

March 11, 2024

The regular meeting of the Chocolay Township Board was held on Monday, March 11, 2024, 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, David Lynch, Judy White, Don Rhein

ABSENT: Ben Zyburt (excused), Kendra Symbal

STAFF PRESENT: William De Groot, Dale Throenle, Brad Johnson, Suzanne Sundell

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

White moved, Lynch supported to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Hendrickson, Iron Ore Heritage Trail – introduced himself as the new Administrator of the IOHT, replacing Carol Fulsher last July upon her retirement. He wanted to provide an update on what is happening with the IOHT. Had met with Brad Johnson and Joe Neumann earlier to inform them of projects going on in Chocolay Township. There is an extension being worked on that will connect to Lakenenland – construction will likely happen in 2025. Lots of other projects in the County – Negaunee Boardwalk and a land acquisition in Marquette Township adjacent to the trail.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting – Joint Meeting, February 12, 2024.
- B. Approve Revenue and Expenditure Reports – February 2024.
- C. Approve Bills Payable, Check Register Reports – February 12, 2024 (Check #'s 26677 – 26694, in the amount of \$38,011.69), and February 21, 2024 (Check #'s 26695 – 26717, in the amount of \$97,432.47).
- D. Approve Bills Payable, Tax Disbursement Check Register Reports – January 2, 2024 (Check #'s 5042 – 5045, in the amount of \$581,192.30), January 9, 2024 (Check # 5046, in the amount of \$158,021.18), January 18, 2024 (Check #'s 5047 – 5051, in the amount of \$945,257.95), January 31, 2024 (Check #'s 5052 – 5053, in the amount of \$1,058.58), February 12, 2024 (Check #'s 5054 – 5060, in the amount of \$857,862.39), and February 21, 2024 (Check #'s 5061 – 5065, in the amount of \$884,329.29).
- E. Approve Bills Payable – Regular Payroll of February 1, 2024 (Check #'s DD3927 – DD3943 and Check #'s 11471 – 11476, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$45,970.52), Regular Payroll of February 15, 2024 (Check #'s DD3944 – DD3980 and Check #'s 11477 –

11482. Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$51,285.00) and Regular Payroll of February 29, 2024 (Check #'s DD3981 – DD4012 and Check #'s 11483 - 11488, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$56,088.55).

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

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Supervisor Bohjanen informed the Board that the Township has received notice of retirement of the Police Chief, Scott Jennings. There will be discussion on this later in the agenda.

Manager's Annual Review – Supervisor Bohjanen presented his report to the Board. In the past, this has been given to all members to fill out, but this seems a little impractical as not all the Board members have regular contact. Bohjanen would welcome any input other Board members may have. The Supervisor's review of the manager was accepted by the Board.

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Engle reported that the election ran smooth, despite some of the problems that were encountered in the time leading up to it. Voter numbers included: Absentee – 1,125, Precinct 1 – 222, Precinct 2 – 205, and Early Voting – 85 in total with 51 of those being Chocolay Township. Clerk Engle was asked about the cost of early voting per person. At this point, it is expensive but it was new, so hopefully the number of people taking advantage of it will pick up in the next election.

TREASURER'S REPORT - NONE

PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

PRESENTATIONS – 2023 SEWER MAIN AND LATERAL INSPECTION FINDINGS

Brad Johnson, Public Works Superintendent, presented the findings of televising that had been completed by Great Lakes TV Seal, Inc. The reason for doing the televising is that our system is approximately 50 years old and it is getting harder to find replacement parts when needed. It was also needed to monitor flows. This has been a huge learning experience for staff. Johnson is working on an Asset Management Plan for the sewer to determine what our immediate and long-term needs are. Once done, this will come back to the Board. Currently, the manhole structures need repair along with two areas that require root ball removal. Root ball removal would require a fix or patch on the pipe also.

DISCUSSION LOCAL ELECTION DEADLINES FOR 2024.

Election deadlines were discussed, along with the plans of the five members of the Board present for running in the upcoming elections. Richard Bohjanen and Judy White are not planning on running at this time. Dave Lynch will be running for Supervisor, Max Engle will be running for Clerk,

and Don Rhein will be running for Trustee. Clerk Engle let the Board members know that the packets needed to run for office can be obtained from Lisa Perry in the front office.

CONSIDER FEMA FLOOD ORDINANCE 60 UPDATE INTRODUCTION.

It was noted that it is necessary to have a Public Hearing in a timely manner, as this must be completed by June 6, 2024, in order to maintain our flood insurance designation.

