

# *Vergennes Township*

## Regular Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2007

Tim Wittenbach called the regular meeting of the Vergennes Township meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Vergennes Township Hall.

Members Present:	Tim Wittenbach	Supervisor
	Mari Stone	Clerk
	Jean Hoffman	Treasurer
	Al Baird	Trustee
	Vern Nauta	Trustee

The agenda for the July 16, 2007 meeting was approved with three additions by Wittenbach seconded by Nauta. **Motion Carried.** The minutes for the June 18, 2007 meeting were approved with changes. Al Baird requested the minutes say that Kenny has always done all burials and that Kerry, when doing cremations, waived the layout fee and just charged for the cremation. The motion was approved by Hoffman; seconded by Baird. **Motion Carried.** Treasurer's report read and approved. There was a motion to approve the bills by Nauta; seconded by Baird.

### **Unfinished Business:**

1. **Cemetery Issues** – As a follow-up to the discussion in June, Wittenbach said that he feels the recent administration of burials has not been consistent with past practices. He and Baird noted that the fee schedule that Kenny Wittenbach has given the township has always been used for all burials and cremations. Stone pointed out that the ordinance gives authority to the Sexton, Kerry Tap, to make those decisions. As Clerk, the job of administering burials has fallen to her, and she stated that she has made decisions based on the ordinance. Stone then resigned from the duties of burial administrator, and Wittenbach said he was willing to take the duties. He will be in charge of receiving phone calls from funeral homes, overseeing the opening of burial spaces, laying out foundations for monuments, and other cemetery related issues. Stone will still keep records of lot sales and burials. Tap asked if he was being fired, and Wittenbach said yes, he would now be doing the job. Stone thanked Tap for his 7 years of service, stating "Kerry has always been there when he was needed, and has always done a wonderful job." There was a motion to appoint Wittenbach to be in charge of cemetery administration and operations by Baird; seconded by Wittenbach. **Motion Carried.**
2. **Township Millage Rate for 2007** – A one percent administration fee put on taxes was discussed. It would raise approximately \$50,000 dollars a year. This money would replace the money lost in lowering millage rates due to the yearly rollbacks under the Headley Amendment. A public hearing will be set for the September meeting regarding the administration fee. The millage rate for the 2007 tax year needs to be set by September. There was a motion to adopt the millage rate of .8672 for the 2007 tax year by Hoffman; seconded by Stone. All were in favor. **Motion Carried.**

### **New Business:**

1. **Rockford Ambulance Agreement** – According to the township attorney, under the Fire Agreement with the City of Lowell and Lowell Township it is not currently legal for the township to fund building improvements to city owned properties. There is a public act allowing townships to support ambulance services, and Rockford Ambulance is willing to enter into an agreement for this purpose. We will pay Rockford Ambulance \$16,000 to help build the ambulance addition. The payment will be made on the August invoices. There was a motion to approve the agreement with Rockford ambulance by Stone; seconded by Wittenbach. **Motion Carried.**
2. **Fire Run Bill** – June’s fire bill for the township showed numerous overtime runs for guarding downed electrical wires for Consumers Power. There was also a notation regarding a charge for engine use – however the township was not being billed for this. When asked, the fire chief said to bill Consumers Energy for the engine use ourselves, but that Vergennes could keep it. It was noted that there is no procedure in place under the current Fire Agreement for this kind of event. The board decided to disregard the billing for the engine use.
3. **Commercial District Discussion** – Nauta noted that Ryan Kilpatrick has been working on a commercial district plan for Vergennes and Lincoln Lake. He wanted to know if the board agreed with pursuing the idea. Since there are no immediate plans by landowners in the district and the current Commercial ordinance is relatively new, the board was not in favor of another set of regulations. Ryan will be contacted about the change of plans.
4. **Sewer Business** – Nauta wanted to discuss where the township stands on sewer provision in light of what has happened over the last year. The Township has invested in a plan for the Cook property and possible nearby areas. The experience showed that technology and regulations now allow for smaller, more centralized systems that can be self funded by growth. Because of this, discussion regarding needs in other areas of the township showed a lack of support for pursuing participation in Lowell’s sewer plans.
5. **Special Presentation – Laurie Chesney** – Chesney, an English teacher at Grand Rapids Community College, urged a yes vote on the GRCC millage in August. She said they have lowered the millage rate for the August ballot to .49 mills. It would be about \$24/yr on a \$100,000 house. She said that one quarter of Lowell graduates in the 2006 school year attended GRCC. The money will be used to increase the capacity for GRCC and fix infrastructure problems. Dale Kropf stated he was impressed with GRCC. They were doing an excellent job, and his son would be attending CC in the fall.

**Citizen’s Comments** – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

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Mari Stone, Clerk