

Bear Creek Township Board Meeting February 2, 2022

Called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Keiser, Hoffman, Golding, Radatovich, Urman

Others Present: Al Welsheimer, Mitch Brown, Ethel Larson, Val Meyerson

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting of Jan 5, 2022, Special meetings of Jan 10, 12, and 18, 2022.

Motion by Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Request from the Floor/Discussion: None

Approval of the Agenda

Unfinished Business

Roads

Keiser noted that we have the PASAR ratings for the roads for 2022. He shared that Brian Gutowski suggested that we use seal coating this year.

Library Report

Val Meyerson, the Petoskey Library Director, gave her 2021 annual review. She shared a summary of the programs completed throughout the year, as well as some financials from the library. One new program the library had this year was a book delivery service to inmates. They are currently delivering books to 12 inmates bi-weekly. Another new program is a 24/7 locker pickup program, where residents can request to pick up a book after hours in a locker. The library has also started a homebound book delivery service with the help of the Friends of the Library. The library is hosting a new program called the Great Decisions Program, in which individuals come to have serious discussions about world issues and foreign policy. The Page Turner Program is a way for readers to connect with other readers. The library also partnered with Northmen Den this year to help students with tutoring and mentoring. The library has also acquired a parking lot this year, on the corner of Lake and Division. Library patrons with a library sticker on their car can use that lot. The library digitized their yearbook collection over the past year and has also added an at home access to Value Line, a service that tells people how certain companies are doing in stocks. Meyerson shared some of the children's programming that took place over the last year, including a partnership with professional artists, where children learned how to make clay monsters, draw dinosaurs, and watercolor paint. They also started a graphic novel club in the spring/summer for children. Meyerson shared that Bear Creek Township provides approximately 20% of the operating revenue for the library, and accounts for approximately 33% of the library cardholders. Approximately 1900 households from Bear Creek Township have library cards. Meyerson explained the book selection process, called the Collection Development Policy. This guides the librarians from starting to pick books to bring into the collection all the way through when the books leave the collection. The librarians who select books for the library are trained. They order books after they have read reviews and reviewed bestseller lists. They also look at what is being sold locally at McLean and Eakin and also base ordering on what patrons are requesting/what they like to read. The library spends approximately \$100,000 on new books annually. The collection staff also completes a process called weeding, where they look at which books are no longer being circulated, are not in good condition, or have outdated information. Meyerson shared the process for when a patron questions a book in the library. There is a Reconsideration Form which would need to be filled out, after which the library staff and board reviews the book. The board makes final decisions when a book is to be removed from the collection. However, there has to be good reason to remove a book from the library, because information in a library is protected under the first amendment. When the library staff orders books, they like to provide different viewpoints to ensure that they have something for everyone to read. There may be books in the collection that not everyone agrees with, but the library exists to serve the needs of everyone in the community. Meyerson feels that the ordering staff does a wonderful job in selecting books. On average, the library has approximately 90 new cardholders per month. However, the overall number of patrons is dropping.

Hoffman noted that after the 2020 library newsletter was released, he received calls from constituents. That newsletter expressed that "whites" should learn about and read the listed books about racism towards "blacks". The objection is that taxpayer funds should not be used to call taxpayers "racist". After the release of that newsletter, the Bear Creek Township board sent a letter to the library, asking that the library remain neutral on political issues. Over the last six months, Hoffman has dedicated his time to learning about the library's youth services section. He noted that the teens/8-12 section of the website has resources about racism and features TED speakers which discuss "police and blacks". Hoffman feels that it is okay for the library to have books on this topic, but does not feel that the "white privilege and racism" should be on the website. After talking to a physician, he noted that this is not good for young kids, because they cannot digest or understand that information at that age. The library is a wonderful place, but he feels that suggesting and highlighting certain books on racism is "over the top". Hoffman noted that he read the book

by Abrams, which was given out to “unsuspecting children” and he has also read *The Hate you Give*. In *The Hate You Give*, the young girl’s uncle is a police officer. However, the book features anti-police themes and severe language. Hoffman noted there are five pages that are severe.

Meyerson noted that the language in *The Hate You Give* is meant to be rough, because “that is how all kids talk”. In order for this book to be authoritative in a child’s mind, it has to sound like what their life is like. The book has won many awards. The language is addressed on the sleeves of the book and she feels it is one of the features that will make it so that kids will read the book and understand what it says. Meyerson feels that the book is not anti-police, but discusses what happens when the police do not respond or when the police ignore issues. It is about the life of a community and is a realistic book. This book gives children the opportunity to read about another lifestyle than what we have here in Northern Michigan. It opens the door for excellent conversation about hard topics. She asked several high school teachers about this book, and all of them felt that this book needs to be on the teen shelf.

