

**Champion Township Board Meeting**  
**Monday October 14th at 6:30 p.m.**  
**Champion Township Hall**

- I. Call to Order: Supervisor Simula called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. Roll Call: Trustee Jim B, Trustee Betty B, Supervisor Simula, Clerk Catherine Pratt.

Also Present: Deputy Treasurer Heidy Pelkola, Deputy Clerk Amy Cevigney, Gary Hamel, Shawn Prisk.

- IV. Agenda Approval: A Motion was made by Trustee Betty B. to approve the Agenda. Supported by Trustee Jim B. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- V. Approval of meeting minutes: Regular monthly meeting of September 9, 2024. A motion was made by Trustee Jim B. to approve the monthly meeting minutes for Sept. 9th with one name correction from Carl Baldwin to Carr Baldwin. Supported by Trustee Betty B. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- VI. Treasurer's Report: Clerk Catherine Pratt gave the Treasurer's report. Trustee Jim B. stated that we do not have a CD report. READ AND ON FILE.
- VII. Claims: Clerk Catherine Pratt read off the Claims. With a total of \$45,663.64. The \$30,000 dollar expense was for the moving of money between funds to pay for the bond payments. A motion was made by Trustee Betty B. to pay the Claims. Supported by Clerk Catherine Pratt. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- VIII. Reports:
  - A. Supervisor: Had a meeting with Antonio Aden, new Executive Director for the Marquette County LandBank. Discussion was had about the house that they tore down in town that formerly belonged to Stanley Robbins as they are considering building a house there. Or, if someone would like to buy the property they would sell it. He also mentioned the development of some sort of fund that would allow Townships to potentially borrow from to help remedy those issues. Also met with Rachel Raak from the Lake Superior Community Partnership who can assist with finding grants for upcoming projects. Supervisor Simula and Trustee Jim B. attended the MTA workshop at Northern Michigan University. Gained a lot of knowledge and very helpful and useful information. Supervisor Simula mentioned that resident Miriam Jackson had a problem with water in her basement which he believes is due in part from the creek that runs behind her house and is full of brush and grass. Supervisor Simula contacted EGLE which suggested that we could clean out some of the brush and sticks and debris which does not require a permit. To get equipment involved would require a permit.

- B. Zoning Administrator: Approved one zoning permit for Rich Baron for the installation of a solar system on Kipple Creek Road.
- C. Clerk: Clerk Catherine Pratt received approval for the \$5,000 grant for the purchase of new election equipment or anything related to elections. Clerk Catherine Pratt commented that we should look into solar heating.
- D. Fire: Marquette County is still under a burn ban. So no burning please.
- E. EMS/WETESA: Had a meeting last week. Supervisor Simula brought up the issue with the truck as far as the doors and not being able to get in. Their solution is to start doing weekly checks on the vehicle to make sure that everything is operational and stocked properly. One EMT was placed on a 30 day suspension for a driving incident.
- F. Planning Commission: Our zoning text amendment regarding clubs was approved by the county. Trustee Jim B. stated that he did not see it advertised in the paper. Supervisor Simula replied that he sent it in so we should be seeing soon. An application from the club for a conditional use permit was received by the planning commission. Further discussion is being had on what the conditions may be.
- G. Mqt Co Twps Assoc (MCTA): Had a meeting on Sept. 25th. Had a guest speaker from the Enbridge Company. They are responsible for laying all the pipes underneath the Mackinac Bridge to provide fuel, most of which comes from Canada. They provide 55% of propane, and 80% of oil. All the infrastructure to build it came from Norway. It is the only program of its kind in the world. The landfill is dropping the tire collection as it is too expensive. Marquette County is going to be building a new jail. They do not have enough room for all the prisoners. Will update with more information as it is provided. Next meeting will be on the last Wednesday of October.
- H. Landfill/Transfer Station: Not a lot happening at the Transfer Station. Business as usual. In regards to the old landfill they had bermed off a section to keep people out. An inspection took place and they did not approve of that. They would like to see a fence. Looking for grants to help with this. All the testing for the wells came back good. They are changing phone service from a hardline to a cell phone.
- I. Assessor: Not here.

