

**MINUTES  
ALPINE TOWNSHIP BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 16, 2009**

**09-30           REGULAR MEETING**

The Alpine Township Board met on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alpine Township Hall, 5255 Alpine Avenue, Comstock Park, Michigan. Board members present were Supervisor Alex Arends, Clerk Jean Wahlfield, Treasurer Jim Townsend, Trustees Ron Cordes, Jim May, Bill Schweitzer, and Ted Wallace.

Supervisor Arends called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**May offered a motion, supported by Schweitzer, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-31           CONSENT AGENDA**

Townsend requested a correction to the February 16, 2009 Minutes as follows: Page 2, paragraph 2, the end of the third sentence should read: “about tapping into **this emerging** resource.”

**May offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 16, 2009 as amended, Consideration of Vouchers/Bills, Receipt and Approval of Firefighter Afton, and Receipt of Correspondence. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-32           PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was offered at this time.

**09-33           COMMISSION REPORTS**

**Planning Commission – Cordes:** February 19, 2009: Two sand mines were approved for renewal. At the March meeting the Commission will discuss a site plan for a Sonic drive-thru restaurant in front of Wal-Mart property on Alpine Avenue and an addition to Jack Brown Produce on Fruit Ridge Ave.

**Zoning Board of Appeals – May:** February 23, 2009: A side yard variance was approved for the construction of an accessory building at 5032 Peach Ridge Avenue N.W.

**Historical – Schweitzer:** January 26, 2009 - The Commission discussed purchasing a fireproof filing cabinet. The Open House held on March 15<sup>th</sup> featured Marilynn Momber and her experience at President Obama’s Inauguration. Building Official Gary Campbell will be repairing the door and install a new latch set, weather stripping, and hinges at the Historical Museum. The door at the former Station 3 will be repaired.

**Sewer/Water – Arends:** Deferred to later in the meeting.

**Parks & Recreation – Wallace:** Wallace did not attend the meeting. Arends reported that the Committee is filling the softball and soccer field use schedule. A baseball league will be signing a

contract to use the fields. The soccer fields will be used on Sundays by the Hispanic League. One person wants to use the soccer fields for practice paying \$25 per practice and there is interest in Saturday field use for eight soccer teams. Arends indicated that the Township would not be responsible for setting up the teams as had been done in the past. He explained the Westgate Park dinosaur playground equipment on a spring needs to be removed due to safety issues after it was vandalized.

**09-34 FINAL READING: ORDINANCE NO. 09-01 WIND ENERGY SYSTEM**

**May offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to approve Ordinance No. 09-01: Wind Energy System and order publication. Motion carried 7-0 in a roll call vote.**

**09-35 AUTOMATED CLEARING HOUSE (ACH) ELECTRONIC PAYMENT PRESENTATION**

Amy Homich, Vice President from Choice One Bank, gave a presentation on Automated Clear House payments and provided a handout for Board members to review. She explained that ACH payment is another bill payment option that a resident may utilize to pay quarterly sewer bills. Residents would sign an agreement indicating that the payment is automatically deducted from their checking account, moved through the Federal Reserve, and placed into the Township's bank account. The Board discussed several scenarios with Homich and it was noted that there will be no cost to the Township for the service.

It was the consensus of the Board that this was a good idea. Cordes expressed concern about access to personal account information. It was explained that the Township would need to commit to securely storing residents' sensitive bank account information.

Treasurer Townsend commented that he ran his campaign on accepting ACH payments, that there appears to be no down side to offering the ACH payment option, and that he would like to have the option in place in time to accept ACH payments for the 3rd quarter sewer billing.

**Wallace offered a motion, supported by May, to authorize the Treasurer to pursue the option of accepting Automated Clearing House payments (ACH). Motion approved 7-0.**

**09-36 PRESENTATIONS ON WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS – ECONOMIC STIMULUS IMPACTS**

**Future Westgate Subdivision Water System Improvements**

Bob VanderMale, Engineer from Prein & Newhof was present on behalf of Plainfield Charter Township. He reviewed and described the Plainfield Water System Improvement Plan as outlined in the letter from Plainfield Charter Township Manager Homan dated 03/10/09. VanderMale provided information on the proposed improvements for the Westgate subdivision that have been submitted to Alpine Township for the next three years as part of Plainfield's capital improvement program. He explained that Plainfield would like to apply for Economic Stimulus Funding for all capital improvement construction plans including those proposed improvements for the Westgate subdivision.

Preparing and submitting a project plan does not guarantee that the project will be in the fundable range. If the project is not funding with stimulus money, the Plainfield water project could be eligible for the low interest loan program funded through the State Revolving Fund in Fiscal Year 2010.

Plainfield is requesting that Alpine Township pay \$33,250 of the project design costs. This money would not be wasted if Plainfield does not receive the stimulus money because all of these projects are on the Township's five year capital improvement plan and they would need to be designed eventually.

In summary, it was noted that this would not be an additional cost but only accelerate project design costs. A drawback noted for the Township would be that the time frame for improvements would change and more than one street would be disrupted at the same time. With the approval of sharing the up-front costs there may be a chance that the federal government will pay up to 40% of the entire project cost.

