

Benton Township Board Meeting

June 12, 2019

7606 E State Rd 45, Bloomington, IN 47408

Attendance

- Michelle Bright, Trustee
- Joe Husk, Chair
- Hans Kelson, Secretary
- Lynn Stevens, Board Member
- Kevin Robling, Legal Counsel
- Deputy Chief Matt Bright, Northern Monroe Fire Territory

Meeting called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Financial Report

- **Rainy Day Fund**
YTD Expense: \$0
Cash Balance: \$114,972.19
Note: There was a special LIT distribution from the state, which was to be put into the rainy day fund. This was done, which is why the cash balance has gone up.
- **Township Fund**
YTD Expense: \$39,741.75
Cash Balance: \$188,287.30
- **Township Assistance Fund**
YTD Expense: \$3,267.18
Cash Balance: \$91,492.72
- **Firefighting Fund**
YTD Expense: \$14,137.67
Cash Balance: \$419,073.80
- **Cumulative Fire Fund**
YTD Expense: \$0
Cash Balance: \$283,513.54
- **Recreation Fund**
YTD Expense: \$1,247.29

Financial Report, Continued

Deposits:

- **Restitution Deposit from Heather Cohee**
\$46.52

- **Cashed out Bloombank CDs**
Interest: \$79.50
Revenue: \$18,119.28

- **Income Tax**
\$10,959

- **Trust Indiana account**
\$1,912.76

Motion to Approve Financial Report: Stevens

Second: Kelson

Approved Unanimously

Trustee Report

Legislative Update

- HB 1117, now Public Law 129-2019:
 - Requires the township to have a plan if our surplus funds are greater than 150% and greater than \$200,000.

- HB 1192, now Public Law 203-2019:
 - If public servant steals public money, it can be taken from public servant's pension fund. Going to find out if that is retroactive.

Mowing Service

Mowing service has changed. Proscap failed to provide service when specifically asked to for Community Day, in addition to other issues. That contract has been canceled, and Bruce's Mowing Service is our new mowing contractor. This is the company who had the contract before Proscap.

Bloombank CDs

Our CDs which we had with Bloombank have been dissolved as per our investment policy, and deposited the revenue and interest into our Chase account. Once our June statements are processed, that money will go into our TrustIndiana account.

Heather Cohee Case

The amount of money ordered from Heather and Brittany Cohee has gone up again, by another \$128,000. Trustee Bright will try to find out more information.

Danny Smith Park

- Finally got bricks up, which has gotten the logjam moving on construction
- Security cameras have been updated

Scanning Event

The Unionville Senior Center hosted a scanning event on June 4, run by the Monroe County History Center. They said it was the best they have had so far.

Cemeteries

- Eric Deckard completed survey for Brock Cemetery.
- Richardson-Fleener still needs to be done.
- Received a thank-you from a resident for fixing up Richardson-Fleener

Community Day

Touch-a-truck event went well, and there was a \$482 profit.

Fire Department

- **Volunteer Association Budget**
The Volunteer Association is supposed to propose a contract amount by June 1st, as of this meeting that has not been received.

- **Squad 14**
Squad 14 blew its engine a few weeks ago. The truck is 19 years old, scheduled to be replaced next year. The cost is \$5,500 to replace the engine. Encouraged Zach to transfer the equipment to another of the smaller vehicles and use that until we have a plan for the future of the department
- **Northern Monroe Annual Fire Service**
Equipment was inspected, several items were identified. Lots of medical supplies had expired, and several blowers didn't start. Thank you to Northern Monroe Fire Territory for helping us identify these issues.
- **Building Issues**
Northern Monroe came out and did walk-through of fire station building. They found that one load-bearing column is bent. We are now consulting a structural engineer. They also found that the gutters were full, and a few other issues.
- **Public Safety LIT Committee**
They will be making applications earlier this year. Zach plans to ask for money to replace Squad 14.

Fire District

- **Van Buren**
Van Buren Township has surpassed their goal of 20% of landowners supporting joining the District. They are now in the process of having these petitions certified by auditor, at which point they will make a presentation to Commissioners.
- **Bloomington Township**
Bloomington Township would like to move forward with joining the Fire District instead of continuing with the Territory. Their primary reason for this is that SB 603 passed. This bill protects fire districts from annexation, but not Territories.
- **What this means for us**
Bloomington Township has asked if Benton Township would be interested in joining as well. Technically, the board does not have to agree to this, but it is helpful in getting taxpayer support. Met with Dustin Dillard about this, he says he would like Bloomington Township to go first this year, and then Benton and Washington to move forward next year. This is to protect us in case Washington and Benton got all the required signatures, and then Bloomington couldn't.

