

**MINUTES  
ALPINE TOWNSHIP BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 21, 2009**

**09-160           REGULAR MEETING**

The Alpine Township Board held a regular meeting on Monday, December 21, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alpine Township Hall, 5255 Alpine Avenue, Comstock Park, Michigan, 49321. 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 with the Pledge of Allegiance which was led by three students from Kenowa Hills High School.

**A motion was offered by May, with support from Wallace, to accept the Agenda as presented. The motion carried 7-0.**

**09-161           CONSENT AGENDA**

Board members reviewed the Consent Agenda. There were no corrections to the Minutes from November 16, 2009.

**A motion was offered by May, with support from Cordes, to approve the Minutes of November 16, 2009 with no changes. The motion carried 7-0.**

Townsend reviewed his December Treasurer's Report and November 30, 2009 Cash Report. He discussed the requests received for the electronic exportation of the Township tax database and suggested that a fee of \$50 be charged per request. There would be no charge for verbal or faxed inquires about special assessments, sewer, and taxes. Board members agreed with the Treasurer's suggestions. Townsend noted that unpaid sewer bills will eventually be available for look up on the Township website once the BS&A software conversion is completed.

Supervisor Arends reviewed the Township calendar for 2010. He explained that the offices will be closed for two days during Christmas as normal on December 23 and 24 due to Christmas Day falling on a Saturday. He proposed one day off for the New Years holiday on Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup> but no second day. The second day will be given on the Friday before (July 2, 2010). Monday (July 5, 2010) is planned for the Fourth of July holiday due to the Fourth falling on a Sunday in 2010.

Supervisor Arends mentioned that in addition to correspondence listed a copy of the Independent Auditor Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 was received today and distributed to Board members. A meeting with the Township auditors Siegfried & Crandall along with Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer has been set up in early January to discuss the outcome.

**A motion was offered by May, with support from Cordes, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried 7-0.**

**09-162 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fritz Wahlfield, 730 Marlene St. NW, commented on the Leadership meeting which he attended at the Township on December 5 noting that it was very informative, there was good discussion, and he has heard good feedback about the meeting. Mr. Wahlfield provided information on the origins and benefits of the Kent County Community Development program which began in 1975. Mr. Wahlfield provided positive comments on the recent edition of the Harvester newsletter which contained the results of the park and recreation survey. He noted that the survey emphasizes the need for additional bike and walking trails and he is interested in extending the trails at Wahlfield Park.

Supervisor Arends thanked Mr. Wahlfield for his insights and he contribution to the community over the years.

**09-163 COMMISSION REPORTS**

**Planning Commission - Cordes:** The Planning Commission approved site plans at the December meeting for Riveridge Produce located at 7777 Venture Drive and Builder's Iron located at 5910 Comstock Park Drive with conditions.

**Zoning Board of Appeals – May:** A meeting was held on November 23, 2009 for variance requests received from Mark Chase for property located at 3135 7-Mile Road NW. The variances for front, side, and rear yard setbacks were approved. There is no ZBA meeting scheduled for December.

**Historical Commission – Schweitzer:** No program or meeting scheduled for this month due to the Christmas and News Years holiday.

**Sewer and Waters – Arends:** The NKSA did not meet in December and the next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2010.

**Park and Recreation – Wallace:** A meeting was held this month and work continues on the Master Plan for the Township parks. The update to the Master Plan is needed in order to be eligible for grant funds. As soon as the Master Plan is completed a public hearing will be scheduled and brought to the Board for approval.

**09-164 FINAL READING – ZONING ORDINANCE #09-07  
REVISE PROVISION FOR YARD ENCOARCHMENTS AND PORTABLE  
SIGNS**

Supervisor Arends explained that the first reading of the proposed ordinance amendments took place at the November meeting. Language has been added to allow barrier free entrance ramps/structures to encroach into required setbacks. The changes create flexibility for residents to place ramps/structures in locations that provide the best service. The language limits the encroachment to the minimum required under the Michigan Barrier Free Rules.

