

**Approved 2.14.24 Minutes of January 10, 2024 Regular St. James Board Meeting
Printshop Museum | 26275 Main St. | Beaver Island, MI | 5:30 pm**

Present:

Welke, Fingerroot, Cole, McDonough, Gillespie

Absent:

None.

General

Supervisor Welke called to order a regular meeting of the St. James Township Board at 5:30 pm on January 10, 2024.

Supervisor Welke added a sewer update to the agenda, under Public Works, Health, and Safety as item number five.

Shelby Harris requested time to give updates on planning and the TIS program and it was added to the agenda as item number six for Public Works, Health, and Safety.

Maria Dal Pra and Vicki Smith, representing Peaine Township, requested an addition be made to discuss a memorandum of understanding. This was added under Public Works, Health, and Safety as item number seven.

Moved by Cole, supported by Fingerroot to approve meeting minutes for the December 13, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Public Comments for Agenda Items

Lori Taylor Blitz, Patrick Nugent, and Theresa Servaitis asked for comment time on item number three of Finance and Administration on behalf of the Elks club.

Maria Dal Pra asked for comment time on item number one under Public Works, Health, and Safety.

Shelby Harris also asked to comment on Public Works, Health, and Safety item number two.

Finance and Administration

Moved by Fingerroot, supported by Cole to accept the December Financial Report and approve the Payments request.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Supervisor Welke announced the receipt of a certificate of achievement, indicating the township passed the audit done in early 2023.

The Beaver Island Elks requested approval for a Club License. Lori Taylor Blitz noted that there are over 120 members and 12 parking spots already exist behind the building they are to occupy. The Elks are looking forward to having their own space to gather. The board had questions regarding who can enter the lodge as well as what kind of bar hours will be held. Lori stated that only members can purchase drinks, and non-members have to be accompanied by a member as well as have their drinks purchased

by that member. Patrick Nugent added that the bar hours will be dependent on volunteer bartenders, with hours more limited than other establishments. The board was agreeable to these terms.

Moved by Welke, supported by Fingerroot to approve the State Resolution granting the Beaver Island Elks a Club License. **Roll Call Vote:**

Ayes: Gillespie, McDonough, Cole, Fingerroot, Welke

Nays: None.

The Resolution was passed.

Moved by McDonough, supported by Welke, to authorize establish monthly Township Board meetings to occur on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm. If this date interferes with election operations, another date will be established.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Public Works, Health, and Safety

Peaine Township has made a request for a listening session, with surveys thereafter, regarding short-term rentals and the possible need for ordinances. Maria Dal Pra shared that the purpose of the listening session is to gather data about the community's thoughts and concerns about short-term rentals. This will, in turn, provide each township with data to aid in the consideration of creating ordinances that help maintain safety and address ongoing issues if there are any. Maria also shared that since she started as Peaine's Supervisor, complaints and concerns about this issue have been brought to her attention regularly. After more discussion of the logistics, St. James Board Members agreed to participate in the listening session.

The Board engaged in a conversation about the contract with Fleis & Vandenbrink for Phase II of the Donegal Bay Bike Path. Shelby Harris inquired about other possible grants/methods that would result in lower costs overall for the Township in completing this project. Supervisor Welke clarified that this contract is strictly for preliminary engineering, which will evaluate the best route and the associated cost to complete the goal of extending the Bike Path all the way to Donegal Bay Beach. The contract and the information it will produce is necessary to pursue the Michigan Healthy Climate grant and other potential grants, which will help cover the costs of the project.

Moved by Cole, supported by Fingerroot to authorize the supervisor to approve the contract with Fleis & Vandenbrink to complete the preliminary engineering for the Donegal Bay Bike Path, Phase II.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Moved by Gillespie, supported by McDonough to authorize Trustee Fingerroot to represent the Township Board with the activities associated with the ETIPP project. This includes attending the Global Islands Sustainability Summit Conference with travel expenses and registration covered by ETIPP funds.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

It was shared by Supervisor Welke that the Waste Management on blight recommendations report came back. It will be passed on to the Waste Management Committee with a recommendation that a committee be started. This committee will

focus on creating both simple ways people can help reduce blight as well as looking into options that will help the island with bigger items that cannot be as easily removed from the island, such as vehicles and bigger appliances.

Supervisor Welke also gave an update about the Sewer, noting that any previous violations have been cleaned up with the state, with the exception of the plan to do sampling of the sewer, as it has not yet been approved.

TIS/Planning Update

Shelby Harris gave an update on her work. The Landowner's Guide is in progress, with a grant deadline of March 31st. This will contain descriptions of natural communities and rare plants. It is in the process of being reviewed, added to, and approved in time to meet the deadline. She has been working with CAKE CISMA and their new coordinator to set up goals for 2024 invasive species treatment, including a possible grant specifically for the treatment of phragmites in the Archipelago. The surveys for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have started, as we are at big risk for infestation. There will be no TIS interns this year. She noted that there are a lot of college volunteers, however, that she has been working with to get help in the TIS projects this year.

For planning, she noted that the housing project is underway and will not be affected by the rewriting of zoning ordinances. Shelby also shared that the Harbor Walk/Parks Millage project was given a finish date of 2025 to complete the project. Additionally, she is working on getting energy records of the island's critical buildings for the Energy Use Model to help complete that project with ETIPP.

Maria Dal Pra and Vicki Smith represented Peaine Township in bringing a Memorandum of Understanding to the St. James Board. This document details the adjustments Peaine requested be made to the RFP in pursuit of updating zoning ordinances on the island. The request included creating a request for proposal with three separate parts: Common Articles, St. James Township, and Peaine Township. Maria and Vicky stated that this would allow both townships to agree on the ordinances for shared areas on the island, while also allowing ease in modifying zoning within each township. They also shared that this would likely save both townships money. After a thorough discussion, the Board agreed to these terms and stated that it would be brought to the Planning Commission so the RFP could be adjusted as necessary to reflect this.

Moved by McDonough, supported by Cole to approve the Memorandum of Understanding presented by Peaine Township, clarifying St. James Township's agreement to adjust the RFP.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

The board discussed the proposed Strategic Plan and the best way to enact it. Members noted what should be first priority. This includes: blight, parking in the downtown area and other safety concerns, increasing accessibility to recreational areas and options, and housing. The Bike Path Project was also noted as an important goal and is already in progress. Trustee Fingerroot made a suggestion to break down the actions section of the plan more to help gauge ease, cost, and priority. The board

agreed to this. She and Supervisor Welke will add detail under each action item, stating some of the necessary projects, steps, and funding in order to complete the goals stated. The plan will then be brought to the Public Works Committee for further preparation and then back to the board for approval.

Moved by Gillespie, supported by McDonough to adjourn at 7:23 pm.

Submitted by:

Tessa Jones, Deputy Clerk
St. James Township
COUNTY OF CHARLEVOIX