

March 13, 2023

The regular meeting of the Chocolay Township Board was held on Monday, March 13, 2023, in the Chocolay Township Fire Hall. Supervisor Bohjanen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

TOWNSHIP BOARD.

PRESENT: Richard Bohjanen, Max Engle, Ben Zyburt, David Lynch, Don Rhein, Judy White

ABSENT: Kendra Symbol (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: William De Groot, Suzanne Sundell, Joe Neumann, Dale Throenle

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Rhein moved, Zyburt supported to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Greg Hellman, 254 Lakewood Lane – expressed concerns on short term rentals in his neighborhood. Asked about regulations regarding noise and trespassing. Concerns on financial impact personally and for the township. Supervisor Bohjanen stated that the short term rental problem is bigger than Chocolay Township, and the State has not figured it out. Rental of property is an owner's right. In Chocolay Township, rentals are required to be registered.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting – Regular Meeting, February 13, 2023.
- B. Approve Revenue and Expenditure Reports – December 2022 (unaudited) and February 2023.
- C. Approve Bills Payable, Check Register Reports – February 8, 2023 (Check # 25938 - 25951, in the amount of \$8,759.52), February 20, 2023 (Check # 25952 – 25981, in the amount of \$39,442.41), and February 28, 2023 (Check # 25982 – 26002, in the amount of \$38,959.63).
- D. Approve Bills Payable – Regular Payroll of February 2, 2023 (Check #'s DD3072 – DD3105 and Check #'s 11315 - 11319, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$41,265.16), and Regular Payroll of February 16, 2023 (Check #'s DD3106 – DD3131 and Check #'s 11320 – 11325, Federal State, and MERS in the amount of \$43,252.36).

Rhein moved, Engle supported to approve the consent agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated the Township had received a "thank you" from the Nature Conservancy on snow removal for the Chocolay Bayou Preserve. Bohjanen also indicated he will not be here for the April meeting.

White moved, Rhein supported that Dave Lynch be nominated to chair the Township Board meeting on April 10, 2023.

MOTION CARRIED

CLERK'S REPORT – SECRETARY OF STATE ELECTIONS UPDATE – SLIDE HANDOUT

Clerk Engle stated there will be an election in May – Absentee Voter applications have gone out and are starting to come back in. The only thing being enforced on the May election will be the postage paid mail, which we will get reimbursed for from the State. The updates from the Secretary of State are included in the slide handout.

Supervisor Bohjanen asked about the County handling the 9-day prior to election voting – Clerk Engle stated he felt this would be confusing to the residents and would prefer to be able to conduct this at the Township.

TREASURER'S REPORT

This report will be given on a quarterly basis.

PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

PRESENTATION – NONE

UPDATE ON NEW TOWNSHIP WEBSITE.

Dale Throenle presented an update on the draft of the new Chocolay Township website. Our current website is from 2014, and has no search capability and is not mobile friendly. With the new website, there will be a search feature and large reference buttons and calendar of events (of all calendars) on the home page. The new website will also have a 3-click policy to get you to the information you want quickly. There will not be visible email addresses or phone numbers on the website – this will prevent “scrubbing”. We have contracted with Schumaker Group (STG) out of Lansing. Throenle gave a quick demonstration on how the new website will work.

Throenle also mentioned that in the future, we will be going from a chocolay.org email address to a chocolay.gov email address. There will be an automatic redirect during the transition time.

Lynch asked about the estimated time to go live – Throenle stated 60 – 90 days.

MARQUETTE COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION DUST CONTROL ACTIVITIES FOR 2023.

Lynch moved, White supported that the Township Board empower the Township Supervisor and the Township Clerk to sign the Letter of Understanding with the Marquette County Road Commission.

MOTION CARRIED

MDNR PASSPORT GRANT APPLICATION, TENNIS COURT.

