

# NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

## Township Board Workshop

### Minutes

### May 26, 2015

#### CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

The workshop was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Supervisor Engstrom at 8350 Main Street.

Supervisor Engstrom led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ROLL CALL

Marilyn Engstrom, Supervisor	Present
Kathy Braun, Treasurer	Present
Angela Westover, Clerk	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Wayne Dockett, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present
Tracy Thomas, Trustee	Present

Also present:

Township Manager Howard Fink  
Public Safety Director William Wagner  
Code Enforcement Officer William Lenahan  
Township Attorney Paul Burns  
Members of the community

#### ADOPT AGENDA

Dockett asked if the issue of waiving Civic Event fees for non-profits could be discussed. It was agreed to add this as item 6.

- **Motion:** Engstrom moved, Thomas supported, that the agenda be adopted as amended.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

#### FIRST CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

#### CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Lot Combination Fees.** Referring to an item discussed at an earlier meeting, Fink said while no application was ever submitted, a property owner had approached staff about combining two parcels into one. He said these combinations can be beneficial for the Township and for property owners, and at some point he will put on an agenda the issue of whether fees for this should be waived. Dockett said he would be in favor of this.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### 1. Various Project Updates

*Whitmore Lake Sewer Assessment District.* Fink explained that he is working on clearing up a title issue (Discharge of Mortgage needed) for a critical easement. He said if that cannot be obtained soon he will bring the next step to the Board to decide whether they would like to proceed anyway.

*Barker Road Non-Motorized Path.* Fink said he has made initial contacts to get easements for this project, but it will not be as easy as he had hoped. He said there are sections where easements will be required for the project to move forward.

*Main Street Sidewalk.* The design and title work for this have not yet been received, but once they are he will begin work on getting easements.

##### 2. Code Enforcement Update

Bill Lenahan referred to the written report and said the mission is to get compliance and resolve issues without having to initiate legal action. He said of 87 complaints lodged last year almost all were handled administratively and most of a large backlog was cleared up. He said one permit violation has gone to court.

##### 3. Library Allocation

Fink recalled that he had mentioned to the Board previously that Controller Rick Yaeger has been working on figuring out the allocation of Township expenses due from the library. He referred to the written information and said he recommends that this be revised every two years and that last year's amount be used for this year.

In answer to a question from Dockett, Fink said he thinks there is too much work involved in this analysis to do it every year. Dockett said he disagrees, noting that costs for Township departments are going up so it is proper for the Library to pay its fair share. Otto said the Library does not have the same access to information as other departments, and this is a large percentage increase for them.

Margaret Neblock, President of the Northfield Township Library Board, noted the Library is building an addition which is expected to be completed in the middle of fiscal year 2016-17, and there will probably be some increased

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expenses associated with that, but it would even out over two years.

Fink recommended that this be placed on a meeting agenda for separate discussion and action from the overall budget.

**4.  
Planning Consultant Request for Proposals**

Fink said he tried to be as unbiased as possible when writing the proposed Request for Proposals. It was agreed that Fink should be proceed with advertising for this.

**5.  
Budget Overview**

Fink said this budget is not much different than previous years. He referred to the summary of significant changes and made comments, including:

- The budget includes \$30,000 more in revenue than expenditures.
- Salary increases in addition to cost of living are not included, but he believes in raises based on performance and he will be making recommendations after completing staff reviews. He noted that salary increases for Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP) staff have been included in the proposed expenses.
- The budget is strong, and the Township is on a good financial footing. A recent University of Michigan study showed most Township have much smaller reserves as a percentage of their annual budgets.
- The Township will be in the black at the end of the current fiscal year, even after some unplanned projects such as purchasing the Curtis property.
- A long term capital improvement plan is being developed to make sure the Fire Department is in good financial condition for a long period of time.

Dockett objected to raises being included for all departments. Fink noted that Police and Fire wages are arrived at through collective bargaining. Dockett said Wagner should not be involved in those negotiations because he gains financially from them. Fink said Wagner is not in the Police union, and it is not possible to leave him out of these negotiations. He added that he believes Township staff should be paid a fair wage.

**6.  
Civic Event Permit Fees for Non-Profits**

In answer to a question from Dockett, Fink said if the Board decides that non-profits do not have to pay these fees then essentially no groups currently operating such events would pay fees. He noted that not all non-profits have 501(c)(3) status. Thomas said he thinks this exemption should extend only to 501(c)(3) organizations. Dockett said the fee exemption should extend to all non-profits. It was noted that all organizations currently offering events in the Township have 501(c)(3) status.

**SECOND CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

No comments.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dockett said local residency should be considered when filling open Township staff positions.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- **Motion:** Chick moved, Otto supported, that the meeting be adjourned.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

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Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:

Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;  
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

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Angela Westover, Clerk

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[http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township\\_board\\_of\\_trustees/](http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/)