

Keene Township Board Meeting

Minutes from January 14, 2025

Wojcik called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance at 7:00pm

Roll Call:

Present: Nate Wolff, Christine Hendrick, Corey Wojcik, Sandy Smiley, Holli Melton.

Recognition of Visitors:

There were approximately 30 members of the community present along with Zoning Administrator Jeanne Vandersloot.

Approval or changes to the Agenda:

Wojcik motioned to move Diane Jones from MML to after public comment. Wolff 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of last meetings minutes – December 11th, 2024

Hendrick motioned to approve the minutes Smiley 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comment on items related to the agenda.

No comments from attendants.

Presentation on Michigan Municipal League by Diane Jones:

Diane went over the highlights of switching the township insurance to MML. Including Cost savings of around \$1,795 per year along with shared dividends. She stated that it will take 5 years to build up to 100% dividends. There is also a \$200.00 per year membership fee which the township has already been paying. She also went over the coverages, including cyber coverage which we don't currently have, and deductibles. The quote is for a start date of April 1st.

Cori Wilbur asked to speak with Diane, as she had questions.

Treasurers Report:

Copies of the Investment schedule are available on the table.

She got a second hand folding and stuffing machine that will help with any paper folding and envelope stuffing needed for the township.

Hendrick stated that she will be at the hall on February 14th and 28th from 9am to 5pm to receive tax payments and issue receipts.

There are 2 CDs expiring in early February, she is looking into reinvesting them.

BS&A should launch by February 4th, and everything should be uploaded to the cloud by March 24th.

Online payments for collecting taxes have been quite active.

She purchased a scanner which has streamlined the tax process.

ARPA funds were expended on time and Walker Fluke is being provided with the information needed for reporting.

Clerk's Report:

Melton stated that she has been going over the school election coordinating committee agreements for Lowell, Belding and Saranac schools.

Accounts payable list has been looked over by the trustees, one minor mistake was found that will be corrected tonight. There was 18,259.57 in expenses in January including some ARPA spending and yearly payroll for the PC.

Wojcik stated that the board overlooked voting on paying December bills at the December meeting. They were agreed to be paid and were paid. Wolff made an official motion to pay the December bills, 2nd by Smiley. Motion carried 5-0
Hendrick made a motion to pay the January bills, 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0

Planning Commission report:

Wolff Stated that the PC adopted their 2025 meeting schedule, Appointed Nancy Solomon as Secretary, Cori Wilbur as Vice Chairperson and Denny Briggs as Chairperson. They also successfully voted on the solar ordinance that was sent back to the PC by the board.

Wojcik, Wolf and the rest of the board spoke of extending the timeline for the PC to accomplish everything that the board requested. Hendrick made a motion to extend the timeline for the PC to finish the battery and wind ordinances to April 30th, 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Zoning Administrator report:

Jeanne stated that there were no permits this month, she had some resolutions and proposals from the boards regarding three renewable energy types and sent 4 ordinances (1 solar ordinance, 3 moratorium ordinances) ordinances to public hearing January 6th. There was a referendum that had been filed, next step is the county clerk and local clerk to verify signatures and set up an election.

She spoke of a cleanup on Rickert Rd. Wojcik suggested that a group of volunteers could fill trailers and bring trash to township cleanup day in the spring. Lee rd. update is that the owner will add more fencing in the spring.

Wojcik and Melton discussed the referendum status.

Technology Report:

Wilbur went over in detail the upgrades made using the ARPA funds. Including WIFI extender for TV, Security Cameras, Speakers and microphone, water heater, shelves for the back office, wireless keyboard and mouse, new tech computer for the trustees and training, exit lights and an occupancy sign and new exterior lighting.

A member from the audience, Gay Haddix asked about software.

OLD BUSINESS

Commercial Solar Ordinance resolution:

Discussion: Pg 6 D should say "in section D" instead of "at D", Application fee was discussed.

Exhibit A is overlay district 3

Wojcik agreed to put the fee schedule on the February meeting agenda.

Wojcik addresses Kim Newell's comment at the PC meeting. He warned of undue influence. Cori Wilbur discussed her advice on being both a resident and an official. There was much discussion about comments from others. In reference to Ray Krieger abstaining from voting on the solar ordinance.

Hendrick made a motion to accept the solar ordinance with the wording change on page 6 "in section D" and exhibit A as overlay district 3. 2nd by Smiley. Melton yay, Smiley yay, Wojcik nay, Hendrick yay, Wolff yay. Motion carried 4-1

Wojcik explained district 3. Hendrick explains that the referendum is null and void as soon as the new ordinance goes into effect.

Cori Wilbur asked about notification process for residents near the affected area (district 3)

Wojcik read a letter from Mike Homier regarding the appeal process of PA233 at the state level.

Ordinance to impose a moratorium on the issuance of permits, license, or approvals for any construction of a solar energy project.

Hendrick made a motion to accept the solar moratorium as written. 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Ordinance to impose a moratorium on the issuance of permits, license, or approvals for any construction of a wind energy project.

