

September 11, 2023

The regular meeting of the Chocolay Township Board was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, in the Chocolay Township Fire Hall. Supervisor Bohjanen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

TOWNSHIP BOARD.

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

ABSENT: Kendra Symbol

STAFF PRESENT: William De Groot, Suzanne Sundell

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

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

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting – Regular Meeting (Joint) August 21, 2023.
- B. Approve Revenue and Expenditure Reports – August 2023.
- C. Approve Bills Payable, Check Register Reports – August 1, 2023 (Check # 26296, in the amount of \$40,297.50), August 9, 2023 (Check #26297 – 26321, in the amount of \$13,649.00), August 17, 2023 (Check #26322 – 26341, in the amount of \$26,995.30) and August 29, 2023 (Check # 26342 – 26360, in the amount of \$13,861.98).
- D. Approve Bills Payable – Regular Payroll of August 3, 2023 (Check #'s DD3495 – DD3514 and Check #'s 11393 – 11398, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$42,471.82), Regular Payroll of August 17, 2023 (Check #'s DD3515 – DD3550 and Check #'s 11399 – 11404, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$46,798.66), and Regular Payroll of August 31, 2023 (Check #'s DD3551 – DD3577 and Check #'s 11405 – 11410, Federal State, and MERS in the amount of \$49,367.89).

Zyburt moved, Lynch supported to approve the consent agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that the Township is planning on have three (3) town hall meetings concerning the AF district zoning. Management and Planning Commission will be conducting these meetings, which will be held on September 26, October 10, and October 17. These meetings will give a presentation on anticipated changes and will be used for data gathering from the residents. Other questions will not be addressed at that time.

The Assessor and his Assistant have accomplished over 400 assessments and anticipate they will be finishing up the 20% goal for the year. New construction should be finished by the time the snow flies.

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Engle reported he will be commenting on an item under New Business concerning a Resolution.

TREASURER'S REPORT – NONE.

PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

PRESENTATIONS - NONE

CONSIDER BOARD MEETING START TIME

As part of the discussion, Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that there are only two more meetings before setting the time for next year. To change it would involve a cost as it would be necessary to advertise the change in the Mining Journal. Clerk Engle asked if there had been any communication with the Trustee on this. Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that the question has been raised to the Trustee, but there has been no answer.

White moved, Lynch supported that the Township Board meeting time be moved back to 5:30 P.M.
AYES: 5

NAYS: 1 (Engle)

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER TOWNSHIP HALL ROOM RENTAL GROUP CLARIFICATION

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that this is brought forward as there has been some inquiries on holding these types of classes (CPL, Hunter Safety, etc.) in the meeting room. The current policy for handling rentals is included in the packet.

Trustee White asked about the ability to be able to shoot the weapon. Manager De Groot stated that there is a separate shooting range time which is not held on the premises. The classroom portion would be held here. After talking with the attorney, we can create a "sensitive area" in which we can have State laws dictate where those "sensitive areas" are. Trustee Lynch asked about the requirement of trigger locks being on the weapons. The Township Board felt that it was a good idea to offer these type of classes in our area.

Lynch moved, Engle supported that the Board allow the rental of Township Meeting Rooms for the purpose of Concealed Carry, Hunters Education, or other similar education classes with the following conditions:

1. Loaded weapons of any kind are prohibited on Township premises;
2. The display of functional weapons with trigger locks is for educational purposes only;
3. Live ammunition is not allowed on Township premises;
4. The group renting the Township rooms carry the appropriate general liability insurance naming the Township additionally insured.

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER RESOLUTION FOR USE OF TOWNSHIP HALL FOR REGIONAL EARLY VOTING PRECINCT
Clerk Engle stated that this is in regard to Proposal 22-2, which allows for 9 days of early voting in Michigan. This resolution would allow Chocolay Township to serve as an early voting precinct for Chocolay Township, Sands Township, Skandia Township, and West Branch Township. It was felt this made sense as residents of Skandia Township and West Branch would use US 41 on a regular basis, and there is a high concentration of residents of Sands Township off of Silver Creek Road. This would help split the cost of running the 9 days of early voting for each Township. There would be specific ballots for each Township.

Trustee White asked about election day. Clerk Engle indicated on election day the Townships would be holding the election at their individual precincts.

