

Minutes - Board of Town Trustees

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
WILL County } ss. REGULAR MEETING
Town of New Lenox }

THE BOARD OF TOWN TRUSTEES met at the office of the Town Clerk at 1100 South Cedar Road on August 11, 2011.

PRESENT:	William McCollum	Supervisor
	Annette Boyd	Clerk
	Michael Hickey	Trustee
	Martin Boban	Trustee
	Barbara Kaupas	Trustee
	Larry Wennlund	Trustee

The following official business was transacted:

I. CALL TO ORDER

The New Lenox Town Board of Trustees Meeting was called to order on August 11, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor McCollum.

II. ROLL CALL

Also present:

Bonnie Hernandez, Township Assessor
Attorney Cass Wennlund

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Supervisor McCollum requested that the minutes from July be changed to reflect that the Board also recommended referring Mr. Tracy to the New Lenox Highway Commissioner and the Representative for Mr. Tracy's district. Motion by Trustee Kaupas, seconded by Trustee Wennlund, to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2011, Regular Meeting as amended. No further discussion; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried.

IV. SPECIAL GUESTS / PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ricky L. Tracy, Moracambe Bay Drive

Mr. Tracy requested an opportunity to address the Board regarding the fact that no one had gotten back to him after the last meeting. Attorney Wennlund assured Mr. Tracy that he had spoken to the Highway Commissioner and that as previously discussed, the Highway Commissioner does not enter onto private property, and in fact, the last time the Highway Commissioner entered onto private property, he was escorted off the property by an owner with a firearm. Attorney Wennlund offered to go with Mr. Tracy to meet with the County Engineering Department.

Mr. Tracy also wished to speak about the fact that the minutes did not reflect each detail he spoke about, specifically, that the minutes did not reflect that he spoke about the Township doing the work previously, and details about a resident with a mechanical system not draining properly, etc.

Attorney Wennlund clarified for Mr. Tracy that the minutes are a summary of the Township's meetings, and are not a written transcript of the meetings. Attorney Wennlund noted that the board could include Mr. Tracy's written response as part of the record, which would be wholly appropriate.

Mr. Tracy acknowledged Attorney Wennlund's suggestion that Mr. Tracy had a private action against an individual who was causing water to drain onto his property and Attorney Wennlund again reminded Mr. Tracy that the only party that could bring this action was Mr. Tracy.

Mr. Tracy reiterated his concern that he had not heard anything from the Township, and Attorney Wennlund advised that someone from the Township could introduce Mr. Tracy to the local Representative of his area and that perhaps there was a way to help Mr. Tracy contact his local County Board Members. Attorney Wennlund also suggested that the answers Mr. Tracy was seeking would be found at the Will County Subdivision Engineering Department.

Mr. Reggie Hernandez, 1404 Grand Prairie, New Lenox

Mr. Hernandez wished to thank the Board for the opportunity to address them. Mr. Hernandez wished to speak to the board on behalf of his 88 year old mother-in-law, Alicia Luckhart and wanted to ask the Board some questions.

Mr. Hernandez first asked the Board if the Township changed the distribution policy of the Food Pantry. The Supervisor answered that no, the Township had not changed their policy.

Mr. Hernandez asked if the Township had a 5 day grace period for the rent due for the Seniors living in the Senior Housing Building. The Supervisor responded that no, there isn't a grace period for the rent. Attorney Wennlund noted for the record that the written contract would be the controlling authority.

Mr. Hernandez reported that his mother-in-law has never accepted groceries before until August 3rd, when she received groceries for the first time. However, Mr. Hernandez noted that a member of the staff wanted to know if she was signed out for those groceries.

Mr. Hernandez also reported that his mother-in-law lives on Social Security. Her check had not yet been deposited by the 3rd of the month. The office manager had inquired as to the listing of who had not yet paid their rent, and was told it was a short list and it was within that grace period. Mr. Hernandez said the office manager replied "Well we'll see about that." Mr. Hernandez inquired again whether there was a grace period for the rents. Mr. Hernandez made the point that he did not like his mother-in-law being singled out.

Supervisor McCollum explained that rents are due on the first, and the Township allows for Seniors receiving their checks after this date. Supervisor McCollum explained that there generally isn't any action taken unless there is someone who has become egregiously late. Attorney Wennlund noted for the record, even at that point, there would be 5 days after that notice is served.

Supervisor McCollum explained that the Township is keenly aware that some of the tenants in the Senior Housing Building are on a very limited fixed income, and their Social Security checks arrive after the date the rent is due, and extends leniency based upon those facts.

Trustee Wennlund explained that the bonds issued for the Senior Housing Building require a payment on a definite date, and there isn't any grace period on the bond payments. The buyers of the bonds are those who set the terms.

