

Regular Meeting of the Crystal Lake Township Board

1651 Frankfort Highway, Frankfort MI 49635

January 16, 2024

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Amy Ferris at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Ferris, Nielsen, Northway, Popp, and VanMeter were present, constituting a quorum.

Guests: Airport Manager Dick Bayer, Deputy Supervisor Jill Marble, PC Chairman Greg Wright, Al Popp, Bruce Walton, Paul May, Support Staffer Brian Halliday, Commissioner Karen Cunningham, Fire Chief Michael Cederholm, and Deputy Clerk Sondra Halliday

Agenda

Ferris moved to accept the agenda as amended: add Road Committee at the beginning under "Reports," Par Plan Insurance under "Financials," and Ironman Triathlon under "New Business." Northway supported. All ayes. Agenda accepted as amended.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Popp declared a conflict of interest and said her competing interest to become airport manager might impair her ability to decide a public question regarding the airport objectively or independently. Ferris thanked her and noted the conflict of interest would be discussed further under the Airport report.

Minutes

Ferris moved to accept the minutes of the December 19, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as amended: Page 1, correct spelling of guest Blessing; add the title of "Support Staffer" to Brian Halliday; Page 7, under OMA and Minutes Schedule, correct "is draft made" to "draft is made." Northway supported. All ayes. Minutes accepted as amended.

Correspondence

Ferris shared correspondence from Attorney Craig Fiederlein of CF Legal, and drew attention to the date of the letter and the earlier date in body of letter. Kucera forwarded this email to the attorney.

County Commissioner's Report—Karen Cunningham

Commissioner Cunningham shared her monthly report indicating it was also available online and asked for any questions. Ferris said she could not find the Airport Manager position posting on the County website. Cunningham indicated the information was sent to Human Resources, and HR requested a job description and Dick Bayer's letter of resignation from the FCCAA. The notice for the

Airport Manger position was posted on the window of County building. Cunningham emailed FCCAA Chairman Coury Carland and asked for the necessary documents.

Cunningham also shared a handout summarizing Benzie County 2023-2024 budgeted tax dollars at work including general fund revenues and expenses, county millage figures, public safety investments, and other special revenue/enterprise funds.

Fire & Rescue Report Year End 2023—Fire Chief Mike Cederholm

- Chief Cederholm presented the 2023 year-end report and also noted there were 40 runs so far this month.
- Fire Advisory Board will meet 6:00 p.m., Thursday, January 25, at the Fire Department to discuss next year’s fiscal budget. He noted that he met with Ferris and suggested an increase of about 10% to CLT Fire Fund budget for 2024-2025.
- One of the goals and objectives for 2024-2025 is to complete the draft version of the SOPs for the membership to review and, once reviewed, it will be sent to the City Council for approval.

Public Comment

- There were no public comments.

Financials

- Popp asked if there were any questions on the reports she provided, and there were none.
- Popp presented the December 2023 Payroll Summary Report.

Popp moved the Crystal Lake Township Board approve payment of salaries and wages, per the December 2023 CLT Payroll Summary Report, in the amount of \$12,737.67. VanMeter supported. Roll was called. All ayes. Motion was approved.

- VanMeter shared a summary of the CLT insurance coverage through the Michigan Township Par Plan, which will be renewed on February 7, 2024. The quoted premium was \$8,321.00 and was included in today’s warrant report. Ferris asked if we had to pre-approve it, or just add to the warrant report. Past practice has been to just add it to the warrant report.

Popp moved to approve the warrant report as amended to include an additional invoice from Anavon for \$288.13, mileage reimbursement of \$47.17, and Spectrum Printers for \$585.74, adjusting the General Fund total to \$15,522.35. Cemetery Fund total was \$145.52, and the Fire Fund total of \$29,378.76 was added. VanMeter supported. Roll was called. All ayes. Motion was approved.

Committee Reports

Road Committee

Bruce Walton presented the 2024 Road Committee project recommendations and offered highlights from the Benzie County Road Commission meeting. He noted discussion continues on the best type of road surfacing and the comparison pricing of each. Bruce shared that CLT is a part of the Local Road Cost Participation Policy. He noted CLT received \$14,889.71 each of the years from 2022 to 2024 and said the money can only be held for three years. CLT needs to spend at least \$14,889.71 this year, or will lose the money. The funds may be used toward road maintenance, culverts, resurfacing, etc. Ferris thanked Walton, Nielsen, and Allen Popp for their work on the Road Committee and attendance at the BCRC meeting.