The portable sign amendments increase the number of days per calendar and the number of consecutive days the sign is displayed. In addition the Planner's recommendation is to decrease the total fee to \$75.00 which is \$45.00 for the permit plus \$30.0 for the inspection fee.

Trustee Cordes commented that the proposed changes will benefit the people in Alpine as well as businesses trying to advertise due to the decrease in the total fee.

**A motion was offered by May, supported by Wallace, to approve Ordinance #09-07 – Revise Provisions for Yard Encroachments and Portable Signs as presented, to approve the change for a portable sign permit fee to \$75.00, and the motion carried 7-0 in a roll call ordering the zoning ordinance amendments for publication.**

**09-165            CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #09-23  
SET FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2010**

Supervisor Arends reviewed Attachment A and Resolution #92-23 setting the miscellaneous fees and charges for 2010. Board members discussed the suggested increase in the quarterly sewer rate to \$70.00. Arends explained that the current quarterly rate of \$63.00 does not set aside any funds for future capital improvements or repairs to the sewer system. He explained that the increase is in line with the rate study recently presented to the Board

Treasurer Townsend commented that the increase would add \$171,500 in sewer fund revenues and approximately \$150,000 to \$160,000 could be put away for future improvement or repairs to the sewer system. The balance of the increase would be used to pay for system costs. He also noted that planning and budgeting for the future is a responsibility of the Board.

Members of the Board discussed the \$70.00 quarterly sewer fee. Wallace had concerns about increasing the sewer rate as it will be a burden to residents in light of the bad economy. It will cost people more money to survive and continued increases over the years will hurt them.

Supervisor Arends reviewed rates from surrounding communities which are: Alpine-\$63, Cannon Township-\$90, Grand Rapids Township-\$116, Plainfield Township-\$75, and Walker-\$123. Even with an increase Alpine Township is still one of the lowest sewer rates in the area noting that the Township has to be fiscally responsible.

Supervisor Arends noted that the per grave non-residents will increase from the current \$250 fee to \$300, that the IRS mileage rate for 2010 is .50¢ and reviewed other changes.

**A motion was offered by May, supported by Schweitzer, to approve Resolution #09-23- Set Fees and Changes for 2010 as presented. The motion carried 6-1, with Cordes opposed.**

Supervisor Arends stated that Planner Thomas has provided a list of other charges to be added to the fee schedule that is approved every year. She recommends the following - Zoning Permits-\$25, Portable Signs-\$45 per permit, \$30 inspection, Zoning Administrator Review of Farm Markets-\$50,

Zoning Administrator review of antenna co-locations-\$50, Land Division-the first two parcels \$100, and \$25 for each additional, and to delete the TDR Book Fee from the fee schedule.

**A motion was offered by May, supported by Townsend, to approve the suggestions, approve the fee amounts, and add the fees to the yearly fee schedule. There was no further discussion and the motion carried 7-0.**

**09-166            CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #09-24  
                         APPOINTMENTS AND DEPOSITORIES FOR 2010**

Supervisor Arends proposed that the Zoning Board of Appeals members be allowed to serve an additional three term and explained that the current ZBA by-laws do not state that the members are limited to two terms. He has discussed extending the terms of the current ZBA members with Planner Thomas and she also recommends that Chairman Bill Stachowiak and alternate Howard Roobol be appointed to one more term. Bruce Lee is recommended for reappointment to a full 3-year term on the Planning Commission. The following individuals have been recommended for approval to the Construction and Fire Prevention Board of Appeals as new appointments: Russ Preston, Fritz Wahlfield Jr., Ted Doorenbos, and Steve Shoemaker. Ken Dieterman is a member of the CBA and his term will expire on 12/31/2010. The Supervisor noted that the State has made it mandatory condition that members of the CBA hold a current license in a building related trade. The Historical Committee members Kathryn Post, Ruth Post, and Pat Cederholm are recommended for reappointment.

The Board discussed the recommendations to the various Boards. Treasurer Townsend commented that the word “West” should be removed from Chemical Bank.

