

## Bear Creek Township Board Meeting September 7, 2022

Called to order at 7:04 p.m.

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

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular mtg of August 3, 2022 and special meeting of August 22, 2022.

**Motion** by Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Urman.

**Passed**

### **Request from the Floor/Discussion:**

Karla Buckmaster made remarks regarding the blight ordinance. She recently attended the county land bank meeting and noted that some of the individuals with the land bank are not even aware of Bear Creek's ordinance. She remarked that a property on Pickerel Lake has been blighted for years, however, she was always hesitant to write a blight letter, because she has seen the authorities bringing someone out of that house. She thinks we need to change our blight ordinance and suggested that if one person could write a letter and sign it, perhaps the name could be redacted. Keiser explained that legally, the names cannot be redacted. Buckmaster suggested that the blight officer could write the second letter. In addition, she would like to see the blight officer looking official. In regard to the Click Rd property, she asked if it will be a general revenue bond. Keiser noted that this bond would go to the vote of the people.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Keiser would like to start new business with parks and recreation, as a representative of Beckett and Raeder is present.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### Roads

Keiser noted that all road projects are complete. We will be receiving our Pasar ratings at the end of the month. Urman asked when the townships are meeting with the road commission. Mark Hoffman clarified that it will be in January.

#### Blight Ordinance Review

Keiser explained that we are reviewing our blight ordinance, which currently requires two signed letters to be effective. Last month, it was suggested that we look at neighboring ordinances. Little Traverse and Littlefield require two letters, as do we. Springvale does not require letters, they enforce based on if something is reported. Keiser suggested we consider hiring a police officer to enforce our ordinances. Currently, our blight officer is enforcing in plain clothes, and there may be more things going on inside a house other than blight. Currently, Emmet County does not have enough officers. However, Keiser has discussed with administration the possibility of Bear Creek contracting with the county for an officer. They could help enforce our ordinances. In addition, Keiser noted that Welsheimer has discussed the possibility of a property maintenance code, similar to the city. That has really helped clean up the city.

Hoffman noted that we have a wonderful blight officer, however, it is dangerous to go up to someone's house. If we were to reduce the minimum to one letter, it could turn it to neighborhood disputes. Two letters may be better. If we had an officer, he could follow up with complaints and get back with us. Keiser agreed that our blight officer has done a great job and will take whatever direction the board gives him. We do not want to put him in a difficult situation.

Urman noted that Springvale, who requires no letters, was recently updated. The other two are old ordinances, and our world has changed. Keiser noted that we revisited our ordinance in 2018 to address household garbage, which can be removed after 7 days with no letter.

Radatovich feels we should leave the ordinance as it stands for now, but then seriously discuss an enforcement officer and property maintenance code during budget time this year. Golding and Hoffman agree.

**Motion** by Radatovich to leave the blight ordinance as it stands. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Golding.

Yes: Golding, Radatovich, Hoffman, Keiser

No: Urman

**Passed 4-1**

#### Click Rd Property

Keiser noted that the board has agreed to move forward with a design build concept, and we are awaiting a formal proposal. Keiser and Urman met with bond council last week to discuss bond rates. We can spend money on soft costs, such as design cost, permits, and surveying, but for any hard cost we would have to pass a reimbursement resolution. We are looking to build a second fire station and permanent place to vote. Currently, we are outgrowing the snowmobile club. This would be up to the vote of the people to pass a bond. We are in preliminary stages now but are looking forward to being able to get information to voters. Urman noted that if anyone has any suggestions for the new fire hall, we are open to suggestions.

### **New Business**

Parks and Recreation

Tim Knutsen is a landscape architect from Beckett and Raeder, who has put together a scope for a project to get grant funding to help us remodel Spring Lake Park. Originally, we were just looking to remodel the existing bathrooms, but the scope of the project has changed. With regards to the existing bathrooms, they are 30 years old and the ventilation is not adequate. He would like to add day lighting, which will also help with ventilation. The finishes inside the building are starting to age, and the floor and wall tile have cracks. The focus is on ventilation and day lighting, to get more air movement into the space. He would also like to work on accessibility in this project, although preliminary inspections appear that the park is very accessible. Knutsen also noted that the bathroom roof needs attention. In regards to the dock at water's edge, he explained that the railing needs to be replaced, and has suggested replacing with a staggered railing to increase accessibility. The pavilion roof will also need to be addressed, as the cedar shakes are in disrepair. He would like to get in contact with the Top of Michigan Trails Council to see if there is any support for cycling infrastructure. If we can make accommodations for them, perhaps they will contribute to funding. Knutsen is also looking into additional parking opportunities within the park. Part of the scope of the project will also be to perform an accessibility assessment. Lastly, they will investigate the possibility of grants for installing a charging station at the park. Consumers Energy has two grant opportunities for this, however, most likely, with these grants, they are looking for the park and facilities to be open 24/7.

