

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390
Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Gray called the Township Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Larry Gray, Supervisor
Melissa Creech, Clerk
Molly Phillips, Treasurer
Rick Sovel, Trustee
George Weber, Trustee
Bob Berkheiser, Trustee

Absent: Vanessa Magner, Trustee

ITEM 1: Public Comments

Supervisor Gray opened Public Comments.

Jennifer Yeager-Saylor, 2068 Alsup, approximately 4,000 supporters have signed a petition to preserve Windmill Farm under the direction of Carrie Hancock. I feel touched by all the people who have such a connection with this place. We keep speaking out in the hopes that you are hearing us. Praying that you are willing to work with us. Please know that we have an incredible group of people who will do what it takes to prove it will be a grand success. There is nothing that we would not be able to achieve. I will personally see to it, the whole group will. We are bursting with ideas, prospects, and options. Give our community the opportunity to see how amazing this farm is, there is nothing comparable. I know you understand that someone else can't move in and thrive. Let's adjust what we have and embrace the program already serving so many and build upon that. Let's compromise. The community will respect and applaud you for it. I can guarantee it. Let's remember to think about the children, let's not forget how messed up things have been in recent years with covid, masks, social distancing, schools closing- I don't even have to say it. Our equestrian team with the Walled Lake Schools is at risk of falling apart and it is my intent to do something to keep it together. We need Carrie and her horses. I have a detailed proposal if you're willing to meet with me and I believe it will satisfy a lot of the things that are of concern. As I have said before, we will all be winners for it. This is a double-sided print out of all of the signatures that we have and it really is a lot of our community. If you're interested in that, I will share it with you. Thank you for your time.

ITEM 1: Public Comments (continued)

Denelle Yeager, 1990 Birch Court, Waterford, once again I just want to state that I am in support of keeping Windmill Farm as a riding academy under the direction of Ms. Hancock. This multi-discipline horse farm is such a unique asset to our community. There are no other barns with lesson horses in the area. I feel the local equestrian teams will not exist without Carrie and her school horses. There are many solutions to the Board's concerns that the community riding academy only serves a sub-set of our community. There are grants and federal funding and resources available for equine therapy programs. There are programs to assist our veterans with PTSD as well as for children and adults who have survived trauma. Studies have shown these programs to be more effective than psychotherapy and other forms of mental health treatment. Recent studies indicate that 1 in 4 people globally will be affected by mental illness at some point in their lives and covid has only made it worse. There are alternate funding sources that can help achieve some of the aesthetic goals as well for the farm. More importantly, Carrie and her seasoned horses will meet the required qualifications. Connections have been established and people are ready to move forward with these grants. We just need the stability of a solid contract with the Township to pursue these programs. Thank you.

Seeing no others, Supervisor Gray closed Public Comments.

OTHER MATTERS

Supervisor Gray – I just want to update you on a couple of things from last month.

- We are still working on the Museum Fund. Phil has sent a letter to the State of Michigan requesting more information on that \$25,000 grant received in 1986.
- We received \$250,000 from Oakland County for a Senior Grant toward a pickle ball court.
- I talked to Molly regarding the RFP bid going out for the 8585 building. We are going to remove the locker room portion from that RFP and buy directly from the vendor and we'll save anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 just in taxes and up-charges. They'll come in and set it up, the whole 9 yards. We'll pull that off the bid which has been sent out. We did have 6 participants here when we did the walk through last week. Dave said there's 11 who have gotten information from the website. The opening for that packet is February 16th.

Treasurer Phillips

- At the January meeting I talked about the need for an OPEB Actuarial Report to be done for 2022 since it's been 5 years since the last one. I contacted the company who did it before, it's been sold since. I contacted the new company. The price in 2005, 2011, and 2015 was \$4500, just for the actuarial assessment. That was pre GASB 74 and 75 reporting requirements for the audit report. In 2018, the last time we had it done, it was \$7800 and included the 74 and 75

OTHER MATTERS (Treasurer Phillips continued)

GASB requirements. The new company said that they would be happy to do it for 2022 for a cost not to exceed \$8000 with full GASB disclosure and actuarial valuations. Their question is, do you want it in the form of a bid, an engagement letter, or an email?

Trustee Berkheiser asked if this is the company we've used in the past? It's the same person?

Treasurer Phillips answered that the new company took over from the person who used to do it, who is now retired.

Trustee Berkheiser asked if they are familiar with how we do business?

Treasurer Phillips answered yes, the new company is Foster and Foster and they took over almost everything from the previous company. I need some direction. Do we want to get a formal quote from them, do we want to get an engagement letter, or do you want me to reply to their email and let them know when they can start?

Trustee Berkheiser answered that he is ok with an email as long as it lists out what they are going to do. The dollar value is not that different from the last time we did it.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to approve Foster and Foster in an amount not to exceed \$8000.00. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Trustee Berkheiser

- The status of the encroachment that came up at Parks last night. Talking to folks about as they walk through parks to be conscious that it's park property and not neighbor's property.

Supervisor Gray said he'll have an update at the next meeting.

Trustee Berkheiser asked if this is something we need to talk about as part of discussion?

Supervisor Gray said no, he just wants to make sure he's remembering everything.

Trustee Weber

- The Vanstone properties, the 4 lots, I drove past again and they're wet, they're wooded and not buildable. One of the neighbors wants to buy them, which I'm fine with as long as it is combined into 1 parcel and can't be subdivided. I don't know if anyone else responded or what the status is?

OTHER MATTERS (Trustee Weber continued)

Supervisor Gray said that he received responses and it will be on the February agenda.

Trustee Weber

- Lafontaine Group is reverting back to their original site plan design and will be going before the Planning Commission. More to come on that.

ITEM 2: CLOSED SESSION

MOTION by Creech, supported by Phillips, to enter into Closed Session for the purpose of the Discussion of the Purchase of Property.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Creech, Phillips, Weber, Berkheiser, Sovel, Gray

NAYS:

ABSENT: Magner

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Entered into Closed Session at 7:14 p.m.

Returned from Closed Session at 7:41 p.m.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to return from Closed Session and approve the Closed Session minutes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Weber, to direct the Township Attorney to proceed as discussed in Closed Session.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other matters to come before the Board.

MOTION by Creech, supported by Berkheiser, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce