

Rutland Charter Township

Regular Board Meeting

March 8, 2023 / 7PM

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Watson at 7pm. Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call - Members Present:

Gene Hall, Sandy James, Sandy Greenfield, Larry Watson, Robin Hawthorne, Brenda Bellmore

Members Not Present:

Doug Lectka - excused absence

Others Present:

Dave Jackson, Pat Sharpe, Audrey Burton, Jim Dull, Brian Cenci, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

Hawthorne adds discussion about the copy machine in the clerk's office. Motion by Greenfield, seconded by James to accept the March 8th agenda with one addition. All ayes. Motion passes.

Guests:

Audrey Burton - Hastings Library Rep gives an overview of the last library board meeting. Her report is available and included. She also tells the board that her term as the Library Representative for RCT ends at the end of 2023. She and the board will both try to think of replacement options. The board thanks Burton for her service. James was excited to read about how busy the library has been. Hawthorne asks for the new fliers to have available at the township hall.

Jim Dull - Drain Commissioner is in attendance to speak about the Agaming Drain District. He received the letter that Doug Lectka sent and appreciates the ideas.

Dull explains that a Drain District includes the County, Township, Drain Commission, Road Commission, and the residents in the special assessment area. He explains that the Board of Determination can only take into consideration the drain code law. He says they cannot take into consideration that neighbors do not want it done or that people might have a better idea of how to proceed. He says the drain code protects the one or two residents that are actually affected. It is his responsibility to follow the drain code.

Watson, Hall, and Hawthorne tell Dull that rerouting the one resident's sump pump to drain to the lake could take care of the problem. Hawthorne explains that a major rain event would have to take place for this resident's basement to flood and that it only happens once every 2-3 years. Dull says it may be possible to reroute the sum pump but that the road problem would still need to be fixed which is what the Road Commission petitioned the Drain Commission to do. He explains that once the drain in question passes a Board of Determination, the drain district then takes on all the liability. He says trying some of the things in Lectka's letter to see if they work, could leave the drain district in a tough spot if the resident has more damage and decides to sue.

Brian Cenci joined Dull to explain more about the 2 options to the board. He says they understand the frustration but have no choice but to follow the determination. Cenci says the Road Commission will be paying about 50% of the total cost which is higher than anyone else involved. He says they will be getting two separate bids for two different ideas. He says there are only about 45 resident homes that will actually be affected and have to pay higher taxes instead of the 140 they originally thought.

Board members discuss some different ideas and question many of the findings. They share that some residents that signed the petition in favor of the special assessment were not given the correct information and would like to take back their signatures. The board all agree that the Drain Code is in terrible need of an overhaul. Cenci shares that it is amended every year but has not had a complete overhaul since it was written in 1956.

Board members comment that the Board of Determination hearing was a joke. Hawthorne says the 3 people making the determination had no clue about drainage. Cenci says the law is set up that way purposely. Dull says it is like picking a jury in a court case. Hawthorne says this is a private issue and not a public issue. The board feels it is the Drain Commissioner's job to start the discussion on making the necessary changes to the law. Hall says it is the township and Drain Commissioners duty to be good stewards of the taxpayers money and not just worry about getting sued. The board understands that this is going to happen even if they do not want it.

Pat Sharpe comments that things might be easier if the resident in the special assessment area knew the amount that their taxes would go up. Cenci says the road commission will pay about 50%, the township will pay about 15%, and the residents in the drain district will pay the remaining 35%.

Open Comments: None

Consent Agenda:

Motion by Greenfield to accept the March 8th consent agenda, seconded by James. All ayes. Motion passes.

Supervisor:

Watson says he went to the BIRCH Fire Association meeting where they discussed the amount that each of the 5 townships pays. Currently each pays a different amount that is figured out by a complicated formula that no longer seems the most fair and efficient way to proceed going forward. Watson has suggested to the BIRCH committee that each township start paying 1 mil instead of continuing to use the old formula. He has suggested it in the past and it was not received positively. But now the members are considering that it may be the only fair way to move forward. Watson says he will keep the board updated as progress is made.

Clerk:

Hawthorne says that her Clerk's report and Vouchers/Payroll reports are on board members' desks.

She gives an update about Proposal 2022-2 that will take effect at general (even year) elections starting in 2024. She explains there will be expenses involved because a new tabulator will need to be purchased as well as software and overtime wages to pay the many extra election inspectors and many extra work hours. Hawthorne is hoping the state will help with some of the expenses but she wants the board to know that there will be costs that need to be paid by RCT.

Hawthorne says that the copy machine in the clerk's office makes more than 8000 copies every month and it is getting older. She would like to move that copier into the zoning administrator's office since they do not make as many copies and the copy machine they are using is a lot older. She would like to be able to purchase a new one for the clerk's office. The cost would be \$6630 to purchase it instead of leasing as they have done at times in the past.

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by James, to spend \$6630 to purchase a new copy machine for the clerk's office. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Lectka - Absent. Motion passes.

Treasurer:

Greenfield shares that a copy of her Treasurer's Monthly Report is on each board member's desks. She also says that she will be done collecting taxes in her office next week.

Trustees:

Hall asks for an update on the parking lot lights. Watson says he cannot find anyone that wants the work. Hall will work on finding someone.

Commissioners Report:

Commissioner Dave Jackson agrees that the drain code needs to be updated. He has heard discussions about forming a committee to help the drain commissioner make decisions.

He shares that the YMCA is interested in buying the old mental health building that meets the YMCA property. The COA was originally interested in the property but the location is not ideal. Jackson says Thornapple Manor may collaborate with the COA to create a senior center community out where the manor is located. The COA would remain a separate entity. They could then use the old COA property for housing. They are also looking into selling the Jefferson St garage property.

He thanks the board for using the ARPA money and ROBIN grant to help further spread broadband in our area. He thinks there will be more grant opportunities available in time.

Unfinished Business:

WOW Expansion on Hammond Rd

Residents on a section of Hammond Rd would like to be included in WOW's expansion plan to Algonquin Lake. The residents could not get the needed amount of signatures to support a special assessment, due to several of the homes being owned by the same landlord. There are a total of 17 homes involved. Barry Co Community Foundation has generously offered to pay half of the cost (\$3500). Hawthorne says the RCT Board needs to decide if they are willing to pay the other half (\$3500). The cost is \$7000 at this time only because the work is already being done out in that area. If they wait and decide to do this at a later date, the cost would be \$30,000. Hawthorne explains that the \$3500 would come from the ARPA funds which the board has already designated as broadband funds. The board discusses that this is a great deal and the opportune time to do this.

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by Hall, to spend \$3500 of the RCT ARPA funds to help with the cost to provide broadband services down Hammond Rd. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Lectka - Absent. Motion passes.

New Business:

First Reading of the Ordinance 2023-186 definitions for group day care homes and qualified treatment centers

Hawthorne explains this is the exact same thing that RCT and the city have already passed. Now it needs to be passed in the JPC.

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by James, to accept the recommendation from the JPC and to accept Ordinance 2023-186 for first reading Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Watson - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Lectka - Absent. Motion passes.

Open Comments: None

Adjournment:

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by James to adjourn at 8:16pm, all ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary

PROPOSED