

PINE GROVE TOWNSHIP MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 2, 2022 7:00 p.m.

1. **Meeting was called to order** at 7:00 P.M. by Smith
2. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
3. **Roll Call: Present:** Richardson, Meert, Smith, Sell, Hephner -Attorney Catherine Kauffman
4. **Agenda: *Motion made by Richardson, supported by Sell to approve the agenda. All yes, motion carried.***
5. **Consent Agenda: *Motion made by Hephner, supported by Smith to approve the Consent Agenda. All yes, motion carried.***
6. **Monthly Bills: *Motion made by Smith, supported by Sell to pay the monthly bills as presented in the amount of \$19728.61. All yes, motion carried.***
7. **Public Comment:** Question was brought up about the township spraying for Gypsy Moths. Citizen was referred to the Van Buren County Conservation office for more information. The treasurer from Almena Township presented a letter from the Almena Township Board asking for the support of ARPA funds to Bloomingdale Communications from Pine Grove Township.
8. **Correspondence and Reports:**
 - A. **Library:** Nothing at this time.
 - B. **Sheriff:** Submitted. The newly appointed Sheriff for Pine Grove Township is Lauren. The Sheriff stated he had responded to 62 calls for the month. He mentioned to citizens to be aware of people trying to steal catalytic convertors from vehicles. Park your vehicles inside of a garage or under a light if possible.
 - C. **County Commission:** Submitted. Copy on file.
 - D. **Road Commission:** Submitted. Dan Bishop from the road commission was present.
 - E. **Fire Chief: Pancake Breakfast-Sunday, March 6, 7 AM TO 11 AM.**
 - F. **Fire Board: None.**
 - G. **Ambulance:** Submitted. 24 responses.
 - H. **Treasurer:** T&A: \$9,943.70 Checking: \$645693.51 Savings: \$199,926.16 Tax: \$6894.19.
 - I. **Planning Commission:** Meeting 3-21-22 at 6 p.m. Special Land Use for Farrell on CR 388.
 - J. **KABA:** Submitted. Smith stated that \$3573.00 in fees from building permits were collected
 - K. **OEO:** submitted
9. **Committee Reports: ARPA FUNDS:** Steve Shultz, Bloomingdale Communications, advised that they are still working with the USDA Rural Utility Service to see if they can use federal and local monies on the same projects. Schultz stated that Reconnect Round 1 and Round 2 will connect about 750 homes in Pine Grove township. Schultz stated that they are not asking for any monies right now, they are just asking local jurisdictions for commitments to allocate some/all of the ARPA funds for these projects. There was lengthy discussion about PGT committing funds at this time which would allow BCI to be able to move forward with the reconnect project.
Motion made by Meert, supported by Richardson, to commit half of the ARPA funds, approx. \$154,000 to the BCI Reconnect I Project for Pine Grove Township. Roll Call: Richardson – yes, Meert – yes, Smith – yes, Sell – yes, Hephner – yes. All yes, motion carried. The Board requested that the Fire Chief prepare some estimates on a new fire truck so that the Board knows how much of the ARPA funds can be used on that project.
10. **Old Business:**
 1. **Approval of Misc. Projects for VBRC:** Smith presented 4 project that needed board consideration:
Motion made by Hephner, supported by Smith to approve Project 497.2168 for \$5,000 for the Extra Width Mowing. All yes, motion carried.
Motion made by Hephner, supported by Richardson to approve Project 497.2173 for \$3,000 for Miscellaneous Ditching. All yes, motion carried.
Motion made by Hephner, supported by Smith to approve Project 497.2172 for Boom Mowing for \$4,500. All yes, motion carried.

Motion by Smith, supported by Hephner to approve Project 497.2171 for Driveway Culverts. All yes, motion carried.

Motion made by Smith, supported by Richardson to adopt a resolution to support the Van Buren Road Commissions application for Local Bridge Funding for replacement of the 2nd Avenue bridge. Roll Call: Richardson – yes, Meert – yes, Smith – yes, Sell – yes, Hephner – yes. All yes, motion carried.