**A motion was offered by May, supported by Wallace, to approve Resolution #09-24 – Appointments and Depositories for 2010 with one change. The motion carried 7-0.**

**09-167            SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR KENT COUNTY COMMUNITY  
                         DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

Supervisor Arends explained that the Board needs to set a public hearing to decide the use of the annual Community Development Block Grant Program funds for the Year 2010-2011. In a recent meeting with Kent County, it was noted that approximately \$33,000 is available from the year 2006-2007. These funds have not been utilized and must be spent by June 30, 2010. Additionally, the funds repaid to CDBG from the McConnell House project in the amount of \$157,000 must be utilized before June 30, 2011. The Supervisor explained that how the funds are used must meet certain criteria and Planner Thomas has been working on this project. Additional information will be presented at the meeting held in January 2010.

**A motion was offered by May, supported by Wallace, to set the annual public hearing for the Kent County Community Development Block Grant Program on January 18, 2010. The motion carried 7-0.**

**09-168 DISCUSSION-NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

Supervisor Arends stated that there have been many problems with the Township's current phone system and equipment. Last year the Township switched providers from AT&T to TDS and has saved approximately \$150 per month. The amount of \$10,000 was budgeted in FY 2010 for the purchase of a new phone system. Central Interconnect supplied the Township with two bids, one for leasing and the other for an out-right purchase of the system. TDS provided a bid to the Township in which the Township could purchase the phones but not the computer server. Supervisor Arends stated that the out-right purchase is less expensive in the long run than leasing to own. The out-right purchase is slated at \$10,539.28 which includes the back up battery and a 5-year extended manufacturer warranty.

**A motion was offered by Wallace, supported by Townsend, for the out-right purchase of the new telephone system from Central Interconnect. The motion carried 7-0.**

**09-169 UPDATE ON BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Supervisor Arends provided an update on employee background checks. In a recent letter, the Supervisor of Comstock Park Schools requested information from the Township on the policy used to conduct criminal background checks of the Township employees including firefighters. The Township already performs background checks on the fire department personnel and new employees at the time of hire. Supervisor Arends would like to see all the employees in the office and the contractors for the Township have a background check done. School districts need to be assured that the Township is doing everything possible to avoid errors in hiring the wrong people. A program has been set up with the Michigan State Police called I-Chat to conduct the criminal background checks on the all current employees of the Township including the Fire Department. The consensus of Board members was this was a good program and policy to implement.

**09-170 SUPERVISOR REPORT AND BOARD COMMENTS**

Supervisor Arends wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He wanted to thank the entire Board for a successful first year and noted that he is looking forward to next year. The Leadership meeting held on December 5 went very well. Some of the positive comments and outcomes from the meeting discussed the diversity and uniqueness of the people in the Township and the proximity and access to the agriculture community which is located in a relatively short distance from the population centers in the Township. Maneuvering on Alpine Avenue was pointed out as the least liked aspect of the Township and the lack of sidewalks was the second item. Another outcome of the Leadership meeting was a renewed interest in the Alpine Avenue corridor connection to the US131 highway. Arends stated that a meeting with the City of Walker Mayor and Senator Jansen has been scheduled to explore this long standing topic.

The updated and improved Township website should be up and running on December 23, 2009.

Treasurer Townsend noted that he received a thank you letter from Norma Brunger for a planter arrangement she received at the time of Phil's funeral. He provided information about a funeral home

planned to be built on Alpine Ave and that he will be discussing the subject of online payments with the Board at the next meeting. Townsend thanked Wahlfield for the research she conducted on a land division approved a long time ago.

Trustee Cordes commented on the lack of snow removal from sidewalks located in the commercial areas of the Township.

Townsend and the entire Board wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**09-171 PUBLIC COMMENT AND ADJOURNMENT**

Fire Chief Ron Christians stated that a pre-construction meeting is scheduled to take place next Wednesday for the new fire pumper truck.

**A motion offered by Townsend, supported by May, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jean Wahlfield,  
Clerk

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Alex Arends,  
Supervisor

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Erin Randall,  
Recording Secretary