

FINAL - IRVING TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

MARCH 19, 2024

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Present – Doug Sokolowski, Dean Bass, Jamie Knight, Mike Buehler. Absent, Sharon Olson. Public attendance – 16.

Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler, approve agenda. All in favor, “Aye”. Opposed, none. Motion passed. Olson absent.

Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler to approve February meeting minutes with the following statement that was omitted from the draft February minutes to be added back in under Board Member comments, Knight asked Olson, “Who is your Deputy.” All in favor, “Aye”. Opposed, none. Motion passed. Olson absent.

Public Comment. Vicki Bettit. I want to commend our emergency services personnel. We had a medical issue. Will fell and broke three ribs. Freeport and Thornapple emergency services showed up, and the care was phenomenal. I was so proud of our people. Thank you.

Unfinished business. Thornapple Township Emergency Services Contract. Sokolowski, board members have a copy of the contract that was presented at last board meeting. Thornapple Board has reviewed it and approved it. Final step is for Irving Township Board to approve it.

Motion by Sokolowski, seconded by Knight to approve Thornapple Township Emergency Services Contract as written. Roll call: “Yes”, Buehler, Bass, Sokolowski, Knight. “No”, none. Olson absent. Motion passed.

New business. Printers. Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler to replace (3) old office printers with (3) new Eco tank all-in-one printers purchase from Staples for \$1400. Roll call: “Yes”, Buehler, Bass, Sokolowski, Knight. “No”, none. Olson absent. Motion passed. Printers to be purchased after April 1, 2024.

BIRCH ordinances. Hazardous materials and cost recovery. Sokolowski, Chief Jordan brought this up at the last Birch meeting. (Jordan absent.) There are two (2) ordinances that Birch required their members to pass in 1995 and 2005. (*Sokolowski provided copies of both ordinances to board members.*) Sokolowski, first, because these are so dated, we need to have them reviewed by legal. Second, each board member should familiarize themselves with the content. Sokolowski, the ordinance is designed to recover costs for Hazmat/Clean up. Chief Richardson, we don’t do the actual mitigations. We do the emergency portion. The cleanup company will recover the clean-up costs. Forbes, that is the same ordinance that is in Freeport contract. Sokolowski, we need to update these ordinances, and we should have one that covers all three fire departments. Board Member Bass expressed concern with some of the language in the ordinance that states “complete control of charge to customer is up to fire chief.” Bass recommends some protections in the ordinance for citizens. Sokolowski, recommend that all three fire departments review ordinance and come back to township

board with their recommendations. Lani Forbes and Bill Richardson agreed. Add to May 2024 Board Meeting Agenda.

Sokolowski, Burn Ordinance table to May 2024 Board Meeting. Forbes, I have the response from the other two fire chiefs, and I am prepared to discuss it tonight. Knight, present during reports.

Year-end Audit, Irving Township is scheduled for July 12, 9:00am – 5 pm, held at the township office, and it is open to the public. Auditors not able to answer a lot of questions, but the public is welcome to attend and witness the audit.

Reports: John Smelker, Commissioner Report. Approved contract for 16,500 sq. ft. for COA building. Next step, COA to reach out to public for donations toward the building. The county loan for the Barry County Airport of \$100,000, to be paid back in (10) years and paid annually in \$10,000 increments. To do our portion of a \$1.8 million grant, we had to come up with \$400,000. The city is doing \$100,000. The county is doing \$100,000 and \$200,000 is coming from the airport fund way. A new terminal building will be built. Commissioners tabled the resolution on the Second Amendment, as some felt the language was too weak. A total of \$93,000 was given to tarmac the trails by Nashville, Barry County Christian and Thornapple Manor. The monies are from 2020, two payments of \$50,000 from the federal government/tribal contributions. This was NOT ARPA money.

Cemetery, Jim Wickham, I talked with Lorraine about some price changes, and she recommended that I bring my concerns to the board.

Miscellaneous: \$350 for pellet lime on lawns to stop ground moles. Add \$100 for the extra cleanup of new parking lot, stones, roots, wire etc. and extra mowing and trimming.

Pine trees in German cemetery need to be trimmed, they overhang into Reigler Farm fields. Need to be raised about 12 feet. Board Member Buehler to handle.

Motion by Sokolowski, seconded by Knight for \$1300, building and grounds account, for care and maintenance of the two new parking lots added in 2023, effective April 1, 2024. Roll call, "Yes", Buehler, Bass, Sokolowski, Knight. "No", none. Olson absent. Motion passed.

Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler, to **increase Sexton's annual compensation** to \$15,000, effective, April 1, 2024. "Yes", Bass, Buehler, Sokolowski, Knight. "No", none. Olson absent. Motion passed.

Jim Wickham to submit an invoice for \$450 for the lime to rid of ground moles and the added cleanup of new cemetery.