IX. Communications: Clerk Catherine Pratt received an email from Chocolay Township. They are updating their Township Recreation Natural Resource Conservation Plan. NICE Community Schools reached out to us with our 2024 tax rate; nothing has changed for Champion. Clerk Catherine Pratt was contacted by the City of Ishpeming Fire Department. As it is Fire Prevention week and they are seeking contributions. In previous years we contributed \$250.00. Trustee Jim B. made a motion to donate the \$250.00 again this year as we did in previous years. Supported by Supervisor Simula. Roll Call Vote: Supervisor Simula Aye, Trustee Betty B. Aye, Trustee Jim B. Aye, Clerk Catherine Pratt Aye. 0 Nays. Motion carried. If anyone would like to see the information for any of these topics feel free to contact the Township. Clerk Catherine Pratt commented that she met with the accountant Mike G. and he stated that it is entirely up to the Township on how they want to split the bill. Whether the general fund pays all or you have Fire/EMS/Road fund pay some as well. Either way is acceptable. Board members agreed to table until next month to decide.

X. Public Comment: Gary Hamel commented with this money situation do you think that the state could step in and say hey we have to do something different? Supervisor Simula replied with the turnover with new personnel after the election he doubts the State will jump in at this point. However, it is a possibility at some point.

## XI. Old Business

### A. Township hall relocation update:

1. Supervisor Simula stated that there is a lot going on up there. The plumbing and initial inspection has passed and is complete. Still working on some electrical, and heating duct work. Items are being installed right now. They did build a new step for the rear exit/entry way. All the new windows are in now. We Energies are coming in the next couple days to move the electrical service from the old panel to the new panel. We are at a point where we need to make some decisions fairly soon on floor coverings. Supervisor Simula brought some samples for Board members to look at to decide. We are going to be doing carpet tiles in the big main room as well as the offices. The bathrooms and the entryway are going to be doing the vinyl plank flooring. Township Board Members agreed and picked out carpet tiles and vinyl plank from the samples provided. Supervisor Simula is going to get some comparison prices before final decisions are made.

2. Entryway upgrade idea:

Supervisor Simula was provided a quote of \$11,000 or a little less to complete this project. Board members decided to table this for now pending further review of pricing and possibilities. At the last meeting Board members approved for the concrete pad to be poured where the footings have been placed for that.

3. Siding Options:

Supervisor Simula provided a picture to Board Members provided by Ben, one of the contractors as far as siding goes which shows the Board and Batten look. This is an option that he is proposing instead of the lap siding. The good thing is that it would probably cost a little less. We do have the option of getting it in prefinished colors. The other option is to get it primed and then paint it whatever color we want it afterwards. Ben recommended that the prefinished color siding lasts a lot longer over time versus painting it. Ben also recommended putting the steel siding around the bottom to protect and preserve the bottom portion of the wall from weather. Board Members agreed to table this for now pending further discussion to look at it all for pricing, colors, etc. Supervisor Simula mentioned the possibility of using some sort of computer program to generate an idea of how it is going to look so everyone has a better idea.

B. Newsletter feedback?: Supervisor Simula asked the question whether or not we were getting any feedback on our newsletters? We believe that we are. Trustee Jim B. stated that to help reduce postage cost we should put something out there to see if anyone would rather receive it online. Supervisor Simula is going to advertise this option in the next mailing as well as online.

