

Approved 7/16/12

Casco Township Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting of May 21, 2012, 7:00 pm

Present: Overhiser, Winfrey, Cowie, Graff, Ridley, and approximately 25 people. The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and led in the pledge of allegiance.

Candidates present: John Brush, candidate for Allegan County Drain Commissioner, reviewed his life experiences as a Casco resident, farmer, and builder. He has served on several boards (both church boards and for the Township).

Julie Cowie spoke about filing to run for Allegan County Clerk/Register of Deeds. She talked about her experiences in Township leadership, including 8 years as Township Clerk in which she wrote several grants to secure public park land.

Guests: Don Black and Sherry Torres representing the Allegan County Commission on Aging were present and Don addressed the group. He asked the Board to respond to a letter regarding the functioning of the County Senior program and the needs of residents. Sherry Torres stated that June is Elder Abuse Awareness month.

Public Comment: Bob Sherwood, of Adams Road, is the President of the Fennville District Library board; he stated that at the primary election in August, the Library will seek a millage renewal (continued at .49 mill).

Julie Werkema, of Lakeview Avenue in Miami Park, thanked the Board for supporting the sewer project on Lakeview Avenue.

Minutes: April 16, 2012 Regular Meeting; approval moved by Graff, supported by Winfrey; MSC.

The May 7, 2012 Special Meeting was moved by Cowie, amended to use the resolution subsequently provided by Ron Bultje and to delete the discussion of amending the previously supplied Lakeview Special Assessment District resolution; supported by Graff; MSC.

Cowie reported that the May 8, 2012 election went well with 41 voters. The Election Inspectors were thanked for their good work.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer presented the following balances:

General Fund	\$460,670.01
Parks Fund	\$ 38,052.75
Senior Services Fund	\$ 37,389.72
Fire Department Fund	\$633,807.24
Road Fund	\$256,721.19
Cemetery Care Fund	\$129,385.14
Collected Tax Account	\$ 2,816.11

Winfrey moved payment of bills including General fund orders #21428-21491 in the amount of \$37,541.39; Fire Fund #3902, \$90,912.25; Parks Fund #248-259 in the amount of \$5,211.18; and Seniors Fund #306-311 in the amount of \$6,092.96, supported by Ridley; MSC.

Winfrey asked that the newsletter be submitted to the printer by June 15 to be ready for the July tax mailing.

Parks & Recreation: Nature Preserve construction has resumed. Pam Blough presented two bids for the gate, with the lowest being from Van't Hof Door and Gate Systems Inc. This firm has installed gates on other Casco private properties. Pam also contacted Consumers Energy, who will provide a contract totaling approximately \$2505 to bring pole and wire service to the Preserve, and \$6.50 per lineal foot for a connection point to the gate (with the entire project not to exceed \$3000). Graff moved to approve the Van't Hof bid plus the Consumers Energy bid (not to exceed \$3000), supported by Winfrey. The gate project is expected to take 4 to 6 weeks.

The vault toilet is scheduled to arrive on Friday. A permit is needed for the toilet; preliminary approval has been secured from the County. The asphalt paving will come after that. The furnishings are on hand.

Pam Blough reported on a letter from David and Debra Schuette, neighbors to the south of the Preserve, regarding Adirondack chairs that were removed from their property. Allan will call the Schuettes tomorrow and tell them the gate is on order.

Graff stated that good communication between the neighbors is important. There is no opening date set yet due to a delay to allow soils to settle.

Casco Senior Care Program: Susan Katt and Rachel Brenner were present. Joan Bonnette will be leading a butterfly craft class on June 6 at the church. Ellen Appelhans donated a desk, bookshelves, and file cabinet. A bid for chairs for exercise has been received. The Commission on Aging has mini-grants for \$500-\$1000 that could be useful for this project.

South Haven Health Systems: Judy Graff reported that South Haven Hospital is in the running for a top 10 hospital for service (a national award).

ZBA: Met on Thursday April 26, a continuation of the March meeting. The owner of parcels 03-02-450-005-00 & -450-054-00 sought a variance to allow the erection of a 7' high fence (contrary to the Zoning Ordinance which limits height to 6'). This variance was granted. The second item was from Brian Bosgraaf, Cottage Homes, on behalf of The Moran Group (Haven Shores), to develop a 10 acre tract consisting of 6 parcels. Two variances were granted and one was tabled. The setback variance from the high water mark was tabled.

Allegan County Commissioner: Tom Jessup said construction continues on the jail, which should be finished summer of 2013; jail is at 325 beds. A County non-smoking policy is being implemented, prohibiting smoking within 25 feet of a building entrance. The 9-1-1 rates are going up, per unit. The 9-1-1 fund has a \$6 million surplus. Tom asked about the transition to the ACRDC transportation program.

Tom was asked to encourage better facilitation of contacting seniors to set up transportation. (Managing this by telephone is difficult for the seniors). Rachel Brenner suggested that the County compensate the Casco Senior Care Program staff who could get involved in assisting seniors with transportation.

