

****DRAFT****

COVERT TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Covert Township Hall

The purpose of this joint meeting of the Covert Township Board and the Van Buren United Civic Organization (VBUCO) is to discuss the following:

- Programs and funding provided by the Senior Millage and address requests communicated by the VBUCO.
- Proposal from Wightman & Associates pertaining to the walkway and sidewalk project.
- 2020 Primary Road Planning with the Van Buren Road Commission.

The Special Meeting of the Covert Township Board was brought to order by Supervisor Palgen at 6:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Supervisor Palgen.

Members Present: D. Cook, D. Palgen, L. Taylor, W. Pritchard, K. Harrington

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Barbara Norman, *President of VBUCO*, Seth Koches, *Township Attorney*

Public Comment

None

Van Buren United Civic Organization

Barbara Norman was given the floor to present a new letter detailing requests of the VBUCO. Enclosed was also a Form 990-N, a table of revenue from 2017-2018 and a copy of the minimum service standards of the senior programs. Ms. Norman made a request to use the fund balance from previous years to make up for reductions in the budget, increase funding for each program to match the 2018/19 amount with an increase in Volunteer Transportation services, and fund a Senior Transportation Bus that is handicapped equipped to run seven (7) days a week. Ms. Norman also assured the board that the VBUCO has taken steps to

rectify the discrepancies in the logs and has begun to adhere to the service standards.

Mr. Palgen pointed out that the current year contract has yet to be signed by the VBUCO, therefore they are currently out of contract.

Ms. Cook thanked Ms. Norman for her efforts in bringing the services into compliance with the standards, yet expressed her concern with supporting a contract with the VBUCO as they have yet to provide a breakdown of program costs to justify an increase in funding and it did not appear that the complete Form 990 was submitted.

Ms. Norman explained that the Form 990-N was fully accepted by the IRS and urged the board to consider the benefit of these services to the seniors before cutting funding.

Ms. Cook pointed out flaws in the minimum service standards that need to be addressed.

Discussion ensued on program funding, taking responsibility of maintaining the services and giving VBUCO a chance to rectify the situation. Members of the public gave comment.

Frida Brown, resident and former administrator for the VBUCO, addressed the board. Ms. Brown expressed her concern that these issues were suddenly brought to everyone's attention and never addressed before. She further urged the board to consider that they are not only servicing Covert seniors, but also all of Van Buren County.

Mr. Harrington responded by pointing out the drastic cut to the Socialization programs and Ms. Cook explained why funding was cut. Ms. Pritchard explained the decrease in revenue to be expected over the next four years and the importance of keeping a positive fund balance. Mr. Taylor stressed the importance of documentation in order to the justify costs.

Mae Lucas, resident and volunteer for the VBUCO, addressed the board and

expressed her disappointment in the Senior Advisory Committee. Ms. Lucas asked the board why we were suddenly asking for financial information after all these years, and urged the board to stop contracting with Area Agency on Aging so that more money could be used to operate Covert organizations and services. Ms. Cook explained that she would like to see these services at VBUCO, but the discrepancies in the logs could not be ignored. Ms. Norman assured the board that the discrepancies have been rectified.

Jean Holmes, resident and former administrator for the VBUCO, addressed the board and explained her experience with a survey conducted by AAA back in 2009. Ms. Holmes urged the board to continue funding the contract as they have an employee who depends on that funding for her salary. Mr. Palgen explained that it does not make sense to spend \$500 on an event in which only a few people are in attendance.

Ms. Brown explained some other costs associated with running these programs that will no longer be funded if the budget is cut.

Discussion ensued on what the Senior Millage has been contracted to fund. Ms. Cook urged the VBUCO to provide numbers so that the board may consider using funds to cover a portion of operations and any other hidden costs that may have been appropriated from services for seniors. Discussion continued on public transportation needs, how to revise the minimum standards and how to audit the logs.

The following motion was passed:

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by D. Palgen, **to revise** the 2019/2020 Contract Rider between Van Buren United Civic Organization and Area Agency on Aging to continue funding services for a probationary period of 6 months, at the current maximum amounts as reflected in the 2019/2020 budget for the Small Socialization Events and the Monthly Newsletter, and an increase in Volunteer Transportation funds to \$9,800 – effective July 1, 2019. We will further allow 60 days for the Van Buren United Civic Organization to submit financial information supporting these services as requested by the Township Board, in which AAA or Covert Township can terminate or suspend the agreement upon violation of the

agreement.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: 5, No: 0 CARRIED

Wightman & Associates Proposal

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to accept** the ADA Sidewalk Consultation Services Proposal as presented by Wightman and Associates.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: 4, No: 1 CARRIED

2020 Road Planning

Motion by K. Harrington, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to deny** the request of the Van Buren Road Commission to share the cost to sealcoat CR376 from M-140 to 72nd Avenue

Roll Call Vote: Yes: 5, No: 0 CARRIED

Motion by D. Palgen to adjourn at 8:13 p.m.

Daywi Cook, Covert Township Clerk