

SAUBLE TOWNSHIP BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 7:03 pm

ROLL CALL: Mary Ann Nugent-present, Gail Raad – present, Abbey Sisson-present, Tracy Baker-present, Beth Acker - present

Agenda Revisions: Raad motion to accept agenda as presented with a second from Acker. All in favor, motion carried.

MINUTES: Moved by Acker to approve August 9, 2021, minutes, second by Baker. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Acker to approve August 28, 2021, Public Hearing minutes with a second by Baker. All in favor. Motion carried.

Board Reports:

Supervisor:

- Big Bass/Little Bass SAD hearing #2 was Saturday, August 28, 2021, at 9 AM.
- Security cameras: Nugent received cost estimate of \$3500 from Brooks Security
- Playground equipment: Thank you to Paul Raad & Gary Nugent for installing the spring riders
 - Acker inquired if monies from the Fremont Foundation funded the spring riders. No as enough money in the playground account.
- Lake County Sesquicentennial Celebration
 - Sauble Township Hall will be open from 12-3 PM on Saturday, 9/25, for the one room schoolhouse tour.
- LCRC: Brining meeting 10/26/21 at 6 PM
- LCCF: Donation of \$437.26 has been made to the Sauble Endowment Fund through 6/30/21.
- MMRMA: \$633.75 will be reimbursed to township for zoning courses.
- Mecosta/Osceola Lake Conservation District: Hazardous waste disposal on 10/9/21 at Wenger Pavilion, Baldwin. Township has written \$100 check.
- Greg Barnett, Assessor, notified Pleasant Acres Trailer Park that park will be assessed, no longer vacant land. Beginning with Pleasant Acres as they are the largest trailer park in Sauble Township.

Clerk:

- The Great Lakes People Fund provided the grant which paid for the new flagpole, flag, and solar light. All township residents are encouraged to round up their bill which provides the funds to townships to complete projects such as Sauble's. Without this grant, Sauble Township would not have a new flagpole, flag, and solar light.
- Bills and Payroll: Sisson inquired as to why her mileage was not reimbursed and Lillian Hasenbank not paid for deputy treasurer work.
 - Board inquired as to why there were two consecutive trips to Baldwin. 7/29 & 7/30/21 –
 - Sisson stated that on the 29th she didn't click on the button to settle so she had to return on the 30th.
 - 8/19 & 8/20 Sisson had issues with check.
 - Raad stated that deadline to be paid is at noon the Friday before the board meeting and has been on meeting minutes many times. Raad received mileage request on her desk 9/13/21.
- Hasenbank's Time Sheets: 30 hours were submitted
 - 8/10/21 for 5.5 hours Hasenbank was not sworn in as deputy.

- 8/17/21 for 5 hours. Hasenbank was sworn in. Her mom (Sisson) texted her to go to township; however, Hasenbank stated she did not know anything. Nugent and Raad told her to leave as she is unable to process any tax payments.
- MTA and township attorney consulted.
 - Deputy cannot perform any work until deputy has been administered the oath of office.
 - Board can determine payrate, number of hours worked, provide proof and documentation for number of hours worked, what role a deputy plays.
 - Board will not reimburse Hasenbank for 8/10 & 8/17/21 hours.
 - Will pay other hours when Hasenbank provides documentation.
- Hasenbank has not completed new hire paperwork although two messages were left on her phone. Cannot pay until Hasenbank is set up in payroll. Also, time sheets were submitted past the Friday noon deadline
- Sisson inquired about attorney fees regarding deputy treasurer and why she or Lillian weren't contacted. Sisson not available by phone, text, or email.
 - Deputy treasurer hours were placed on clerk's desk on 9/13/21 & that is why board is questioning hours worked at the September 13, 2021, meeting.
 - Township placed in a situation which is not beneficial for the township and its residents.
- Acker motion to approve bills & payroll with a second from Baker. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer:

- Baker motion to approve treasurer's report as presented with a second from Acker. All in favor, motion carried. Sisson stated Playground account was quarterly; however, Raad inquired as to March statement. Sisson will provide March 2021 statement
- Deputy Treasurer
 - Training – has been provided as shown on the August hours sheet.
 - Signature cards at LOSB
 - Account cards have not yet been signed. Treasurer, Clerk & deputies all need to sign the cards.
 - Per LOSB, deputy treasurer cannot sign checks or make deposits until cards are signed.
 - Other paperwork
 - New Hire Paperwork: Raad has left two messages on Hasenbank's phone, no response from Hasenbank.
 - Sisson stated she thought Hasenbank had completed paperwork.
 - Receipts: In July Sisson stated that she ran out of official receipts with township name and address.
 - MTA stated official receipts are to be used.
 - Sisson has not yet ordered receipts. Thought Raad should order, however, that is treasurer's responsibility not the clerks.
 - Lake County Treasurer Office uses Fidlar
- Receipts
 - 8/2/21 Two EFT's given to treasurer 1) \$159 & 2) \$814 No receipts to clerk as of 9/13/21
 - 7/1/21 Deposit of \$116.10 – no receipt given to clerk as of 9/13/21
 - Clerk requested account number from Ryan Howell of Baird, Cotter & Bishop so she could reconcile LOSB July 2021 statement. Account set up for uncategorized income.
 - Sisson did not know what \$116.10 deposit made on 7/1/21 was for. Nugent told her it was from SEEJBA (Lake Co. Star publication).
 - Three deposits all dated 8/24/21 were put on clerk's desk on 9/13/21.
 - Caused a delay in August reconciliation of general account by clerk.

