

Benton Township Board Meeting

April 21st, 2021
7616 E State Road 45, Bloomington, IN, 47468

Attendance

- Joe Husk, Chair
- Hans Kelson, Secretary
- Lynn Stevens, Board Member
- Michelle Bright, Township Trustee
- Matt Bright
- Vicky Burton
- Mary McInerney (Via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 6:33 PM

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve March Minutes: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Reports

Financial Report

Rainy Day Fund

- YTD Expense: \$9,352.50
- Budget Remaining: \$215,674.50
- Cash Balance: \$216,287.22

Township Fund

- YTD Expense: \$14,800.67
- Budget Remaining: \$48,199.33
- Cash Balance: \$105,780.98

Township Assistance Fund

- YTD Expense: \$2,776.83
- Budget Remaining: \$37,223.17
- Cash Balance: \$94,056.88

Firefighting Fund

- YTD Expense: \$118,930.77
- Budget Remaining: \$436,069.23
- Cash Balance: \$176,864.37

Cumulative Fire Fund

- YTD Expense: \$110,545.00
- Budget Remaining: \$88,524.00
- Cash Balance: \$1,368.65

Recreation Fund

- YTD Expense: \$1,252.39
- Budget Remaining: \$3,747.61
- Cash Balance: \$6,054.15

Shelter Insurance COVID Fund/Donation Fund

This is a combination of anonymous donations and money donated by Jenny Burton of Shelter Insurance for COVID-19 relief food boxes.

- Cash Balance: \$1,110.68

Deposits

- Local Income Tax: \$12,557.41
- Trust Indiana: \$33.36

Approval

- Motion to Approve Financial Reports: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Trustee's Report

Senior Center/Township Office

- HVAC in the Senior Center has been replaced.

Mowing Services

- Trustee Bright solicited bids for mowing services for 2021. Our previous lawn care provider once again submitted a lower bid than the other bidder, and has been selected.
- The Firefighters will be taking care of the grass on the Fire Station and Senior Center grounds, so this contract is only for mowing the cemeteries this year.

Fire Department

- Trustee Bright has contacted the Monroe County Planning Department to discuss how we could possibly split up the township's parcel of land between the Senior Center and the Fire Station.
- A concerned citizen contacted us about potential delays due to Anderson Road undergoing bridge replacement. Trustee Bright contacted Lisa Ridge of the Monroe County Highway Department, who was able to assure us that there will be a temporary road constructed to avoid any interruptions to emergency services.

Fire Station Remodel

- We have received an amount for Change Order No. 4, which involves relocating drains in the main garage bays. This will be very expensive.
- We received a second batch of wardrobes, but some were damaged in transit. They will be replaced at no extra charge.
- The old garage door openers have been purchased by the contractor who had serviced them for \$850.
- District Firefighter Sarah True has been authorized to assist us with the requirements of the FEMA grant which we were awarded for Plymovent systems. Since we are only going to require this system for four bays instead of the original seven, there will be a surplus which we may be able to spend on other equipment.

Food Pantry

- We have withdrawn our agency partnership with Hoosier Hills Food Bank. We initiated this when the pandemic first set in, but our requests for food have dropped to the point that we have food expiring on our shelves. As such, this is no longer necessary.
- This is with the understanding that we can re-initiate the partnership if circumstances change.

Cemeteries

- Our insurance company will pay for the cost of a new stone sign for Stepp Cemetery, which was vandalized last year.
- A Student from Franklin Community High School is doing a project on Stepp Cemetery, and contacted Trustee Bright for information.

Approval

- Motion to Approve Trustee Report: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Township Assistance Report

- One incomplete application was received from someone who had already sent in a previous incomplete application.
- Paid for a Rental Assistance application.
- A gentleman who was given \$20 for gas money repaid that.
- The 4-H Hotshots will be building a vegetable garden behind the Senior Center.

Approval

- Motion to Approve Township Assistance Report: Stevens
Second: Kelson
Approved Unanimously

Fire Reports

BTVFD Report

- Our agreement with the Volunteers was that we would be provided a run report for January, February, and March. We only received the March report. Trustee Bright will follow up with Chief Powers on this.
- The Board received and reviewed the BTVFD Wrap-up report.

Fire District Report

- The Board received and reviewed 1st quarter reports from the Fire District. Matt Bright attended our meeting to offer comments and answer questions.
 - The Fire District has just started using new software, and will be able to provide a more accurate report for Benton Township next month.
 - The ISO inspector conducted an inspection earlier in the day of this meeting, and we should get our new rating in the next four months.
 - Training has been difficult due to COVID-19.