C. Other: Dumpster Days went well. Just received a bill for that.

## XII. New Business:

- A. Quarterly budget review: As we are halfway through the budget year. So we are looking for things to be at 50% potentially. Trustee Jim B. stated that we have a few issues with the checks clearing as well as the Treasurer's Statutory duties being done. We believe they are being done, we just cannot prove it. Trustee Jim B. stated that the first thing he noticed is under Treasurer line item number 253-730-Marquette County tax roll and supplies. Looking back \$730.00 was put there for that. Then looking at it now it went to \$3485.00. Which is totally unexpected. Clerk Catherine Pratt explained that this happened from two previous charges that she was notified of from equalization saying that they were unpaid. From Dec 4th and Jan of 2023. Trustee Jim B. stated that is part of our problem that we have to remedy now. Trustee Jim B. made a motion to move \$3000.00 from line item 265-934 being Township maintenance and repair. To put into line item 253-730 Marquette county tax roll and supplies. Supported by Trustee Betty B. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried. Trustee Jim B. commented in regards to Marquette County Solid Waste we have received checks from the people who have done it. We just don't know if they went through and are done. That is why it looks different. We did not budget anything in there because usually what goes in and out, usually zeros itself out. Trustee Jim B. believes everything will work out. He is just bringing it up for Board knowledge. All of the other funds look good at this point.
- B. Quickbooks: We were contacted by Quickbooks. We were in jeopardy of losing data as we had a bunch of errors in our system. The main one being we did not have enough storage space available. We ended up having to update our quickbooks which was about \$5,000.00. We now have technical support included which we did not have prior. Everything is fixed and working now. Trustee Jim B. made a motion to okay this purchase after the fact as it was an executive decision. Supported by Supervisor Simula. Roll Call vote: Supervisor Simula Aye, Trustee Jim Belpedio Aye, Trustee Betty Brotherton Aye, Clerk Catherine Pratt Aye. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- C. New officer salaries for upcoming terms: Supervisor Simula met with Jackie Solomon last week, our County Treasurer, as it was suggested by our Accountant a while back that we have our taxes collected by the County instead of our local Treasurer because of the problems that we have. Jackie Solomon is very open and willing to accept this suggestion. The cost would be the 1% administrative fee. The caveat being that whoever our new Treasurer is going to be has to be on board with that as you cannot take away a statutory duty without their blessing. So we'll just have to wait and see. Also worth mentioning is the fact that if in a year or two we want to take it back that is an option as well. The County is going to compose an agreement. With that being said, if the County takes over the collection of taxes then our new Treasurer would have a lot less to do. Supervisor Simula does not believe they should be paid as much. The reason that this is being discussed is you can only lower a salary at the beginning of a term. You can increase a salary anytime. If the new Treasurer does not want to agree to this then at the following meeting we can raise the salary back up. Also, taxpayers will also have the option to pay with a credit card when paying taxes through the County. Supervisor Simula made a motion to resolve the Treasurer Salary for the new term by resolution at \$400.00 a month. Supported by Trustee Betty B. with the resolution being ready to be voted on at the next monthly meeting. 4 Ayes.0 Nays. Motion carried. Board members discussed pay for the other officers. It was agreed that it will stay the same as our budget is already set.

- D. Approve election inspectors: We need to approve our election inspectors for the upcoming election on November 5th. Election inspectors are: Catherine Pratt, Carl Pratt, Amy Cevigney, Rona Cardew, and Shannon Kangas. A motion was made by Trustee Betty B. to approve the election inspectors. Supported by Supervisor Simula. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- E. Increase credit card limit: This came up when we had our Quickbooks issue. We did not have enough on our card to make the entire payment at once. A motion was made by Trustee Jim B. to raise the credit card limit to \$7500.00 to avoid another problem in the future. Supported by Clerk Catherine Pratt. Roll call vote. Supervisor Simula Aye, Trustee Jim B. Aye, Trustee Betty B. Aye, Clerk Catherine Pratt Aye. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- F. Trick or treat hours: The recommended time for trick-or-treating is between the hours of 4p-7p. A motion was made by Trustee Jim B. to set the trick or treating time from 4p-7p. Supported by Trustee Betty B. 4 Ayes. 0 Nays. Motion carried.
- G. Planning Commission opening: Planning Commission member Blayne Marek has officially resigned. So we now have 1 open seat on the Planning Commission which will be advertised for. If anyone has any interest please contact the Township or Supervisor Mike Simula.
- H. Other: None.

XIII. Board member comments: Trustee Betty B. has two fliers regarding mental health awareness with crisis numbers. One is in reference to Shore Place that offers all kinds of services and assistance. If anyone would like to see them they will be at the office. Trustee Jim B. commented that we will be closing the cemeteries after Veterans Day, November 11th. If anyone needs to pick up flowers, decorations etc. from a loved one's gravesite please do it before then. The sooner the better.

XIV. Meeting Announcements:

- A. The Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday November 12th, at 6:30 p.m.
- B. The Township Board meeting is scheduled for November 11th, at 6:30 p.m. which is a holiday. With an alternate date being November 18th, at 6:30 p.m.

XV. Public comment: Gary Hamel commented to Supervisor Simula wondering if that goes through would he have to pay his taxes at the courthouse. Supervisor Simula replied yes, or you can pay by check, credit card etc. Gary H. asked about Warner's old house and what is going on with that. Supervisor Simula replied as far as he knows they still plan on tearing the old house down and rebuilding on that property. Gary Hamel also asked about the possibility of the Land Bank acquiring these properties which could be a possibility however the property owners would have to sign their properties over.

XVI. Adjournment: Supervisor Simula adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Champion Township  
Deputy Clerk  
Amy Cevigney