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT  
MICHIGAN DNR RECREATION PASSPORT GRANT

*Lynch moved, Zyburt supported that:*

***Whereas***, *In accordance with the provisions of the Township Recreation Plan to create and maintain recreational options for our community; and*

***Whereas***, *the Michigan Department of Natural Resources will release grant funding through the DNR Recreation Passport Grant process for up to 75% reimbursement of costs associated with renovation and reconstruction of recreational facilities; and*

***Whereas***, *the Township Board agrees and supports the project improvement plan; and*

***Whereas***, *the Township Board has budgeted capital funds in accordance with this project; and*

***Whereas***, *if the Township does not receive the reimbursement grant funding, the Board could dedicate future funding to higher priorities; and*

***Now Therefore be it Resolved***, *that the Township Board approve and support the improvement plan; and*

***Let it further be Resolved***, *that staff are directed to apply for the MDNR Recreation Passport Grant and commit budgeted Capital Outlay Funds for the renovation of the second half of the tennis facility at Silver Creek Recreation Area.*

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Rhein, White, Lynch, Zyburt, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

RESOLUTION APPROVED

SUPPORT FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF THE TEN RECREATION AREAS THROUGH CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING.

Joe Neumann, Grants / Planner, stated that this money is offered every year through Senator Peter's office. The Township did apply last year for a fire department grant, but we did not qualify. After some further investigation, it was felt that this project would meet the criteria and there is no match required.

Township Manager De Groot stated that Neumann has moved into a full-time Grants / Planner position as of the first of the year, and has diligently been seeking and applying for grants for the Township.

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT  
2024 CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING REQUESTS

White moved, Rhein supported that:

**Whereas**, In accordance with the provisions of the Township Recreation Plan to create and maintain recreational options for our community; and

**Whereas**, Senator Gary Peters' office is accepting Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests for high-impact public projects in Michigan that can benefit from the federal government's assistance; and

**Whereas**, the Township Board agrees and supports the plan to conduct a feasibility study focusing on redesign of Township Recreation Areas, especially in relation to ADA compliance and multigenerational opportunities, which would expand the user base, benefiting residents and visitors of all abilities; and

**Whereas**, the results of this study would be used to guide future development of and budgeting for Recreation Areas; and

**Whereas**, the Township is under no financial obligation with this request; and

**Now Therefore be it Resolved**, that the Township Board approve and support the feasibility study plan; and

**Let it further be Resolved**, that staff are directed to submit a 2024 Congressionally Directed Spending Request for Senate Appropriations to conduct a Township Recreation Area redesign feasibility study.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Rhein, White, Lynch, Zyburt, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

RESOLUTION APPROVED

MANAGER UPDATE FOR THE SEWER AND BUDGET

Sewer – still waiting on a few things, such as seeding – will not release the retainage amount (approximately \$100,000) until we are sure of completion.

Budget – will be providing a quarterly report at next month's meeting. Joe Neumann is in our Grants / Planner position – having him in a dedicated role has helped with long range planning as he is able to research the different grants out there – there may be additional resolutions required, although we don't always know if we are going to get the grant. We are hoping for more success stories, but they are very competitive.

White asked about the SPARK grants – J. Neumann indicated that we were not chosen – 462 applications received with 21 chosen. Neumann followed up and those chosen were adversely affected by COVID.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Don Rhein – None

Kendra Symbal – Absent

Judy White – understands the issues of short term rentals on Lakewood Lane

Dave Lynch – thank Throenle for the update on the Township website – much easier to navigate

Ben Zyburt – None

Max Engle - None

Richard Bohjanen – None

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

Rhein moved, Zyburt supported that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

- A. Minutes – Chocolay Township Planning Commission; Regular Meeting of February 13, 2023, Draft.
- B. Minutes - Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, Regular Meeting of February 15, 2023, Draft.
- C. Minutes – US 41 Corridor Advisory Group; Regular Meeting of January 10, 2023.
- D. Information – Michigan Department of Transportation – 2023 Construction Map.

---

Max Engle, Clerk

---

Richard Bohjanen, Supervisor