

Special Meeting of the Crystal Lake Township Board

1651 Frankfort Highway, Frankfort MI 49635

July 28, 2023

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Amy Ferris at 9:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Guests: Jill Marble and Cathy Wilkinson

Adoption of Agenda:

Ferris moved to accept the agenda as presented. VanMeter supported. All ayes. Motion passed.

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

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Safety and Security Improvements

- Ferris asked the three Board members who initiated the meeting for input.
- VanMeter responded that the church where she works has been very proactive with security and safety issues. The doors remain locked, and there is a buzzer system and doorbell for entrance. The church's insurance company provided them with safety and security information. They have a system in place for armed intruders, which links directly to the sheriff's office.
- VanMeter is uncomfortable having doors unlocked while alone at the Township Hall on Fridays. The first thing she would like to see is the code changed and perhaps a video doorbell.
- VanMeter expressed concern for the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer who may be alone at hall when collecting money. VanMeter felt implementing safety and security was an ongoing process. With upcoming elections including 9-day voting, the details are yet uncertain of what the State security guidelines will be. The tabulators and ballots will need to be locked securely beyond just the entry doors.
- Popp shared Sondra's email and especially agreed with changing the door code, possibly quarterly. Ferris asked Popp if she felt the entry doors should remain locked. Popp felt if someone was uncomfortable being alone, they should be able to have the doors locked. Election workers and Sondra will be spending a lot of time alone in the office as the election nears.
- Popp shared she discussed with Brian the possibility of changing the door in the vestibule with half glass and have a counter to receive tax payments, etc. She felt people will be

understanding when they realize it is for security. Popp said this is being done at other township buildings without an issue. VanMeter said both City and County have total glass at the Clerk's Office.

- Northway said the high school also has a buzzer entry system and he agreed with this. Northway wished that Brian and Tom were present to engage in the conversation. Northway felt that if anyone entered the hall with a gun, it would be a problem as there also is not an egress door on the other side of the hall. Popp felt it would be a great idea to put an exit only door. Northway thought we could plan for a new building. VanMeter agreed. Popp felt a plan for a new building would take years. Northway stated the decision had been put off for years.
- Nielsen shared two concerns: the safety of elected officials and safety of our staff. The other issue raised was whether the building was breached. We should consider what possible data is available if that happens. Ferris asked if in his 45 years, the building had been breached. Both Ferris and Nielsen did not feel this had happened.
- Nielsen said we could have a motion detector with camera that could be linked to a phone. This would give us the necessary video feed rather than scroll through 24 hours of video. Popp indicated she informed Brian of a possible intruder. Ferris believed our current system could have motion detection activation. Northway suggested we look at options for a security system and get information from professionals.
- Nielsen stated another exit door would be a good idea. We cannot just ignore elected officials and staff concerned with their safety. He felt a door with a buzzer and security glass was a good idea and an easy way to alert the sheriff if there was a concern. Ferris mentioned a panic button, and Nielsen agreed.
- Northway contacted the City Police and the Sheriff for information and asked what we could do if someone had a weapon. They said the Township needed to have a policy in place regarding the scenario as well as others. Northway shared with the Board a program called BRACE that can assess security and potential issues. We currently have no policy on concealed weapons. Popp shared we are an open carry state. Popp thought we should explore the City of Frankfort's BRACE program. VanMeter shared election workers are uncomfortable with voters who carry weapons.
- Ferris said our end goal was implementing security measures for protection of staff and property. Nielsen said yes, staff should feel safe to come to work. VanMeter stated times have changed, and there is more violence in the world. We should protect both the people in township and property.
- Popp felt a first step would be to change the door code for the entrances. Northway said the door passcode was changed last year. Ferris asked if we needed a policy regarding who has access to the door code. Popp suggested it should only be staff and current contractors such as Eclipse Communications and then change code after Eclipse's work is finished. The UPS delivery person should not be given the passcode.
- Northway asked if anyone called authorities regarding the township visitor. Popp shared that Brian did inform the Sheriff Department, and patrols will be increased.

- Ferris asked if there was anything else other than changing the code. VanMeter asked if all doors used the same code. Ferris confirmed they did. VanMeter restated the need for a doorbell system and signage on the door to call for entry. Nielsen thought we should also provide the door to the office with a window and buzzer.
- Northway had to leave at 9:30 a.m., and stated he hoped no votes will be called in his absence. Nielsen said there was a quorum, and a vote could happen if needed. Ferris wanted to adhere to protocol.
- Popp indicated posting signs on the door and changing the code were no-cost items and did not need Board approval. Popp also spoke with Brian regarding a new door at the vestibule, perhaps with a window to greet and service guests. She also asked him to investigate adding an egress door on the north end of the hall. Popp suggested we schedule a meeting with the police chief regarding the BRACE program. Ferris asked if we should involve Township Enforcement Officer Grant Sowa. Nielsen said Brian should investigate possible security companies for additional options.
- VanMeter was unsure of the cost of a buzzer system, and Popp was unsure if she felt fully safe with a buzzer system. Nielsen stated it would give the option to open door or not. Ferris asked if a panic button should be installed, and where it should be placed. VanMeter explained, the device for armed intruders only, needed to be in such a place to eliminate accidental activation.
- Ferris asked the Board what situations or scenarios they anticipated leading to a possible intrusion and threat. Nielsen felt the reason for security was for safety. Ferris didn't know how we could determine if someone was in danger. Nielsen said that in about 100 years, there had never been an issue, but times have changed, and people do not feel safe anymore.
- Ferris asked how we would stop these possible issues. Nielsen said there is no way to stop it, but we can try to mitigate it. VanMeter explained a situation at the Church where an individual wanted to enter, and he was not allowed until there were others there.
- Ferris said the Sheriff will not appreciate getting a 911 call because we might not like how someone appeared. Popp stated individuals need not explain why they feel safe or unsafe as we can never fully anticipate what may or may not happen.
- Popp asked where we were regarding the list of security options. Ferris said consensus was to change door passcode and put signs on the doors with phone number to call for gaining entrance. The Board will ask Brian to pursue information on the addition of an egress door and change the wooden door in the vestibule. Ferris said Brian should also investigate other security options and Nielsen agreed.
- Jill Marble asked how much cash was kept in building. Popp explained there was none, but the "No Cash on Premises" signs needed to be posted again as they had been removed.
- Nielsen suggest the new doors be ordered now and not to put the order on hold. He felt the board did not need to vote on the color and trusted Brian to make the appropriate choice. Popp

