

# Minutes Board of Town Trustees

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STATE OF ILLINOIS

LAKE COUNTY

TOWN OF NEWPORT

THE BOARD OF TOWN TRUSTEES met at the office of the Town Clerk at the Village Hall on October 21, 2020

**Members Present:**

J. Daryle Spiller, Trustee

Stan Williams, Trustee

James Zegar, Trustee

Debbie Spurgeon, Clerk

Randy Whitmore, Supervisor

Jerome Berens, Assessor

Rodger Edmonds, Highway Commissioner

**Call to Order:** Supervisor Whitmore calls the Regular Township Meeting of the Board of Town Trustees to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Supervisor Whitmore leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** In attendance, Daryle Spiller, Stan Williams, Jerome Berens, James Zegar, Debbie Spurgeon and Randy Whitmore. Absent, Rodger Edmonds, Mike Wells. Also present via video conference, Attorney Keri-Lyn Krafthefer.

**Approval of Minutes:** Supervisor Whitmore requests a motion and a second to approve the September Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from September 16, 2020 by Zegar, second by Williams.

Roll call vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 4-0. Wells, absent.

### **Reports: Supervisor's Report:**

Supervisor Whitmore reports on a meeting held with Larry Booth of Benton Township, regarding Newport's participation with Benton for PACE Dial-A-Ride services. Newport Township budgeted \$3,000 for our portion of the service, however, the actual cost this year came in at \$1800. The supervisor reports the service is working pretty well thus far, and residents are pleased with the township sponsored service offering.

[Trustee Mike Wells joins the meeting at 7:06 p.m.]

### **Highway Commissioner**

In his absence, Commissioner Edmonds' report is delivered by Mrs. Toni Edmonds.

Mrs. Edmonds notes the road district has purchased a truck since the last meeting. Previously, the commissioner was looking for a used vehicle in the \$60-70k price range. However, Commissioner Rodger Edmonds, working with Bunnell, ultimately decided on a new 2021 model truck for \$150,000. Mrs. Edmonds indicates the board will notice a warrant and bill for \$100,000, which is the down payment. Additionally, Edmonds has adjusted the new budget to include an additional \$51,722 to accommodate the final payment due on the new vehicle.

Mrs. Edmonds comments that the new vehicle is very nice and the majority of the district's accessory equipment will tie in to the new vehicle. A new salt system will be added, which will be an additional cost, and will help the district keep track of salt usage when working in other districts, such as the Village of Wadsworth or Benton Township.

Trustee Williams inquires as to when the Newport Road District is taking delivery on the new vehicle. Mrs. Edmonds believes it will be delivered on Friday (October 23, 2020) or within a few days thereafter.

The road district has been working on road striping.

Additionally, JB Trees has again been hired to perform tree-trimming activities. With permission of the Village of Wadsworth, an area under the jurisdiction of the village on Plaza Drive has been cleared for traffic line of sight. Tree trimming work is now complete for the season.

The road district personnel is currently working in the shop doing vehicle maintenance, such as rust removal and painting.

Mrs. Edmonds says they met with Benton Township and have agreed on an IGA for winter snowplowing services. The IGA will be revisited again in the spring.

**Assessor’s Report:**

Assessor Berens reiterates comments initially stated at the September meeting regarding disappointment with his current salary. Berens reads aloud a letter from Rick Mozier, Old Mill Creek, advocating for an increase of Beren’s salary to \$40,000 annually for the part-time, elected position. Mozier’s letter sites his positive interactions with Berens as justification for the increase.

Berens calls on audience members, Diana & Syed Haider, Antioch, to additionally advocate for the raising of the Assessor’s salary from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Haider sites property taxes as a residents’ largest concern, however, proposes that the part-time Assessor position salary should be raised to \$40,000.

The supervisor notes compensation for elected officials is intended for the office, not the individual, as there is no guarantee that a person will be re-elected. He indicates personalities should not be a consideration, adding the district has to live within its means.

**Clerk’s Report:**

The clerk requests the board to review and sign the monthly audit report.

Beginning in September, election materials and pertinent information for the April 2021 Consolidated Election are available at the township offices and information is posted on the township’s website. Anyone with additional questions can contact the clerk.

**Trustee Comments:**

Daryle Spiller—No report.

Stan Williams—No report.

Mike Wells—No report.

James Zegar—No report.

**Township Business:**

Supervisor Whitmore re-introduces the salary compensation discussion, which began at the September Regular Meeting. Supervisor Whitmore reviews the amounts being discussed for the new term of office, beginning May 17, 2021 for trustees and January 1, 2022 for the Assessor:

Supervisor

+25%, an increase of \$5,000, for an annual salary of \$25,000\* for the 4-year term beginning May 17, 2021 and ending May 18, 2025

Clerk

+25%, an increase of \$2,000, for an annual salary of \$10,000 for the 4-year term beginning May 17, 2021 and ending May 18, 2025

Trustees

+40%, an increase of \$20 per meeting attended, for a per meeting compensation of \$70 for the 4-year term beginning May 17, 2021 and ending May 18, 2025.