2. **Charter vs. General Law Township:** Attorney Kaufman stated that the Secretary of State has sent the township a pamphlet stating that since the most recent census, Pine Grove now has over 2000 residents which makes the township eligible to become a Charter township or remain a General Law Township. The biggest benefit of being a charter township is protections from annexation but does not provide total protection. The Board will take some time to review the materials provided and Hephner will send Attorney Kaufman the questions that the board members come up with. Attorney Kaufman will respond back to Hephner and she can share the information with the rest of the board.
3. **Office Building:** Smith stated that he asked the board to come up with ideas of what they would like to have in a new township building. Smith stated that he does not believe the current building is worth putting more money into, and The Board needs to look seriously at building a new building at the township owned property at 388 and 32nd Street. Smith stated that he spoke with the architect who did the last proposal and stated that the first place to start is doing a boundary survey, TOPO survey, and soil borings and to accomplish that, clearing would need to happen at a cost of an estimate of \$18,000.00. Smith stated that the architect is willing to come to a meeting to discuss any questions. *Motion made by Smith, supported by Hephner to look at building a new township hall at CR 388 and 32nd Street. Roll Call: Richardson – no, Meert – yes, Smith – yes, Sell – no, Hephner – yes. 3-2, motion carried.*

11. New Business:

1. **Board of Review:** Meert stated that she has advertised for an alternate Board of Review member but has not received any applications. *Motion by Hephner, supported by Sell to seek an alternate member for the Board of Review. All yes, motion carried.*

2. **Approval of Cemetery Fees:** Lawn Care Plus, Jeff Gasper is requesting to raise the fees for opening graves by \$50 which would put them in-line with surrounding township's fees. *Motion made by Hephner, supported by Richardson, to increase grave openings by Lawn Care Plus by \$50. All yes, motion carried.*

Smith stated that there has been talks of an annual raise of 2% for Jeff Gasper for township lawncare/maintenance. Jeff has not asked for this increase but has not been able to find help and is doing all the lawn care/maintenance himself. The township is in year 3 of a 5-year contract. Attorney Kaufman suggested an amendment to the current contract. *Motion made by Hephner, supported by Richardson to amend the current agreement with Lawn Care Plus to include a 4% increase annually for years 3-5, subject to agreement by the Sexton. Roll Call: Richardson – yes, Meert – yes, Smith – yes, Sell – yes, Hephner – yes. All yes, motion carried.*

3. **Township Computers:** Dave from Hi-Tech remotely entered computers at the township and in doing so, found that the Treasurers computer is severely lacking in space in the hard drive. Sell stated that she was not having any issues with her computer before David went in. Dave stated that Hi-Tech can provide the township a 1 TB storage for the hard drive for \$140.00. *Motion by Sell, supported by Richardson to have Hi-Tech install the 1 TB hard drive. All yes, motion carried.*

Smith stated that after speaking with Dave from Hi-Tech that the township needs to go to their own server in the building so that each computer is not a stand-alone system. The server would cost approx. \$5000 and this would allow the township to scan all paperwork, and the scanner would be approx. \$6,000. It would be a long project to get all the stored files scanned. Smith stated that we could also do the Zoning Ordinance ourselves, getting away from Municode, as well as the Police Power Ordinances that are not anywhere electronically.

Attorney Kaufman requested someone to send her Pine Grove Township's Bid Policy.

12. **Public Discussion:** Resident stated that there is another pile of junk dropped off on his road. Smith stated that Pine Grove has an agreement with Brian Kronk for cleanup. Smith stated that he will make that contact.
13. **Member Comment:** Smith stated that the flag needs to be replaced. Meert stated that there were replacement Flags in the front cabinet, someone just has to replace it.

Motion made by Smith, supported by Hephner to adjourn. All yes, motion carried.
Adjournment: 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Meert, Pine Grove Twp. Clerk