

Benton Township Board Meeting

August 19th, 2020
7616 E State Road 45, Bloomington, IN, 47468

Attendance

- Joe Husk, Chair
- Hans Kelson, Secretary
- Lynn Stevens, Board Member
- Michelle Bright, Township Trustee
- Ernie Frazo

Meeting called to order at 6:48 PM

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from the following meetings: Kelson
 - March 11th
 - March 18th
 - April 8th
 - May 13th
 - June 17th
 - August 4th (Public Hearing)
 - August 6th (Public Hearing)
 - August 8th (Public Hearing)
- Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Reports

Financial Reports

- The Board has received the detailed financial reports, but the Trustee was not able to compile summaries for the meeting in time. We will review those on the record at the next meeting.
- Motion to Table Financial reports to the next meeting: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Trustee's Report

- This is a combination of reports for April, May, and June.

Public Hearings

- Thank you to everyone who attended the public meetings for the Fire District. The recording of the third one, which was the smoothest in terms of technology, has been posted to the website.

COVID-19 Procedures

- Our office remains closed, members of the public can enter by appointment only. We are able to give and receive food for our Food Pantry by setting items outside.
- Thank you to Chief Powers for donating a plexiglass shield for the office, to assist with Social Distancing when people have appointments in the office.
- We were able to get a gallon of hand sanitizer from Monroe County Emergency Management, as well as a PPE pack from the state.
- We are a distribution point for cloth masks from Monroe County Emergency Management.

Food Pantry

- We received a \$1000 donation from Jenny Burton with Shelter Insurance. This is being used to purchase 5-day food boxes for families affected by COVID-19. We have money for 30, and have distributed 11.
- The Monroe County Commissioners and the Monroe County Council have \$100,000 of relief funds for Monroe County Townships in anticipation of an increased requirement for Township Assistance. The Townships have agreed on a method to divide up those funds based on ALICE numbers, as well as looking at what was previously budgeted. Benton Township received \$1,284.82.
- We have been approved as an authorized agency to shop at the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. We have not done this yet, due to space constraints.
- We did a drive through food pantry on August 8th. Three people participated.

2021 Budget

- Trustee Bright has participated in her budget workshop remotely. We anticipate a revenue shortage due to COVID-19. In addition, we expect to see a reduction in revenue from Local Income Tax. This is due to the shrinking of our total budget when we join the Fire District.
- Due to the probable budget cuts, the Trustee has let Stonehugger Restorations know that we are not likely to be spending money on Cemetery restorations next year.
- Trustee Bright attended the annual State Board of Accounts meeting on July 9th. No major news, but when things settle down, we will have to adjust to some new policies.

Building Updates

- We had a roof leak over the Township office. Due to the age of the roof, we are having the whole thing replaced.
- Gary Fleener will be doing the work. He is a township resident, and his bid was low enough that we were not required by law to send the job out to other contractors.

Danny Smith Park

- We gave Danny Smith Park funding for some projects last year. As part of that, they were supposed to file an E-1 form with the State Board of Accounts. They were also supposed to provide us with a report of who they have served in the past year. Despite several emails, they have yet to do either of these things.

Cemetery Updates

- We have had some vandalism at Stepp Cemetery. We don't think there is any new damage to stones. However, the limestone sign has been hit with a hammer and had red candle wax dripped over it. In addition, the gate was knocked down. We have contacted the Department of Natural Resources to ask for additional surveillance, and we are working with Stonehugger Restorations to see what we can do about the sign. It may not be repairable, but we will find out. In addition, a concerned citizen has offered to put up Trail Cameras. We accepted that, and let the DNR know.

Fire Department

- We received our new fire truck on August 5th. It is a Tender, which will replace one that is 21 years old.
- The new Washer/Dryer for fire gear has been received, and we are waiting on a plumber and an electrician to install it.
- Chief Powers is continuing to work towards replacing our aging extrication tools.
- Chief Powers has applied for two grants. One for new 800 MHz pagers, and one for a Plymovent exhaust system. We have not heard responses for either of those, but we are optimistic about the Plymovent. Van Buren Township's Fire Department recently got a grant for the same system.
- Chief Powers and Trustee Bright applied for Public Safety LIT funds. The County Council reviewed the applications and recommended that we receive \$80,000, but the Public Safety LIT committee as a whole decided that no townships would get funding this year.

Fire District

- The Auditor's office decided that our postcard didn't have the correct wording. We apparently needed to have people explicitly express "Support". 376 postcards were returned as "Interested". We are in the process of contacting those people again to get their "Support". Quite a few people expressed support at our public hearings, and we are up to a total of 303.
- As of Wednesday, we have nine remonstrations.
- The Trustee has asked the firefighters and others who are able to go door to door, as we do not have phone numbers for most people.
- The County Commissioners have offered to pay for a third postcard to be sent out, but we would like to avoid doing that.
- The County did not approve our mailing before it was sent, however, it was done based on similar ones from other townships.
- The County is planning to hold the public hearing for remonstrations on September 9th.