Highway Commissioner

+35%, an increase of \$8,750, for an annual salary of \$33,750 for the 4-year term beginning May 17, 2021 and ending May 18, 2025

Assessor

+15%, an increase of \$4,500, for an annual salary of \$34,500 for the 4-year term beginning January 1, 2022 and ending January 1, 2026

\*As the Township Treasurer, the Supervisor is entitled to up to \$1,000 annually for the duties of Treasurer. Newport's compensation for the Treasurer is set at \$1,000 annually for the 4-year term beginning May 17, 2021 and ending May 18, 2025.

Supervisor Whitmore asks trustees if they have any further comments or would like to modify the increases as presented. (No further discussion. No modifications.)

Whitmore requests a motion to set the Compensation Resolution (#212020A) for the new term of office, as presented.

Motion by Spiller, second by Zegar.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

For the next item of business, Whitmore reads aloud a resume provided by Mr. Bruce Cramer, who is interested in an appointment to the Newport Fire District Board. Supervisor Whitmore notes Mr. Cramer's prior negotiating experience working for the Waukegan School District will be an asset to the fire district board. Whitmore says he is choosing Bruce Cramer as someone who will watch taxpayer's dollars at the fire department. The appointment of Bruce Cramer to Newport Fire District Board will fulfill the vacancy created by the August 2020 resignation of Joe Stanonik. Trustee Zegar comments he has known Cramer for many years and says he will be an excellent addition to the fire board.

Whitmore requests a motion to confirm the appointment of Bruce Cramer to the Newport Fire District Board.

Motion by Zegar, second by Wells to confirm the appointment of Bruce Cramer to the Newport Fire District Board.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

The board congratulates Mr. Bruce Cramer on his appointment.

[Trustee Stan Williams leaves the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Trustee Williams rejoins the meeting at 7:30 p.m.]

Whitmore says the township is ordering a new bookkeeping system at the cost of \$8,500. The system is primarily used by Bookkeeper Nancy Lech. The supervisor says the change is necessary as the current system will be unsupported going forward. Mrs. Edmonds says daughter Beckie Mitten will be training along with Nancy Lech and that Ms. Lech would like to become a back-up resource for the district going forward, rather than the main resource. (No motion.)

The supervisor inquires as to whether Mrs. Toni Edmonds has an update on the next steps on the closing of Newport Road District. Mrs. Edmonds says the district needs an additional 1.2 miles of roadway to avert closure under the new state mandate. The Edmonds continue to work with the Village of Wadsworth, the Village of Old Mill Creek and Lake County (Scott Stelesky) to find a suitable solution, noting there are a few different possibilities that could potentially shift jurisdictional responsibility of certain roads from the village to the township, thus avoiding closure of the district.

Supervisor Whitmore says the township needs a decision by November 17<sup>th</sup> regarding the payroll of the road district. Due to the Tuesday Election, the Village of Wadsworth's next meeting is Wednesday, November 4, 2020, where the village board will further discuss the matter as it relates to village concerns. Whitmore suggests a Newport Road District representative attend the village meeting.

Mrs. Edmonds comments that while everything else in the state has been delayed due to the Covid-19 emergency, the state has thus far been unwilling to delay the closure of affected road districts who have been hampered in efforts to find a resolution, due to the emergency.

Trustee Williams is concerned about the time crunch and the need for a solution to be determined quickly. He notes the districts' options are few.

Supervisor Whitmore introduces the Adoption of the Estimate of Levy for the General Township.

Whitmore requests a motion to adopt the Estimated Township Levy (#212020B).

Motion by Zegar, second by Spiller.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

Mrs. Toni Edmonds says the road district has been advised by legal counsel, Keri-Lyn Krafthefer to move forward with the annual levy adoption, per usual, and for the time being assume the road district will remain intact going forward. Possible dissolution of the district will be sorted out later.

Whitmore requests a motion to adopt the Estimated Road District Levy (#212020C).

Motion by Williams, second by Spiller.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

**Finances:**

Supervisor Whitmore indicates the warrants for the monthly bills are available for trustee review.

Whitmore requests a motion to approve the General Town Fund/Assessor bills.

Motion by Zegar, second by Wells.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

Whitmore requests a motion to approve the General Town Fund bills.

Motion by Spiller, second by Williams.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

Whitmore requests a motion to approve the Road & Bridge bills.

Motion by Williams, second by Wells.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes, Spiller, Williams, Wells, Zegar, Whitmore. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

Trustee Zegar questions the accuracy of a road district budget line item figure. Mrs. Edmonds will review with Bookkeeper Nancy Lech and respond to the trustee.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Closed Session:**

No closed session.

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Supervisor Whitmore requests a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting.

Motion by Spiller; second by Williams.

Voice Vote: Ayes, all. Nays, none.

Motion passes, 5-0.

Meeting adjourns at 7:49 p.m.

**Dated the 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 2020.**

\_\_\_\_\_s/Debbie Spurgeon\_\_\_\_\_

**Debbie Spurgeon, Township Clerk**