Smiley made a motion to accept the solar moratorium as written. 2nd by Wolff. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Ordinance to impose a moratorium on the issuance of permits, license, or approvals for any construction of a battery storage energy project.

Melton made a motion to accept the solar moratorium as written. 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Wojcik, Hendrick and Melton discussed and agreed on paying the ZBA in February.

Website project manager – reconsideration: Smiley discussed how she along with Cori Wilbur researched multiple website designers and how the board decided on Shumaker. She discussed using a .gov domain. Member directory. She requested photos of Keene township. She covered the new logo, fire dept. coverage map. Public calendar and announcements. The website could be launched as soon as spring. Needs access to current website. She discussed cost and suggested adding option B to the package to have them post things to the website for \$21 per month. Bob Shafer stated that a redirect from .org to .gov will work. Also, in the files he turned in there should be a fire coverage map.

Jeanne stated that the fire chief would have the fire map in digital form. And stated that having photos on the website will make it load slower for those who don't have high speed internet. She also suggested creating a committee to oversee the transition to a new website as no official action has been taken on that. She suggested herself, Cori Wilber and Sandy as each have different parts to add to the project.

Public Information Officer - Hendrick stated the Clerk is the Township record keeper, therefore, Prepared documents should be directed to the Clerk for review and sent to Shumaker group for loading to the website. Smiley offered to assist, and discussed taking training together. Hendrick made a motion to upgrade to fully managed option B for an additional \$250 (\$21/month) where the company will do all the website postings as our webmaster, with the Clerk as our public information officer to relay information to put on website. 2nd by Wolff. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

New Roof: Smiley referred to the color sample and timeline for roof replacement.

Jeanne suggested waiting until warmer weather because the heat will help adhere the shingles together. Jeanne also said she has extensive construction experience and shingles have a tar strip on them that hot weather and sun cause them to stick together and then suggested waiting until warmer weather. She also said black shingles get very hot and deteriorate faster than lighter colored shingles. She picked out "weathered wood" and others agreed.

Bob Schafer: Wanted to know if they were stripping the current shingles or just covering. Wojcik answered strip and reroof. Bob also suggested black would attract heat in summer making the building harder to cool.

The sample was passed to all board members and Weathered Wood was decided.

Facebook Admin: Smiley and Wojcik discussed deleting old Facebook account and start a new one. Facebook will be information only. Cori Wilbur and Smiley will be admins.

Planning Commission Secretary wage increase: Wojcik suggested she is underpaid. It was discussed to look further into it and add it to the February meeting.

Jeanne will gather other townships' secretary pay for the Board.

Township Insurance: Hendrick explained her research into other insurance companies, and she feels that MML is the best and most economical choice.

Cori Wilbur feels comfortable with the amount of coverage.

Wolff and Wilbur talked about changing our emails to .gov

Belding Fire Department: Wojcik explained the agreement and cost. He also spoke about discussing changes with Belding and Saranac fire departments for possible cost savings.

Supervisor Report: Wojcik announced his appointment of Robert Simpson as Deputy Supervisor.

Wojcik discussed an issue with consumers energy getting power to a new home. Power lines and possibly a pole may cross the cemetery on Pinckney, He will find out more details and options.

Wojcik acknowledged the donation of a photo print of Whites Bridge to be hung at the hall and Mike Welch donating a flag for the hall.

Wojcik, Smiley and Hendrick discussed a meeting they attended the previous evening for township officials.

Public Comment:

Jeanne stated that Roths opened their standpipe for the fire trucks during the fire at Dynamic Wood Products. She also suggested that there should be an official vote to have a committee to implement the new website because several of us have input for it and stated that she had many questions about the website process. Jeanne stated that she has information about the website that they need her to be a part of. Cori and Smiley stated all they need is access to our current website to transfer information.

Jeanne stated that she feels that she should be part of the implementation of the website.

Jeanne objected to the way the new website project was created.

Jeanne was asked to send her questions to Corey, Cori and Sandy to get answers.

Smiley mentioned that we need to get individual photos of the board members for the website.

Brad Potter: Asked why the residents need to provide a self-addressed envelope. He also stated that he is dissatisfied with the admin fee.

Hendrick explained that it is in effort to save money.

Kim Newell suggested that the supervisor interview applicants for the PC so there is not an even number of people on it. Which could cause a stalemate.

Wojcik agreed to address the issue.

Bo Smiley stated that he has heard from clients that they are glad they are getting all property tax bills in one envelope verses one for each property they own.

Cori Wilbur stated that she called Diane from MML, and she informed her that they do cover us if we rent the hall. Suggested a liability waiver and recommended no alcohol.

Hendrick motioned to switch township property and liability pool coverage insurance to MML April 1st, 2025. 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.

Karl Heiler stated that "Diane" is just as fast as Jake from State Farm!

Next meeting February 11th

Motion to adjourn at 9:31pm by Melton, 2nd by Smiley. All in favor. Motion carried 5-0.