

Bear Creek Township Board Meeting

March 3, 2021- ZOOM Meeting

I. Called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. **Roll Call**

Keiser- (Bear Creek Township, Michigan), Golding- (Bear Creek Township, Michigan), Hoffman- (Bear Creek Township, MI), Urman- (Citrus County, FL), Kendziorski- (Bear Creek Township, MI)

a. Others Present: Al Welsheimer, Dr. LaBeau, Mitch Brown, Val Meyerson, Ann, M. VanBerlo

III. **Pledge of Allegiance**

IV. **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from two meetings: Regular BCT Board Meeting on February 3, 2021 and Special Meeting on February 22, 2021.

a. **Motion** by Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented. 2nd by Kendziorski.

Passed

V. **Request from the Floor/Discussion**

VI. **Approval of the Agenda**

Motion by Kendziorski to approve the agenda as presented. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

VII. **Unfinished Business**

a. **Roads**

Keiser shared that our roads are out to bid. The estimates appear to be fairly accurate.

b. **Library Report- Report by Meyerson**

Val Meyerson shared her annual report. This has been a very non-traditional year with all of the changes to the library brought about by the pandemic. Overall, it was a productive year; they have a new strategic plan and new mission statement that reads: "Nurture Knowledge, Drive Discovery, and Connect Community". The walk-in business was down 50% due to COVID-19, with approximately 50,000 visits to the library in the past year. The library was closed for approximately 3 months. When the library reopened, it was with lessened hours. The number of patrons served was up to 7,786, which is an increase. The increase was driven by a desire for digital services. The paper circulation was down 26%, but digital circulation was up 30%. The library closure encouraged people to get involved in using the digital collection. There were many new patrons that used that service and this was a benefit to the library. The big library event of the year was the "Support Their Stories" initiative, which received many donations. The community reads book of the year was "White Fragility". This programming received lots of participation and feedback. There were many services that changed due to the pandemic. The library added curbside service, switched to outdoor and virtual programming, provided an at home usage of database programs, and added an online library card sign up. The library is in the process of adding a 24/7 book pickup process, which will use lockboxes. Meyerson shared the last pre-pandemic event, which took place in February 2020: "Plush Puppy Adoption Day". When the pandemic first hit, the library was closed for 10 weeks, and when public was allowed back in, new procedures were put in place for safety purposes. Materials coming back into the library are all quarantined. At the beginning of the pandemic, the library used 3-D printers to print masks for the EMS. Meyerson shared the outdoor programming that happened this summer: Hawk Hill brought in raptors, Story Time became Story Stroll, and the Bookworms met outside for discussion. The library also hosted truck or treat for Halloween and had a jack-o-lantern jamboree in the fall. Meyerson reviewed the annual usage and revenue comparison chart, which showed that Bear Creek brings in 19-20% of the library's revenues. About 1/3 of the card holders of the library are from Bear Creek and Bear Creek increased card holders by about 7% last year. Over 2,000 households in Bear Creek Township hold library cards, which is a 5% increase from last year. Going forward, the library is opening up meeting rooms for 25 people or less, adding Sunday and evening hours, and hoping to bring back in person programming this summer.

i. Hoffman asked if the Springvale dropbox is a drive-up. Meyerson noted that it is, but they do not have an awning there to protect the dropbox from the weather.

ii. Keiser asked about the 24/7 book pickup. The patrons will have a combination to get the book from the lockbox. He asked about the budget and paying employees during the pandemic, and asked how the library is planning to clean meeting rooms after they are rented.

a. Meyerson clarified that employees worked through the pandemic and did training when they were closed to the public. They caught up on seminars and webinars and processed books. Some hours were cut. In regard to cleaning, the Carnegie building will be rented out for 25 and the classroom for 10. The library staff will clean after meetings.

c. **Crooked Lake Consortium**

Keiser shared that the Pickerel Crooked Lake Association voted and are unanimously against lowering the lake levels. These are individuals who live on the lake and understand the lake levels better than we do. Keiser feels we should follow their recommendation. The board agrees and will not support lowering the lake levels at this time.

d. **Poverty Exemption Resolution/Guidelines**

Keiser shared that on Dec 23, 2020, a new law was passed that required a township board to pass a resolution regarding poverty exemptions and to establish guidelines for the Board of Review to follow. We have already adopted the federal guidelines. In the past, the Board of Review has been able to grant a percentage of a poverty exemption. Moving forward, the percentages need to be dictated in this resolution. We now have a resolution and guidelines prepared to adopt. The board would need to approve changes to the asset test, which is recommended at \$7,500 for the claimant and \$10,000 for the household. This is fair considering it includes a vehicle and cash on hand. The City of Petoskey is \$2,500 and \$5,000 but many of their residents do not have vehicles (and most of ours do).

i. **Motion** by Kendziorski to pass the resolution for poverty exemption and poverty exemption guidelines. 2nd by Hoffman.