Approval

- Motion to Approve all Fire Reports: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

New Business

Frye Cemetery Burial Request

- A constituent has come forward to request burial in Frye Cemetery. He left before the meeting was called to order.
- In Indiana, Township Trustees are responsible for the care and maintenance of abandoned cemeteries. Typically, these are inactive cemeteries.
- The last burial in Frye Cemetery was in 1978.
- The Township has very limited knowledge of what plots are sold, what plots are available, etc.
- Any records we have come from research that Trustee Bright has done, not from original documentation.
- Trustee Bright's is fine with people having their ashes scattered on the cemetery site, but is not comfortable with selling plots or allowing burials, because there could already be someone buried in a given site.
- Even if we could be sure that there isn't someone already buried on a plot, someone could come the next week and present a deed for that plot.
- At some point in the future, it could be possible to do the necessary research, but it can't happen right now.
- Board Member Stevens suggests contacting the DNR for records.
- There are other townships which will bury people in their cemeteries, but Trustee Bright is not comfortable doing that currently.

Danny Smith Park Presentation

- Sara Farmer was unable to attend this meeting, but sent a PowerPoint presentation with audio files.
- Report on projects which were already underway:
 - This has been a record-breaking year with 173 baseball players registered. Existing teams filled up enough that more teams had to be added.
 - Added a new baseball division for 9-10 year olds, who had previously been playing with kids up to age 12.
 - Danny Smith Park has become the home field for a middle school-aged girls softball team.
 - Conversations have started about growing the softball program.
 - Annual Jamboree happened on Saturday the 17th, and went well despite inclement weather.
 - The playground now has a fresh bed of mulch and a new rubber mat at the bottom of the slide. Bear Hardware donated the mulch.
 - The bleachers have been replaced at field 3.
 - A new UTV has been purchased.
 - Field conditioner has been applied.
 - A new mower has been purchased, so park board members no longer have to coordinate to haul their mowers to the park.
 - The new ice machines have been very useful.
- Upcoming projects:

- Still waiting on a quote from Duke Energy for lighting.
 - We have no field lighting at this point. We are currently investigating what happened, and prioritizing field 3.
 - We are consulting with a retired Parks and Recreation director to build a new playground at Field 2.
 - Our 50th anniversary donation campaign has raised \$500 so far, which will primarily be used to fund that playground.
 - A community member has also started a GoFundMe for the same project, which has so far raised over \$1,200.
 - There are other ongoing fundraisers, including sales of a coupon sheet, barrel planters donated by Cardinal Spirits, and a 50th anniversary T-Shirt.
 - Gratitude is expressed to the Danny Smith Park Board Members for their hard work, and the Benton Township board for financial support.
 - After the sports season is over, the park is considering having a food truck night. More information will be forthcoming.
- Vicky Burton, Danny Smith Park Treasurer attended the meeting to answer questions.
 - Mary McInerney asked over Zoom whether the park was looking for volunteers to mow the grass. At this time, they are keeping it to Park Board members only.

Danny Smith Park Contract Addendum

- The quote for repairing the field lights was much higher than expected. Danny Smith Park has requested an additional \$8,500 to cover that increased expense.
- Board Comments:
 - Chairman Husk noted that the presentation tonight fulfilled higher expectations that hadn't been met in the past.
 - Board Member Kelson was impressed with the presentation, and is in support of doing what we can to help the park.

Approval

- Motion to approve Addendum to Danny Smith Park Contract: Stevens
Second: Kelson
Approved Unanimously

2021 Township Assistance Guidelines

- Every year, we review our Township Assistance guidelines. Trustee Bright sent out a draft in advance. Changes are detailed below.
 - Page 4:
 - * Updated wording to permit online applications as allowed by state law.
 - * Revised wording to more clearly define when an application is considered "Received".
 - Page 10: Removed irrelevant references to home value and savings accounts.
 - Page 17: Clarified that we need beginning and ending values included with supplied bank statements.
 - Page 19: Updated amounts to reflect Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2021.

- Page 20:
 - * Updated Weekly Food Stamp Allotment values to reflect external changes made due to COVID-19.
 - * Updated Maximum Utility and Rent Benefit to reflect values from the Bloomington Housing Authority.
- Throughout: Grammatical corrections, date updates.
- The Board will vote to approve this document at our May meeting.

Public Comment

- Mary McInerney notes that we may not want to specify the name of the Deputy Trustee in this document, as that could change before we revise the document again.

Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.