

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

Supervisor Bartlett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Mooradian, Olson, Hollingsworth, Bartlett, Green

Absent: none

Visitors: Ed Taylor, Amy Peters, John Riggs. John & Betsy Aho, Abigail Hackman,
Keith Hammond, Larry Buhl

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve agenda & additional items: Bartlett included items “E”, Third Quarter Financial Report and “F”, Poverty Requirements added to the agenda.

Public comments: John Riggs commented that the board is doing a fine job.

Approve minutes of regular meeting on December 12, 2023- Mooradian made positive comments about how well it’s going with Otter AI. Mooradian mentioned on page 5, fifth line up from bottom, should state, *“Mooradian and John Baker will find names for the rec committee”*. Mooradian also questioned if “Employees Manual” should be *“Employee(e) Manual”*? Agreed to change it to “employee”. Bartlett mentioned on page 3, second line should state: *“to fund Northwest Michigan Rural Housing Partnership \$2000 a year for two years for a total of \$4000.”* All agreed. **Hollingsworth made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Green seconded. All aye.**

Review correspondence not included below.

Action items:

- a. **Interview Thorne Swift Manager Applicants-** Bartlett, Baker, Green and Riggs interviewed applicants and brought three to the board. Stephen & Betsy Aho, Abigail Hackman and Keith Hammond. Each applicant was given a chance to introduce themselves and speak to their education, interests and what they could bring to Thorne Swift as manager. Hackman discussed her degree in Environmental Science, her passion for land conservation, love of outdoors, etc. Hackman expressed an interest in adding more community involvement at Thorne Swift. I.E. BBQ’s, community get-togethers, etc. Hammond discussed his years of working at Thorne Swift, his interest in art, love of nature and wild animals. Hammond expressed an interest in bringing his artistic flair to Thorne Swift, adding his love of music with small acts/performances and to possibly offer Ti-Chi classes (mind body practice) while in the outdoors to the community. Stephen & Betsy Aho discussed the

Outdoors Camp they run in Nashville for children, their love of the outdoors, skills in maintenance, their skills with overseeing and managing people, their love of gardens and bringing wildflowers and native plants to Thorne Swift, hosting and engaging local residents to the outdoors. The Aho's expressed interest in maintaining what already is in Thorne Swift, but also expanding it in ways to appeal to people that aren't comfortable outdoors, who aren't used to outdoors and to make them feel safe. The board complimented all of the applicants for their time tonight. The board decided to have a Special Meeting on Thursday, January 11 at noon, to give the board a chance to consider each candidate, their talents and how they would fit in with Thorne Swift and make a decision then.

- b. **Budget Input for 2024-25- Millages:** the board decided the millages would remain the same. SEV will probably go up to 7%. Mooradian asked about the Fire Budget and if it will go up. Further discussion on that after speaking with the Fire Authority. Compensation report of Personnel Committee meeting, 1/2/24: Committee suggests a 3.2 % (same amount as Social Security) increase for West Traverse Township employees and increasing the Secretary's wage 11% to \$20 per hour as her responsibilities have increased. Mooradian mentioned perhaps looking at line-item personal increases rather than an overall increase. Mooradian mentioned being conscious of costs, being good stewards for the community etc. Green thanked Mooradian for her concerns for the township. Bartlett mentioned being concerned that all are compensated for the jobs that they are doing. It was decided to make separate motions for the 3.2% increase and one for the secretary's increase of 11%. **Dave Green made a motion to accept the Personnel Committees recommendation for a 3.2% increase. Hollingsworth seconded. Roll call vote: Mooradian-no, Green-yes, Hollingsworth-yes, Olson-yes, Bartlett-yes. 4 yes, 1 no.** Regarding the second motion for the Secretary's wage increase of \$20 per hour. **Green made a motion to increase the Secretary's wages to \$20 per hour. Olson seconded. Roll call vote: Mooradian-yes, Green-yes, Hollingsworth-yes, Olson-yes, Bartlett-yes. All yes.** Thorne Swift Special Budget requests: Brief discussion on what may need to be done to update the Thorne Swift residence. That will be considered with a budget amendment later on. Routine Expenses/Special Items: None stated.
- c. **HSASDA update-**The township has been notified that the Authority officially wants out of the service contract. Reasons stated were: "*we are not a public facility*", "*also not a member of the Authority*", and "*we are not a public facility because not just anyone can hook up to the system.*" They are required to be members of Forest Beach and Pine Trail. It was discovered that the Authority has not been filing the paperwork with the state required for that system. In order to find a provider to manage the system the township needs to file for a new permit, establish that the flow size matches the size on the permit. Authority Manager, Marcus, will help us establish the size of the flow, give it over to Benchmark who will fill out the application to submit an application for a new permit to the state. The township will be fined in the area of \$500 for two years' worth of permit fees. Bartlett spoke with Joey Arbaugh and David Comer regarding increasing the bi-annual fees which hasn't been raised since 2017. It was agreed that the new sewer fees would be \$500 for single properties and \$1000 for double properties. For Pine Tree Trail and Forest Beach to hook up to the Authority, the cost would be \$2.1 million. There was discussion of a special

