

October 14, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Chocolay Township Board was held on Monday, October 14, 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, Ben Zybert, David Lynch, Judy White, Don Rhein

ABSENT: Kendra Symbal

STAFF PRESENT: William De Groot, Suzanne Sundell

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

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

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deborah Mulcahey, 633 Lakewood Lane – spoke on the hiring process for the new Township Manager, water issues within the Township, Recreation Plan and small amount of time to review, access to Lake Superior on M-28, ongoing Smith issue on M-28, Budget and 61% increase in Other General Government and Other categories over the past 4 years and expenditures doubling in that period. Wished Clerk Engle luck in the upcoming election process.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting – Regular Meeting, September 9, 2024.
- B. Approve Revenue and Expenditure Reports – September 2024.
- C. Approve Bills Payable, Check Register Reports – September 9, 2024 (Check #'s 27091 – 27113, in the amount of \$12,631.76), September 18, 2024 (ACH 11(A), in the amount of \$180,600.00), September 19, 2024 (Check #'s 27114 – 27135, in the amount of \$17,065.57), and September 24, 2024 (Check #'s 27136 – 27144, in the amount of \$17,829.23).
- D. Approve Bills Payable, Tax Check Register Reports – September 3, 2024 (Check #'s 5090 – 5092, in the amount of \$408,201.52), and September 19, 2024 (Check #'s 5093 – 5096, in the amount of \$390,401.92).
- E. Approve Bills Payable – Regular Payroll of September 12, 2024 (Check #'s DD4510 – DD4546 and Check #'s 11588 – 11595, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$50,126.04), and Regular Payroll of September 26, 2024 (Check #'s DD4547 – DD4574 and Check #'s 11596 – 11603, Federal, State, and MERS in the amount of \$47,695.29).

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

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that this is the "lame duck" portion of his term as he is not seeking reelection as Supervisor.

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Engle reported that Lisa Perry's mother had passed earlier in the day. In Precinct 1 there have been 891 ballots issued, with 344 returned. In Precinct 2 there have been 971 ballots issued, with 399 returned. Clerk Engle indicated that he had placed information on the table concerning an increase in his compensation. With the increase he would be able to help more by spending additional hours in the office as the elections get more complicated.

TREASURER'S REPORT - NONE

PUBLIC HEARING - NONE

PRESENTATIONS – 2025 FISCAL BUDGET – WILLIAM DE GROOT

Manager De Groot presented the budget and addressed the issue of the 61% increase. This is directly related to insurance and health care increases. Strategic goals have remained the same over the last 4 years. General revenue – started looking at a grant program last year and have two line items amounting to \$800,000 anticipated for revenue. On the expense side, a conservative budget has been provided. The Capital budget is primarily related to improvements and maintenance in Hall and Grounds. We are currently saving for a new pumper truck in the Fire department line. We had asked for an appropriations on this but it does not appear we will be getting that. The COLA has been budgeted at 2.8% for all staff. Public Hearing is scheduled for the November meeting.

Still waiting to hear on our health insurance – expecting at least a 13% increase, which is mostly due to prescription drugs. We have budgeted for an 11% increase, but this may change. White questioned the COLA at 2.8%. Manager De Groot indicated this can be run at a different rate if the Board would like.

Supervisor Bohjanen strongly suggested that the Board review the budget numbers before the November meeting.

CONSIDER SECOND READ AND REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL / FORESTRY DISTRICT ORDINANCE

Supervisor Bohjanen indicated that there had been a minor change in language for assembly operations to "small scale" assembly operations. The Board felt that it was not necessary to take this back to the Planning Commission. Bohjanen also asked about a discrepancy in AG1 (which had originally been listed as 1-5 acres and is now showing at 2.5 acres). Consensus with the Board was to leave as is at the 2-5 acres.

Lynch moved, Rhein supported that the language and proposed zoning map for zoning ordinance revision 34 24-01 be accepted for a second read and public review as revised (AG-1 originally listed as 1 – 5 acres - changed to **2 – 5 acres**).