Bike Trail: Jeanne Van Zoeren, President of Friends of the Blue Star Trail, appeared on behalf of the bike trail project. The FOTBST exists to promote construction of the Blue Star Trail. They are promoting a feasibility study (to be conducted by the Nancy Owens Group). The civil engineering quote is \$5000 of the feasibility study. The Friends group presented a proposal to the board, requesting \$4000 from Casco Township.

The FOTBST will be working with Lakeshore Harvest Country on August 18 to provide volunteers for a bike event throughout Casco Township.

Jeanne read a letter from Carol Leneway in support of advancing the Blue Star Bike Trail. Julie Cowie read several pieces of correspondence in support of developing the bike trail (from Jeff and Lori Cullin of Glenn Haven Shores; Richard Potts; David S. Arbile; Marvin Haveman; Lois Schwartz; and Dan Way.) Julie Werkema spoke in support of the bike trail. She survived a car/pedestrian accident 14 years ago and spoke to the need for a separate facility for safe movement along Blue Star Highway.

Discussion ensued about allocating funds for this project, which would enable people to get to the Stefan parcel and the Maple Grove parcel on foot or by bicycle. Divergent views regarding which should come first—the feasibility study or the engineering study—were expressed.

Cowie spoke to the benefit of moving ahead on the engineering bid for the Blue Star Bike Trail.

The scope of the engineering bid was discussed: would it be for the total cost, or for just one component of the trail through Casco Township, and would it be good for more than 1 year? Graff supported an engineering study for the Casco portion of the trail. Overhiser stated that the unanswered question is the cost of the trail.

Van Zoeren stated that the feasibility study would address the ability to raise funds to cover the cost of the trail construction plus establish an endowment to maintain the trail.

Due to Casco Township's small staff (and in contrast to the staffing and grant funding resources of the City of South Haven), it is clear that engineering costs and additional costs (securing easements, planning, etc) need to be outsourced to an engineering firm such as Prein Newhof, whose engineer Scott Post has already provided Casco Township with a bid of less than \$4000 for estimating the cost of the trail.

Toni Carroll asked the board how much it was willing to commit to have this done. Board consensus was that the Township should pursue the engineering bid.

Cowie moved to authorize Overhiser and Graff to pursue an engineering bid with Prein Newhof for the bike trail that would provide sufficient information (all inclusive) for the Casco Township portion of the bike trail; supported by Winfrey. MSC.

Julia Sherwood asked if the Board could agree that it supports the bike trail and supports the people who want this. It was stated that indeed, the Township Board supports the project. Jeanne Van Zoeren stated that it addresses the residents' top two priorities: access to the Lake, with priority #2 being a bike trail. Pam Blough clarified that priority #1 in the Recreation plan is actually 3-pronged, with development of the Township Hall site being part of priority #1.

Nature Preserve Update: Overhiser reported that the Township is scheduled to close on the sale of the Lakeview parcel on May 23, which will provide the \$500,000 match for the Maple Grove acquisition. He estimated that the Maple Grove acquisition will cost the Township between \$30,000 & \$40,000 (beyond the Lakeview sale and after grant funds). The exact numbers are still being worked on as the June 6 closing date draws near.

Road Bids: Overhiser moved to accept the County Road Commission paving bid for 71st street south of DeBest to the curve, supported by Winfrey; MSC.

Resealing bids have been received for Baseline Road—from Lacota 60th to 64th, at around \$24,000 which is within our estimate; Overhiser moved approval of the County bid for resealing, supported by Cowie, MSC.

Text amendments: The Planning Commission chose not to do a definition for the high water mark; the attorney will have a resolution consistent with the Planning Commission's decisions. Graff moved to support the recommended text amendments which will be provided by resolution from attorney Ron Bultje, supported by Cowie; in a roll call vote, Graff, Winfrey, Overhiser, Cowie, and Ridley voted yes.

Draft Budget, FY 2012-2013: Cowie presented the draft fiscal year budget, 2012-2013. This is draft #1, and shows no salary changes.

Law Enforcement Update: David Campbell, on behalf of Glenn Shores Association, asked where the law enforcement issue stands. Overhiser reported that the next meeting will be with the County, which will implement a precinct system set up by the County. There also could be a special assessment district with the City.

Foreclosed properties: A property list from the County was received; the board was asked to look at it, but tight restrictions on acquiring land is a disincentive for purchasing parcels.

Acquisition of Stefan: Regarding differences with the State over the reimbursement received from the MNRTF for the Stefan acquisition, we are requesting a meeting with Steve DeBrabander.

Public comment: John Brush, candidate for Allegan County Drain Commissioner, expressed interest in knowing more about peoples' concerns.

Winfrey moved to adjourn at 9:47 pm, supported by Ridley; adjourned.

Respectfully,

Julie M. Cowie, Clerk

Casco Township

Attachments:

Casco Senior Care Program News

Friends of the Blue Star Trail proposal