

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 8, 2024

6:00 pm

Yankee Springs Township Hall  
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333

MINUTES

MINUTES  
Page 1 of 6  
YS Board of Trustees –  
Regular Meeting  
February 8, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Supervisor Rob Heethuis

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE**

**INVOCATION**

**INVOCATION**

**Roll Call:** Deb Mousseau, Dave VanHouten, Rob Heethuis, Larry Knowles, Mike Cunningham (All Present)

**ROLL CALL**

**Staff Present:** Joe Shea, Frank Fiala, Rich Beukema, Dennis Buist

**Visitors:** 15

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:**

*Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to add/delete any and all items in red text to the agenda. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes.*

**MOTION TO AMEND  
AGENDA**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

*Motion by Cunningham with support from VanHouten to approve the agenda as amended. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes.*

**MOTION TO ACCEPT  
AGENDA**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Board minutes 01/11/2024 Regular BOT meeting and 01/24/2024 Joint meeting.
- January 2024 Accounts Payable: Checks #917800 through Check #917850 total amount \$578,900.48.
- January 31, 2024, Payroll Checks #7749 through Check #7772 = \$19,110.41 net amount; January 2024 Fed P/R withholding \$5,368.45.

*Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to approve the consent agenda. Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Cunningham: yes; Knowles: yes.*

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
CONSENT AGENDA**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
OF VISITORS**

**Dan Miller:** Recognized for 50 years of public safety service including EMT, EMS, Firefighter, Wayland Police Officer, and Police Chief, and since 2016 as the Yankee Springs Deputy Fire Chief. His favorite quote: "Working together and sharing resources, we can

accomplish good things through communication cooperation and coordination.” A nice round of applause for Mr. Dan Miller. He thanked the Board and his family, especially his wife, for their support. He expressed his hope to continue serving for a few more years.

**Katie Niemchick & Kara Vugteveen** (United Bank representatives): Gave a presentation regarding United Bank and how FDIC works for public entities. United Bank is also a member of IntraFi which is a banking network that offers solutions to allow customers to do their banking with just one bank and access FDIC coverage from many banks.

**Catherine Getty** (Barry County Commissioner): Gave a brief update on the Barry County meetings. The next meeting of the County was scheduled to have a presentation from the County Sherrif regarding the voter fraud investigation but that has been postponed in order to find a larger venue as it is expected to draw a large crowd. There will be a county workshop on Feb. 13 regarding solar energy and she provided a copy of the agenda to the Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** (Limit 3 minutes)

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Rich Beukema:** Expressed his thanks to the Board and the office staff for their kind thoughts and prayers during his recovery from cancer.

**Scott Havens** (Owner of Gun Lake Sprinkling): Thanked the Board for the years of doing business with the township. He has recently sold his business to Grapids Irrigation and will be working for them going forward.

**Dave Lansma** (Payne Lake Rd): With regard to the solar energy issues mentioned by Catherine, he expressed his opinion that this is a very important issue and could have consequences for our community in the future.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** By Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

- January Financial Statement and Investment reports were reviewed.

**Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Roll Call Vote: Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes; Knowles: yes; Heethuis: yes; Mousseau: yes.**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
TREASURER’S REPORT**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

**CLERK’S REPORT:** By Mike Cunningham, Clerk

**CLERK’S REPORT**

- February 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 02/08/2024 \$25,607.80.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the February 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 02/08/2024 totaling \$25,607.80. Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; VanHouten: yes; Cunningham: yes; Knowles: yes; Mousseau: yes.**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
INVOICE REGISTER**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Election Update:
  - The YST Election Commission met 02/06/2024 to approve the final list of election inspectors.
  - The 2024 presidential primary Public Accuracy test was completed Thursday, 02/01/2024. The only issue was a blown fuse on the new early voting tabulator which has been replaced.

- 9-day early voting will start on Saturday, 02/17/2024 and end on Sunday, 02/25/2024 each day from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM in Yankee Springs Township.
- Precinct 1 and Precinct 2 early voting will be at the Township Hall.
- 02/27/2024 election day voting will take place in the usual Hall (Precinct 1) and Fire Station (Precinct 2) locations.

