

Vergennes Township

Regular Meeting Minutes

June 18, 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 June 18, 2007 meeting was approved by Wittenbach; seconded by Nauta. **Motion Approved.** The minutes for the May 21, 2007 meeting were approved. Treasurer's report read and approved. The bills were approved with the addition of a payroll check to Building Official Mark Fleet of \$5862.86 dollars. The motion was approved by Nauta; seconded by Hoffman.

There was no Unfinished Business.

New Business:

1. **Rail-to- Trail Discussion** – There was a discussion regarding the sale of the railroad which runs the eastern side of the township from the city boundary line to 4-Mile and turning it into a trail. To buy the railroad, it would cost \$2.5 million for 40 miles of trail. This is about \$62,900 dollars a mile. The railroad, which is owned by Rail America, runs from Greenville to Ionia. Carolyn Cane was a guest speaker and answered questions posed by the community and board. She represented the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition. Currently the coalition is raising money to pay for the appraisal fee of the railroad, which is 17,000 dollars. The Lowell Area Community Fund is giving \$4,500 for the appraisal, which is covering the City of Lowell, Lowell Township and Vergennes Township's fees. Carolyn stated the trails would bring business to Lowell, offer health incentives and connect Lowell with other communities.
2. **Liquor Ordinance Amendment** – Wording needs to be changed in the ordinance to reflect the yes vote on the sale of spirits in the township in November of 2006. The words alcoholic liquor will replace beer and wine in the new ordinance. There was a motion to adopt the amended liquor ordinance by Stone; seconded by Hoffman. A roll call vote showed all in favor of the amendment. **Motion Approved.**
3. **Township Millage Rate for 2007** – The millage rate is .8672 for the 2007 tax year. There was a motion to approved the millage rate by Hoffman; seconded by Nauta. The board discussed having an administrative fee to cover some of the costs of tax collection. After further discussion, both Hoffman and Nauta

withdrew the motion. There was a motion to table the discussion until the July meeting by Stone; seconded by Nauta. **Motion Approved.**

4. **Cemetery Issues/ Sexton Duties** – There are several issues the board needs to address. Kenny Wittenbach currently does the burials for the township. He has recently sent an updated list of his charges and would like it specified that Dirt Cheap must perform all burials, including cremations. As Sexton, Kerry Tap has the authority to make those decisions, and has buried cremations himself in the past. Wittenbach felt this was a change in operation that should have gone through the Board. If Kenny were to eliminate the word “all” from the agreement, then Nauta would be fine with it. Stone would like Kenny to be on demand for cremations, which sometimes are buried in a small vault, thus needing more equipment than a shovel. In other issues, Kenny is sometimes the first to be contacted by the Funeral Directors, and Stone pointed out that Kenny should coordinate burials with the sexton, not the funeral homes. The ordinance states that the sexton must be contacted 36 hours before the burial, but to be consistent with Kenny’s proposed services, that should be changed to 48. An updated fee schedule is needed for the sexton. There was a motion to revisit the issues next month by Stone; seconded by Nauta. **Motion Approved.**

Citizen’s Comments – None

Al Baird questioned the bill sent by Williams & Works. He thought that Jay and Ryan charged the township extra for Jay to look over work that Ryan had completed. This issue will be looked into.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28.

Respectfully submitted,

Mari Stone, Clerk