- **Treasurer report:**
 - Per the attorney if treasurer is absent, board cannot approve the report. Township board should not have approved July and August reports.
 - Does a deputy treasurer have the knowledge to answer questions?

Trustees: No comments

Public Comment: No comments

Gary Nugent, SEE Fire Board: Sauble had 3 medical & 0 fire. All township fire departments are seeing an increase in activity.

Gary Nugent, SEE Joint Building Authority: Office trusses are going up. Waiting on big crane to put up other trusses.

Don Arquette, County Commissioner: Not present

Lake County Sheriff Department: Storm damage in Baldwin & Chase; 3 fatalities (2 natural & 1 GLE lineman electrocution) new animal control and evidence officers, \$1,000 to \$3,000 per month being collected to distribute to non-profit organizations.

Lake County Road Commission: None

WID USE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

- Bill Rodgers issued 3 permits & 2 variances
 - Scott Young property on Mac Rd. Acker inquired if any updates.
 - Blight (trailer) on 3 Mile Rd & Hamilton. Owner is aware and Bill will contact.
- New citation books on order
 - When received will issue citation for multiple vehicles.

COMMISSION/BOARD REPORTS:

Planning and Zoning:

- Jim Sharp stated that work continues reviewing ordinances. Members are not being paid for special meetings.

Zoning Board of Appeals: 1st Variance hearing will be held on 9/28/21 at 6 PM

- Two other variance hearings will be scheduled together for a Saturday at 10 AM.
 - Going forward, variance hearings will be scheduled for a Saturday.
- Alternate needed, see New Business.

Board of Review: December meeting and nothing is on the books.

Unfinished Business:

- **Basketball Court Backboards:** Gerber Foundation discretionary funds will be used to purchase. Gary Nugent will let Raad know what to order on Amazon. Will use township debit card.
- **Ethics/Code of Conduct Resolution:** Will be moved to October agenda.

- **Striping of parking lot, basketball, and pickle ball courts:** Thank you to Bill Rodgers and Paul Raad for handling the striping.
 - Jim Sharp will check with Faith Fellowship Church if township can store the striping machine.
- **Trunk n Treat:** Board decision not to sponsor the event this year due to covid.
 - Nugent will post on website not a township sponsored event. People can use the township grounds across the street to give treats from their car.

New Business:

- **Appointment of ZBA Alternate:** Paul Raad – has had prior experience. Will be sworn in after meeting.
- **Tax Bill Mailings: KCI –**
 - Has been delayed since July & August meetings; wanted treasurer input.
 - Substantial savings per Elk & Eden townships.
 - Sisson will check costs from KCI & report back to board; can go in with other townships to save money.
- **Deputy Treasurer**
 - MTA & both township attorneys advised that the Township board sets hours, compensation, responsibilities. Also set for the deputy clerk.
 - If clerk or treasurer cannot perform statutory duties due to absence, illness, vacation, or emergency than the deputy is utilized
 - Raad stated this does not give clerk or treasurer carte blanche not to do their job.
 - Raad stated she has a duty to represent residents and most of the duties fall on her, not her deputy.
 - Pay deputy treasurer only during tax season. Sisson inquired about October training if deputy would be paid. Board would authorize official training
- Sisson posted hours on tax bills; however, she has not been present.
 - Supervisor was dealing with irate residents.
 - Sisson did not respond to citizens when they called her.
 - Treasurer can't go away all summer & utilize deputy.
 - Didn't inform the board she was on vacation.
 - 8/3/21 to 8/20/21 stacks of tax payments waiting to be picked up.
 - Residents calling why their check wasn't cashed.
- Sisson stated Nugent was offering vacated trustee position to Pat Boik.
 - Nugent stated it was a consideration, however, Acker was appointed as she has the skill set needed for the Planning Commission to take minutes, draft letters, and mailings.
- Sisson stated Acker could have remained as deputy treasurer, however, it was Acker's decision to resign as deputy.
 - Sisson had already planned to be gone; however, never informed the board.
 - Took laptop with her to KY (security concern) which left deputy treasurer unable to process tax payments.
 - Raad's concern is Sisson will not be available putting responsibility on her deputy.
 - Deputy treasurer is her daughter, allowed but a concern.
 - Baker stated Sisson should recommend the deputy's hours
 - It is up to the board to determine the deputy's number of hours worked.
 - Nugent's concern that deputy will be used when treasurer wants to go to KY.
 - Laptop is township property and should be left at township.
 - Treasurer's statutory duty to collect taxes.
 - Treasurer should schedule vacation outside of tax season.
 - Clerk does not schedule vacation during elections.
- Sisson has trained Hasenbank as deputy as evident by number of August hours submitted.