assessment. Bartlett made a motion to increase the annual sewer bill to Pine Tree Trail and Forest Beach beginning with the summer 2024 billing cycle. Hollingsworth seconded.

- d. **Discuss re-instating Township Newsletter in next tax bill-** It was brought up last month and would like to discuss it now. Green mentioned it would be beneficial with all the new changes with Thorne Swift, Planning Commission and now the sewer system increases. Mooradian also mentioned the new information for the Rec Committee. Hollingsworth noted that Littlefield Township, which is similar in size to West Traverse, cost for inserts is \$742. Mooradian mentioned someone, Key Creative, that could put a newsletter together along with content. Mooradian will speak with her.
- e. **Third Quarter Financial Report-** Brief discussion with no great concerns. Bartlett will use these to adjust budget balances for 24-25.
- f. **2024 Poverty Exemption Policy & Guidelines-** Received from the Assessor for this year. Township required to adopt for the Board of Review meeting in March. **Bartlett made a motion to adopt the 2024 Poverty Exemption Policy & Guidelines as detailed in the letter dated January 9, 2024. Mooradian seconded. All aye.**

Reports & Updates:

- a. Clerk – Olson discussed the upcoming elections. Talked about changing the locks with new keys. Upgrading the EPS security system. Cost is \$10 a month for real time notification. Olson inquired about having extra help with elections if the secretary or deputy clerk are unavailable. All were ok with it.
- b. Treasurer – Taxes are rolling in; last count was 938 received so far. Discussed finding a new auditor to acclimate with us during one of our “mini audits”. Discussed the new FCB debit card and its strict uses.
- c. Planning Commission – mtg tomorrow night. Lane will provide some training and also provide the PC with the Harbor Point information. Will be electing new officers and finish up the work list.
- d. Zoning Administrator – included in packet. Lane provided year-end report in the packet.
- e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – ZA Lane met with Rec Committee. Decided to hold a Rec Committee meeting monthly on the 3rd Wednesday. Mooradian hopes to have a Rec Committee Plan for the September or October board meeting. Currently have five members, need seven. Suggestions will be brought to the table for approval. Mooradian noted that by 2026 the committee will be able to begin applying for grants.
- f. Supervisor –discussed above in action items.

Approve payables & payroll – **Hollingsworth made a motion to approve payables & payroll. Mooradian seconded. All yes.**

Public comments – none

Board comments – Hollingsworth asked for payroll logs from the Secretary and Thorne Swift for her record keeping. Hollingsworth also requested that the Secretary be compensated for time spent at board and pc meetings. All agreed.

Next Regular Meeting – **February 13, at 6:00 p.m.**

Supervisor Bartlett adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jay Olson, Clerk

Transcribed by:
Amy Peters