

Irving Township Board Meeting

3425 Wing Rd, Hastings, Michigan 49058

April 19, 2022, 6:30 pm

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present: Mike Buehler, Jamie Knight, Sharon Olson, Alesse Cross, Dean Bass. Also, present (16) members of the public.

Knight, before we start, several changes to agenda: add Resolution and Cemetery Agreement for the purchase of land, and prior to Treasurer Report to move funds to three items to balance the budget for this fiscal year.

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

Knight, reviewed fire reports, Hastings, Thornapple, Freeport all reports attached. In addition, Freeport Fire Pancake Breakfast raised a whopping \$15,889. They will use the money to purchase two (2) thermal imaging cameras.

Smelker, Commissioner Report, FOC has moved into their new office building. In addition, I have attached a copy of the quarterly statistics for 911, attached.

Bush, Cemetery Report, two plots purchased.

Public Input, VanPolen, regarding Freeport Pancake Breakfast that amount is stellar.

Knight, Jim Dull, Barry County Drain Commission, each board member received a copy of a 431, Petition for Maintenance and Improvement of a Drain "Hidden Hollow" in Irving Township, in addition, Resolution #2022-9. The drain, located of west of WoodSchool and State flooded out this spring. It is a development that was put in in the 1990's. Dave Dykstra did the work. The development detention pond is in the old Waterway. It has flooded out a couple houses this spring. Andy Coe and his wife called me about the flooding and how to fix it. We have researched it. We can do a petition. We have a petition from the people. But, if you do not know anything about a petition, they are a blank check and without a good solution they are expensive. According to drain law if you received a petition, you set a board of determination, engineering redesign, bids, etc. The process takes 1 – 3 years. Looking for township support of approximately \$20,000.

Open public discussion. Dull, The developer created the problem. The county took it over after it was built. The developments are a big problem. This was done 30 years ago. We are having ongoing discussions with planning and zoning, Jim McManas, for any development projects that affect storm water drains, one acre or more, to send to us for review first. Lake, Is there a bucket of money for this fund? No. The dollar amount would spread on those in the drain district. Smelker, Any other developments with a problem? Yes, Arrowhead, which is Garbow – 6-7 houses, since early 2000's. Dave Dykstra told the builder at that time to NOT sell those lots because of potential water issues; however, they did. A 433 is the plan that the developer does the engineering, builds the projects and then it is accepted by the county. Knight, if we decided to do the 431, would the township be responsible for the full amount? No.

Board Member Comments/Others: Smelker, Is there a time limit on this project? Should the township contact their attorney? Yes. You don't want to be fixing everyone's drain problem. Knight, we will table this item for next month's meeting.

Clerk's Minutes, March 15, Board Meeting Minutes and Special Board/Budget Meeting. Knight, motion to approve March 15, Board Meeting minutes, seconded by Buehler, All in favor "Ayes." "No" none. Motion passed. Knight, motion to approve Special Board/Budget Meeting minutes, seconded by Cross. All in favor "Ayes." "No" none.

Knight, Motion to move \$16.80 from the Administration Cost Center to Deputy Clerk Cost Center, seconded by Buehler. Roll call "Yes" Cross, Bass, Knight, Buehler, Olson.

Knight, Motion to move \$24.25 from Administration Miscellaneous Cost Center to the Street Lights Cost Center, seconded by Buehler. Roll call "Yes" Buehler, Cross, Bass, Knight, Olson.

Knight, Motion to move \$100 from Administration Miscellaneous Cost Center to Roads Dust Control Cost Center, seconded by Buehler. Roll call, "Yes" Knight, Cross, Bass, Olson, Buehler. "No" none.

Treasurer report, provided by Alesse Cross, reports attached.

Knight, Motion to Pay Bills for the month in total \$3663.13, seconded by Cross. Roll call, "Yes" Buehler, Cross, Olson, Bass, Knight. "No" none.