Attorney Wennlund explained that even though there may not be a grace period laid out in the lease, the Supervisor has chosen not to go forward to strictly control and enforce the due date owing to the circumstances for some of the tenants.

Township Assessor Hernandez noted the objection was her mother had been singled out.

Supervisor McCollum voiced the opinion that he didn't believe this was the appropriate forum to bring issues of this matter before the Board without giving him any notice to address the situation. Mr. Hernandez reminded Supervisor McCollum that he was out of the office for 3 days.

Attorney Wennlund advised Mr. Hernandez that this information should have gone to the Supervisor. The Supervisor has the power to hire and fire staff members, not the Board.

Mr. Hernandez also stated that the employees had asked him to read a statement.

Supervisor McCollum voiced an objection to the statement prior to it being read and inquired if the issue was something that could have been brought to him rather than in the open meeting.

Supervisor McCollum also asked if the statement was going to have names in it, and if so, *he* didn't believe that the statement would be appropriate.

Trustee Wennlund suggested that Mr. Hernandez give the statement to the Supervisor so that he could forward it to the Board and this would give the Board time to familiarize themselves with the situation.

Attorney Wennlund reiterated again that the Board sets the overall policy. The Supervisor can hire and fire employees. The Board directs how the money is spent.

Trustee Hickey also advised that the Board appoints the Supervisor as the manager of the office.

Mr. Hernandez inquired if the Board preferred a formal letter of grievance, and Attorney Wennlund advised that he could just forward the statement to the Supervisor or make a formal grievance to the Supervisor and then take it to the Board.

Mr. Hernandez was warned about the 5 minute rule for Public Comments, and Mr. Hernandez pointed out the previous speaker was allowed to speak for over 15 minutes.

Attorney Wennlund reminded the Board about their lack of adequate enforcement of their rules during the Public Comment period at their meetings. The Public Comment period is not meant to be a Question and Answer session; it is a forum for someone to make a statement, with a 5 minute limit.

Supervisor McCollum inquired as to whether this issue rose to the level of an Executive Session.

Trustee Wennlund again suggested that the employees file a written statement with the Supervisor to give the Supervisor and the Board adequate time to review the situation.

Supervisor McCollum stated he would not stand for the majority of employees trying to create policy.

V. BOARD ISSUES – ACTIONS

A. Resolution #2011-02, State of Illinois Federal Surplus Property Program

Motion by Trustee Wennlund, seconded by Trustee Hickey to approve the State of Illinois Federal Surplus Property Program as presented. No further discussion; Trustee Hickey, Trustee Boban, Trustee Kaupas, Trustee Wennlund, Supervisor McCollum in favor; none opposed; motion carried.

B. Contract with US Veteran Energy for Electricity and Natural Gas Expenses

Mr. *John* Patrick Miner briefly addressed the Board about the changes in the bids that were submitted and noted for the Board that they had added 2 more companies, which came in lower than the current bids. Mr. Miner pointed out that the Township would save varying amounts depending on the contract length the Township chose. Mr. Miner explained that with NiCor being bought out, no one wanted to bid without knowing what type of break there would be, so natural gas couldn't be priced at this time. Mr. Miner recommended against moving forward on a contract for natural gas at this time.

Attorney Wennlund requested the opportunity to review the contracts prior to the Township signing.

Motion by Trustee Hickey, seconded by Trustee Boban to enter into a 24 month contract with Blue Star subject to the Attorney review. No further discussion; Trustee Hickey, Trustee Boban, Trustee Kaupas, Trustee Wennlund, Supervisor McCollum in favor; none opposed; motion carried..

VI. REPORT FROM TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

A. SUPERVISOR

1. 2011-12 Medical Benefits Program Renewal

Supervisor McCollum reported that he had received quotes last week from 3 different programs, and forwarded those quotes to Trustee Hickey. Supervisor McCollum wanted to give Trustee Hickey a chance to review those quotes within the next few weeks and get it on the agenda for the September meeting.

B. TRUSTEES

1. Trustee Hickey

Trustee Hickey reported that the Township continues to review the proposed IMRF changes for part time employees which would change the eligibility hours to 1,000 hours from 600 hours, and is expecting some legislation to clarify these changes. Trustee Hickey wanted to reiterate that these changes will only effect future employees, and does not impact current or past employees.

Trustee Hickey noted he didn't comment during the Public Comment period. However, Trustee Hickey said he met with several employees about their grievances, and reported there is a major problem with the employee morale in the office.

Trustee Hickey advised the Board that the Township needs a mechanism, a forum for the employees to be able to bring their concerns forward.

