

Special Meeting of the Crystal Lake Township Board

1651 Frankfort Highway, Frankfort MI 49635

April 16, 2021

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Amy Ferris at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Purpose:

- Groundskeeper New Hire
- Wright Complaint
- Board Relations

Agenda: Ferris moved to accept the agenda as presented. Popp seconded. Roll was called; all ayes. Motion passed.

Conflicts of Interest: There were no conflicts of interest declared.

Public Comment:

- Cathy Morris stated that she was glad Greg Wright brought the issue up and hopes Popp becomes part of the team.

Groundskeeper: Ferris moved that the Board accept the Cemetery Committee's recommendation that Raymond Jordan of Green Path be rehired for described grounds maintenance at the East and North Cemeteries at \$19,400.00 per year, plus \$32.00 per hour for non-contractual tasks specifically requested by the township and the installation of all foundations at the attached rate of reimbursement; Popp seconded. Roll was called; all ayes. Motion passed. Ferris will get with Popp and Sullivan regarding the wording of the contract.

Board Relations: Ferris suggested starting with whether the Board has a problem; then how do we name that problem; and what do we do about it? Popp said Board harmony tends to be cyclical and we have been in a bad patch for a long time; there has been a lot of defensive anger based on not getting one's needs met, so perhaps we should focus on what those needs are and how to meet them in a way that is collaborative. Ferris agreed that there has been a lot of anger and personalization that has delayed getting work done. Sullivan said important communications have either not happened, or have not been

efficient or timely. Northway said there had been a lot of hard feelings causing wasted time and overly long meetings and the Board needed to stay on mission with the township's business.

Popp said she would commit herself (1) to endeavor to listen to others to understand their dynamic, (2) to endeavor to demonstrate trust and respect through her words and actions, and (3) to put the needs of the residents before her own to promote a productive environment. She also said she would need the help of others to meet these goals. Ferris said she agreed with these goals and believed the rest of the Board would as well. Sullivan suggested we need to try not to anticipate others' motivations as wrongful and to be aware of our choice of vocabulary so it is not accusatory or otherwise characterizing as negative.

Wright Complaint: Ferris invited Greg Wright to speak to the concerns raised in his letter to the Board. Wright said he did not understand why there suddenly was discussion after the first of the year affecting the independence of the Planning Commission. He commended Popp for taking responsibility for the inappropriateness of the motions she made in January and said her willingness to give up the contracts would help restore the integrity of the Board. He reiterated the importance of elected officials staying out of the business of the Planning Commission.

Sullivan said she agreed that it was very possibly inappropriate for a Board member to have a separate "contract" with the township, but that MTA is clear that Board members may not only be paid extra compensation for taking on additional duties, but may also vote for themselves to receive such compensation. Ferris described the difficulty the Board has had for several years in trying to equitably address compensation for unassigned duties and stated the importance of avoiding not just conflicts of interest, but also the appearance of conflict – an issue which may be addressed in the Ethics section of the Policy & Procedures Manual.

[Back to] Board Relations: Ferris asked if there were more specific actions to address the dysfunction in the Board over the last several years. Jill Marble suggested that Popp and Sullivan could significantly address Ferris' concerns about internal control and help the working relationship between the three of them if they would take 30-40 minutes to sit down with Ferris and herself to explain how QuickBooks works. Ferris agreed and said it would be a great help. Sullivan and Popp agreed. Marble offered to take a more active role in trying to bring people together to resolve office problems, not just QuickBooks. Sullivan offered to try to avoid being in the middle when Ferris and Popp need to speak directly with each other.

Public Comments:

- Roland Halliday: Need to resolve hostilities; meetings too long due to acrimony; perhaps need to outline issues better before Board meetings; is going to be difficult and take time.
- Carol Beidler: Enjoyed hearing the positiveness in this meeting and looks forward to more peaceful resolutions of problems and more amiableness.
- Greg Wright: It is often more important to be amiable and build consensus and trust than to just get legal number of majority votes.
- Barbara Johnson: It is good to see positive steps today and she hopes issues can be resolved; it is very important.

Board Comments:

- Ferris: Appreciates everyone and thinks it has been a wonderful discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Sue Sullivan, Clerk, reporting.