Keiser clarified that this is a seasonal park that is not open 24/7. The charging stations are worth looking into, but may not work out there if that is the requirement. Would this proposal be for an April 2023 application? And do we need to update the recreation plan to support this? If the board were to approve this tonight, what would be the financial obligation? In addition, what would be the match from the township for the grant?

Knutsen explained that this is a draft proposal calling for schematic design and engineering. It would be about a three-month process. The proposal includes their services for the grant application. The goal would be to have the schematic design complete by the end of the year to start working on the application for the spring. It appears that the recreation plan supports this park. The proposal includes the agreement that if the township were to get the grant, then the township would contract with Beckett and Raeder to complete the project. They reduced the fee for assisting with the grant application process. The township would owe \$13,500 for this portion of the project. The passport grant is focused on infrastructure and repairing existing buildings, which is perfect for this project. That requires a 25% match and has a maximum of \$150,000 in grant funding. We could also pursue a trust grant, which is more general.

Hoffman asked if a trust fund grant would be harder to get? Knutsen explained that there are more trust fund grants given than passport grants. We also would receive more points on the grant application for a higher match.

Keiser asked if we would be prescored? Knutsen confirmed that we would, and after receiving the grant, we would be about a year out from construction, due to the bidding process.

**Motion** by Urman to approve the proposal from Beckett and Raeder for schematic design and funding application assistance for Spring Lake Park for \$13,500. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hoffman. **Passed**

FOIA Procedures & Guidelines

Radatovich shared that we will need to adopt the updated FOIA Procedures and Guidelines to stay in compliance. We are currently using the 2016 edition and it has recently been updated.

**Motion** by Radatovich to approve the updated FOIA Procedures & Guidelines for 2022. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Golding. **Passed**

Fireworks Ordinance- Request

Keiser shared a request from the Petoskey High School football coach to have a fireworks display for the homecoming game on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Our ordinance normally would not allow for this date. After discussing this with Joel, we could agree not to enforce the ordinance section 5A and B on this date, and the school could agree to have it on their property. Coach Webb noted that this would only be for the homecoming game, and it would be to generate excitement with the students and community. The board agreed to allow fireworks on the school property on Sept 16<sup>th</sup> for the homecoming game.

Mail Machine

Radatovich shared that we have been having problems servicing our current mail machine for the past several months. She found a grant that would cover about half the cost of a new machine. She is recommending the PostBase A5 machine, which is the same machine used by Little Traverse, but also has quotes from Pitney Bowes and Mint.

**Motion** by Radatovich to purchase a PostBase Vision A5 postage machine in the amount of \$5,520.00 and to approve the annual maintenance fee and meter rental fee. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Golding. **Passed**

Library

Keiser noted that if any public have comments to make regarding the library, they are welcome to come to the microphone to address the board (not their neighbors), and the board is here to listen. Going forward, the voters will have an opportunity in 2024 to vote on the library funding. He read his statement regarding the library, which is as follows: I believe that for every problem, there is a solution, providing that you are dealing with the facts. In today's world, with social media (which I don't follow but have been told) that the facts