Board Member Comments. Olson, there has been discussion about moving the Election poll from Irving Township to Freeport, again. I went back into the records to show the number of people who voted:

YEAR	IRVING Voters	%	FREEPORT Voters	%	COMBINED Freeport/Irv.	%	ABSENTEE	%
2012, PRES.	1197	70.08%	358	57%				
2014, STATE	833	47.46%	292	45.7%				
2016, PRES.	1304	71.92%	427	68%				
2018, STATE					1524	59%		
2020, PRES					2136	74.78%	1111	

We had a total of 1025 vote in person at this building in 2020. The concern brought up is too much traffic for this building to handle. It was not brought up until after 2020 election. We had fewer voters in 2020, a total of 1025 vote in person than we had in 2018, 2016, 2012. Olson, my continued concern is that this is where people expect to vote. It is at the center of the township. It is where the offices are located. I am against having a temporary poll. The purpose for consolidating was at the urging of the State of Michigan and a proposal on the 2018 ballot for the "No Reason Absentee Voting," and the possibility that they would be expanding the polls to 5,000 versus 3,000. A number of considerations went into the decision, cost and purchase of election equipment. I included a copy of a cost sheet for one of the tabulators, \$5295.00. When you multiply that by the number of polls that are in the state, it adds up.

I discussed our situation with the County Clerk again and again. She stated that she had another tabulator. She has given us an extra tabulator. We can run our poll in this building with two tabulators. I did not know that we could do that until I spoke with Election Source when I was looking into a high-speed tabulator. They said that we could use two (2) tabulators. They sent me a quote. After I received the quote, the County Clerk contacted me and offered me the use of the extra machine. The only expense is the annual maintenance on the machine.

Smelker, that gives you two up here and one in basement. Olson, yes. VanPolen, do you think adding the tabulator will fix the problem? VanPolen, To me, I don't think that two tabulators will fix the problem. I was also wondering how many registered voters we have. Olson, 2700.

VanPolen, If I understand the law correctly, we must have another precinct anyway over 2999. You do not pull the AV's out of that number. Olson, that is not what Robin Hawthorne, *Clerk Rutland Township*, told me. She said that they do not count the permanent AVs in that number. VanPolen, Thornapple Clerk says that you count the AV's. Olson, my permanent AVs are their own precinct. I am not required to run a small absentee counting board for this small election. Knight, so my concerns with larger elections at this building is the safety. I know the numbers don't show it, but parking across Woodschool, parking ½ mile down road... If the weather is poor, we need to do something different.

Olson, I spoke to my father in-law on Sunday, he is still willing to trade a piece of land that the township owns on Solomon for the land across the road on Wing that he owns so we can have parking here. We need to have someone from the board to reach out to him about this. It cannot be me, as it would be a conflict of interest. Olson, to Knight, have you sought legal advice? Knight, I have not. Buehler, I have not. Buehler, I thought it has just been talk. Knight, I have not talked to anyone about exchanging land. Olson, what is the best thing for our residents ... for them to have parking right next to their township hall building.

Wright, what is the issue with voting in Freeport? There is a lot of space at the community center that does not get used. We live just down the road from the township hall. Olson, the Clerk is required to be in her office so that people can register to vote. A deputy could work a poll in Freeport. Olson, yes. Lake, don't reinvent the wheel, fix the wheel here. The hold up lies in the registration. Betit, moving it to Freeport, we will lose votes. Olson, the long-term solution isn't to continually establish the poll in Freeport. The long-term solution is to do the land deal, put a parking lot in and use this building for generations to come. Lake, I know of talk of a new township building. It seems to me don't reinvent the wheel but fix the wheel. I don't know how many check-in people are involved. If there were more in the registration process, people could move quicker. The effort should be put on that process.