Airport

- Ferris shared there was no Airport Authority meeting in December, so no informational packet was available.
- Ferris inquired where the Airport Manager job description was posted. Outgoing Airport Manager Bayer shared the job was posted at the Township Hall, Benzie County, the City of Frankfort, the Dow Memorial Field terminal door, and will be in the Record Patriot and the Record Eagle. Ferris indicated it wasn't posted at the Township just included in the meeting packet. Ferris asked Popp if it was posted on the two websites Popp mentioned at an earlier Board meeting. It was unknown.
- Ferris wanted clarity regarding Popp's declared Conflict of Interest. Ferris believed there was a Conflict of Interest in the action of applying for the Airport Manager's position. She also noted it appeared Popp was actually applying to herself because she holds a seat on the FCCAA (Frankfort City-County Airport Authority). Ferris asked if the Board should take any action regarding the Conflict-of-Interest declaration. If so, what kind of action? Should Popp be offered and accept the position, there may be a Conflict of Interest as Airport Manager and Township Treasurer.
- Dick Bayer explained the tentative hiring process for the Airport Manager position. All applications are due by February 20, 2024. The three- to four-person selection committee reviews submissions and keeps narrowing down the applicant numbers until there are two to three in the running. The FCCAA will make a decision with Popp recusing herself from the final voting process.
- Lengthy discussion ensued. It was noted the Conflict-of-Interest issue should be given to the Township attorney.
- Ferris felt Popp should be removed from the position of CLT representative to the FCCAA, even with just an appearance of a Conflict of Interest. Nielsen and VanMeter felt it was premature and said to wait until Popp was offered and accepted the Airport Manager position.

Ferris moved that Popp be removed from the FCCAA as representative of CLT and be replaced because applying for the position of Airport Manager was a Conflict of Interest. Northway supported. Roll was called: Nielsen, no; Ferris, yes; VanMeter, no; Northway, yes. Popp abstained. Motion failed.

- Ferris shared she and Trustee Northway had a meeting with City of Frankfort Mayor JoAnn Holwerda and City Superintendent Josh Mills. The purpose of meeting was to get clarification of the relationship between the Township and the Airport. Ferris and Northway had numerous questions, but Holwerda and Mills didn't have the answers. Mills indicated there was not a Memorandum of Understanding or contract that included the Township. Mills said he sent a message to County Treasurer Michelle Thompson asking for clarification regarding the \$3,000/year asking from each of the three municipalities—County, City, and Township. He received no answer. Mills was going to contact Coury Carland to schedule a meeting for all concerned parties.

Budget

- Ferris presented the 2024-2025 proposed budgets for the General Fund, Cemetery Fund, Road Fund, and Fire Fund. Deputy Supervisor Jill Marble worked with Ferris on the proposed budgets and thanked Brian Halliday for his assistance with the IT and Buildings/Grounds portions.
- Lengthy discussion of the *General Fund* proposed budget ensued including, but not limited to, discussion of figures relating to specific line items such as FICA, supplies, software, capital improvements, election wages, etc. Marble, Ferris, VanMeter, and Popp agreed to meet and discuss specific budget recommendations. It was noted Ferris and VanMeter had recent difficulties accessing QuickBooks.

Ferris asked if Board salaries should be increased. Popp said she would not be asking for an increase. There was much discussion regarding an increase in the Clerk's salary to compensate for the additional workload for the nine extra days of in-person Early Voting in state and federal elections. Several options were suggested with the topic being tabled until the February Board meeting, hoping to gather further information from other townships. Nielsen also said if the need arises, election staff wages should be increased again, so we can retain election workers.

- Proposed *Cemetery Fund* budget figures were discussed at length, especially compensation for the Cemetery Administrator position. Ferris shared the proposed transfer of \$16,000 from the General Fund to the Cemetery Fund was in support of compensation for the Cemetery Administrator position. Ferris has been performing the duties of Cemetery Administrator without compensation for several years. As cemetery duties are nonstatutory, the Cemetery Administrator compensation would be in addition to the supervisor's salary. In past Board discussion, it was suggested to outsource the Cemetery Administrator position instead of it being the responsibility of a Board member, especially the clerk. Popp felt the \$16,000 figure was exorbitant and suggested \$12,000 might be a better figure. Popp said none of the Board members should be performing the job of Cemetery Administrator. She thought outsourcing the position would be better than having the clerk or another Board member doing it. It wouldn't be a political position and would not be tied to anyone's term.

Popp felt the Cemetery Administrator job description should be approved prior to compensation approval. There was further discussion on procurement of job descriptions for all positions, noting

they would be helpful in budget planning. There was also discussion on the Cemetery Ordinance and changes made.

Ferris shared that she spoke with the Sexton, and he will be increasing his prices. For instance, \$500 for a burial will be increased to \$600. These new figures were not reflected in the budget presented as Ferris was just notified of price increase. Ferris felt the township burial charges should stay as they currently are. Nielsen felt we should not allow nonresidents to be buried in CLT cemeteries. Ferris will adjust the figures to accommodate the cost increase.