regarding the library are not accurate. So I would like to give you the facts as I know them. First, Bear Creek never asked the library to remove any books from their shelves, but only not to promote controversial books to our teens and young adults. We wrote a letter to the library board members in August 2020 asking them not to spend taxpayer dollars on political and social issues and just remain neutral. We asked not to spend our taxpayer dollars on challenge cards and t-shirts. Second, we never said that we would defund the library, but was asked by a township resident to do that. This request came to us after Jamestown Township voted to reject the library millage. The township's response to this request was that the people of Bear Creek Township voted to have the Petoskey District Library provide library services to the township residents through 12/31/24 and that the voters will have to decide in 2024 if they want to renew library services or not. The township has a Library Service Agreement for such services. The board will be working on that agreement and the board will have to discuss at that time any changes to be made to the agreement. Last month, the library director asked us to change the minutes of our meeting, which we legally cannot do. We have to record what was said. As township supervisor, I was shocked to learn what the library was promoting in Pandora's Box- men menstruating, and the book *The Hate U Give* with the terrible language including the "F" word and hate towards our police. The library should stay out of political and social issues and only provide material when asked and not promote political, controversial material. Stay out of politics when using taxpayer dollars. If you promote political views such as democrats or republicans there will be controversy. If you promote religious views there will be controversy. If you want to promote a parade or flag, then promote the American flag and have a parade supporting the military, police, fire and EMS. Maybe it is time for the board to consider writing another letter to the library or a joint public statement from the township board.

Hoffman explained that in 2020, the library released a newsletter that discussed "how whites need to learn about racism towards blacks". Hoffman was approached by a resident who was white and felt they were not racist. As a township trustee, it is his duty to ensure that township monies are used correctly. The voters have voted in 0.4 mils for the library, which raised approximately \$200,000 this year, plus the library receives our penal fines. Over the last two years, he (and others) have objected to the library buying books such as *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, which was given out before the pride parade. He noted that the LGBT themed books are "not as bad as *The Hate U Give* and others". When considering the library budget, Hoffman noted that the \$200,000 from Bear Creek gets put into the general fund. There is no accounting for the costs of when a librarian puts out a diversity mailing, the cost of the mailing, the print, her time, the lights and the building, etc. There is no setting those costs apart. The library claims that the Friends of the Library is paying for these materials. The Friends raise money and it goes into the general fund, just like our monies. So when someone asks where our money is going, he cannot believe that it is not going towards this programming. There was quite a change in 2020 with the library getting active in Critical Race Theory and the Black Lives Matter movement. Hoffman found out that the bigger libraries often use the training sites from the American Library Association. He read a statement from the library director's report: "Once again, discussion has flared in the library world, this time over the American Library Association's recent update to the Librarian's Code of Ethics. The American Library Association added a ninth code, the first change in the code since 1995. This code states 'We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual bias and to confront inequity and oppression.'" Our library has implemented this. This ninth principle was a product of the work done by the Social and Racial Justice subgroup of the Committee on Professional Ethics. They have quite a training program of paid courses on facilitating conversations about race and implementing this. Our library uses this site. Hoffman noted that if you go to the library website to the youth services section, kids 5-12 years old, you will see anti-racism resources. You will see resources talking about race with children as well as indigenous race with children. The website also lists the staff picked books. Some of these books include *Racecar*, a children's book about white privilege, *Something Happened In Our Town*, a story about racial injustice, *Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism, and You, Our Skin, How Can I Be an Ally?*, *What is the Black Lives Matter Movement*, *What is White Privilege?*, *Not My Idea, What's Racism?*, *Antiracist Baby*, which is for 0-4 years olds, *The Talk*, and *Let's Talk About Race*. If you go to the home page of the Petoskey Library, you will get to a page about anti-racism resources for 13 and up. It is part of the library's commitment to creating a welcoming space. There is also an anti-racism discussion question sheet. On this page are TED videos you can click on. A few months ago, Hoffman asked the head librarian to take down a video "that talked about taking a knee... cops are killing blacks, George Floyd" and she agreed to take that video down. There are some really questionable, unpatriotic videos still up on this page. In regards to *The Hate U Give*, this book discussed the police killing a kid, and uses very vulgar language, including "F the cops". This is selected as a main pick for kids 13 and up to read. The police union in South Carolina has come out against this book. Hoffman noted that we do not want our youth to speak like this. When talking to people at the library about this, he was told that kids talk like that. He asked the library to reconsider what is on the website, and if an individual wants books on this topic, to work with the parent. He is not advocating to take books off the shelf, "just don't throw it in people's faces". He also would like to stop sending our librarians to some of these conferences, and "get back to a normal library where parents can feel safe" sending their children. If a group wants to start a club using their own building and resources, he feels that would be fine, just does not want to see it happening at the library.

Urman noted that although he was not on the township board in 2020 when the letter was written, he strongly agrees with the letter. He feels we should promote our military, EMS, firefighters and the American flag. He believes the library should remain neutral and also encouraged biblical and Christian values.

