

Norwood Township Board of Trustees
Approved Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2023 7:00pm
Norwood Township Hall

Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Ben Freds

Pledge of Allegiance – by all present

Roll Call – Pirie-present, Brenda Freds-present, Smolenyak-present, Ben Freds-present, Warner-present

Approval of October 16, 2023, Meeting Minutes, MM by Warner to approve minutes as presented, 2nd by Pirie. Motion carried to approval 4-0-1 with Smolenyak abstaining.

Public Comment on Agenda Items –

Roger Soldano stated he feels the Zoning fees are compatible with the rest of Charlevoix County Townships and suggested the fees not be raised. He said he sent a letter to Clerk Freds about hiring another Zoning Administrator and feels this is not warranted. He feels increasing the fees is a subtle way to finance a new ZA. Soldano also feels hiring a new ZA without the public's knowledge is not the right way to go about it.

Approval of Agenda – Supervisor Freds asked to add the use of ARPA funds be added to New Business. **MM by Brenda Freds to approve Agenda as amended, 2nd by Smolenyak. Motion carried to approval 4-0.**

Supervisor's Report –

- Richardson Road light issue is dead as Banks Township does not support it.
- The TOPO map of Township Park has been provided by Performance Engineers so planning for an ADA ramp can begin.
- Discussion with PC Chairman regarding attendance of PC Member. Freds stated he feels a 2nd chance should be given and stated he has spoken with the PC member and asked for consistent participation to rectify the problem. Freds will stay in contact with PC regarding this issue.
- Norwood has been granted Preferred Local Government Status so now the Historical Commission can work on Grants for work on the Historic Township Hall.

Treasurer’s Report –

Fund Balances as of 10/31/2023:

General:	\$102,132.34 (\$12,000 performance bond included)
Sweep Acct:	\$176,122/41
TOTAL General:	\$278,254.75
Road:	\$ 44,448.62
CD Road:	\$100,000.00
TOTAL Road:	\$144,448.62
Fire:	\$ 13,115.16
CD Fire:	\$ 30,000.00
TOTAL Fire:	\$ 43,115.16
ARP Fund:	\$ 75,143.54
Phragmites:	\$ 7,936.97 (includes \$1,055 for Frank Hamilton fund)
Tax Fund:	\$ 59,739.66

The treasurer asked to thank residents of the Township for coming out to vote and passing the Road Millage. She also stated the Winter Tax bills will be going out next week and her Winter office hours will be December 28, 2023, from 9am-5pm at her home. Please call ahead to make an appointment. The treasurer also gave other options for payment of taxes.

Clerk’s Report –

Preapproved:	\$ 350.18 (GLE/Trustream)
Unapproved:	\$ 27,552.85 (included the \$12,000 bond refund)
Totals:	\$ 27,903.03

MM by Warner to approve the Clerk’s report and paying the bills, 2nd by Pirie. Motion carried to approval 5-0.

The clerk also wanted to thank voters for coming out to vote and passing the road millage. She stated there were 190 voters and the millage passed 131-59. The clerk also praised her Election Staff for a successful election day.

Trustee’s Reports -

Warner reported on the following:

- Solar System discussion is still ongoing but discussion that it will be allowed in the MIRD and commercial districts. The Township has six months to get into place.
- Commented on the PC Member missing 3 meetings as unexcused.

Pirie – Nothing to report.

Zoning Administrator’s Report-ZA report is on-line.

Old Business - None

New Business –

Zoning Fee Increase and Submittal Schedule –

Supervisor Freds asked the Board to review the fee schedule that was submitted. The last fees were updated in 2018. Smolenyak questioned the Green Belt Permit Fee and felt the Non-Profit fee should stay at \$25. She also felt the Special Meeting fee should be changed from \$750 to \$500.

The supervisor also said the Submittal Schedule needs to be reviewed for the PC and ZBA to have time to prepare for applications and approvals that are brought before them.

The Zoning Fees and Submittal Schedule will be adopted as policy not as amendments to the ordinance.

MM by Smolenyak to adopt the Submittal Schedule dated 2023 as policy moving forward, 2nd by Warner. Motion carried to approval 5-0.

The supervisor feels increasing the fees is justified as a cost of doing business but asked the Board to review and will discuss at future meetings.

MM by Ben Freds to table Zoning Fee Increase to the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting, 2nd by Warner discussion by Smolenyak to take into consideration the time it takes for the ZA or Planner to get materials together and prepare for a Permit, S.U.P. or other issues. **Motin carried to approval 5-0.**

New Zoning Administrator Hire –

The supervisor advised that when Leslie Meyers hired back on, she took the ZA position as a temporary position and stated she would stay on as the Planner but limited time as ZA. Freds stated he wanted to find a reliable and consistent ZA and has been on the search for one for quite some time and has shared this with the Board and the Township several times. Currently paying \$1,500 per month for ZA, Planner and Enforcement Officer but feels there is a concern for the lack of enforcement.

The supervisor stated he has met with Nick Brief who is a Sergent with the Charlevoix County Sheriff's Department and lives in Norwood Township. Brief is interested in the position of the ZA and would start March 1, 2024. Meyers told Freds that she would work with Brief to train him until he is comfortable. Freds stated he would like to budget \$1,000 per month for ZA and Meyers would stay on as Planner for \$700 per month until she decides to retire.

Freds stated that if there is anyone that is experienced in being a ZA, he would like to hear from them but so far no one has come forward. Freds said Brief has a law enforcement background and is recommended by Sheriff Vondra. He stated this is just a proposal at this point but said Brief is very enthusiastic about the position and is willing to learn. Freds stated he would like to hear from the public about this idea and feels that \$12,000 per year is realistic.

Smolenyak stated that this is a very demanding position and Brief's current job would be beneficial for the position. She also felt he should get some training before March 1, 2024. The supervisor stating the ZA new hire will be an Agenda item for the December Meeting and would like further input.

Stillwell Performance Guarantee Bond –

ZA has verified that the work has been completed to release the \$12,000 bond money.

MM by Warner to return the \$12,000 bond to the Stillwells, 2nd by Brenda Freds.

Motin carried to approval 5-0.

ARPA Funds –

The supervisor stated the ARPA funds must be allocated by the end of 2024 so would like to get ideas on how it should be allocated. Ideas discussed were Roads, Purchase of property, Capital improvements, pave the parking lot of township park and park improvements. The supervisor stated he is getting a bid from Charlevoix County Road Commission for the paving so they will maintain it. Other suggestions were to purchase a new dedicated laptop computer for the ZA and the Planning Commission, purchase filing cabinets for storage room, television for board room and make creative workspaces for Township Board and PC Members. There was further discussion on the passage of the road millage and how that will come into play for future road improvements.

Pirie stated the Board needs to find out what the residents of Warner and Beatty Roads are willing to do to get asphalt and that this concern cannot keep being thrown under the table. Discussion on approaching Beatty and Warner Road residents on how they would like to handle the upgrades and contacting Marion Township regarding Warner Road. This will be an Agenda item for future meetings.

Announcements & Correspondence –

Supervisor Freds stated the recording system was updated so will be curious to see how it works out.

Public Comment –

Roger Soldano suggested a water softener and water filter for the Township Hall to be purchased with ARPA funds.

Shari Jones asked if the Township could get bids from other sources for the road and parking lot improvements, but Supervisor explained that if the CCRC is going to maintain then they will bid out the work.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Submitted by Shari M. Jones, Recording Secretary