

Official Proceedings of the Washington Township Board of Trustees

March 1, 2010

**Washington Township Center
30200 Town Center Road, Beecher, IL**

Meeting called to order **at 7:00 p.m.** to pay bills for the month of February and transact any other business that may come before the Board of Trustees. Meeting agenda and guest sign-in sheet are attached.

Supervisor Howard led the Pledge of Allegiance and then asked for a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the United States Armed Forces and for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Roll call:

Present: Supervisor Robert Howard; Trustees: Elmer Becker, Dan Waterman, Ted Deery, Teresa Peterson Absent: NONE

Other Officials present:

Clerk Joe Burgess, Assessor Carol Ann Blume and Highway Commissioner Jerry Meyer

Approval of the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Dated February 1, 2010:

Supervisor Howard asked if there were any corrections or additions to the February 1, 2010 board meeting minutes as presented. Being none, Howard asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion:

Trustee Becker made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2010 Board of Trustees meeting as presented. Trustee Waterman seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll call vote as follows: Becker – yes, Waterman – yes, Howard – yes, Deery – yes, Peterson - yes. **Motion passed 5-0.**

Public Commentary:

Township resident George Willy gave the board an “update” on the Illiana Expressway showing the Board a proposed new route. According to Willy the new highway is 8 lanes and 600 feet wide and would cost \$1 billion to construct. Willy than read a prepared statement against the building of the airport and the pollution associated with the jet traffic.

Mike Hameister, representing L&H Services, told the board that L&H was the contractor who installed the HVAC system in the Washington Township Center. Mike then questioned why another vendor, from outside the township, was recently contacted to perform service work on the HVAC units. Hameister asked the board if “they supported members of the Beecher Chamber of Commerce”? Supervisor Howard told Mr. Hameister that L&H was not the “exclusive” contractor for Washington Township and that he would gladly meet with him and they could discuss his concerns. Mike agreed to meet with the Supervisor at a later date.

Township resident Ken DeHaan, who lives on State Line Road, asked Commissioner Meyer what could be done about the deteriorating condition of State Line Road north of Indiana Avenue. Meyer explained that the section of State Line Road in question was maintained by Lake County Indiana and he should contact them at their Crown Point office. Mr. DeHaan did not believe a call from an Illinois resident about an Indiana road would make a difference. Meyer offered to assist Mr. DeHaan in contacting the Lake County Highway Department.

Reports

1. *Road Commissioner* – Commissioner Meyer presented his written report (attached) and asked for questions or comments. In addition to his written report Meyer said that road oil prices will be about the same as last year and his crew is working on a system to keep oil heated when using the new patching machine. Frost laws are in effect until April 30. The county has informed Commissioner Meyer that the bridge on County Line Road between Yates and Stony Island Avenue is deteriorating and they are going to begin the replacement process. They asked Meyer if a detour route could be ran through township roads and Meyer would not agree to their request because of the excess traffic and weight that would occur on township roads.
2. *Assessor* – Assessor Blume reported that she has contacted the Will County State’s Attorney regarding her becoming a FOIA officer for Washington Township. Blume said she was told because of her office, she could become a FOIA officer and could appoint others in her office as well. She indicated that the State’s Attorney’s office referred to IL statute 5ILCS140/4C regarding her request. She has completed her FOIA certification training and requested to have her name added as a FOIA officer on the website. Supervisor Howard told Assessor Blume that he has contacted the law firm of Ancil Glink to get a legal opinion regarding her becoming a FOIA officer. Howard said the Board did not name her when the township’s FOIA Policy & resolution was passed so a legal opinion was in order.

Assessor Blume also reported that she estimated that the assessed value of Washington Township would drop about 5% - 6%, which would drop the total township assessed value from \$192 million to \$182 million for the current assessment year. Blume explained that assessments are based on an average of what property values have done over the past three years and the drop in value was triggered by the steady decline of property values during this period. The Assessor went on to say that because the assessed values have gone down, taxes may still go up because taxing bodies could ask for a higher levy.

Assessor Blume also said she supported holding an Annual Appreciation Dinner and agreed with board members who wanted to honor former Trustee Dennis Koehn this year.

In response to a question from last month, Blume said that her office does not charge for the first 50 copies for property card record requests but charges \$.15 per property card thereafter.

