

**MINUTES  
ALPINE TOWNSHIP BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 15, 2009**

**09-78           REGULAR MEETING**

The Alpine Township Board met on Monday, June 15, 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 noting that June 14 was Flag Day and that President Obama requested that we honor this all week.

The agenda was amended to make the following changes under Pending and New Business:

- Add Item 5H: Budget Adjustments and Item 5I: Revision of Reward Ordinance 86-1.
- Move Item 5D: Pulte Request Discussion up to follow Item 5A.

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

**09-79           CONSENT AGENDA**

Treasurer Townsend requested the following word be included in the May 18, 2009 Minutes on Page 7, Paragraph 4, second sentence, instead of “to the Treasurer”, it should read “to the Deputy Treasurer.”

In response to Townsend’s question, it was noted that the Bow Tie Temporary Liquor License request did indicate the event security on the attached site diagram. The proposed events are not located on government property.

**May offered a motion, supported by Wallace, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended consisting of: Approval of May 18, 2009 Township Board Minutes, Consideration of Vouchers/Bills, Request for a Temporary Liquor License from Bow Tie Tavern – 3 Events (Multiple Sclerosis, Meals on Wheels and Benefit for Battered Women), Request for a Temporary Liquor License for Holy Trinity Catholic Church Festival – September 12 and 13, Receipt of Treasurer’s Report-June 2009, and Receipt of Correspondence. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-80           PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ellen Shuker, 6783 Fruit Ridge Avenue, compared the hourly wage of the Maintenance Department, the Zoning Inspector and the Groundskeeper part-time personnel to that of the Building Inspector. She requested that the Board question when the Building Inspector performed specific maintenance tasks,

was the Building Inspector paid his regularly hourly rate or the maintenance rate. Her opinion was that the proposed budget cuts to the part-time employees are not right.

Jerry Shuker, 6783 Fruit Ridge Avenue, stated that by trying to reduce fat you are cutting peanuts. The Building Department could go to part-time hours and employees could work four days a week. Shuker asked the Board, "What are you going to tell the citizens?"

Linda Dunneback, 3241 6-Mile Road, requested that the Board look at the rates charged for using the Sports Complex. Dunneback presented an example how the Township is actually losing money with the fields and the use of the concession stand. She stated that Alpine Township is "giving" our fields away. She questioned the necessity for AAA Lawn Care and asked the Board to look at these things more closely. Dunneback offered (without being paid) to look at the charges of maintenance for the complex and charges for sport facilities in other municipalities.

Sue Alt, 2511 6-Mile Road, stated she has run the softball program at the Complex for many years. Her contention was that if higher field use rates were charged, there would be enough money to cover expenses including security guards. She goes to the complex now and sees violations. The people using our fields are not residents and do not pay additional money. Alt cited examples how the fields are being mistreated. She questions how the concession stand can meet Health Department regulations without hot water available. Alt stated a concession stand should be paying at least 20 percent of their income to the township. Alt informed the Board how much the City of Walker is charging and Alpine is much lower plus there are no non-resident fees. Alt wanted the Trustees to hear her concerns.

Arends thanked everyone for their comments and invited them to stop in and see him to discuss the issues.

## **09-81 COMMISSION REPORTS**

**Planning Commission – Cordes:** On April 15, 2009 a public hearing was held for two special land use requests and site plan review. Key Construction requested approval for a Contractor Equipment Yard and Operations as well as Asphalt Refining for property located at 5959 Comstock Park Drive. The project was approved with conditions.

**Zoning Board of Appeals- May:** May 26, 2009 A variance was approved for a loading dock facing Venture Avenue within the I-2 zoning district for Riveridge Produce.

**Historical Commission – Schweitzer:** No open house due to Father's Day.

**Sewer & Water – Arends:** A public hearing will be held on June 16, 2009 at 7 p.m. at the PARCC plant as part of the process to apply for a low-interest loan from the State of Michigan for proposed sewer improvements. The Alpine Township Board will be required to meet after that date to consider a resolution for the project plan and designate a project representative. A Board meeting date of Monday, June 22, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. was discussed. Supervisor Arends informed the Board he has requested and received general information about conducting a sewer rate study to determine if the Township is charging sewer customers a rate which covers the current sewer bonds, DPW costs, repairs, and future improvements as well as other associated costs tied to the sewer fund. An estimated fee of \$5,000 was received from the firm recommended by the Township auditors.

**Parks & Recreation Commission – Wallace:** June 11, 2009. The Commission met at the Sports Complex and discussed fees and future plans. Planning Director Thomas is helping to prepare the 5-year Master Plan. Arends added that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources inspected

Westgate Park and the Sports Complex and the letters of approval have forwarded to the Board. Both of the parks were partially financed through grants from the DNR and must remain in compliance with program requirements. The approval speaks well for the Township and will be a favorable support tool for future grant requests.