Thornapple Township Fire report by Chief Richardson. Total calls last year 1848 calls with Irving representing 16% of calls. The average calls last year 175 a day. Last month we did 202 calls. The time from alarm to in route was one minute and 58 (1.58) seconds. Last year we were down to one minute, thirty-nine (1.39) seconds. Last month, nine (9) medical alarms in the township, one (1) fire, an individual wanting to burn. I just want to bring up burning as it was mentioned previous by Board

Member Bass. We are not coming after law abiding citizens. We are here to help, support and educate. It is NOT our goal to charge people or get the DNR involved to impose fines on our citizens. The goal is to educate and have a common understanding of burn safety and respect for our neighbor and that is why I want a burn ordinance. It has nothing to do with stopping people from burning.

Last year average response time for the entire year was 11 minutes and 52 seconds (11.52). Last month, down to nine minutes and 11 seconds (9.11). We had four (4) structured fires. We averaged (12) firefighters off duty on all four (4) of those fires of which two (2) were in our township and two (2) were outside the township. Two black helmet members got off probation, which is a long-involved process, and both are getting promoted.

Freeport Fire Report, Lani Forbes. Our annual meeting was held in February. Board members, Jim Gonzalez, who is the representative from Carlton Township was elected president. Larry Brummel who lives in Irving Township was elected vice president. Karen Hendrick of Bowne Township was elected treasurer and Ann Solomon, Carlton Township was elected secretary. I do the bookkeeping, so I'm not an officer. We did vote to purchase eight (8) sets of fire gear, they were expired and needed to be replaced. Jim Yarger was reappointed as Chief and JD is the Assistant Chief. We adopted a new budget. (Copy given to Board Member Sokolowski).

January had (26) calls. February at (15) calls with (11) in Irving. Other news, finishing up protocol training throughout Barry County. There have been several changes to the State protocols; and therefore, we've been working on all personnel getting through the training including Thornapple and Hastings.

Chief Jordan unable to attend as he is attending car seat training. We will have car seat certified individuals at each fire location to install car seats correctly. In addition, Chief Jordan is named as one of our regional training coordinators for the state.

Chief Yarger and Chief Jordan discussed *without Thornapple Township as committed at the February board meeting*, do not feel the need for a burn ordinance. They simply want people to call to get a burn permit before burning.

Forbes, April 26, Thornapple Kellogg is doing "A Day of Caring" event. The United Way is working on finding places to volunteer. The times are from 9:00 am – 12:00 noon. Lorraine Bush and I spoke about Irving Township's cemeteries and the spring clean-up and flags.

Sokolowski, contacted MTA regarding ordinances. A board can pass ordinances that are applicable to only certain segments of our township given that Thornapple desires a burn ordinance, we could pass ordinance that only is applicable to Thornapple, and same as the two ordinances passed in 1995 and 2005 specific to BIRCH. If Chief Richardson wants this ordinance for his section of the township, we can do it.

Chief Richardson, this is just disappointing that I wasn't even part of the conversation. Sokolowski, this board is not interested to pit department against each other. We are prepared to address individual or collective. Let us know how we can help.

Sokolowski. Treasury report. Winter tax season has come to an end. Delinquent taxes to be turned over to the county by end of March. *(See detailed treasury report attached.)*

We will have collected **\$48,000** of interest on our accounts to date this fiscal year. Most receipts are from winter taxes. We did receive two (2) state revenue sharing \$68,432.31 and \$57,557. We are doing our end of year summary. In receipt of Clerk's Report, Budget vs Actual Report.

There are four (4) accounts that we need to address before March 31.

1. 223. \$1700 over due to year-end preparations.
2. 247. \$85.51 over category, Board of Review.
3. 253. \$2,270 over category, Treasurer. \$1400 was assessor mailings. We did not have a separate line item in past budget, but we fixed it for this budget.
4. 262. \$8,672 over category, Elections. Direct result of Proposal 2, requirement to be open nine (9) days and staffed with (4) people, and new equipment.

Sokolowski, we still have a surplus in the budget of \$185,610. Making these adjustments, we will have a remaining surplus of approximately \$172,800.

Motion by Sokolowski, seconded by Knight, adjust these four activities with the amounts noted so that we can close out the year. Roll call: "Yes", Bass, Buehler, Sokolowski, Knight. "No", none. Olson absent. Motion passed.

Bill Pay, *(see attached)*. Motion by Knight, seconded by Bass, to pay the township bills in the amount of \$5292.19. Roll call: "Yes", Sokolowski, Bass, Buehler, Knight. "No", none. Olson absent. Motion passed.

Public Input. Lani Forbes mentioned, Lane Cooper, former Freeport Fire Chief passed away. Funeral on Saturday, March 23. Lane served many years as on the Freeport Fire Department. He continued to serve his community long after he retired. He will be missed.

Public comments. Jim Wickham, do we still have a Clerk? Knight, yes.
Board Member comments. None.

Next board meeting, Tuesday, April 16 @ 6:30 pm.

Motion by Knight, seconded by Buehler, adjourn meeting at 7:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by Lorraine Bush for Jamie Knight, Township Supervisor.