3. Town Clerk – Clerk Burgess reported recent website updates including a “Public Information” page listing FOIA requirements was now live and township newsletters can also be viewed online. The Annual Town Meeting will be held on April 13 at 7 pm at the Washington Township Center. Marcy Meyer from the Village of Beecher has solicited 10 ads to be inserted into the next editions of the village and township newsletters. Burgess said the business card size ads would generate \$1500 for the township.
4. Washington Township Planning Commission (WTPC) – No report.
5. Supervisor’s Report – Supervisor Howard reported that General Assistance applications continue to rise and that his staff works diligently with those in need. His office also offers assistance by utilizing the Food Pantry and by offering advice and additional resources for those in need. He thanked the Village of Beecher for their assistance in working with cases within the village limits. The equipment in the Medical Closet has been inventoried and the township is very fortunate to have many items including some very expensive and unique items. Howard said the use of the Medical Closet by residents is a small way to help keep medical costs down as people utilize used equipment instead of purchasing new items through Medicare. The Food Pantry is in need of paper goods, personal hygiene items and pet food at this time.
6. Transportation Report – Clerk Burgess reviewed the February trip report submitted by Director Pat Peters and there were 194 Dial-a-ride trips ran last month.
7. Foundation for a Green Community – The Foundation is working with Will County Board member John Anderson (in attendance) and is asking to open dialog with the county regarding the completion of Vincennes Trail through the township. The walking and biking trail has been a subject for completion for many years. Trustee Deery reported that at the last Foundation meeting the committee has decided to work on developing short and long-term goals and will present them to the board once completed. Deery said goals under consideration at this time include building a Dog Park, a Victory Garden and the completion of Vincennes Trail.
8. Community Building Report – The last payment of misallocated property taxes (from Washington Township to the Community Building fund) has been repaid to Washington Township.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Washington Township Employee Handbook – Trustee Waterman has received several suggestions for updates to the Employee Handbook and will update the Handbook and have it ready to be reviewed at the March meeting.
2. Washington Township Meals Program – Laurie Summers reported that she has spoken to Kevin at Village Woods regarding supplying food for a Washington Township food program and he is meeting with his Board regarding our request. Village Woods has offered to prepare a contract outlining their services and food costs for the township and Summers said that the contract would be available for the next township Board meeting.

Meals would cost residents \$5.25 and this includes the microwavable container. Village Woods has a dietician on staff and can prepare meals for any diet except dialysis patients. They have plenty of capacity to serve Washington Township's needs and have no minimum requirements for meals prepared or purchased. The necessary thermal insulated containers to transport the meals have been quoted at \$47 each. Laurie also indicated that she has recruited 15 volunteers to deliver meals and two others who will help as needed. Laurie is going to meet with Sally Fuhrman to provide the Board details about how the Rich Township meal program operates and indicated that "Feed Your Own" was a name being strongly considered for the new township program.

Trustee Waterman asked about qualifications to enter the program and also why the new volunteers could not assist the current Meals on Wheels program to expand their program to the rural areas. Supervisor Howard said the current program is not interested in expanding their program at this time and this was the only way to fill the void in the township. Waterman suggested putting program details including criteria for applying for meals, in the upcoming newsletter to see what type of interest there is for a new program.

Trustee Deery was concerned about what the program would cost the township and who and how the program would be managed. Laurie said she would volunteer to manage the program. Trustee Deery was appreciative of her willingness but asked what happens if Laurie suddenly becomes unavailable to manage the program. Deery also proposed several other "what if" scenarios and said there needs to be more details in writing about how the program would run. Laurie said she would provide the additional information at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. *Consideration and Approval of Planning Commission Recommendations* – There were no Planning Commission recommendations to be acted upon.
2. *Approval of Meeting Dates for Fiscal Year 2010-2011* - Clerk Burgess presented a proposed schedule (attached) for the 2010 - 2011 Board of Trustee meetings. All meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of the month except for the week of Labor Day and the final meeting of the fiscal year is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28, 2011. The clerk indicated that the schedule should be reviewed and approved before the beginning of the next fiscal year, which starts on April 1, 2010. Trustee Deery asked if a trustee could attend a meeting through electronic means such as a conference call. Clerk Burgess will contact TOI regarding Deery's question. The Board reviewed the dates and no changes were recommended.

MOTION:

Trustee Becker made a motion to approve the proposed meeting schedule, as presented. Trustee Peterson seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll Call vote: Becker – yes, Peterson – yes, Waterman – yes, Deery – yes, Howard – yes. **Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Consideration and Approval of April 13, 2010 Town Meeting Agenda – Clerk Burgess told the Board that he had received no requests from residents to add additional agenda items to the proposed Annual Town Meeting Agenda (attached). Requests to add items had to be received in the Clerk’s office by March 1. Supervisor Howard asked the Board if there were any items they would like to add to the agenda and there were none.

