

# BENZONIA TOWNSHIP BOARD

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Approved:

**PUBLIC HEARING** – Approving Public Hearing for 2023-2024 Budget.

The public hearing was called to order at 2:45pm, March 8, 2023 by Jason Barnard with these members present: Jim Sheets, Karen Burns, Sheila Priest, Diana Heller and Jason Barnard.

The clerk read the purpose of the Public Hearing which was to present the new budget for 2023 – 2024 to the general public and to answer any questions they might have. There being no public present, Jim Sheets made a motion at 2:47pm to close the public hearing, Sheila Priest supported. All voting Aye, motion passed and the public hearing was closed.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

March 8th, 2023

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Barnard at 3:00 PM.

Present: Barnard, Burns, Sheets, Priest and Heller

Absent: none

Staff: Haase, Adams, Nye

Absent: Hahn, Wilkinson

Guests: 2

Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Sheets to approve the agenda as presented, Priest seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Burns to approve the minutes from the regular meeting February 8th, as well as the special budget meeting of February 7th, 2023. Supported by Sheets, all ayes, motion carried.

TREASURERS REPORT: Report submitted by Burns. Priest made a motion to accept the report with Burns supporting, all ayes, motion carried. Burns also stated that the township collected all but 5% this tax year. Michigan Class is currently paying 4.8% interest on our savings account.

#### CLERKS'S REPORT:

The Clerk presented a Profit and Loss statement for both the General and Fire Funds for the month of March 2023 along with payables. Motion by Sheets to accept report and pay the bills, seconded by Priest. Roll call vote, all ayes, motion carried.

#### SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:

Supervisor Barnard presented his report. The township received approx. \$206,000 in excise tax money. Assessment change notice has errors, no time to resend before board of review. Large number of petitions to come in to BOR which is the 13<sup>th</sup> from 9am-3pm and 14<sup>th</sup> from 3-9pm. Discussions resumed with road commission for Lincoln Rd to be corrected to the section line as well as resurface/rebuild of Cedar St. Regarding Cedar St we previously received a bid to just pave and another for complete rebuild. The township has budgeted the paving portion, however Elmers nor the road commission recommends just paving. Jason is working on options of future budgeting and/or cost sharing with those residents. Regarding Lincoln Rd, Bonney's had given a bid of \$120,000. The Road Commission has agreed to remove the large tree that has created this issue. The township will be tasked with completing the remainder of the rebuild. Approx \$61,500 of matching funds can be used towards Lincoln Rd. The entrance to the new elementary school, aka Henry road, has been moved East of the DTE facility. This eliminates the bus traffic being right next to a couple of homes. The Road commission has built the road to where it is now. The county will pay 50% of the paving if township will pay the other half. Consumers is still requesting the power line relocate on Grace Road to the park side. Latest from their engineer is they will give up to \$1000 for tree replacement. More residents have called regarding the new FEMA flood plains and say there are no options for low cost insurance unless the Township becomes part of a FEMA program. Which would entail a code enforcement officer, Jason is speaking with County regarding contracting their services, more to come. Jason requested an estimate for a new zoning laptop, estimate is \$1000. The old one can possibly be wiped, reset and used for public assessing computer. Pennington Park lawsuit still in process. Sewer authority intergovernmental agreement provided for review. Was passed by Village of Benzonia, needs our approval in order to apply for grants and funding sources for the project.

#### STAFF REPORTS:

1. FIRE CHIEF: Chief Adams submitted his report for February 2023. There were 12 fire and 30 medical runs making the YTD total 76 runs. 2022 had 97 and 2021 had 73. Fire gear has been ordered and approx. 4-6 month lead time. Still need to order boots, helmets gloves. Rescue Task Force training for mass casualty/assailant situations being held on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at the Platte River School. Steve will be on vacation April 6<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>.
2. Cemetery Sexton: No report.
3. Township Attorney: No report.
4. Commissioners Report: Nye stated that MAC has several committees and the county has decided to make application for each committee to give our county more voice at the state level. Nye has been accepted for the Health and Human services committee. Attended first meeting and it included a presentation on homelessness. Public hearing to close out a loan to Eclipse from Venture North. There is a loan program though them