Attorney Wennlund noted it would have been more appropriate for the employees to have met with 2 Trustees.

Trustee Hickey went on to report that he met with Supervisor McCollum about the issues and problems the employees discussed with him and said the Township needs a mechanism, a forum for the employees. Currently as it stands, the only way the employees can move forward is in a Public Meeting or an Executive Session.

Trustee Hickey reiterated that this was "not a happy office" and the Township needs to find a way to put this behind them.

2. Trustee Boban

Trustee Boban reported that due to the July heat, on July 21st and July 22nd, the Township's Emergency Cooling Center was activated and was coordinating with the New Lenox Police Department.

The Food Drive at Proud American Days, Mr. Cheny helped man the event. Mr. Cheny had a small can available so that anyone who arrived, and didn't have a food donation, could make a monetary donation to the Food Pantry.

The gate for the Traditional Recycling yard is in working order and is also being used by the public on a daily basis.

Sharefest scheduled on September 10th at the Spencer Campus, where there will be another Food Collection event that our Food Pantry will participate in. The Household Hazardous Waste Collection will be from 8:00am-3:00pm that day. There will also be an electronics recycling event also, which will then be brought to the Township. In addition to these events, there will also be a Health Fair, a Job Fair, Angela's Mission taking collections for soldiers.

Trustee Boban also reported that he ran into a friend that used to coach softball, and is heavily involved with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and requested an opportunity to speak to the Board next month and to let the Board know that they're very active in the area.

Trustee Boban also reported that the Veterans' website is active and that we have a number of New Lenox residents currently serving and some going back.

3. Trustee Kaupas

Trustee Kaupas reported that the first meeting of the Family Services Foundation was on July 20th and they have a couple of new directors, along with the formation of a grant writing committee. The committee will be working out ways to address keeping the costs of maintenance down for the Senior Housing Building. The next meeting is scheduled for September 20th, at 7:00pm.

Trustee Kaupas reported that they were currently reviewing the paperwork the Township requests for Food Pantry participants as well as reviewing the other local area Food Pantries and their procedures. Trustee Kaupas had reviewed the application from Frankfort.

Trustee Kaupas reported Frankfort has a 4 bag maximum, with the breakdown being if there is 1 person, you would receive 1 bag. 2 bags for 2 people, and so on, with a maximum of 4 bags. Frankfort also has a monthly income threshold in order to qualify.

Trustee Hickey suggested that Trustee Kaupas and Kathy Johnson should make a recommendation to the Board.

Trustee Wennlund noted that this would be something that Trustee Kaupas and Kathy Johnson would need to work with, and it would be in the best interests of the program if these 2 individuals decided what was reasonable for the program.

Attorney Wennlund suggested that a simple signature with a statement could suffice.

Trustee Hickey noted that all the Township could do would be some basic screening, and have trust and do the very best that the Township could do.

Trustee Kaupas also reported that they have made arrangements with Frankfort in the event that Frankfort gets an oversupply of something, the Townships could trade oversupplies of items.

4. Trustee Wennlund

Trustee Wennlund reported that he would be meeting again with the New Lenox Fire Department about the Knox Box program for the seniors.

Trustee Wennlund reiterated that the Knox Box would be jointly owned and when the box was no longer needed by a senior, the box would be returned to the Township to be redeployed to another senior.

Trustee Wennlund estimated that each box would cost approximately 90.00. Trustee Wennlund believed that he would have more information for the Board for the September meeting.

C. CLERK

None.

D. HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

None.

E. ASSESSOR

Assessor Hernandez reported that the rough assessments would be \$1,471,000,000. The new construction figures, approximately \$12,239,916, do not have the new health building included yet. This would be with the inclusion of the 5% decrease for all residential land.

Assessor Hernandez also reported that the notices would be mailed out around Saturday.

VII. REPORT FROM ATTORNEY

None.

VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

Motion by Trustee Kaupas, seconded by Trustee Wennlund, to accept all bills and late bills as presented and approve for payment (\$31,370.22 for the Township General Fund, and \$3,285.19 for General Home Relief (July), \$25,684.68 for the Road District General Fund). No further discussion; Trustee Hickey, Trustee Boban, Trustee Kaupas, Trustee Wennlund and Supervisor McCollum in favor; none opposed; motion carried.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Trustee Hickey reported that he and Supervisor McCollum picked up a17 French exchange students and drove them to O'Hare Airport.

Trustee Kaupas pointed out to the Board that Trustee Boban's wife was on the front page of the New Lenox Community Reporter with others celebrating their outstanding work at the Lincoln-Way High School.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Canceled.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Wennlund, seconded by Trustee Hickey, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17p.m. No further discussion; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried.

Respectively submitted,

Annette Boyd