**09-82 COMMERCIAL TOOL & DIE, INC. - REQUEST FOR RENAISSANCE RECOVERY ZONE – CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #09-09**

Commercial Tool & Die, Inc. located at 5351 Rusche Drive, NW, Comstock Park (PP#41-09-24-376-027) has submitted information requesting a Renaissance Recovery Zone. Doug Bouwman, President, Todd Finley, Vice-President and Shelly Nelson, Chief Financial Officer were present to give an explanation of the request and answer any Board questions.

Nelson provided an overview of the company and informed the Board that Commercial Tool & Die, Inc. has formed a collaborative with five other tool and die companies from across the State to pursue tax relief under the Michigan Renaissance Zone Act. The Act was recently amended to include companies with more than 75 employees. Commercial Tool & Die, Inc. requested that Alpine Township consider adopting a resolution designating a Tool and Die Renaissance Recovery Zone to waive certain taxes, as outlined in the Act, for 15 years. Nelson had provided information which was distributed in the Board packets prior to the meeting

In response to Board questions, Nelson noted that currently Commercial Tool and Die is 90% automotive, however they are pursuing the aerospace, medical and nuclear wind energy industries. Five officials from the Township toured the Commercial Tool and Die facility prior to this meeting. The Township Assessor's table dated 06/05/09 indicates the amount of revenue which would be lost to the Township in one year if the request was granted.

**May offered a motion, supported by Schweitzer, to approve Resolution #09-09 designating Commercial Tool & Die, Inc., 5351 Rusche Drive NW (PP 41-09-24-376-027) as a Renaissance Recovery Zone for a period of 15 years. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-83 DISCUSSION OF PULTE REQUEST – EXTEND TIME FRAME TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION**

Jonathan Anderson, attorney from Varnum, Riddering, Schmidt & Howlett and representative for Pulte Land Company, was present to request an extension to modify the time period within which construction is to be commenced on the property located at 1100 and 1150 6-Mile Road, NW, Comstock Park.

Attorney Anderson explained the history of the property, subsequent litigation, and the resulting 2003 Consent Judgment. The Pulte request is to delete the time limit that construction of the development was to commence within one (1) year of the entry of the final judgment or to extend it through at least June 1, 2011.

Township Attorney Jeff Sluggett has reviewed the request noting that the Township has an opportunity to amend any other restrictions in the Consent Judgment. He provided suggested amendments which were to remove the responsibility of reimbursing Pulte for up to one half of the cost of extending the public water service to the site (a maximum of \$36,500) and to consider a definite extension date, not a deadline in perpetuity.

Anderson stated it is unclear what the legal consequences would be if the time frame in the Consent Judgment should lapse. Pulte is asking for an extension and certainty that the development remains as approved in 2003.

Supervisor Arends indicated that the Board could consider other amendments to the Consent Judgment.

Treasurer Townsend provided his comments regarding the two business day time period that the Township Board has to schedule and hold a hearing relative to granting final plan approval. Board members discussed that a one-year time extension would be appropriate.

**Wahlfield offered a motion, supported by Schweitzer, to extend the time frame of the 2003 Consent Judgment between Pulte Land Company, Margaret Brechting and Alpine Township for the period of one year expiring June 27, 2010, to remove the Township's obligation to pay for any water lines from Alpine Avenue to the subdivision as noted in the Consent Judgment of 2003 under item #10, and to remove the two-day time frame for final plat approval under item #8 and to instead do what is in accordance with the State Plat Act, as amended.**

Discussion: Townsend wished to clarify if Pulte can keep coming back to the Township Board for a time frame extension. Arends stated that the Township would have an opportunity to say no in the future.

**Motion carried 6-1, with Townsend dissenting.**

#### **09-84            2008 Kent District Library Annual Report**

Martha Smart, Director of Kent District Library, noted that the Board received the 2008 annual report. She presented a promotional video detailing the entire district and discussed the endowment fund. Laura Weld, new Branch Manager, presented the annual report for the Alpine library. Circulation has increased by 12% and visitors have increased by 10% over the previous year. Weld stated that in one day, Alpine received 400 visitors and to date there are 200 children enrolled in the summer reading program with 16 teen volunteers. Weld stated the Alpine Branch shows tremendous growth but this is not the year to expand. Board members expressed appreciation for a full-time manager.

#### **09-85            FISCAL YEAR BUDGET 2009-2010**

Supervisor Arends indicated the proposed budget has been revised from the previous month and he reviewed the changes. One significant change affecting all employees was the reduction of Township contributions to the pension fund from ten percent to five percent. Arends explained that State

Revenue Sharing would be cut \$46,000 this year and is anticipated to be \$96,000 next year. The proposed budget indicated enough funds to keep the groundskeeper for the Sports Complex and the part-time maintenance personnel thru the end of September. The zoning administrator would be employed one 8 hour day per week under the proposed budget.