Radatovich read an excerpt from the letter written by the Bear Creek Township Board to the Library Board on July 18, 2020. This letter states: "We encourage the library to maintain reading materials that are inclusive and diverse in the library. However, we strongly feel that the library should remain neutral in volatile social issues (while maintaining reading material on the subject within the library collection)." She remarked that the stance of the Bear Creek Township Board has remained the same over the last two years: to retain

these books in the library (not to remove these books from the shelves), but to remain neutral and to not promote books that discuss political or social issues.

Keiser encouraged the public to speak up at the library board, noting that the library director agreed that comments should be made at the library board.

Dr. Sweeney introduced herself as a neurologist from Petoskey, with two children. She noted that she can hear the point of view where maybe some of the national issues don't apply to Petoskey itself, however, she strongly cautioned the board, physicians are in short number, and you want physicians to stay and pay taxes in your area. She feels the entire discussion is a little backwards. She noted that the community present at this meeting in the hall are predominately Caucasian. If our information about minorities comes from TV and books, "we might accidentally be racist". She thanked the military and veterans for their service. She stated that she does not have a television and is not a republican or a democrat. She feels that when news like this hits, it "makes the community look backwards, uneducated, and frankly, way off base, compared to the national standard." If you want physicians to stay here, be pro-education and pro-library. She believes in no censorship and supports the library.

Christine Parker, a resident of Bear Creek Township, noted that her great grandfather bought his land from the Indians. She is proud of that and is proud of the way Petoskey and Bear Creek Township have grown, and sees "no reason to look like the world." She explained that there is a group that has been praying for the township leaders, and from the sound of what the board has supported, sent to the library, and investigated, she is proud to say that she believes the board heard her prayers. She congratulated the board on standing for American principles, "the same Godly principles that founded this nation." She feels it is inappropriate for the library to hand a gift bag to a teenage girl with books that talk about the gay and homosexual agenda. She does not want her taxpayer dollars to be used for that. The homosexual community is 1.2% of the population. She noted that if 98% of the people in Bear Creek Township are not homosexual, then why is the homosexual lifestyle, and the anger and division that comes along with that, which is anti-unity, why is that "pressed upon us in staff picks and donated books"? It is her advice that someone from the township goes to the Petoskey Library board meetings as ex-officio, and asked that as a township, that we do not renew our agreement at the end of the tax cycle in 2024.

Eric Kessler, lifelong Petoskey resident, identified himself as a "card carrying republican, Catholic, hard-core conservative" and explained that he has a daughter who is part of the LGBTQ community. He is glad that the 98% was brought up and recognized that "we are all predominately white up here". He stated that he grew up with narrow minded views about the world, and in his 9 years in the army, met all sorts of people of color. It was brought up what can the board do, and he feels that the board is "filling these library meetings with people." He stated that his wife is the teen services librarian (and noted that programs are up 200% after she took over). He noted that people who are in the minority may have no other place where they feel they can be themselves. He has heard firsthand from teenage patrons of the library that it is the only place they can go where they feel safe. He feels that "the board can quit stirring up trouble with lies, talking about books you have never read, programs you've never visited, and videos you obviously did not watch all the way through." He noted that he did not understand white privilege until he read *The Hate U Give*.

Sophia Henry, a senior at Petoskey High School, feels the board should reconsider. She stated that she is part of the diversity club, whose goal is to make sure that the students feel welcomed and safe. She feels that these books help other students in how they should treat others. She feels that the books should be allowed in circulation and promoted, because some people may feel nervous to reach out about this material.

Olivia Rollinger, a Bear Creek Township resident, wanted to make comments about the remarks made in the Petoskey News Review. She was upset with the article in the Petoskey News Review that said that Bear Creek residents had concerns about the LGBT+ community. As a resident, the only thing that concerned her in that article was "there were hateful and discriminatory language and thoughts expressed there by specific members of this board." She feels members of the board need more education to understand the LGBTQIA+ community and the lived experiences of people of color. She noted that most of the people in the room were white and have never lived the lives of a person of color. However, some individuals try to understand the injustices they face in society. She stated that "your ignorance has shown through your words and it demonstrates that when people do not have firsthand experiences with people who are different from them, how they can have gross misunderstandings of those folks and their lives." She is appalled that the board is having discussions about defunding the Petoskey Public Library over these LGBTQIA and racial issues. In regards to transgender volunteers, she noted that the library is a wonderful resource to the community. Even if there was a transgender volunteer or staff member reading to children, she feels there is nothing wrong with that. She noted that transgender people are human beings and "only your hatred for them makes this a political and divisive issue, not their existence." She stated that "transgender rights are human rights and transgender lives matter." She feels that even a brief discussion about voting to defund the library is unacceptable, and it would tear resources away from township residents. She addressed Joe Hoffman directly and said "in the article, the thoughts that you had were homophobic, transphobic, full of hatred, and 100% racist. And I will not support you and I will ask that you resign from your position."

