

1
**Bear Creek Township Special Board Meeting
May 17, 2022**

Called to order at 1:00p.m.

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

Click Rd Fire Station

Keiser noted that we are here to discuss the concept of the new fire hall. Radatovich did some research to answer board question. She gave the board a memo with information regarding other jurisdictions, including Green Lake Township and City of Petoskey. In addition, she drew up a new sketch for the hall.

Radatovich explained that there are several pieces of election legislation going around. HB 4134 would expand precinct limits to 4,000 active registered voters. This bill doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Most election bills are at a stand still or are being vetoed by the governor. Radatovich shared some information about what buildings can be considered for a polling place. In addition, she shared that the updated voting booth requirements are 1 booth for every 300 voters (legally), but the Bureau of Elections recommends 1 booth for every 80-100 voters. Radatovich suggested a hybrid. Less booths (closer to the 1/300 ratio) for smaller elections and more booths (closer to the 1/100 ratio) for large elections. In December 2021, The Bureau of Elections released a list of high count precincts. Basically, these are precincts that the Bureau is watching to make sure that they split and do not go over cap. Bear Creek precinct 2 is on this list and so we will need to split when we reach cap. Radatovich noted that she reached out to Green Lake Township, which is in Interlochen area, and is a similar size township to Bear Creek (voting population). They are in a very similar situation. They just split their precinct 2 into 2 and 3. At Green Lake, precinct 1 votes in the township hall, precincts 2 and 3 vote in another township owned building (that they rent out the rest of the year). Green Lake is currently building a fire hall and they will add a fourth precinct that will vote there when it is built out. The City of Petoskey has four wards and they vote in the Grand Unity Event Center. They have about 6,000 sq ft of space per ward and it is completely filled. Radatovich's new plan suggests 5,760 sq ft for the polling place, which would house two precincts (and is comparable to the size of the fairgrounds community room).

Hoffman noted that we should share this information with voters- that we are on the Bureau's watch list of precincts to split.

Radatovich suggested that we hire a marketing professional to help us explain this plan to voters. We can give them our research and they can find a concise way to explain this and market the project.

Keiser noted that there is a short and long term need. Last month we discussed adding onto this current hall. There is a temporary need for the 2024 election cycle (possibly). Radatovich noted that there is no way to know for sure when we will need to split precinct 2. Possibly 2024 but very likely for 2026.

Keiser suggested possibly two routes for this. Perhaps we build out part of this with our own funds. We could do that part sooner. And then we could add onto it after we do a bond. He noted that we will need to hire a marketing professional to maybe do a short survey. Originally we had talked about an insert in the tax bill. After contemplating this idea, Keiser suggested that we do something separate than in the tax bill. At this point, the board seems to be comfortable with the proposed voting size and need. Let's discuss the fire side.

Welsheimer agreed that voters are more likely to vote in a bond of fire protection services than for elections. If we were to build out the fire side first, they could temporarily accommodate the election needs.

Urman noted that last meeting, we discussed adding onto this current township hall. We could ask neighboring property owners to borrow parking space. Keiser noted that parking would be a main issue if we were to house more precincts here.

Welsheimer shared a list of fire equipment we currently own. We currently have six pieces of equipment that will go down to the new fire hall. Plus, we will need a 100ft ladder truck within the next 5-7 years because of current township growth. He is hoping to work with the tribe to get some funding for that vehicle. Our goal is always to get a truck to its 30 year life expectancy. Tankers are on a 15 year rotation. The main goal of adding this new fire station was to get a better ISO rating for better coverage for our residents to the south end of the township. The south end is where the growth is going to happen. We can possibly get FEMA grant money for this project, especially if it is used for training. There is also a house bill that was proposed for fire station funding, but it is at a standstill.

Keiser noted that we are more likely to get grants if this is a regional project (regional training facility). Radatovich believes we should hire a professional grant writer to help us find grants for this project. Keiser noted that often times, grant writers are paid for out of the grant. Radatovich noted that the Petoskey Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation may have some connections for us.

Urman noted that he is going to be in the Traverse City area tomorrow and may stop by Green Lake Township.

Hoffman asked if we need to get in touch with Elaine Keiser. Radatovich suggested that we reach out to design build contractors and have them give us two estimates: one for just the polling place side of things and the other for the whole project. Then we can compare costs and determine if we want to have this as a phased project or if we would rather do the whole thing at once. Urman thinks Elaine should compare as well.

Hoffman asked if there is anyone good in Northern Michigan that we could hire for PR/marketing? Radatovich thinks we should hire two people: a marketing person and a grant writer. Urman suggested contacting Bedzinski or Miller Canfield about a grant writer.

Keiser thinks we should contact a few builders and also coordinate a trip to Green Lake Township to see their facilities. He asked about what the board wants to do with Elaine.

Urman offered to sit down with Elaine. He thinks should she be engaged as she has put a lot of time into this already. Keiser noted that Elaine has already been paid for the work she has done.

Welsheimer noted that he is leaning towards a design build. We want to know what this project is going to cost.

Keiser asked if the meeting room would have to be sprinkled. Radatovich feels we should have it sprinkled to protect the township's investment. Keiser noted that we could put in the piping but then finish the sprinkler system in phase two of the build out.

Mitch Brown suggested that we have the builders give us a third estimate of the fire side only.

Keiser noted that we will need a general contractor for this project and will need a commercial builder.

Radatovich noted that she can send out meeting date options after we get ahold of some design build people. She will reach out to MTA about possible marketing consultants. Welsheimer will contact design builders.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: 2:39p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emma Radatovich

Emma Radatovich, Bear Creek Township Clerk