

**West Branch Township
Public Hearing / Special Meeting
March 26th · 2024 DRAFT MINUTES**

Public Hearing - Supervisor Morris opened the public meeting as 5:00 pm. Five Members of the public were in attendance and the public hearing.

Topics of discussion pertaining to the budget included:

- Questions regarding the Fire Funding and the amounts that are paid in. It was also asked what the Fire Department uses that money for that is paid in by the township. It was explained that it was for general operations and that the Fire Department has its own budget and makes the decisions on where to spend the money that is brought in.
- There were also general questions pertaining to the newly created Parks and Recreation section of the budget and what that money would be allocated for and where it was being suggested to be allocated to. It was mentioned that the Ogemaw Hills Recreation facility that the township has a lease with the county for would potentially be a beneficiary of the new parks and recreation fund potentially.
- Questions also were asked about the public safety section of the budget and what that would be used for. It was explained that the budget section public safety is for the potential police service that maybe provided to the township in the future. This did lead to additional questions pertaining to need and what types of services are being looked at and also information was mentioned pertaining to information from the MTA (Michigan Township Association)

AFTER NO MORE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THE SUPERVISOR CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 5:23 PM.

Special Meeting - called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:23 pm

Board Members Present: Jim Morris, Diane Philbrick, Jeremy Hickmott, Mike Selinski and Mike Durfee.

Public Present: Five Citizens were in attendance.

Absent: NONE.

MOTION BY HICKMOTT, SECOND BY MORRIS TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION OF WATER ANMD SEWER MAINTINANCE WORKER CONTRACT REVIEW. VOICE VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, PHILBRICK, HICKMOTT, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES OF OTHER MEETINGS: March 13th 2024 Board Meeting and March 12th 2024 Special Meeting / Budget Workshop minutes where presented.

MOTION BY MORRIS, SECOND BY DURFEE TO APPROVE THE MARCH 13TH 2024 MEETING MINUTES AND THE MARCH 12TH 2024 SPECIAL MEETING BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES. VOICE VOTE: YEA - MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE. MOTION CARRIED

REPORTS:

Supervisor – Gave an update regarding regarding potential road work projects in the township specifically and Campbell road south of the cemetery. The road commission may be able to do better than 50/50 split but some shoulder work may be needed on the road. He also made an apology for the actions of himself at the most recent DDA meeting regarding an agenda item which was loaded with misinformation and aggressive actions against a lot of individuals within the community.

Clerk – gave the board information pertaining to the May election and the fact that the ballots just came in on Tuesday and that he was hoping to have the vast majority of those ballots out by the end of the week for those that had applications already submitted for the May election.

Treasurer – gave the board information regarding the close out of the winter tax season with the county. Also that the township payment portion should be received at the township hall within the next day or two as it was sent in the mail.

Trustee Selinski – provided the board with information regarding the Ogemaw Hills Recreation board and the fact that there was some displeasure with action of trying to get the lease of the Ogemaw Hills Recreation facility updated. They feel they were left out of the loop and trying to be pushed out. It was mentioned though that they have not reached out to the township to ask either about the changes.

Trustee Durfee – mentioned that he has organized some speakers to be present at the April Township Board meeting regarding the upcoming May ballot requests.

CORRESPONDENCE: NEMCOG regarding City of West Branch Master Plan updates.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution #03 -26-2024 A – General Appropriations Act – Clerk Hickmott presented to the board the general appropriation act (budget) for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. He and Treasurer Philbrick did point out a few items to the board of interest including the fund balances that the township has and mentioned that overall the township from a budget stand point is in good condition, it was also mentioned that this is projected to be the first year that the Township’s Revenues are expected exceed \$600,000. It was also mentioned about the Transfer out Section of the budget seemed higher than years past because of the Adult Use Marijuana money will be transferred into the General budget as needed.

MOTION BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY MORRIS TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #03-26-2024 A – GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT. ROLL CALL: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE. RESOLUTION PASSED.

Water Sewer Operator Contract – The board was presented with information from water and sewer operator Mike Killackey for review of his contract and wages with the township for the maintenance of the township water lines, sewer lines, and system. The wages included an increase \$5,000 annually which included the twice a year annual flushing of the township fire hydrants.

MOTION BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY DURFEE TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT FOR THE WATER AND SEWER OPERATOR. ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE MOTION CARRIED

Transfer Station Fee Schedule – The board was presented with an updated fee schedule for the West Branch Township transfer Station. The sheet included no increases but it does reflect the addition of the Roll Off that can now be used and the prices for the use of the roll off.

MOTION BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY MORRIS TO APPROVE THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE TRANSFER STATION AS PRESENTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE MOTION CARRIED

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Renewal Lawn Care – The board was presented with information from Quality Lawn Care for the continued grass cutting and pathway maintenance as needed along M-55 and the Business Loop and also the continued grass cutting at all other township properties. It was mentioned that there is no increase from last year's prices for services.

MOTION BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY MORRIS TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT LAWN CARE SERVICE AT ALL TOWNSHIP PROPERTY. ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE MOTION CARRIED

Township Police Options – The board was presented with previous information regarding the potential of police service options for the township. The concerns brought up during the Budget public hearing were echoed further about if this subject may not have been done correctly or if the subject is being pushed too hastily according to MTA information. Some members of the board called into question that either MTA or the township attorney may not have accurate information.

MOTIONS BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY SELINSKI TO TABLE THE POLICE OPTION SUBJECT UNTILL APRIL TO ALLOW FURTHER TIME TO EXPLORE MTA AND LEGAL INFORMATION. ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI. NAY – HICKMOTT AND DURFEE. MOTION CARRIED.

Ogemaw County Brine Control – The board was presented with the agreement for the 2024 Brine Control program from Ogemaw County. The Board had some discussion on what type of pass to go with and the board decided that the solid double pass is what is typically done and decided that was the best options of the township roads to keep dust down.

MOTION BY MORRIS AND SECOND BY PHILBRICK TO APPROVE THE BRINE CONTROL ORDER FOR 2024 FROM THE OGEMAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION. ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE MOTION CARRIED

Funding Allocation for Water Tower Repairs / Cleaning / Repaint (rebrand) – Hickmott provided the board with details regarding the need for the West Branch Township water tower to have an inspection, cleaning, and a repainting (rebranding). It was mentioned that it has been between 10 and 15 years since most of this work had been done and that the township has enough funds in the water and sewer accounts to cover the associated expenditures without drain the accounts fully that way there is still revenues / savings left for just in case situations. Selinski also mentioned that additional insulation should be part of the plan at the building near the tower in an effort to reduce heating costs as well.

MOTION BY HICKMOTT AND SECOND BY MORRIS TO ALLOCATE \$425,000 FROM WATER AND SEWER FUND SAVINGS TO THE WATER TOWER REPAIRS, CLEANING, REPAINT (REBRAND). ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, HICKMOTT, PHILBRICK, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments – One resident had additional comments regarding the police option encouraging the township to review the MTA information they had just to check about how to go about implementing police services in the township. They also thanked the Supervisor for the apology regarding what happened at the most recent DDA meeting and suggested the Clerk should the same which was rejected as any comments he made he will stand behind considering the dynamics of the situation.

MOTION BY PHILBRICK AND SECOND BY MORRIS TO ADJOURN THE SPECIAL MEETING.
VOICE VOTE: YEA – MORRIS, PHILBRICK, HICKMOTT, SELINSKI, DURFEE. NAY – NONE.
MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm

Date

Jeremy R. Hickmott, West Branch Township Clerk