White moved, Rhein supported that the Chocolay Township Board set a public hearing for the next available Board Meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER 2024 DUST CONTROL AGREEMENT WITH THE MCRC WITH PAYMENT FROM RESIDENTS.

Lynch moved, Engle supported that the Chocolay Township Board approves staff recommendation and move forward with approving the request for dust control for 2024 that is paid by the residents requesting the dust control and sign the contract with the Marquette County Road Commission.

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER SEWER MAIN REPAIR

White moved, Rhein supported that the Chocolay Township Board approves the expenditure of not more than \$42,000 and award a future contract to Smith Construction to replace 60 feet of 10-inch sewer main.

MOTION CARRIED

(This 60 feet of pipe is located at Lift Station #3 on Baker Street – manhole to manhole).

And,

Lynch moved, White supported that the Chocolay Township Board approves the expenditure of not more than \$11,000 and award a future contract to Great Lakes T.V. Seal Inc. to remove the two root balls out of our 18-inch sewer main.

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF A WILDLAND / BRUSH TRUCK.

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that this was discussed at our last meeting. We currently have the opportunity to purchase this vehicle.

Township Manager De Groot indicated that the reason we have to purchase such a large truck is that in the past we have used trucks that have been handed down. Having a larger truck changes the way we utilize it for things such as brush fires. This allows us to get in line – truck still at factory. This is just chassis and cab – will need to build deck and integrate a skid unit into the frame. Will be looking at procuring the equipment needed over the next few months.

Lynch moved, Rhein supported that the Chocolay Township Board approves the expenditure of not more than \$68,000 for the acquisition of a Wildland / Brush Truck Ford F-550 from LaFontaine Ford in Lansing. The funds for this vehicle have already been received from the KBIC 2% allocation.

And,

Empower the Township Manager to finalize the purchase contracts and sign on behalf of the township.

AYES: Lynch, Rhein, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYS: White

ABSENT: Zyburt, Symbal

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER AN APPLICATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Manager De Groot indicated that this is Congressional funding, which is earmarked funding. There is funding available to commit to this obligation in our Capital Fund.

**CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING APPROPRIATIONS OPPORTUNITY
RESOLUTION OF AUTHORIZATION- LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT MATCH WITHOUT
DONATED FUNDS**

White moved, Rhein supported:

WHEREAS, The Chocolay Township Board supports the submission of an application titled, "Fire Apparatus Acquisition" for design, build and delivery of a fire pumper/tanker engine; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed application would negate the need to ask for a millage to fund this apparatus,

WHEREAS, Chocolay Township is hereby making a financial commitment to the project not to exceed \$ 110,000.00 of matching funds, in cash and/or force account; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The Chocolay Township Board hereby authorizes submission of a CDS Request for \$ 550,000.00 and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED to make available its financial obligation amount of \$110,000.00 (20%) of a total of project cost \$550,000.00 during the 2025 fiscal year.

AYES: Rhein, Lynch, White, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Zyburt, Symbal

RESOLUTION APPROVED.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that the foregoing is a Resolution duly made and passed by the Township Board of Chocolay Township at their regular meeting held on March 11th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Chocolay Township Fire Hall, with a quorum present.

Max L. Engle, Township Clerk

Date

CONSIDER AN APPLICATION FOR MDNR FUNDING FOR POCKET PARK IMPROVEMENTS.

RECREATION PASSPORT GRANT PROGRAM

RESOLUTION OF AUTHORIZATION- LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT MATCH WITHOUT DONATED FUNDS

Lynch moved, White supported:

WHEREAS, The Chocolay Township Board supports the submission of an application titled, "Kawbawgam Pocket Park Improvements" to the Recreation Passport Grant Program for development of improved access and amenities at Kawbawgam Pocket Park; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed application is supported by the Community's 5-Year Approved Parks and Recreation Plan OR Current Annual Capital Improvement Plan; and,

WHEREAS, Chocolay Township is hereby making a financial commitment to the project in the amount of \$ 9,000 matching funds, in cash and/or force account; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The Chocolay Township Board hereby authorizes submission of a Recreation Passport Grant Program Application for \$ 36,000 and further resolves to make available its financial obligation amount of \$ 9,000 (25%) of a total of \$36,000 project cost during the 2025 fiscal year.

AYES: Rhein, Lynch, White, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Zyburt, Symbal

RESOLUTION APPROVED.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that the foregoing is a Resolution duly made and passed by the Township Board of Chocolay Township at their regular meeting held on March 11th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Chocolay Township Fire Hall, with a quorum present.