**Townsend offered a motion, supported by May, to inform Plainfield Charter Township that Alpine Township will ~~to~~ participate and share the up front design costs of \$33,250 in order to apply for stimulus or low interest funding for the public water improvement projects. Motion carried 7-0.**

#### **INFLOW AND INFILTRATION INVESTIGATION (I & I)**

Arends informed the Board that a previous I & I study had been completed for Alpine Township in 2001 indicating several areas that improvements would be required for the sewer system in the future. The importance of addressing the I & I situation has changed with the PARCC Side Clean Water Plant coming into fruition.

Engineer VanderMale displayed the NKSA system-wide map and reviewed his letter dated 03/12/09. He explained several issues involved with the intense December rain fall and thaw during which a large increase in flow was experienced at the NKSA wastewater treatment plant. No spills occurred, the affluent water met all the treatment conditions, and there were no sewer back-ups. The NKSA authorized Prein and Newhof to prepare an I & I Investigation Report and from that report develop a work plan to further identify where I & I was occurring.

The details of the work plan and costs are included in the March 12, 2009 letter from Prein and Newhof. The proposed cost to Alpine Township is shown at \$62,359. VanderMale explained the costs involved with the placement of additional meters with meter enhancements and portable meters installed at crucial locations as well as the Kent County DPW costs.

VanderMale met with the Alpine officials and the Township indicated the need to see a reduced cost alternative. The total cost of the alternative study for Alpine Township is \$28,511 which would only be for metering with no follow-up investigations.

Board members discussed various issues regarding Alpine Township's sewer system and those costs associated with the study. Arends explained that the 2001 study identified problems which are still in existence today. Alpine spent \$124,000 in sewer lining last year. Supervisor Arends suggested approving the alternative study at a cost of \$28,511. This study will indicate where Alpine's biggest I & I issues are located.

Per Arends request, VanderMale displayed the most likely locations of I & I. VanderMale explained the pros and cons of sewer lining versus total replacement of sewer lines and laterals, the details of smoke testing, and the differences between inflow and infiltration.

**May offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to accept the Inflow and Infiltration Investigation Proposal for Alpine Township in the amount of \$28,511. Motion carried 7-0.**

A third letter from Prein and Newhof dated March 12, 2009 regarding Stimulus Bill Funding regarding Wastewater Collection System was referred back to NKSA for review and discussion.

#### **09-37 PRESENTATION & UPDATE OF TOWNSHIP PROPERTY DESIGN STUDY**

Craig Hondorp, Engineer from Progressive AE gave a presentation of the designed study prepared for the existing Township property and adjacent undeveloped property to the west to demonstrate the type of expansions that would be viable. He displayed a print showing a possible 12,000 square foot addition which could serve as a new library and a 6,300 square foot building that could serve as an auxiliary building. Hondorp explained that some of the land could have value as a park or trails.

It was the consensus of the Board to accept the design study information at this time and utilize it for future land use discussions.

#### **09-38 DISCUSSION ON GENERATOR SALE**

Arends offered a brief history of the used Township owned generator that was originally located at the Fruit Ridge sewer lift station near 4-Mile Road. At the time of replacement, the old generator was stored at the Kent County Road Commission. Arends stated that Cannon Township is interested in purchasing the used generator which has been valued at approximately \$6,000 by Cummins-Bridgeway. If the Township were to install the generator at Fire Station #1, the estimate of \$3,500 has been obtained for electrical set-up and for a cement pad.

Board members discussed the pros and cons of selling or retaining the generator. Deputy Chief Lasko commented that residents from the mobile home park from across Alpine Avenue use the lower level of Fire Station #1 during severe weather. The used generator would keep the entire building up and running including the heating system. Board member comments noted that the generator could be moved to a future building if needed. Cordes stated that if Board decision is to sell the generator the Township bid process would need to be enacted.

**May offered a motion, supported by Wallace, to retain the Township used Onan generator for installation at Alpine Fire Station #1 located at 841 Alpine Church Road NW with the installation costs not to exceed \$4,000 for electrical work, the cement pad and other costs associated with installation. Motion carried 7-0.**

#### **09-39 BUDGET WORKSHOPS**

A budget workshop meeting for FY 2009/2010 budget will be held on Monday, April 13, 2009 beginning at 6 p.m.

**09-40 REVIEW OF FIREFIGHTER REQUEST**

Board members received a letter dated 02/25/09 from Alpine firefighter Mark Bierens requesting \$1,300 to take the National Registry Exam in order to obtain EMS licensed status. Bierens letter indicated that upon receipt of his license that he would be eligible for EMS night duty and runs during the daytime.

Supervisor Arends noted that there is currently no clear policy regarding payment for EMS training or licensing. He read the Township Board Minutes of August 20, 2007 regarding this issue and at that time the SOG'S had not been updated or completed. Educational changes occurred when the fire vehicles were downgraded to MFR status. It was noted that another firefighter will be coming to the Board with a similar request for payment of education cost obtained above the MFR standard.

It was Board consensus that a clear and concise policy be developed on the education costs that the Township will pay for firefighter training. The Board noted that a reimbursement policy for educational costs incurred by the Township if a firefighter leaves the Township within a specified time should also be discussed.