Keiser explained that Hoffman is not asking for the book to be removed from the shelf. He is simply asking that this book not be promoted or “pushed” on the website. As a grandparent, Keiser shared that his grandchildren visit the library where they live and do not have this type of literature recommended. This type of literature may be more appropriate in a big city like Chicago than it would be here. There should be equal opportunity for the lists on the website for other viewpoints.

Meyerson noted that this book is not “pushed”, rather it is available for when someone asks for a recommendation for a book about “anti-racism or the black experience”. It is on the website in order to be easily accessible for her staff to use. The list featured on the website is a staff picks list. There are all sorts of topics you can pick from, and anti-racism is one of those topics. In regards to Hoffman’s comment about books going to “unsuspecting children”, she noted that the book box that was sent out was publicized, so parents knew what book their children were receiving. These boxes go out quarterly and is a great way for the library to connect to kids at home.

Hoffman feels the TED talk videos on the website about “cops and blacks” are not good for 13 year olds. He noted that the website highlights LGBT books and themes, and feels that is fine for most kids. He read a book featured by the library about two gay dads who divorced their wives and married one another. He feels that is “not as bad”. He read another LGBT themed book from the library that he felt was not as good; it was about a little girl who goes to summer camp and falls in love with another girl. He does not feel books like this should be singled out or highlighted on the website, however, he feels it is okay for these books to be in the library.

Meyerson responded that that is Hoffman’s opinion. She will look at the website again and the placement of the lists.

Urman noted that he disagrees with Meyerson, in his opinion, “not all kids in Petoskey talk like this”. Urman feels we should not “push that agenda”. He asked if Meyerson surveyed local teachers in a wide area, including Charlevoix and Antrim County. He feels she should get a broad view of opinions and feels that police officers in our county should read this print and see what their opinion is. Urman remarked that as Americans, we do have freedoms, however, we need to “watch what we push”.

Meyerson feels that the board sees the library in the light of “pushing books on racism and LGBT to everyone”. However, it is the job of the library to select books that people want to read. Her staff not only reads the reviews, but also reads the books that are in the children’s collection. When someone comes in, we talk to them and ask what they are interested in, and make a recommendation based on that. *The Hate You Give* is not a book they just pass out, rather, it would be a book that would go to someone who is seeking it out. The librarians try to match books to what people are looking for. She feels they do not have an agenda or push books.

Hoffman noted that *The Hate You Give* is a staff recommended book on the youth services portion of the website and they also have the TED videos.

Myerson noted that you have to click on the teen page to get to that information. Perhaps kids want to read and learn about the “black experience”. She feels we should be providing that information. She noted that kids may not be talking to their parents about these issues, like she wishes they would, however, the librarians are trying to talk to these kids about the hard topics. She feels these books are a wonderful door opener for kids who are struggling with the tough issues. She will look at the placement on the website and noted that it may need to be in a different place, but that it will not go away. This book is award winning.

Keiser remarked that the message from the board is that the library remains balanced.

Division Road Ending

Keiser noted that we received a partial survey for the west portion of the road and they will be working on the east side soon. In the process, we discovered that there is an additional 20x100ft easement to the sewer authority there. We are researching that but have not found the documentation that goes with it yet.

Property Maintenance Position

Keiser reminded the board that we have a joint meeting with Resort Township on February 3rd at 4pm to discuss this position. This meeting will be hosted at the Bear Creek Township Hall.

Click Rd Property- Utilities

Keiser shared that he has been working with the township attorney and the utility company to come up with easement language that would be acceptable for both parties and has made some progress. Once the language is acceptable, we will place to order to have temporary power brought into the property.

New Business

Charter Township Resolution

Keiser shared that every ten years after the census, every township with a population of 2,000 or more has an option to become a charter township. We will need to make a resolution opposing our incorporation as a charter township.

Motion by Radatovich to adopt the Resolution Opposing Incorporation as a Charter Township. 2nd by Golding.

Roll Call: Hoffman, Urman, Keiser, Golding, Radatovich

Yes: Hoffman, Urman, Keiser, Golding, Radatovich

Passed

Poverty Guidelines

Keiser explained that we will need to adopt the 2022 federal poverty guidelines in order to prepare for March Board of Review.

Motion by Keiser to adopt the 2022 federal poverty guidelines. 2nd by Radatovich.

Passed

Salary Resolutions

Keiser noted that we will have to make the salary resolutions for the new fiscal year, to go into effect April 1st, 2022.

Motion by Golding to adopt the salary resolution to increase the wage of the trustees to \$8,000 annually. 2nd by Radatovich.

Roll Call: Radatovich, Hoffman, Urman, Keiser, Golding

Yes: Radatovich, Hoffman, Urman, Keiser, Golding

Passed

Motion by Golding to adopt the salary resolution to increase the wage of the clerk to be \$52,000 annually. 2nd by Urman.