Bush, playing on what Lake just said, two months ago we addressed the issue of the voting process. In the 2018 election, 1580 people came through this building on election day. In 2020, 1025 came through this building. In the last two meeting we have listened to the public and have acted, by implementing education and training. We have recruited new people to learn how to do this process and take steps to expedite it. In addition, we have spent hours investigating the cost vs benefit of a high-speed tabulator. In the process, we learned from Election Source that we could use two tabulators which will add yet another benefit. If we have done all that you have asked and the people has asked of us in this building, we shouldn't have an issue. Furthermore, the land mass is same here as it is in Freeport. In August of 2020, I see only one other person here other than myself, we spent \$15,000 on a parking lot so that we could improve on our elections here. Every task that you have thrown at us to help increase the efficiencies, we have done. In the future is this how it is going to be? We do all this work to improve, and you change it anyway, when we haven't been given the chance to prove it. Olson, so in the meantime, the solution would be for an additional parking lot, and nothing has been done about that either. Buehler, so what if you improved your through put 30% and built a parking lot and find that it is not necessary, then you wasted your money. Bush, good point. I say we wait, test this out with the new people, training and processes and then decide. Buehler, I agree.

Lake, safety. Adding volunteers in orange vests. Also, fear we will lose voters. Smelker, we had posse in past. They should take care of safety. To your point Lake, you will lose voters either way. Knight, we will lose voters if you stand in line for 3 hours.

Knight, Getting back to the purchase of the land in 2005, 4.44 acres. We paid \$75,000 for the contract sale price. The purchase was made to build a new township hall. The citizens shot it down. Bass, what are you suggesting? Knight, I am not suggesting building a new building. Olson, we need to fix the problem. We can't keep putting a band-aid on it. Lake, if you put this topic out there for the public instead of a select email listing, perhaps more public would come to talk about it.

Van Polen, there is a lot of different things happening in this discussion, parking lot, voting, moving offices to basement. This room sucks to do an election in. It is horrible. You can't set it up good. Your office space is not secure because the public is in here, it stinks. I think you must look at all those pieces before you do anything. Who knows, maybe you will build a new township hall over there. Maybe we can get the offices moved downstairs, liked we talked about before. Olson, to get this building ADA compliant if we were to move offices downstairs, I believe we would be further ahead building new. We have been told by several contractors that we cannot put a drive downstairs to access it because the ground is too soft.

Betit, a barn-condominium would be an economical solution. We are getting more and more moving into our township all the time. Olson, my father-in-law is 75. Who knows what the future holds and if this will be available to us should anything happen to him. Williams, what changes do you see in the registration process? Bush, change out registration people with a new trained crop. More people, separate lines, streamline layout room. We haven't taped it off. We have discussed removing this platform. We have a small election to see some changes through. Knight, the small election won't tell you about August. Bush, I am not saying that. This one will help to put the components and people in place for the best result.

Knight, we have some ideas on the table. We will put this item on agenda for May 17, Board Meeting and come up with some solutions. Lake, the goal would be for this to have the August election here. Knight, I don't know. We have discussed many things. As a board, we need to gather our thoughts and discuss it at the next Board meeting.

Knight, Unfinished business, records room. Discussion regarding two doors in records room ultimately cheaper. We have been talking about this for seven months now. Knight, motion to have Mel Veenstra to do brickwork for \$3700, Buehler seconded. Roll call, "Yes" Cross, Knight, Bass, Buehler, Olson. "No" none.

Knight, motion to have JD put another steel door, \$800, seconded by Buehler. Roll call, "Yes", Buehler, Cross, Bass, Olson, Knight. "No", none.

Knight, replacement of handrail. Board and Open Discussion. Presentation of (2) proposals. Visser Brothers, FCC Construction. Additional discussion on picketed of the railing. The original blueprints had not been built with pickets. Add quotes for galvanized and powder coated and add pickets. Wright, I don't want you to spend a bunch of money on something that you may change down the road. Knight, quote with bar across the middle of existing and the remaining railings. Table to next meeting.

Knight, purchase of land for expansion of cemetery, seconded by Buehler. Presented resolution, attached. This would allow Sharon and I to sign the necessary agreements needed for closing, send to John for signature. Resolution read allowed by Knight. Roll call, "Yes" Cross, Bass, Olson, Buehler, Knight.

Knight, Public comment. Bush, participated in a teleconference with FBI and Homeland Security regarding cyber security awareness and potential attacks and how to report them. Olson, look for phishing attacks through email.

Next Board meeting is May 17, at 6:30 pm.

Knight, meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully prepared for the Clerk,

Lorraine Bush, Deputy Clerk