Notes

- Our next meeting is on September 16th.
- We will be looking at bids for the Fire Department remodel.
- We will hold a public hearing for our budget.
- We have to make a Capital Improvement Plan, so we will be discussing that.
- We will be looking at our 2021 Fire Protection contract.

Township Assistance Reports

March

- One person was approved for \$298.68 in Electric bills and \$382.86 worth of Propane. This person had also just lost their job, and they were given employment resources.
- The Food Pantry was used twice, for a total of \$70.00. The second people were also referred to the Area 10 Agency on Aging.
- There were no pantry donations this month.
- The 4-H Hotshots have put in a new non-perishable items food pantry in front of the building.
- We are continuing to work with the Hoosier Hills Food Bank for help with our Food Pantry.
- If necessary, we can get food from Pantry 279 in Ellettsville.
- We have a list of approximately 8 people who are willing to deliver food for those who need it from the Food Pantry.
- We have a new shorter form for emergency assistance applications during the public health crisis, and it is available online.

April

- Three application requests:
 - One denied, but given food from the Food Pantry.
 - One approved for \$320 in Electric bills and \$52 for Water. This person's business is currently shut down due to COVID-19.
 - One was contacting the wrong township and has been redirected.
- The Food Pantry was used 5 times, for a total of \$245. Multiple people made deliveries.
- Pam gave out numerous external resources to people who needed them.
- Jenny Burton with Shelter Insurance is donating \$1,000 to our food pantry. She will help buy the food and box it up for people in need.
- We are still waiting until the stay at home order has been lifted to collaborate with the Hoosier Hills Food Bank.
- Our website has been updated with links to make it easier to find store hours.

May

- Three application requests:
 - One denied, not enough information. This was this person’s second time in two months, and they were given a food box.
 - One approved for Burial assistance, \$1,100.
 - One still pending for Water and Electric assistance.
- The Food Pantry was used once, for a total of \$72.00.
- We received \$67.51 in Pantry Donations.
- Food Baskets were delivered by Pam and Michelle.
- Jenny Burton’s donation of \$1,000 was received, along with another donation to the same cause in the amount of \$300. So far, we have provided 13 food boxes.
- Helped a resident set up deferred mortgage payments.
- Hoosier Hills Food Bank was able to send someone to inspect our facility. We now have an account open to buy food from them to replenish our pantry.
- Cornerstone Church donated 15 bags of necessities.
- Helped a resident apply for an apartment in town.
- Someone came to ask about a burial in Frye Cemetery. We only handle care, and can’t have people buried there.

June

- Three Applications:
 - Two were sent to Bloomington Township.
 - One was approved for \$830.63 in Electric bills and \$561.62 for Water.
- One food basket was given out.
- We are trying to establish a date for a food drive.

July

- The Board received this report, but did not discuss it in the meeting. It was approved along with all the others.

Approval

- Motion to Approve Trustee’s Reports and Township Assistance Reports for April through July: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Fire Reports

BTVFD Reports

March

- Runs Dispatched: 23
- Runs Made by BTVFD: 15
- Average number of BTVFD firefighters responding: 1.7
- Volunteer Hours: 52.2

April

- Runs Dispatched: 10
- Runs Made by BTVFD: 7
- Average number of BTVFD firefighters responding: 1.42
- Volunteer Hours: 62.5

May

- Runs Dispatched: 19
- Runs Made by BTVFD: 10
- Average number of BTVFD firefighters responding: 1
- Volunteer Hours: 65.2

June

- Runs Dispatched: 25
- Runs Made by BTVFD: 17
- Average number of BTVFD firefighters responding: 1.2
- Volunteer Hours: 61.95

July

- Runs Dispatched: 24
- Runs Made by BTVFD: 20
- Average number of BTVFD firefighters responding: 1.25
- Volunteer Hours: 74.15

NMFT Reports

March

- NMFT Only: 7
- BTVFD Only: 1
- Both Units Respond: 10

April

- NMFT Only: 3
- BTVFD Only: 1
- Both Units Respond: 5

May

- NMFT Only: 9
- BTVFD Only: 0
- Both Units Respond: 10

June

- NMFT Only: 12
- BTVFD Only: 2
- Both Units Respond: 9

July

- NMFT Only: 5
- BTVFD Only: 0
- Both Units Respond: 14

Aladtec Issue Report

- The board has reviewed the Aladtec Issue Report.

Approval

- Motion to Approve BTVFD and NMFT Fire Reports, along with the Aladtec Issue Report for April through July: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Public Comment

- Ernie Frazo suggests that if the lists of addresses and names of people who haven't indicated support could be published, then folks in the township could attempt to call or send Facebook messages to get people to sign up in support of the Fire District.

Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn: Stevens
Second: Kelson
Meeting adjourned at 7:27