MOTION:

Trustee Becker made a motion to approve the proposed Annual Town Meeting Agenda dated April 13, 2010 as presented. Trustee Deery seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll Call vote: Becker – yes, Deery – yes, Peterson – yes, Waterman – yes, Howard – yes. **Motion passed 5-0.**

4. FY 2010-2011 Budget Preparation – Clerk Burgess explained to the Board that budget preparations should begin because a proposed budget must be posted for 30 days prior to approval and then must be filed with the County Clerk’s office by the end of June. Clerk Burgess will forward copies of the current budget to the trustees.
5. Dutch American Foods Tax Abatement Request – Art Van Baren, president of Dutch American Foods addressed the Board and requested that the Board consider offering his company a tax reimbursement on a proposed 50,000 square foot addition to his facility. Van Baren gave a brief history of his business. The business was originally located in Lansing and was operating out of a 6000 square foot facility. Business grew steadily and in 2000 he built a 35,000 square foot building in Beecher and relocated into the current industrial park. The business has added two additions since 2000 and is now 80,000 square feet and Van Baren said the new addition would essentially fill his existing property. He said he currently employs 80 people and they could hire up to an additional 30 people once the addition is fully utilized. He estimated that the addition will cost \$2.5 million plus another \$1 million for equipment and said whatever incentives he can receive from local taxing bodies would help him financially and help secure financing of the project. Van Baren figured that his new expansion would add about \$3100 to his current tax bill and is asking for a tax reimbursement on the taxes on the new addition ONLY. He presented a 10-year plan asking for a 90% reimbursement during the first five years a 60% reimbursement during years six through eight and a 30% reimbursement the final two years. He believe his business brings a lot to the community and told the board that most of his family has relocated to Washington Township and offered the Board the opportunity to tour the facility before they make a decision. He asked the board to make a decision by April 1 so he can decide to move forward with his plans. The board thanked him for coming and will take his request under advisement and discuss it at the March 23 board meeting.
6. Senior Tax Preparation Assistance – It was determined that it was too late in the year to organize and publicize “free” tax preparation service for local senior citizens. Clerk Burgess and accountant Tom Brislane will work on offering this program in 2011. Burgess indicated he would also like to explore offering free Circuit Breaker assistance to area seniors as well.

7. Township Goals – Supervisor Howard has requested that the Board consider developing short and long-term goals for the township. Howard said the goals are necessary to identify needs within the township and to focus on filling those needs.
8. Township Appreciation Dinner – Highway Commissioner Meyer presented a report on the appreciation dinner. Meyer said there were approximately 65 people that would be invited to the dinner and the only local establishment to hold a formal group of this size would be the Princess Café. The event could be held on any weeknight and a limited menu would cost the township approximately \$30 to \$35 per person. That price would include some appetizers and the township could add a cash bar. The Board considered dates for the dinner and April 22 was selected. Meyer will contact the Princess about availability for this date.

Payment of Bills:

Town Account

The Board reviewed the bills as presented by Supervisor Howard and Clerk Burgess.

MOTION:

Trustee Becker made a motion to approve payment of all applicable payroll, bills, debits and appropriate transfers as presented for the **Town Account** totaling **\$13,688.25**. Trustee Deery seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll Call vote: Becker – yes, Deery – yes, Waterman – yes, Peterson – yes, Howard – yes. **Motion passed 5-0.**

Road & Bridge

The board reviewed the bills as presented by Commissioner Meyer.

MOTION: Trustee Waterman made a motion to approve payment of all applicable payroll, bills, and appropriate transfers or debits for the Road & Bridge Account totaling **\$39,322.33**. Trustee Peterson seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. Roll Call vote: Waterman – yes, Howard – yes, Deery – yes, Peterson – yes, Becker - ABSTAIN. **Motion passed 4-0.**

Announcements:

None

Upcoming Seminars and Meetings:

1. March 23, 2010 – Washington Township Board Meeting - 7:00 pm at the Washington Township Center.
2. April 13, 2010 – Annual Town Meeting - 7:00 pm at the Washington Township Center.

Adjournment:

Being no other business or discussion, Trustee Waterman made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Trustee Becker, and after being unanimously approved by voice vote, the Board Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Burgess – Town Clerk

Approved by Board of Trustees Date: _____