Jacob Meyers Myers, a Bear Creek Township resident, introduced himself and stated that he has served as a professional public planner and community consultant. He stated that he was raised in northern Michigan and that his family has served in every major war and conflict in this nation dating back to the revolutionary war. He stated that he was raised with those values in a Christian household. He stated that he was reminded "how the prophet Jesus felt when he was confronted by the pharisees and also some of their prejudices and



hatred and ignorance.” He feels that the views of the board are not neutral and not apolitical. He feels the board is “grossly abusing your public position” and feels “it would be wise to consider resigning your public office as you are not suited to serve the public trust in the way that you should.” He noted that the board has a duty to serve every one of its constituents and he does not believe we are doing that. He stated that he is reminded of Berlin 1933, as the board is discussing some of these topics that make individuals uncomfortable. He stated that it is dangerous to talk about dismantling public funds and public resources, and asked the board to reconsider. He feels that the library is a valuable and important public institution and asked the board to keep an open mind. He stated that “Jesus spent time with the whores and the beggars and the thieves, and yet I’m not sure that some of you would do the same.”

Nick Rhudy, a lifelong Petoskey resident, stated that he is here to speak out against the social indoctrination occurring at the Petoskey District Library. He stated that when you go to the library’s website, you will find over 20 books targeting kids and teens that are about LGBTQ issues and ideas. Just under half of these books are available at the Petoskey Public Library, while others can be ordered from other libraries and delivered to Petoskey for pickup. Some of these books include: *Queerfully and Wonderfully Made*, which looks to educate young queer people of faith and help them to stay safe, healthy, and secure, *Pink, Blue and You*, which is an easy to grasp picture book regarding gender identity, sexual orientation and sexism. He noted that the term picture book shows how young the target audience is. He also discussed a book titled *Gender Queer*, an “intensely cathartic autobiography that charts their journey of self-identity, including the mortification and confusion of adolescent crushes, grappling with how to come out to family and society, bonding with friends over erotic gay fanfiction, facing the trauma and fundamental violation of pap smears”. He noted that the imagery in this book is nothing short of pornographic. These same images have been deemed too explicit to air on Virginia TV and too explicit to read or show in school board meetings across the country, when parents expressed concern over having this book in their school library. He again noted that these images are pornographic. This book is targeted towards teens. He noted that one could argue that teens obtain information such as this, or worse, online, and this is true, but just because there is an easier means to this information does not mean we do not have the moral obligation to protect children from it. The library is supposed to be a place where youth can go, read great works of literature, meant to encourage and enhance their educational experience, not to tempt them with degrading material that targets their base instincts. What we are experiencing is a social contagion, one by which we have not seen the likes before. To define terms, he noted that a social contagion, as defined by Dr. David Levy and Dr. Paul Neil, is a spread of an effect, attitude, or behavior where the recipient does not receive an intentional influence attempt on the part of the initiator. According to Statista, the share of Americans who identified as LGBTQ by generation is as follows: beginning in 1913- 1979, three generations, the population that identified as LGBTQ never rose above 4%, ranging from 1.8%-3.8%. Millennials come in at 9% identifying. Now, Gen Z, with books such as these and teachers looking to affirm their radical ideology, pushing their agenda on our students, is up to 16%. One in six in his generation identifies as LGBTQ. From the end of the 70s to those born in the late 90s/early 2000s, LGBTQ identification quadrupled. You cannot say this increase is due solely to national tolerance. The only answer is indoctrination by public institutions on our children when they are away from their parents and at the age where they cannot fend for themselves. The leap in his generation alone is the reason why the number of adults identifying as LGBTQ jumped from 3.5% in 2012 to 7.1% in 2020, nearly double. He noted that some may not agree with him, that when you are an adult, you can do what you wish, but he cannot stand by and let children be subjected to radical ideology and porn in their schools and libraries, especially not while being funded by local tax dollars. He asked the library to refocus itself as a tool to work towards more educated citizenry, not a political and social tool to fundamentally change our society in ways taxpayers do not agree with.