- Acker stated that it does not take much time to be refreshed in entering payments and printing receipts. Deputy should have taken notes during training.
 - Deputy involvement is minimal during tax season and Raad agrees with Acker.
 - Sisson as treasurer has a duty to represent the residents who elected her.
 - Treasurer is to communicate with board if on vacation or unavailable.
 - Deputy only used for an emergency & is not to be misused.
 - **Raad motion that deputy treasurer will be paid \$12/hour. Deputy hours during tax time will be limited to one (1) hour per week unless an emergency. Laptop will be kept at township and deputy treasurer will do the work at the township. with a second by Acker. Roll call vote: Nugent, yes; Raad, yes; Sisson, abstained; Baker, no (his original vote was to abstain), Acker, yes. Motion carried.**
- **Treasurer Concerns**
 - Nugent has received many calls complaining and demanding action that is why MTA attorney, and two township attorneys were consulted.
 - Attorney sent a demand of action letter to Sisson.
 - Also talked at length about deputy treasurer situation.
 - **Resolution to censure Sisson**
 - Neglect if not done, have to protect assets, reputation of township, insure no signs of misdoings in our financial status.
 - Township auditor is also involved.
 - Don't have to take action tonight.
 - **Resolution 11-2021:** Resolution censuring township treasurer, Abbey Sisson, for willful neglect of duty was read by Raad. Motion by Raad with a second by Nugent.
 - **Baker wanted discussion**
 - Nugent advised that she can be personally held for neglect of duty if she did not do this.
 - Attorney very strongly advised that Nugent could be censured.
 - Raad stated fiduciary responsibility to township and its residents.
 - Log on what has been occurring daily, printing documentation.
 - MTA attorney & township attorney advised that the township should contract with auditor to do a forensic investigation.
 - Acker stated this is difficult and uncomfortable.
 - She was present on election day & was yelled at about taxes.
 - Frustration from friends that can't pay taxes when hours were published.
 - Nugent has had calls from people threatening to call the State police and 9&10 News.
 - Said that the township would handle.
 - Sisson feels it has been a witch hunt.
 - Last two years has had issues health wise and family wise.
 - Hard to keep a deputy.
 - Personal cell phone on State website, residents contact her daily, drives to disabled vets houses on last day to collect taxes.
 - Nugent stated Sisson has the capacity, skills, and intelligence to do job correctly
 - Why did this happen?
 - The board also has trying circumstances, personal & health issues but we can't make excuses for this.
 - Sisson stated treasurers don't have to have township hours.
 - Sisson posted hours on the tax bills.
 - Sisson received demand letter two weeks ago. Now a resolution censuring her is being heard at the September board meeting.
 - Board has not heard from her.
 - 2019 and 2021 audit issues are still ongoing.

- NOT notifying board when she will be absent.
- Can't ignore issues that need to be addressed.

- **Vote on Resolution 11-2021**

- Roll call vote: Nugent, yes; Raad, yes; Sisson, abstained; Baker, no; Acker, yes. Resolution declared passed 3 yes, 1 no & 1 abstention

Public Comment: Two months ago, Bob Woolever expressed concerns about the treasurer's report being in disarray & the township has 6 out of 12 symptoms of embezzlement that he brought up at the July & August board meetings. Also inquired if there is a process for handling cash? Treasurer stated she no longer accepts cash as township does not have a petty cash fund. Woolever asking Sheriff Martin to comment. Woolever requesting that the treasurer reports from July & August be rescinded. Township finances are not ok. Paul Raad requested that treasurer resign.

Board Privilege: Nugent per guidance from MTA & township attorney stated that all the deficiencies presented tonight are signs of misappropriation, embezzlement, etc. Supervisor can be held responsible if no action is taken. Supervisor to represent the township and board and this must be taken seriously.

Adjournment: Acker motion to adjourn at 9:04P.M. with second from Baker.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail Raad

Sauble Township Clerk