

COVERT TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
Via Video Conference

The Regular Meeting of the Covert Township Board was brought to order by Supervisor Palgen at 7:00 PM.

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

Members Present: K. Harrington, D. Cook, D. Palgen, L. Taylor, W. Pritchard
Members Absent: None

The electronic and telephonic meeting rules were presented by Attorney Kendall O'Connor from Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes Law Firm.

Public Comment

Gail Patterson-Gladney, Van Buren County Commissioner District #1, shared a 911 Emergency Services surcharge proposal that will be on the August ballot, and recent alterations on the county's leave policy due to the pandemic. Southwest Michigan Planning Commission is working with community leaders to develop a strategy for economic development that includes talent matching, housing plan and compiling regional housing data in seven (7) counties.

Chief Updates

Police Chief Allen shared that drug seizures, domestic violence and attempted suicides are up. Larceny arrests were made and there have been several calls regarding scams to vulnerable adults. Summer enforcement has begun and includes an increase in law enforcement presence in certain areas. Chief Allen also shared that excessive speed has been a recent issue, partly due to the misconception that police presence has decreased due to the pandemic.

Fire Chief Myers shared that calls last month were cut in half and have slowly been increasing. Rural areas have an uptick of COVID-19 calls now and hotline calls are up 1000%. Burn permits are now available. Chief Myers also welcomed Kyle Gabrielse as a full-time employee. Gabrielse has been with the Covert Township Fire Department as a part time employee for the last two years. Staff have also continued to wear protective gear when servicing COVID-19 patients with no known exposure.

Informational Updates

Supervisor Palgen shared the following information:

- A Special Meeting to discuss the 2020/2021 Budget has been scheduled for May 27, 2020 at 6PM.
- A Special Meeting to do employee evaluations has been scheduled for June 3, 2020 at 4PM
- A Public Hearing to review the 2020/2021 Budget has been scheduled for June 27, 2020 at 6PM
- A special thank you to Bill Hunter from South Haven Department of Public Works for help in vacuuming out leaf debris from the Covert Park Beach and Campground.
- Frontier has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11.

Consent Agenda

- DRAFT Minutes of the April 14, 2020 Regular Board Meeting
- DRAFT Minutes of the April 21, 2020 Special Township Board Meeting
- May Clerk's Invoice Register Report and Payroll Period Reports
- May Treasurer's Revenue Receipt Distribution, Banking and Budget Report as presented
- May Police Chief's Report as presented
- May Fire Chief's Report as presented
- May Public Work Report as presented

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to approve** the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

Meeting Minutes and Board Liaison Reports

None

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Mike Dopp, City Engineer for the City of South Haven, explained a recent water age modeling study and recommendations to the board. The board has requested estimates of cost involved with the increase flushing of water needed to decrease the age of the water in our system.

Motion by L. Taylor, seconded by D. Cook, **to approve** Resolution 2020-06 for 2020 Campground “Soft” Opening as presented with changes to mask requirement and day-use restrictions.

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

Motion by D. Palgen, seconded by K. Harrington, **to approve** the contract between Covert Township and Van Buren United Civic Organization for the following Senior Services: Small Socialization Events, Volunteer Transportation and the Senior Newsletter, effective May 22, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

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

Motion by K. Harrington, seconded by D. Cook, **to table** the bid proposal from Arnt Asphalt for asphalt repairs at the Library, Medical Center, Township Hall, Museum, Public Works Building and the new Police and Fire Complex, pending confirmation of the price and the presentation of further bids.

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

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by K. Harrington, **to table** the proposal from BS&A Software dated April 27, 2020, for cemetery software and services in the amount of \$6,930 with an annual service fee of \$550 as presented, pending further proposals.

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

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to table** the recommendation to distinguish lot sales by “Resident/Taxpayer” vs “Non-Resident/Non Taxpayer” and increase cemetery lot prices, pending a definition of “Resident” and a third tier pricing recommendation.

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

Motion by K. Harrington, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to approve** the laptop purchased for the Covert Police Department in the amount of \$1,295.25 as an exigent purchase due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Motion by D. Cook, seconded by D. Palgen, **to approve** the proposal from Olson Brothers in the amount of \$3,250 to add crushed concrete around the new bath building at the Covert Park Beach and Campground.

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

Motion by L. Taylor, seconded by W. Pritchard, **to approve** the purchase of an outdoor locking pedestal mailbox in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.

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

Other Items

L. Taylor asked if the other boards and committees would be given direction on how to conduct meetings during this time.

Rev. W. C. Askew, Sr., Van Buren County Road Commissioner, joined the meeting and shared updates from the County Road Commission. This included their implementation of virtual meetings in compliance with the Governor's orders. They also expect a sharp decrease in funding due to the decrease in driving during this time.

Next Regular Board Meeting- Tuesday, June 9, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by D. Palgen to adjourn at 9:16 PM.

Submitted by D. Cook, Covert Township Clerk