David Heick, a resident of Petoskey, noted that he has heard this issue come up in libraries around the state. He feels that we are going “out of the realm of what the board has outlined”. We do not know what monies of the \$200,000 are going towards handing out gift bags and such. Joe Hoffman clarified that there have been free books handed out before events. The library said that the Friends of the Library paid for those books, but the money goes into the general fund just like ours. David Heick suggested that there should be an accountability. He is against banning any books. He asked “what if I went into the library and said ‘I love Trump’ and wanted to put on a program and hand out books to library- goers. Can I do that? What money can I use?” He feels that we need a better understanding of how our money is allocated, an itemized break down.

Dr. Laura Most, a pediatrician that owns Petoskey Pediatrics, supports the library, programs, and books. She does that to support the youth in the community that she cares for. She noted that things like this make her upset when “we are challenging other people’s right to live.” She noted that we are discussing what is available, not what is being forced upon anyone to read or participate in. She shared some statistics. Within the United States youth, ages 10-24, the second leading cause of death is suicide. The LGBTQ+ community is four times more likely to be a part of that group than their peers. She explained that it is estimated that every 45 seconds, an LGBTQ+ youth attempts suicide. Knowing this, if we create environments, schools, families and friends that support the LGBTQ+ community, the likelihood of an attempted suicide or for the individual to even think about suicide goes down. Creating environments where LGBTQ+ children feel seen, heard, and welcomed is inherent to their survival. They should feel comfortable in a setting where they can find a book where a character reflects themselves, the same way that you and I want to read books where we see ourselves reflected. Our community should have programs and books that allow us to grow. She stated that some of us read books to be uncomfortable, to challenge what we have known to be true or what we have been taught, so that we can expand our horizons and have empathy and compassion for people outside of ourselves. Having these books gives people the opportunity to have compassion for a group of people they may not have previously understood. While having a book in a library may make someone feel uncomfortable, not having that book or program in the library may make someone else feel suicidal. She is here to support the library and the programs they offer. Our youth and community should not suffer because some people are uncomfortable.

Dan Plichta, a Petoskey resident with children, noted that they recently checked out a couple books from the library. One of the books they checked out was in the young adult's section, and is called *Let's Talk About It*. The majority of the pages are pretty graphic, and there were several pages that give ideas and teach kids different techniques on masturbation. There were also pages on "how to play with their anus". He is not sure where the benefit in this is, and doesn't understand why there needs to be a picture in a young adult book of a man and a woman performing sex or a man and a man having oral sex. There is no good to gain from that with young kids. It is the parent's job to teach their kids. It shouldn't be that they are browsing through the library and open a book and have their innocence stolen from them. He is not sure why we need a book like this and why we can't all agree on that. He would welcome opposing ideas as to why this would be beneficial to our youth. He noted that someone remarked that the board was showing ignorance in the words said. He feels that the words of the board reflect their beliefs, not ignorance (just because it doesn't align with someone else's beliefs). He discussed another picture book for young kids that discusses Critical Race Theory and white privilege. The last page of the book reads "Innocence is overrated; knowledge is power." He asked why we don't give innocence any credit anymore.

Joe Murphy noted that he grew up and graduated from here. Out of the 220 kids that graduated, about 112 came to the 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion and there was not one gay or lesbian, because of the hate that they grew up with. When he lived in Phoenix, a 13 year old girl showed up who knew his daughter, who had been kicked out of her house for being lesbian. If she would have had books maybe she could bring people together so her parents wouldn't kick her out. What was she supposed to do? She couldn't work. Was she supposed to "sell drugs, become a prostitute?" Is that what people who want to ban books want to see happen? Books are used by someone who wants to find information. If you do not want to read a book, don't read it. If you don't want your kids to read a book, don't get it for them. He noted that he has an uncle who died during World War II and his father was treated badly. He stated that he hates when he sees a serviceman treated poorly and that should never happen. He explained that when he grew up, there were places that Native Americans could not eat. Are those the days we want to return to? That is the type of ignorance that happens when we don't have books to teach people. Anyone who doesn't understand what privilege means "really doesn't know what they are doing." He stated that he has purchased books and magazines for libraries and he always asks the librarian first, as some of those books are controversial and Christian. He feels that if we start banning books, eventually we will have to ban the bible because there are things in there that children should not read.