Trustee Bright will have another meeting next week with Dustin Dillard, Joel Baumgardner, Kim Alexander, and Barb Ooley, to discuss the financial side of this plan.

- **Pros**
 - We would get full time staff at our station, which would mean faster response time and possibly lower insurance rates.
 - Equipment would get used
 - A District would likely have a lower tax rate than the Territory

- **Cons**
 - We would give up all control of fire station. All governance would be with County Commissioners with oversight by County Council.
 - We would need to sell our building and equipment
 - Taxes would most likely go up. Currently, Benton has the lowest rate in the county.

- **Comments from the Board**
 - Kelson: Our responsibility is to make sure that our citizens have fire protection. Whether we own our equipment is less important.
 - Husk: Agree with Kelson. Previously, we didn't really have an option other than to join the Territory, and with that off the table, we have to find something. Whether it's Territory or District makes no difference. It would be good if we had either a Territory or a District and not both in the county, so everyone pays the same rates.
 - Stevens: We have to do what we have to do.
 - Kelson is cautious about joining this year, saying that if we have to go out and get signatures, we would not want to have to collect signatures twice. Not sure if that's how the process works, but if it is, we should know.
 - The longer we're not in, the more it costs us.
 - If Van Buren could do it in a month, we could probably wait and see how it's going for Bloomington Township before starting.
 - Might want to accept going slowly, to give the public more of a chance to digest the news.

Township Assistance

- One application for Township assistance.
- 2 donations, \$25 total
- Food pantry used 2 times (\$8)
- One family in a crisis situation last month; Pam helped them find Section 8 housing
- 4 mowing complaints; 1 required intervention (took 2 people 3.5 hours just to do front yard)

Acknowledgements

Trustee Bright gives special thanks to Pam Mitchell, Deputy Trustee, for filling in while she was out of town.

Motion to approve Trustee Report: Stevens

Second: Kelson

Approved Unanimously

Fire Reports

Northern Monroe

- 2 Northern Monroe responded to and Benton did not
- 0 runs that Benton responded to alone
- 6 runs - both units responded
- 2 runs - no data collected
- Thank you to Chief Shaw for responding to fatal accident at SR 45/Russell Road

Benton Township

- Reviewed April Report
- May Report has not been received

Motion to approve Fire Reports: Stevens

Second: Kelson

Approved Unanimously

New Business

Rainy Day Fund Additional Appropriations

- Trustee Bright would like authorization to spend up to \$100,000 from the rainy day fund. This will allow her some leeway to spend what is required to solve problems without needing to come to the Board every time, which would delay the process.
- **Reasons to do this**
 - We have a huge list of repairs that need to be done with equipment and buildings
 - We need to purchase fire equipment, and that cost is unknown at this time.

Motion to approve: Kelson

Second: Stevens

Approved Unanimously

Hans is going to provide a draft of minutes within a certain time period, since it's required

Funds Transfer

Request to transfer \$81,000 in surplus funds from the General Fund to the Rainy Day Fund. This allows us to use these funds in the future for any purpose deemed necessary. This is the maximum (10% of total budget) that we are allowed to transfer.

Motion to approve: Kelson

Second: Stevens

Approved Unanimously

Weekly Apparatus Checks

- Northern Monroe has offered to come to Station 14 for weekly truck checks
- This would allow our volunteers to focus on things like recruiting more volunteers, and would also allow our equipment to be better maintained- when fire equipment sits for long periods between runs it's not good for it.
- Will involve NFMT personnel driving out apparatus
- NFMT could end up taking our vehicles on runs if they need to
- Only possible cost could be due to reporting/inventory software, in case we need to buy additional licenses. This would be a fairly small expense.
- There would be set times for this process to occur. If the Benton volunteers are available, they can show up and help.

No action needed. Husk and Kelson voice support.

Automatic Aid

No further discussion at this time.

Fire Protection Options

No further discussion at this time.

Property on Tunnel Road

There is a township resident who has indicated that he would like to purchase a parcel of land which is owned by the Township. This parcel is very small, directly adjacent to his property, and he has been maintaining it for years. Chairman Husk has no objection to selling the property, but would like to arrive at a fair market value.

The resident, Jason Hawkins, was not present.

Motion to Adjourn: Kelson

Second: Stevens

Meeting Adjourned at 7:53 P.M.