Max L. Engle, Township Clerk

Date

CONSIDER A CONTRACT WITH MARQUETTE COUNTY EQUALIZATION FOR THE FETCH ELECTRONIC PARCEL TOOL AND MAPPING.

Lynch moved, Rhein supported that the Chocolay Township Board approves the Township Manager to enter into a contract with Marquette County for the use of the FETCH GIS software platform. The cost of the purchase is outlined in the “Marquette County Fetch GIS Access Quote”.

MOTION CARRIED

EWING PINES SUBDIVISION PLAT AMENDMENT RESOLUTION.

RESOLUTION OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF CHOCOLAY

White moved, Lynch supported that:

Upon consideration of a request by Paulette Perttunen and Timothy Prisk, record title owners of Lots numbered One (1) to Seven (7) of the Ewing Pines Subdivision Plat, pursuant to their Second Amended Complaint, case number 21-60631-CL, to vacate Lots numbered One (1) through Seven (7) of the Ewing Pines Subdivision Plat, and all of Trillium Circle. Therefore the Township of Chocolay, pursuant to MCL 560.226(c), resolves to approve the vacation of Lots numbered One (1) through Seven (7) of the Ewing Pines Subdivision Plat, and all of Trillium Circle.

AYES: Rhein, Lynch, White, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Zyburt, Symbal

RESOLUTION APPROVED

It is certified that the Township of Chocolay passed this Resolution in formal Board action on March 11, 2024.

Certification:

By: Max L. Engle
Its: Township Clerk

Date

CONSIDER AUDIT LETTERS OF ENGAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING.

Lynch moved, Rhein supported to enter into agreement with Anderson Tackman and sign the letters to move forward with our audit.

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION OF POLICE CHIEF RETIREMENT AND NEXT STEPS.

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that our previous practice of hiring a police chief has changed. Going forward, we will need to advertise for candidates and interview by the full Board. There is also criteria that is necessary for MCOLES to be hired on as Chief.

Township Manager De Groot explained the process of hiring a new police chief. The Township Manager is not allowed to be involved, except for the administrative process. De Groot stated it has been an honor to service with Chief Jennings, who has been with the force for 38 years. De Groot will be presenting a timeline to the Board at the April meeting if they wish. This could include the advertising, salary, recruitment, how to handle (internal first, then outside?), open meeting on a different day for interviews, tours, internal vetting. The last two hires have been an open process. The attorney would recommend having just one process to provide transparency.

De Groot will draft a couple different versions for the April meeting. This is a highly sought after job and we may receive a lot of resumes. In April, the Board may need to decide on desired criteria. The current Chief will be ending his employment with us as of May 31, 2024. The June meeting will include a recognition of Chief Jennings' accomplishments.

MANAGER UPDATE OF WORK PLAN AND CORPORATE STATUS.

Manager De Groot indicated that we have received funding of approximately \$142,000 for new radios. We have contracted with Motorola to provide the radios. We should have them within a few months, and then they get templated through the State.

The auditors have been in and spent the last week with us. There is nothing to report at this time.

There is a movement in the news right now – AXMITAX – they have started a petition to have a constitutional amendment to eliminate property taxes. They do not have anything in place as to how the money would be replaced. They have until mid-July to collect 450,000 signatures. We are looking at putting something on the web as to where property taxes go. Michigan Township Association is also looking at informational material.

We have a temporary employee, Kellie Barry-Angeli, in the front office to replace staff that is on medical leave.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Don Rhein – None

Kendra Symbal – Absent

Judy White – attends the meetings at the landfill – they are having significant financial problems. There is a possibility that they will need to raise tipping fees.

Dave Lynch – None

Ben Zyburt – Absent

Max Engle – None
Richard Bohjanen – None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Hendrickson, IOHT – the funding for the Lakenenland extension is \$300,000 and is coming from a Michigan Trust Fund grant. This trail will be a parallel trail, and not be replacing the motorized trail on the south side. This will be an aggregate trail, which also make the trail ADA.

Rhein moved, Lynch supported that the meeting be adjourned.
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

- A. Minutes – Chocolay Township Planning Commission; Regular Meeting of February 12, 2024, Draft.
- B. Minutes - Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, Special Meeting of February 9, 2024.
- C. Minutes – Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, Regular Meeting of February 21, 2024, Draft.
- D. Information – Chocolay Township Newsletter – February 2024.

Max Engle, Clerk

Richard Bohjanen, Supervisor