Barb Fate, a Petoskey resident, used to work in rural libraries growing up, and used to take her children to the library when they were growing up. She stated that the library has always been a pillar in the community that promoted the love of reading and learning, and the library was unbiased and stood as a solid haven for all, without pushing any agenda or representing any groups or factions of people. That is not happening anymore. We see our library stepping out to represent certain folks and aligning with certain agendas, instead of remaining neutral and working to promote unity. The library is promoting disunity by standing by certain groups without representing all. We need to be unbiased and welcoming to all in a library. By having displays of LGBT and Critical Race Theory materials front and center when you go in the library, it is promoting an agenda or having a bias. She noted that she, and many others present, do not hate LGBT community neighbors, however, "we do not have to adopt their agenda" and "it should not be thrust upon our children." If you are going to represent an agenda for the LGBT group, she asked for equal representation of another group that is misrepresented in our community, and that is the unborn. Please show equal representation for the right to life. She suggested not belonging to the American Library Association. She feels that we are not ignorant here in northern Michigan and that the national way of life right now is "a piece of garbage." She noted that if we have to stand up for our American, rural police, we should. She would like to see the library be a pillar in the community that does not have biases.

Meredith Kennedy, a Little Traverse Bay Band Tribal citizen and mother of six, is present to support the library. She noted that there is a question about funding. For the first two community reads programs, she volunteered as a facilitator, and no money was given to her (although she is a professional speaker). She gave that to the library because she wanted her children to have representation in their own community. Her husband is Jamaican, so her children are Odawa and Jamaican, and she wants them to be seen in their community. The Petoskey District Library provides a space for her children and nieces and nephews, and her community. They have books about why boys have long hair and why that is sacred. They hold reports from the federal government, including one that talks about Indian Boarding schools, the last of which to close was in Harbor Springs. She is a fourth generation boarding school survivor. That school closed in 1986. It is things like this that the library promotes so the unseen can be part of the community.

Tammy Broz has been living in the area with her family since 2016. She feels that public organizations should not have political or gender programs. She feels "it is a parental thing" that beliefs and values should be taught by families. She feels it is okay if families want those programs to help their children feel safe, they could have a club. However, she does not want taxpayer dollars going to that, and noted they could have a fundraiser. She feels that the library has gotten "caught up and swept along" with the social justice courses. She noted that her children have seen some of those books and looked in them and that it is awful. She explained that they have lived in multiple, diverse communities, some of which they have been the minority. She feels that we need to get away from looking at sexual preferences or the color of someone's skin and look at what is on the inside. She agreed that individuals with certain sexual preferences do have higher suicide rates, but explained that Sweden is one of the most homosexual-friendly countries with the highest rate of transition surgeries and yet their studies do not say that they have a lower suicide rate. In fact, their suicide rates are higher, even though they have affirmative and transitioning care. She feels it would be great to have the resources, books and programs for kids to feel safe, but feels it needs to be off the taxpayers' dollar. There are lots of people that support that movement, but not everyone wants their

children to be taught that. She feels parents should have priority over that. Sexual preference shouldn't be something that kids talk about, but if it is, it should be handled with the parents. If the parents want to send them to a club, that would be fine, but it shouldn't be funded with taxpayer dollars.

Bill Heise, a retired internist, noted that he took care of a lot of gay and lesbian people who were afraid to tell people about it. He practiced 35 years total and noted that "none of them told me they got gay because they read a book." He is embarrassed that we are discussing defunding the library.

Keiser clarified that the board never stated that we would defund the library. We were asked by a township resident to do that and we stated that we cannot do that.

Mary Olmstead noted that it astounds her, after working in libraries, that there are people in this community saying that "you're gay or LGBTQ and you don't fit in with our white culture". She feels that a library does not promote anything, rather, a library has a display, and it may be something that offends you. She noted that she has a daughter in law who is Jewish. If she walks into the library and sees a Christmas tree, should she be offended and feel like the library is promoting Christianity? Maybe they shouldn't have any Christmas displays because maybe that is promoting Christianity. She stated that "you should be reading some of these books" to understand their experiences and "see if you still hate them and want them to just disappear". Some of you said that you should get your own club. She hopes the board does not defund the library.