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF AGRICULTURAL / FORESTRY DISTRICT ORDINANCE

Zyburt moved, White seconded that after providing required notification to the public, holding a public hearing, providing a first and second reading of the proposed language for Ordinance Revision to Sections:

4.9 AG-1 through 4.11 AG-3 and the Official Township Zoning Map;

The Board adopt the proposed ordinance language as written, with the ordinance to take effect thirty days from the official publication, and that the Board file a motion with the Township Clerk to publish a notice of adoption in the local newspaper and on the Township website within fifteen days of adoption and record the Ordinance in the Township *Book of Ordinances* within one week after publication.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER LEASE AGREEMENT EXTENSION FROM AMERICAN TOWER FOR SILVER CREEK SITE

Rhein moved, Zyburt supported that the Chocolay Township Board approve the American Tower Contract Extension reviewed on October 14, 2024

And

Empower the Township Supervisor and Clerk to fully execute the agreement with American Tower.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

MOTION CARRIED

ACCEPT RESIGNATION LETTER FROM TOWNSHIP MANAGER, WILLIAM DE GROOT

Township Manager De Groot thanked the Board – accepting a job in another state for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. De Groot thanked the staff, public, and the community for everything that has been done over the past 5 years.

Bohjanen moved, Lynch supported that the Chocolay Township Board regretfully accept the resignation of Township Manager, William De Groot.

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER MANAGER RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Supervisor Bohjanen went through the hiring process using previously and came it produced very few qualified applicants. On a recommendation from Manager De Groot, a recruiter from Okemos was contacted, but before coming to an agreement had left the company. A referral was then given to Michigan Leadership Institute (MLI) and a proposal was received. MLI has great credentials for recruiting, mostly in the educational field. The person that has been suggested from this company has experience in the governmental field. White indicated he felt it would be wise to contract with a recruiter. This feeling was supported by Lynch and Zyburt, along with the rest of the Board.

White moved, Lynch supported that Option 3 be adopted and Michigan Leadership Institute (MLI) be contracted to do our recruitment for manager, and the supervisor be authorized to sign the contract.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Symbal

MOTION CARRIED

CONSIDER CHANGED TO THE FIELD TECHNICIAN POSITION.

Supervisor Bohjanen stated we have gone through short-term options, but we are not able to retain anyone. White asked why this would not be handled by the Assessor, as he is a contractual employee.

Lynch moved, Engle supported that the Township Board amend the Assessor's contract to replace the Assessing Tech position language to the proposed language presented on October 14, 2024:

“The Township shall employ an assessing assistant who will work up to 1,040 hours per year. The position will start at \$20/hour and increasing yearly at the same rate as other employees. The Assessor will make recommendations to the Township regarding the selection of the field assistant and shall be responsible for proper training of the field assistant.”

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Lynch, Zyburt, Engle, Bohjanen

NAYS: Rhein, White
ABSENT: Symbal
MOTION CARRIED

MANAGER UPDATE OF WORK PLAN AND CORPORATE STATUS.

Manager De Groot indicated that we are in the process of completing the budget and finalizing for the Public Hearing in November. Staff is starting to close out the year and will have recommendations coming out of reserves to the budget amendments. Starting to prepare for the audit process – nothing unexpected. With some of the changes happening on KBIC property, we have asked for an increase in the 2% funds based on these changes.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Don Rhein – None

Kendra Symbal – None

Judy White – None

Dave Lynch – None

Ben Zyburt – commended Manager De Groot on the work that he has done for the Township, and voiced how he had enjoyed working with him.

Max Engle - None

Richard Bohjanen - None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deborah Mulcahey, 633 Lakewood Lane – stated she was glad that KBIC was mentioned. Spoke on budget and budgeting for what we need, COLA and costs that employees have for employment, and medical costs.

Stephanie Gencheff, 587 Lakewood Lane – spoke on rezoning of a residential parcel (Alger Delta parcel) to industrial with opposition from residents. Thanked Manager De Groot for his service and wished him well.

Lynch moved, Rhein 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 August 19, 2024.
- B. Minuutes – Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority – Regular Meeting, September 18, 2024, Draft.
- C. Information – Chocolay Township Newsletter – September 2024.

Max Engle, Clerk

Richard Bohjanen, Supervisor