**May offered a motion, supported by Wallace, that the Personnel Committee along with the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief meet to review, discuss, and develop a recommendation for the Township Board regarding fire fighter education expenses for MFR and EMS classes including a system to obtain permission to attend an EMS class, when the class and exam fees will be paid, and how the firefighter will be paid for educational expenses. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-41 REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ALPINE FIRE DEPARTMENT SOG'S**

Supervisor Arends noted that the proposed Alpine Fire Department SOG'S listed below are ready for approval.

SECTION 28	Record Retention & Disposal
SECTION 42	Personnel Accountability
SECTION 43	Extrication
SECTION 27	Ice Rescue
SECTION 46	Response to Power Lines & Energized Electrical Equipment
SECTION 18	Exposure Control Bloodborne & Airborne Pathogens
SECTION 26	Water Rescue

**Wallace offered a motion, supported by Schweitzer, to approve the aforementioned Alpine Fire Department SOG'S as presented. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-42 AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYEE POLICY**

Arends informed the Board that the Beverage Policy had inadvertently been omitted from the last update of the Employee Policy. Copies of the policy were provided in the Board packet.

**Wallace offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to reinstate the Beverage Policy in the Alpine Township Employee Policy. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-43 SUPERVISOR'S REPORT AND BOARD COMMENTS**

Supervisor Arends stated that everyone in the office has been extremely busy within their departments.

The Supervisor requested that the Board approve a contract renewal for one year with Evergreen Lawn Care for the lawn mowing of Township property. He noted that he will contact Evergreen regarding the cemetery clean-up and lawn mowing in preparation for the Memorial Day Service and the clean-up of twigs and grass clippings.

**May offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to renew a one-year contract with Evergreen Lawn Care for the lawn mowing of the Township properties for 2009. Motion carried 7-0.**

Arends introduced John Jenkins who was present in the audience. He currently attends Alpine's fire calls as the photographer for the Fire Department. Township Attorney Sluggett has been contacted regarding the liability issues involved with a photographer who is not a trained member of the fire department. The Attorney has advised ~~the~~ Mr. Jenkins would be required to hold the Township harmless in case something happened to him at a fire scene or if he caused injury to someone. The Supervisor proposed this issue be further addressed by the Personnel Committee.

The Supervisor instructed Mr. Jenkins that he is not a representative of or in any official way representing Alpine Township or the Alpine Township Fire Department.

Arends distributed photos of the inside and outside old Station Fire #3. Lawrence Symthe, 838 9-Mile, has offered to demolish the building at minimal cost. Arends stated that a discussion of demolishing the building was held in 2003 and no decision was made at that time. Currently leaf bags and historical items are stored in the building. The Board will decide this issue at later meeting.

The Township dental and life insurance policy has been changed to Sun Life of Canada due to the financial difficulties that the current provider is experiencing.

Supervisor Arends stated that the Township's Sewer Ordinance needs to be amended to remove any references to the City of Grand Rapids system. Information regarding the NKSA system and plant will be added and the updated document will need to be approved by the Board.

The Crime Free Multi Housing seminar will be held Monday, March 23 at Fire Station #1.

The Board denied a request from Benjamin Morris of Miracle Ear to perform free hearing tests in one of the meeting rooms.

A GVMC Legislation Day will be May 5 in Lansing. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Supervisor

The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce will be holding a Thank You Meeting for local officials at River House Condominiums.

In response to May's questions, Arends noted the County has not received their new vehicle, so the used Ford Expedition is not available at this time. Arends explained that Engineer Bob VanderMale attended the Board meeting as a representative of Plainfield Township and the North Kent Sewer Authority.

Townsend stated monies have been invested in a money market account at Independent Bank as their rates are higher than short-term CDs.

Treasurer Townsend stated that BS&A software company will be at the Township on April 24 for a demonstration from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It was noted that the Township needs their own insurance for the sewer lift-stations. Townsend stated the Board should be thinking about volunteer concepts and how the Township could use volunteers.

Schweitzer requested that notification is given to the Historical Commission before anything is done at old Fire Station #3. He remarked that volunteers may be used for moving historical artifacts from old Fire Station #3.

Wallace suggested that a college student may be interested in volunteering at the Sports Complex.

Supervisor Arends informed the Board that Township resident Cheryl Budnik will feature her artwork, some of which is Alpine Township scenery, at the Keeler Gallery at Fountain Street Church from April 5 – 15<sup>th</sup>. He explained that he will be arrested on April 23 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association in order to raise \$1,600. Both topics will be on the Township website.

Wallace requested that the a picture of the new board be taken.

#### **09-44 PUBLIC COMMENT AND ADJOURNMENT**

Deputy Fire Chief Lasko questioned payment for Fire Personnel when attending Court. Wahlfield noted that firefighters are paid the hourly fire run rate and mileage.

John Jenkins provided additional comments regarding his service to the Fire Department as a photographer.

**May offered a motion, supported by Wallace to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Jean Wahlfield  
Clerk

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Alex Arends,  
Supervisor

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Beth Alt  
Recording Secretary