Roll Call: Keiser, Golding, Hoffman, Urman, Radatovich

Yes: Keiser, Golding, Hoffman, Urman, Radatovich

Passed

Motion by Radatovich to adopt the salary resolution to increase the wage of the treasurer to \$38,000 annually and the building dept secretary to \$22,000 annually. 2nd by Urman.

Roll Call: Urman, Keiser, Golding, Radatovich, Hoffman

Yes: Urman, Keiser, Golding, Radatovich, Hoffman

Passed

Motion by Radatovich to adopt the salary resolution to increase the wage of the supervisor to \$21,000 annually and the assessor to \$69,722.35 annually, as well as an additional \$4,000 cost share to the assessor annually and \$2,100 annually (to the assessor) in place of an HSA contribution. 2nd by Golding.

Roll Call: Golding, Radatovich, Hoffman, Urman, Keiser

Yes: Golding, Radatovich, Hoffman, Urman, Keiser

Passed

BOR Alternate Appointment

Keiser explained that the Board of Review is a three-member board. Due to the COVID climate, it would be nice to have an alternate to serve if necessary. He is suggesting that the board appoints Mitch Brown to be the alternate. Brown can go to training and attend the March Board of Review to learn.

Motion by Keiser to appoint Mitch Brown to be the alternate for the Board of Review. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Liquor License

Keiser shared a liquor license application for a transfer from the UP to tribal properties. Keiser shared the letter he sent in response, asking that if this does get approved, that the township will have the authority to inspect it, like we do other tribal properties. The applicant will be at the March meeting to discuss this.

Planning/Zoning Report

Radatovich shared that the Planning Commission heard several cases this month. The first case, Krist Oil, was withdrawn by the applicant and was not discussed. The second case, for O'Reilly Auto Parts through Grand Management & Development, was postponed. The Planning Commission is asking O'Reilly's to provide an access from Anderson Rd. The third case, for Jared Clark, is for a home occupation at 2016 E Gruler Rd. This case was approved. The remaining cases were text amendments for the

Emmet County Zoning Ordinance, topics to include: accessory dwelling units, cluster housing, duplexes, child care facilities, and the access management overlay. All text amendments were recommended for approval by the Planning Commission.

Motion by Radatovich to approve the Planning Commission report. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Fire Department Report- Report by Welsheimer

Welsheimer reported 5 EMS calls and 19 fire calls. He shared a proposal for a new tanker truck and noted that they can no longer guarantee price. The goal would be for the board to agree to move forward, so that we can get the truck ordered. The truck will be available at the end of this year/early next year at the earliest. Welsheimer shared the price breakdown as well as the payment plan. We have been very happy with our current vacuum truck and it takes less people to operate. They can fill the tank in less than a minute. This is the largest tank you can put on a single axle and it has an automatic braking system. We have approximately \$250,000 in the bank in preparation for this new truck. Realistically, each township will probably have to contribute about \$50,000 from the general fund. The Bear Creek Township board agreed that Welsheimer should go forward with ordering this truck.

Parks and Recreation Report

There was no parks and recreation meeting this month. Keiser has been working with Gosling Czubak on the specifications for the Jones Landing Boat Wash. Radatovich noted that she submitted the first step to pursue a Recreation Passport grant to help us with the Spring Lake Park bathrooms, however, upon further examining the application, we likely will not have time to get all of the required documentation by April 1st, which is the deadline. We would need to have our engineering or construction drawings plus a cost estimate. She has reached out to Beckett and Raeder, and they are going to run some preliminary numbers to see if this is a feasible grant for Bear Creek Township.

Correspondence

Keiser noted that he received the flood study map for Bear Creek Township.

Clerk's Business/Bills- Report by Radatovich

Radatovich reported bills in the amount of \$143,465.64.

Motion by Radatovich to pay the bills in the amount of \$143,465.64. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Radatovich noted that we have two budget amendments to make; one to the supervisor's budget in the amount of \$1,000, and the other to the sewer budget in the amount of \$2,000.

Motion by Radatovich to amend the supervisor budget in the amount of \$1,000 and the sewer budget in the amount of \$2,000. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Treasurer's Report- Report by Golding

The Treasurer's Report shows a balance of \$10,563,298.73 as of 1/31/22.

Building Department Report

Golding gave out building dept reports through 1/31/22. Building department revenue is up this year.

Sewer Business/Bills

Keiser reported bills for the township sewer in the amount of \$72,508.39

Motion by Keiser to pay the township sewer bills in the amount of \$72,508.39. 2nd by Radatovich.

Passed

Request from the Floor/Discussion: None

Other Business

Hoffman asked about the curbing for the township hall. Keiser noted that he has reached out to some contractors.

Urman gave an update on the Click Rd station. If board members have any thoughts on elevation or suggestions for the building, they can send them to Jaime.

I. **Adjournment:** 8:29p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emma Radatovich

Emma Radatovich, Bear Creek Township Clerk