**MINUTES**  
Page 3 of 6  
YS Board of Trustees –  
Regular Meeting  
February 8, 2024

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Recycling Committee:**

- Next meeting will be 03/04/2024.
- The committee plans to have a table at the 2024 Winterfest on Saturday, 02/17/2024.
- The annual report was given at the last board meeting.

**RECYCLING  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Park Committee:**

- Activity update:
  - Pickleball/Basketball grant project update: Engineer Don DeVries is reviewing, and he is expecting to have the plan ready by April 1<sup>st</sup> and be ready for bids at that time.
  - The walking path around the park has some issues with cracks and raises in the path. Superior Asphalt has come out and looked at it and provided bids to make repairs. Cost would be between \$40,000 and \$60,000 depending on different options provided. The Board is discussing the possibility of including this in the 2024/2025 budget.

**PARK COMMITTEE  
REPORT**

**Zoning Board of Appeals:**

- No meetings since July 2023.
- Next meeting will be 03/12/2024 if needed.

**ZBA REPORT**

**Planning Commission:**

- PCI January 2024 report in packet.
- January 2024 Complaint log in packet.
- January 9, 2024, STR special meeting:
- January 18, 2024, regular meeting:
  - Officer elections were held.
    - Shana Bush is the Chair.
    - Lee Kooistra is the Vice Chair.
    - Frank Fiala is the Secretary
  - Two items coming before the Board tonight: Rezoning of a property on Willson Drive and possible adoption of a chicken ordinance.
  - Reviewed the CIP.
  - Tabled a request to amend the PUD on Bay Meadow Condominiums.
- February 6, 2024, STR public hearing:
  - Came a little closer to completing their recommendation to the Board.
  - It is expected to be brought to the March Board meeting.
- Next meetings: Regular meeting 02/15/2024; Special meeting 02/28/2024 for a master plan workshop.

**PC REPORT**

**Fire/EMS Report:**

- January 2024 Fire/Emergency Medical response in packet. It was a very busy month with double the fire calls and a large increase in medical calls.
- Meeting 01/24/2024.
  - Working on a list of maintenance items to be addressed.
  - Discussing the procedures for billing and personnel processes.

**FIRE/EMS REPORT**

- Next meeting is 03/06/2024.
- There were two resignations:
  - One member who lives in Battle Creek and one retirement.
  - Looking for more EMRs and a couple of people for the Fire Committee.
- Fire truck update:
  - 01/16/2024 New fire truck inspection.
  - 01/31/2024 chassis delivery to Spencer Manufacturing in South Haven.
  - The first payment of \$370,000 was made 01/31/2024.
  - Completion and final payment are scheduled for August 2024.

MINUTES  
Page 4 of 6  
YS Board of Trustees –  
Regular Meeting  
February 8, 2024

WATER ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE REPORT

**Water Advisory Committee:**

- No meeting 02/06/2024 meeting.
- GLASWA meeting 02/01/2024.
  - They have contacted Michigan Rural Water to start another rate study for the water system.

VETERANS MEMORIAL  
COMMITTEE REPORT

**Veterans Memorial Committee:**

- No meeting this month.
- Continuing to look for new members as well as a new Chair.
- There will be a meeting in March.

**Board Action Items:**

- Website update:
  - The website update is moving along but was not complete by the end of January.
  - May be completed in February.
- Zoning issues update:
  - Only a few building permits were issued.
  - A lot of time has been spent on the STR potential ordinance changes.
  - Rezoning on Willson Drive will be addressed tonight.
  - Backyard chicken ordinance is now before the Board as well.
- Rezoning of part of Parcel #16-240-027-00, 8411 Willson Dr. from RA to RR. The rezoning will allow the property to be split in the future.