The Supervisor stated that his goal is to balance the FY 2010 budget and he is adamant about meeting this goal even with the decline in anticipated revenues. The proposed budget document shows that total expenditures are down by 12 percent. A new fire truck pumper is expected in the next fiscal year and an additional \$30,000 will need to be added to the \$150,000 already set aside. The three major Township expenses are Fire, Police and Roads.

Arends stated that he wants to be as loyal to the staff as he can. The Township will be required to pay unemployment benefits for approximately two years if a full-time staff person is dismissed. Arends wants to keep the full-time staff and the professional people as much as possible. It costs significant dollars to hire and retrain a new employee.

Treasurer Townsend stated for the record that he does not agree with the entire budget. He expressed concerns over specific items. Trustees had various opinions on the budget. Arends stated he will discuss with the staff if they would prefer a cut in wages or a cut in pension as suggested.

**Board members agreed to discuss budget items further at the special meeting scheduled for Monday, June 22, 2009 beginning at 7:30 p.m.**

**09-86 CDBG – APPROVE CONTRACT KENT COUNTY AND ITP AGREEMENT 09-14**

**CDBG – APPROVE CONTRACT WITH KENT COUNTY & ARBOR CIRCLE AGREEMENT 09-15**

Clerk Wahlfield noted that these agreements finalize the decisions the Board approved in January, 2009.

**Schweitzer offered a motion, supported by May, to approve Agreement 09-14: Contract with Kent County, Alpine Township and Interurban Transit Partnership and authorize the Supervisor to sign. Motion carried 7-0.**

**May offered a motion, supported by Cordes, to approve Agreement 09-15: Contract with Kent County, Algoma, Alpine, Nelson, Solon, Sparta and Tyrone Townships and the Village of Sparta and Arbor Circle Corporation and authorize Supervisor to sign. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-87 DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL RECEIPT OF ADDITIONAL CDBG-R FUNDS CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 09-16**

Arends explained that additional Community Development Block Grant funds would be available to Kent County this year. The Township submitted a list of projects to the CDBG coordinator. From the

Township list, Kent County decided to recommend funding for sidewalk connections (\$20,000) and a structure-mounted wind energy system for a public building (\$12,000). The recommendation is in federal hands for review and approval. If approved, the Township has 120 days within which to contract for construction. Alpine Township must submit a written request that they would accept the CDBG-R funds by adopting Resolution 09-16.

**May offered a motion, supported by Townsend, to approve Resolution 09-16 for the acceptance of Community Development Block Grant – Recovery (CDBG-R) monies. Motion carried 7-0.**

## **09-88 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

Supervisor Arends explained the Township is close to the end of the 2009 fiscal year and state law mandates there be no negative balances within cost centers. Arends requested Board approval to move the following funds:

Transfer \$25,000 from Contingency Fund to:	\$ 6,000 - General Legal
	\$13,000 - Tax Tribunal
	\$ 350 - Telecommunications
	\$ 5,650 - Library

The Budget Adjustments include the transfer of the following:

- \$10,000 from Election Administration
- \$15,000 from Treasurer's Department
- \$20,000 from Building/Grounds
- \$26,000 from Fire Department
- \$10,000 from Planning Department
- \$20,000 from Parks and Recreation
- \$101,000** - total to be transferred into Roads and Maintenance.

Wallace was informed the Township remains in the 425 Agreement with Plainfield Township and that requires a 50% shared payment for the operation of the Comstock Park Library on West River Drive. Arends commented that the Township will attempt to dissolve the 425 Agreement next year.

**May offered a motion, supported by Schweitzer, to approve the 2008-2009 Budget Adjustment recommendations dated 06/15/09 as presented. Motion carried 7-0.**

## **09-89 REVISION OF ORDINANCE 86-01**

Arends recounted that at last month's meeting a proposal was presented to increase the reward for vandalism and the malicious destruction of property from the current \$50 to \$1,000. The Township attorney suggested that the language state up to \$1,000. Arends feels that the increased amount has a deterrent effect.

**May offered a motion, supported by Townsend, to revise Ordinance 86-01 to increase the reward money up to \$1,000. Motion carried 7-0.**

**09-90 SUPERVISOR AND BOARD COMMENTS**

Trustees May and Wallace commented that the budget is a difficult process and they are doing the best job possible given the current economics.

Trustee Schweitzer stated that he toured the new PARCC Water Treatment Plant and it is a nice facility.

Treasurer Townsend requested to be informed about of any businesses leaving the Township. He noted that he will be meeting with delinquent property taxpayers and delinquent escrow payers in the future in an effort to collect.

Supervisor Arends stated that he has an open door policy and welcomes further discussion on the budget or any other topic.

**09-91 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fred Schweitzer, 4259 Cordes Avenue, stated the difficult times means difficult decisions.

Sue Alt, 2511 6-Mile Road NW, stated that her husband came to the Township three times and still did not get a building permit to enclose their in-ground pool

Respectfully submitted,

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Jean Wahlfield  
Clerk

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Alex Arends  
Supervisor

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Beth Alt  
Recording Secretary