- a. Roll Call: Hoffman, Urman, Kendziorski, Golding, Keiser
- a. Yes: Hoffman, Urman, Kendziorski, Golding, Keiser

Passed**VIII. New Business****a. Employee Review**

Keiser explained that earlier this year, we met with the employees to discuss their needs. He shared the following wage increases decided by the board at the budget meetings this year: Secretary/Deputy Clerk \$17/hour, Deputy Treasurer \$15.50/hour, Electrical Inspections \$37/inspection, and a Fire Chief 5% salary increase (pending Resort Township Approval). These increases will be effective on April 1, 2021.

- i. **Motion** by Kendziorski to increase the Secretary/Deputy Clerk wage to \$17/hour, Deputy Treasurer wage to \$15.50/hour, Electrical Inspections to \$37/inspection, and Fire Chief a 5% salary increase (pending Resort Township approval). 2nd by Golding.

Passed**b. Budget Amendment**

Keiser explained that the following budget amendments will need to be made: \$500 for the supervisor, \$100 for the treasurer, \$150 for the deputy treasurer, and \$1500 for the secretary (for postage for the cleanup vouchers).

- i. **Motion** by Golding to amend the budget in the amounts of \$500 for the supervisor, \$100 for the treasurer, \$150 for the deputy treasurer, and \$1500 for the secretary. 2nd by Kendziorski.

Passed**c. Budget Public Hearing Date**

Keiser noted that the board will need to decide on a public hearing date for the 21/22 budget. He suggested March 16, 2021 at 3:30pm. This will be a hybrid Zoom/in-person meeting. We will have a public hearing and go into regular session after that to adopt the budget.

d. March Board of Review Resolution

Keiser shared a resolution that will need to be adopted to allow residents to appeal their assessments to the Board of Review via letter. If the local unit does not have such a resolution, residents must appeal in person (which will be limited this year due to COVID-19. The Board of Review will be meeting in a hybrid Zoom/in-person meeting).

- i. **Motion** by Kendziorski to pass the resolution which allows residents to appeal their assessments to the Board of Review via letter. 2nd by Hoffman.
- a. Roll Call: Urman, Kendziorski, Golding, Keiser, Hoffman
- a. Yes: Urman, Kendziorski, Golding, Keiser, Hoffman

Passed**e. Assessor Report**

Keiser explained that this has been a difficult year for assessing properties with the pandemic going on. People are hesitant to allow you to visit their home. Most assessments were done using aerial photos. He was not able to assess as many properties as normal. The sales this year have been extremely high, as the housing market is high right now. There are many bidding wars going on, which drives the price up. The 2021 assessments are based on 2018-19 sales. The increases in sales we are seeing this year will show up in about 2 years, and by then, the market may be decreasing. Keiser shared that the average residential went up about 5-6%, although the market is up 15-20%. Lastly, Keiser noted that Board of Review will be a hybrid Zoom/in-person meeting this year. Welsheimer asked about the wording of the Board of Review resolution. Keiser clarified.

f. Cleanup Vouchers 2021

Keiser explained that Lizzy Coats has been working hard to get the cleanup vouchers ready. Last year, we gave out 1533 and 271 went to Bay View. We typically average around 1600 vouchers. Vouchers will be delivered to the office soon and then Coats will be able to get those out.

IX. Planning/Zoning Report

Kendziorski reviewed the cases briefly, because the township board members were present at the Planning Commission meetings, and are familiar with the cases. She noted that the Coveyou case was postponed to work out the road and other issues.

- i. Hoffman would like clarification about right to farm and weddings/campgrounds. The weddings were added to the ordinance in connection to commercial farms, but campgrounds are not. He feels these should be two separate cases. Kendziorski suggested Hoffman works with Tammy Doernenburg on this, as he is the most familiar with right to farm. Keiser agrees that a campground is a special use in a FF-1 district. Hoffman will work with Doernenburg on this question.

Kendziorski reviewed the rest of the cases heard by the Planning Commission this month.