and they are low interest loans for local small businesses. Doug Durand with Senior Resources says the tax program has exploded. 911 director annual report, would like 2 dispatcher on at all times. EMS reported ordering a new ambulance, won't be received until 2025. County approved a comfort dog to work with the SRO and will be going to work with her. Puppy Briggs was donated by Gaylord Jowett. 24-hour Road patrol is moving forward. 3 part time bailiffs will be hired, the full-time bailiff will be put on roster. There will always be 1 bailiff on duty at the courthouse. Continuing discussions on ARPA dollars, commitments made to campus needs, broadband expansion and 2 housing projects. Discussion moving forward regarding Henry Road, as well as public safety by way of a radio tower in Frankfort. Which has a cost estimate of approx 2million. Also talks of Point Betsie maintenance and repair dollars as the project could take 5-9 million to repair it. County owns it and it brings in over 50,000 visitors to the area each year. Potential funds toward outlet updates for the carry in launch as the outlet is now part of the public Railroad Point property. They are looking for projects relating to childcare to assist with.

5. Zoning Administrator: 9 permits issued, several pending. 2 ZBA cases pending. Planning Commission Regular meeting March 2<sup>nd</sup> put of decisions until special meeting 3/15 @ 6pm. Barnard spoke with Platte Twp regarding an assistant in the zoning department. He has had 1 person come in to discuss the possibility of the position. More to come.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT: A guest mentioned hearing a possible computer for zoom meetings. Jason clarified that we have a computer need for assessor records by the public and possible meetings we attend not necessarily our meetings at this time. Another guest asked for clarification on the error of the assessment change notice. Jason stated it was an error with the estimated increase not the actual SEV section. The public does not need to attend board of review meetings as the errors are not being levied.

COMMUNICATION: None

PENDING BUSINESS: Website updates, BS&A, FOIA rates, Area 31 sewer authority intergovernmental agreement. **Sheets made motion to approve agreement, Heller supported, roll call vote taken, all ayes motion passed.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Cemetery: No report
- Parks: Burns gathering info on playground equipment. Jason will be contacting AJ for update on walking trail. Sheets still working on pickle ball court with Avis, received one estimate was 140,000 -180,000 for 2 courts.
- Building and Grounds: No report
- Fire Department: No report
- Township Roads:
- Community Activities: Working on clean up days, tentative May 13<sup>th</sup> and Aug 12<sup>th</sup> 2023

- Finance: No report
- Personnel: No report
- Policy: No report
- ZBA: No report
- Blight: River Rd taken care of, Narrow Gauge 3 more trailer loaded up and wood now stacked. Platte Rd needs further action.

**NEW BUSINESS: 2023-2024 Budget Resolutions presented by Heller and are as follows.**

**a) 2023-2024 Meeting schedule: Sheets moved to accept; Burns supported. Roll call vote: Sheets yes, Burns yes, Barnard yes, Heller yes, Priest yes. Meeting schedule approved**

**b) 2023-2024 budget: Sheets moved to approve; Priest supported. Roll call vote: Sheets yes, Burns yes, Barnard yes, Heller yes, Priest yes. Budget approved.**

**c) 2023-2024 Meeting notice: Sheets made a motion to approve, Priest supported. Roll call vote: Sheets yes, Burns yes, Barnard yes, Heller yes, Priest yes. Motion approved.**

**d) 2023-2024 Treasurer; invest funds: Sheets made a motion to approve, Burns supported. Roll call vote: Sheets yes, Burns yes, Barnard yes, Heller yes, Priest yes. Motion carried.**

**d). 2023-2024 Wage scale: Sheets moved to approve, Heller supported. Roll call vote: Sheets yes, Burns yes, Barnard yes, Heller yes, Priest yes. Wage scale approved.**

**Motion made by Burns to purchase a new copy machine up to \$7000, Priest second, roll call taken, all ayes, motion passed.**

**EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: Guest commented regarding the over the road light at US31 and Crystal Drive needs moved, cannot see Crystal Drive. Guest stated the sewer authority meeting was well presented and asked if the info could be added to our website.**

Motion to adjourn made by Sheets, Supported by Burns.  
Supervisor adjourned the meeting at 4:27P.M.

Submitted by:

Diana L. Heller, Clerk

**MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ❖ **Public hearing prior to Regular Meeting.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to accept the Intergovernmental Agreement for creating the Area 31 Sewer Authority.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to approve 2023-2024 Budget Resolutions.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to purchase a new copy machine.**