putting in a parking lot, maybe the highspeed tabulator is the solution. **Lake**, I would be interested in why this is coming up again and the cost. **Olson**, the villages used to have their own polls. The state took that away from them and made it at the township level. What we do not want to see happen is that we lose our township election to the county. There are several states that only have county elections and not townships. Local control of your election is important; it minimizes the opportunity for fraud. **Knight**, read emails she received. **Knight**, to be clear, the Election Commission consists of the Township Treasurer, Township Clerk and Township Supervisor. We will not decide tonight; however, **Olson**, stated that she wanted this discussion because it was brought up in the past that there was no discussion. **VanPolen**, how was the precinct split before? Down Wing Road and included a small section of Irving Township, not just Village. Discussion on how Thornapple does it. Investigate high speed tabulator.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Records room update: **Knight**, attached proposals. Quotes presented. Olson, once again, it does not have to be fancy, but it needs to be functional. Brick work quote, \$1800 by Dale Cox. Olson, it must be fireproof and waterproof. Again, price of materials are all over the place. We keep pushing this down the pipe, the contractor may not be able to honor his quote due to increase in cost of materials. **Buehler**, Dale would just be doing the block work. Then you would have to have the door put in. **Knight**, motion to accept Dale Cox bid of \$1800 for the block work for records room, **Second by Buehler**. Roll call, "Yes" Knight, Buehler, Olson, Cross, Bass. **Olson**, if we are going to be putting a lot of money into improving this and playing devil's advocate, if we think there is a possibility to building an actual building, should we make this investment. **Knight**, we would need to have public discussion. **Bass**, do we want to secure additional quote for doors. We are talking about one door. **Forbes**, steel has gone up 60%. For one door for records rooms and one exterior door, total \$2500. **Knight**, motion to accept JD bid for \$2500, one (1) interior door for records room and (1) exterior door to replace not functioning door located in basement. **Buehler second**. Roll call, "Yes" Knight, Bass, Olson, Cross, Buehler. "No" none.

Land behind township hall. **Knight** the acre of land behind the hall, price increase. **Olson**, I think with that amount of money we can turn the grass into more suitable parking lot. **Knight**, it is too much. **Knight** to let land contact know that we remain interested; however, not at that price. I invited him to come and discuss with the board tonight. *He was not in attendance.*

Public Input

Bush, stated she has done leg work with MTA. Recommends a wait until the final ruling is in place before commit to any projects, April 1, 2022, final ruling is in place.

Olson, Irving Township has continued to support Freeport, \$10,000 for new roof over library. The village has 502 residents, 300 voters.

NEW Business

Knight, the following resolutions were adopted and read allowed by **Knight**. Motion by **Knight**, to accept resolutions, second by **Buehler**. Roll call, "Yes" **Knight**, **Buehler**, **Olson**, **Cross**, **Bass**. "No" none.

- 2022 Asset Test and Poverty Guidelines Resolution 2022-1, Motion to approve by **Knight**, seconded by **Bass**. Roll call, "Yes" **Bass**, **Buehler**, **Olson**, **Cross**, **Knight**. "No" none.
- 2022 Property Transfer Affidavit Resolution 2022-2, Motion to approve by **Knight**, seconded by **Olson**. Roll call, "Yes" **Knight**, **Buehler**, **Olson**, **Cross**, **Bass**. "No" none.
- 2022 Protest to Board of Review in Writing 2022-3, removing one paragraph regarding meetings held electronically. Motion to approve with changes by **Knight**, seconded by **Buehler**. Roll call, "Yes" **Cross**, **Buehler**, **Bass**, **Knight**, **Olson**. "No" none.

Public Input - Summary

Forbes, regarding polling, whatever we can do to make it safer, easier and faster. **Bush**, we need election workers, they must be trained, certified by the State of Michigan and appointed by Election Commission 45 days prior to an election. Training and election day service is paid. Age range 16 and older. **Forbes**, utilize volunteer network. Need at least (5) workers for upcoming May 3, Hastings School Board.

Knight, motion to adjourn meeting at 7:40 pm. Seconded by **Buehler**.

Upcoming dates:

- March 8, 2022 – Board of Review Organization Meeting, 12:00pm
- March 14, 2022 – Board of Review 3pm-9pm
- March 15, 2022 -- Board of Review 9am-3pm
- March 15, 2022 – Township Board Meeting, 6:30pm