- ii. **Motion** by Kendziorski to approve the Planning Commission report as presented. 2nd by Urman.

Passed

Keiser noted that this was the largest Planning Commission agenda we have had in years, with 13 cases and two different nights. We should look to the future as to how to proceed with other agendas such as this.

- iii. Hoffman suggested at 10 cases, we could automatically schedule a different night. Keiser suggested working on a policy so applicants know up front what night their case will be heard. Hoffman suggested that the Planning Commission chairperson and Township supervisor could have the ability to reschedule cases. Kendziorski suggested that this be decided on a per agenda basis. The chairperson and supervisor could review the agenda before the meeting and decide if it would be handled in one night or two. Then applicants and neighbors would be notified. Urman agrees, especially if we have the agenda ahead of time. Keiser agreed about reviewing the agenda ahead of time, and having an alternative date ready. Kendziorski requested that the alternative date be a Monday rather than a Tuesday.

X. Fire Department Report- Report by Welsheimer

Welsheimer shared that the fire department completed rescue airbag training. They completed a snowmobile stimulation training at the snowmobile club. There were 5 EMS and 19 fire calls this month. Statewide in 2020 there were 122 deaths, and there were an increase

in deaths and fires. So far in 2021 there have been 29 deaths and 26 fires statewide, which is an 18% increase in fires from last year. He reported that there has been 3 oven fires this year. In regards to the radios, by April 1st, everyone will be switched over to the new radios. There will be a meeting next Thursday which will give an update on the tower in Charlevoix. There is a new software program at central dispatch which should be live by the end of April/early May.

XI. Parks and Recreation Report

There is nothing new to report.

XII. Correspondence

Keiser shared a request to plow Jones Landing next year. We have never done this in the past, but this year, there was good ice fishing on Walloon Lake. There were many times this year when trucks with trailers (for four-wheelers) were parked alongside the road. Keiser noted that Petoskey was rated the 6th best place to work from home in Michigan. He has noticed more people homesteading. More people are going to want to move and work here. In regards to the new epidemic order that came out yesterday, Keiser shared that we can start meeting on Friday in groups of 25 or less. We can now resume in-person meetings as long as they are socially distanced. He is hoping to have our March interviews and April board meeting in-person. Kendziorski noted that some large meetings, such as Planning Commission, will still have to be held virtually. Keiser noted that we will open the office to the general public on Monday, but office staff will still work remotely one day a week, because the order mandates working remotely when possible. Hoffman asked about opening the meeting room. Keiser remarked that maybe we can open that in the future, but for now it will be for township business only. Kendziorski feels that when we do open the meeting room back for public use, we may need to charge a cleaning fee, as the hall will need to be cleaned after each use.

XIII. Clerk's Business/Bills- Report by Kendziorski

Kendziorski reported bills in the amount of \$197,330.66.

- i. **Motion** by Kendziorski to pay the bills in the amount of \$197,330.66. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

XIV. Treasurer's Report- Report by Golding

The Treasurer's Report shows a balance of \$9,158,581.89 as of 2/28/21. Golding is in the process of balancing with the county. This tax season was busy, although, with the pandemic, it was harder for people to pay their taxes.

XV. Building Department Report

Golding reported that the building department is slow right now. Keiser noted that commercial businesses especially are slow, as their have taken such a big hit from COVID.

XVI. Sewer Business/Bills

Keiser shared that we have a new sewer service permit application from Sun Petoskey RV Kampgrounds LLC. This would be a total of 5 REU's for the 12 new campsites that are being added.

- i. **Motion** by Keiser to approve the Sun Petoskey RV Kampgrounds LLC Sewer Service Permit Application. 2nd by Kendziorski.

Passed

Keiser noted bills for the township sewer in the amount of \$169,029.72.

- ii. **Motion** by Keiser to pay the township sewer bills in the amount of \$169,029.72. 2nd by Kendziorski.

Passed

Keiser noted that the City of Petoskey rebonded, so our bond payment will start going down.

XVII. Request from the Floor/Discussion

Brown asked who owned the Love's building and if there are any plans for that. Keiser clarified that Love's still owns it, but there are no plans for the building that he is aware of. Unfortunately, this will be a hard building to repurpose.

XVIII. Other Business

Hoffman noted that the Emmet County Soil Conservation District is having a tree sale.

XIX. Public Comment: None

XX. Adjournment: 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emma Kendziorski

Emma Kendziorski, Bear Creek Township Clerk