Keiser stated that the board is not defunding the library.

George Robson, from Petoskey, was on the library board for a number of years and the board emphasized inclusion and expansion. He stated that he can see that the library is doing that today and applauded the library for doing that.

Brenda Kulbieda attended the last library board meeting. She is a taxpayer in Bear Creek and wanted to let the township board know that she supports them and hears them. She is part Native American and belongs to the tribe and noted that she doesn't understand where these lines are drawn. The library is trying to open people's mind, which is great, that is what a library is supposed to do. It appears that the township board understands that. The problem is the age of the people that the material is being shown to. These are children. That seems to be what is at hand here. She respects others and has never had a problem with anyone. Part of this issue is the funding, and the board has already stated that the claims of "defunding" are not true. It will be up to the voters in 2024.

### **Planning and Zoning Report**

Mitch Brown explained that there was a light Planning Commission agenda last month. The first case, for Coseo properties, was tabled at the applicant's request. The second case, for outdoor storage at the D&W gas station, was approved. The Planning Commission discussed traffic flow and agreed to allow them two parking spaces near the dumpster to use for outdoor storage and display. In addition, the Planning Commission discussed some of the recent cases regarding housing as far as setbacks, height, etc. We need to review our ordinance to see if they are still appropriate, because we have had to make so many adjustments.

Keiser explained that housing is a problem in all communities. We have talked to several developers and have done everything we can to help a developer, short of a tax break. However, we still cannot get the numbers to work. We adopted a PUD-RO to allow for flexibility on setbacks and height, but it doesn't seem to be working. The county has hired Beckett and Raeder to start matching the Master Plan to zoning ordinances. We show an area in Bear Creek for high density, but with the topography or lack of services it cannot happen. He noted that he would rather give higher density than see a tax break. In addition, we need to look at the fact that Bear Creek has no storm sewer.

Hoffman noted that often when a developer comes, they need more, because they can't hit their profit margin. It is not our job to make a developer money.

Keiser noted that often times when a developer comes into town, they have a preliminary meeting and show them possible development sites. But then when cost estimates start coming in, they come back to us to ask for more of a break. We did everything we could to help these developers short of a tax break.

Brown noted that it is tough to balance our ordinance with a developer's economic viability. We should look at the ordinance a bit.

Radatovich suggested a joint meeting between the township board and township Planning Commission to start addressing this issue.

**Motion** by Hoffman to accept the Planning Commission report. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Radatovich.

**Passed**

### **Fire Department Report**

Welsheimer noted that they did an extrication walk through with the new guys, as well as a hands on reenactment. There were 2 EMS calls and 32 fire calls; they also installed 12 smoke detectors. He shared that there is a 9% increase statewide in fire deaths. The state of

Michigan received a grant for \$1 million for smoke detectors, which is why we have some to give away. Welsheimer showed a picture of the air vac filtration filter after 6 months. It shows the amount that the filter is catching. Karla Buckmaster asked what is being filtered. Welsheimer clarified that it is the carcinogens from the diesel engines and hoses from fires.

#### **Parks and Recreation Report**

Discussed previously in the meeting.

#### **Correspondence**

Keiser noted that the Emmet County Board of Commissioners will be discussing transit.

#### **Clerk's Business/Bills- Report by Radatovich**

Radatovich reported bills in the amount of \$132,474.25.

**Motion** by Radatovich to pay the bills in the amount of \$132,474.25. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hoffman.

**Passed**

#### **Treasurer's Report- Report by Golding**

The Treasurer's Report shows a balance of \$10,589,086.72 as of 8/31/22.

#### **Building Department Report**

Building dept reports were shared through 8/31/22.

#### **Sewer Business/Bills**

Keiser reported bills for the township sewer in the amount of \$86,220.12.

**Motion** by Keiser to pay the township sewer bills in the amount of \$86,220.12. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Radatovich.

**Passed**

Keiser noted that we will need to have a special meeting later this month to work with Gosling Czubak to discuss lift station repairs.

#### **Request from the Floor/Discussion:**

Earl Bash thanked the board for getting involved at Spring Lake Park, especially when the beavers moved in. It is cleaned up and looking good and is a beautiful facility.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjournment:** 9:22p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Emma Radatovich*

Emma Radatovich, Bear Creek Township Clerk