WEBSITE UPDATE

ZONING ISSUES UPDATE

**Motion by Heethuis with support from Knowles to adopt Ordinance 02-8-2024 1 to amend the Yankee Springs Township Zoning Ordinance (including the zoning map) by rezoning the 6.16-acre portion of Parcel 016-240-027-00 on Willson Drive that is not part of Willsons Plat from Rural Agriculture (RA) to Rural Residential. Roll Call Vote: VanHouten: yes; Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Cunningham: yes; Knowles: yes.**

MOTION TO REZONE  
PARCEL 016-240-027-00  
ON WILLSON DRIVE

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Ordinance 02-08-2024 2 Keeping of chickens.

**Motion by VanHouten with support from Knowles to NOT approve Ordinance 02-08-2024 2 related to the keeping of chickens.** Discussion: The board reviewed the information received from the township attorney and discussed if this ordinance is needed and should be adopted. There was discussion about how the Right to Farm Act applies to this issue. **Roll Call Vote: Knowles: no; Mousseau: yes; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: no.**

MOTION TO NOT  
APPROVE ORDINANCE  
02-08-2024 2 RELATED TO  
KEEPING OF CHICKENS

Yes: 3, No: 2. **MOTION CARRIED**

Discussion about confusion on the previous motion which resulted in an unintended yes vote. The motion was re-worded and re-voted as shown below:

**Motion by Heethuis with support from Knowles to adopt Ordinance 02-08-2024 2 related to the keeping of chickens. Roll Call Vote: VanHouten: no; Mousseau: yes; Knowles: yes; Heethuis: yes; Cunningham: no.**

Yes: 3, No: 2. **MOTION CARRIED**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Dave Lansma** (Payne Lake Road): He stated his view that the Right to Farm Act has been used to prevent farming being put out of business by people filing nuisance lawsuits. In this instance, in spite of the ordinance if a person wants to sell eggs and be a commercial business, they would still have the right to do that.

**Joe Shea** (Bowens Mill Rd): Case law is the law, as well as the statute. Published cases are legal precedent and that's what the courts will follow, not just the statute. Our existing ordinance that requires an acre to have chickens is way too restrictive and, in his opinion, not enforceable. The new ordinance gives us a reasonable backyard ordinance that many other cities and townships have and will be enforceable.

**Robin Lansma** (Payne Lake Road): Thanked Deb for the amazing job she does with the financial reports. Also thanked Joe for all his work on the chicken ordinance. There was a lot of time and talking that went into it and she feels this is a reasonable conclusion.

**BOARD COMMENT:**

**Cunningham:** Having Dan Miller in our township is a big advantage. He works at the fire station like he owns it and we couldn't ask for a better person. Would like to make a motion that he stay another 50 years but it's probably not legal.

**Knowles:** Dan is a fantastic representative of Yankee Springs and enjoy working with him. And I'm glad chickens are done.

**Mousseau:** Thanked Dan as well. Taxes are due February 29. The office will be open until 5:00 PM. March 1<sup>st</sup> everything is turned over to the county.

**VanHouten:** Great job on managing the CDs so they come due just in time for the down payment on the truck. Worked with Dan for about three years now and the leadership is good and it has been a pleasure to work with him.

**Heethuis:** Thanked Mike and Deb for all the information that they provide to the board members in advance so that we have the ability to go through it before the meeting. It is great to be able to go through it so we know what's there and what the scope of the issues are. As far as Dan I have taken my grandkids to the fire station and it was great that he showed them the fire truck and he's done that for many in the community. All his work is greatly appreciated.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

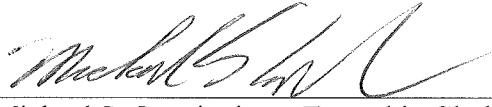
**Motion by Van Houten with support from Cunningham to adjourn the meeting 7:17 PM.**  
*Approved by all. Motion Carried.*

**MOTION TO ADOPT  
ORDINANCE 02-08-2024 2  
RELATED TO KEEPING  
OF CHICKENS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**BOARD COMMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Approved by:   
Michael S. Cunningham, Township Clerk

Date: 3/25/2024

MINUTES  
Page 6 of 6  
YS Board of Trustees –  
Regular Meeting  
February 8, 2024

Respectfully submitted by:  
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary  
February 10, 2024