Resolution Establishing Early Voting Location

Zyburt moved, White supported that:

WHEREAS, the voters in Michigan on November 8, 2022, approved the passage of Proposal 22-2, which in part, entitles voters the right, once registered, to vote in each statewide and Federal election in person at an early voting site prior to election day, open for nine (9) consecutive days beginning on the second Saturday before the election and ending on the Sunday before the election, for at least eight hours each day; and

WHEREAS, the Chocolay Charter Township's Early Voting Precinct for State and Federal Elections will be open for nine (9) consecutive days beginning the second Saturday before election day through the Sunday before election day during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

WHEREAS, the Early Voting Precinct may also be utilized, operating with different hours as may be set by the Clerk, for local and countywide elections; and

WHEREAS, the County, with staff input has determined that the Chocolay Charter Township, located at 5010 U.S. 41 S. in Chocolay Township, is centrally located and meets all polling location requirements established by state law, and as such is an excellent location for an Early Voting Precinct for all registered voters in the Chocolay Township, Skandia Township, West

Branch Township, Sands Township; and

***WHEREAS**, all Early Voting dates and times will be posted sufficiently forty-five (45) days prior to every election to notify voters;*

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Chocolay Township Board, in accordance with MCL 168.662, hereby approves the establishment of the Chocolay Township Hall Meeting Room, located at 5010 U.S. 41 S., Chocolay 49855, as Chocolay Township, Skandia Township, West Branch Township, and Sands Township polling location, for the Early Voting Precinct for the Chocolay Township, Skandia Township, West Branch Township, and Sands Township registered voters.*

This resolution will take effect upon adoption by the Supervisor and Clerk.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

Duly adopted by the Chocolay Charter Township Board on September 11, 2023.

Richard A. Bohjanen, Supervisor

Certified to be a true copy on September 11, 2023.

Max L. Engle, Township Clerk

Supervisor Bohjanen asked about the ability to register to vote same day during the early voting. Clerk Engle will need to check into this.

MANAGER UPDATE FOR THE SEWER AND BUDGET

Sewer – the sewer project is winding down and we should be able to close this out in the month of September.

Budget – the draft budget is being presented this month. We will be keeping this open for comment during the months of October and November and bring it back to the Board for final approval in December. A 3.5% wage increase has been budgeted across the board, which is in line with the regional cost of living for 2024 and a little higher than the Federal which is at 2.7%. Indications from insurances have been that we won't see double digits increases.

There are two large projects we are looking at in 2024 that are more staff driven:

1. Sewer – need to look at sewer rates to make sure they are covering expenses. This review will be conducted by DPW Superintendent Johnson and Manager De Groot projected over a 5 – 10 year period.
2. Vehicles needed to be replaced – Brush Truck – retrofitting versus buying special made. The Fire Department is working on this and it will be coming back to the Board. We also need to replace a DPW 2014 pickup.

Shot Point is within the 2024 budget – savings from 2023 and millage collected in 2024 should pay for the entire thing. It is anticipated that it will not need to be fully redone.

Trustee White pointed out that she is not a fan of percentage raises as it tends to widen the gap. Manager De Groot explained that he has compensated for that and will be bringing the model to the Board. He has built a matrix that will take all factors into account. This is the first year of implementation.

After discussion, it was decided that the Public Hearing will be held on the November 13th meeting. This will still allow the ability to make changes before final approval in December.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Don Rhein – stated he will not be here for the October meeting.

Kendra Symbal – absent

Judy White - none

Dave Lynch – liked the budget and likes the fact there is a projected surplus.

Ben Zyburt – stated he had been reading the Kiplinger Letter recently and they are forecasting double digit increases in health insurance, auto premiums, and homeowner’s insurance.

Max Engle - none

Richard Bohjanen – commented to the Board that there is correspondence included in the “Informational Reports and Communications” from Fire Chief Gould and encouraged all to read.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

Zyburt moved, Rhein supported that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

- A. Minutes – Chocoy Township Planning Commission; Regular Meeting of August 21, 2023, Draft.
- B. Minutes - Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, Regular Meeting of August 16, 2023, Draft.

- C. Minutes – Marquette Area Wastewater Advisory Board, Regular Meeting of July 20, 2023.
- D. Information – Chocolay Township Newsletter – August 2023.
- E. Information – Letter from Fire Chief about Fire Department Operations.

Max Engle, Clerk

Richard Bohjanen, Supervisor