- The proposed *Road Fund* budget figures and possible projects were discussed at length. Nielsen asked if the cost estimates for approach aprons to Marquette Court and Birchwood Terrace, approved in the current fiscal year, were included in the 2024-2025 budget. Nielsen said a bill would most likely not be received until October 2024. At the end of the discussion, it was decided to set the budget figure for road surfacing at \$25,000.
- Nielsen felt the *Fire Fund* budget should be increased by 10 to 15 percent. More accurate numbers will be available after the Fire Advisory Board meeting next week. Discussion ensued. An estimated figure of \$130,000 for Fire Fund expenditures in 2024-2025 was chosen, with the understanding it might have to be adjusted.
- Popp inquired if a motion was to be made regarding the budgets. Ferris said the process begins with the Board tentatively agreeing to the proposed figures. She prepares final draft, the budget hearing date is set, and the budgets are brought to the Board at the next meeting, and a vote is taken. Ferris also stated she prepared a draft of the Appropriations Act, which will be completed when budget figures are approved.

Buildings and Grounds

- Support Staffer Halliday shared a new computer was purchased for the Zoning Administrator and the election closet monitoring camera has been installed, per two resolutions passed during the December 2023 Board meeting.

Elections

- VanMeter shared there will be sufficient workers available for the upcoming Presidential Primary election. She was waiting for Election Day and Early Voting training dates from the County Clerk.
- Election Commission will perform public accuracy testing of the three tabulators at 10:00 a.m., February 2, 2024. Following the testing procedures, the Election Commission will appoint Election Inspectors.
- VanMeter will be pursuing reimbursement for the cost of items purchased for compliance of required election security protocols, such as cameras, closet doors, etc.
- VanMeter explained that a new voter assist terminal and printer were purchased to allow us to print ballots on demand, eliminating the bulk of printed ballots. This will not be used at the February election as training has to be completed.

VanMeter moved to approve the purchase of an ImageCast X Prime Voter Assist Terminal case from Election Source, cost not to exceed \$1,000.00. Popp supported. Roll was called. All ayes. Motion was approved.

Planning and Zoning

- Ferris shared Kucera's 2023 year-end report. She appreciated how comprehensive his report was. There were no questions from the Board.

Unfinished Business

- *Attorney Search*
Ferris shared the Foster Swift Collins & Smith engagement letter, reading the final two paragraphs including the letter's intention. It was agreed by Board consensus that Ferris sign the Letter of Engagement.
- *Attorney Priority List*
First priorities should include the Airport, assessing, the Lakeview Drive Ordinance, and an enforcement mechanism for all Township ordinances. Nielsen asked if Ferris would send the signed Letter of Engagement to Foster Swift. Ferris said she would send the letter and list the three priorities, with enforcement as an umbrella issue. Nielsen wanted clarification regarding who was authorized to speak with the attorney because he wanted Kucera to have permission to talk with attorney. Confirmed Kucera can speak with attorney.
- *Job Descriptions*
Tabled. Will discuss at a later date.

New Business

- *2024 Office Closed Calendar*
Ferris presented the 2024 office closure dates. Juneteenth and the nine days for Early Voting were added. Ferris asked if people would avoid coming into the office on the Board of Review days.

Ferris moved that the Board accept the 2024 Office Closure Calendar as presented. VanMeter supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

- *2024 Mileage Reimbursement*
Popp noted the amount should be written as \$0.67 per mile.

Ferris moved, that beginning January 1, 2024, the standard mileage reimbursement rate for the use of a vehicle for accepted township business, excluding commuting to and from home and hall, shall be \$0.67 per mile driven. VanMeter supported. Roll was called. All ayes. Motion was approved.

- *Contracts: Sexton, Foundation Installer, Groundskeeper*
Ferris shared there were typographical errors in the contract drafts. Ferris asked if there was a need for Board review since they were in basically the same format as in the past. Board consensus for Ferris to advertise the positions with the new drafts upon correction of typos.
- *Ironman Triathlon 70.3*
Northway shared the route was the same as last year and everything was going smoothly.

Public Comment

Bruce Walton shared that when he was on CLT Board there were discussions on what to pay the FCCAA, and it was \$3,000. Popp shared it was now \$3,000 plus \$12,000 for the Airport Manager salary. Popp noted there was not a Memorandum of Understanding between the Township and the Airport Authority. Bruce asked if the original Township resolution to join the FCCAA was for one year. Ferris said the original resolution was for one year, and most of the Board wanted it, so the \$3,000 was added to the budget each year. An updated resolution has not been done since the original one.

Board Comment

- The Public 2024-2025 Budget Hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2024.
- Nielsen would like the Board members copied on all communications with the attorneys.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Judy VanMeter, Clerk and Sondra Halliday, Deputy Clerk, reporting.

Amy Ferris, Supervisor _____
Date

Judy VanMeter, Clerk _____
Date