

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE  
QUARTERLY DISCUSSION MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, MI 48390  
Tuesday, October 27, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**

Due to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services order, this meeting was held via electronic video conferencing technology.

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

**ROLL CALL:** Present: David E. Scott, Supervisor  
Melissa Creech, Clerk  
Molly Phillips, Treasurer  
Vanessa Magner, Trustee  
Rick Sovel, Trustee  
George Weber, Trustee present in Brunswick County,  
North Carolina

Absent: Bob Berkheiser, Trustee (excused)

Also Present: Janet Bushey, Finance/HR Director  
Jim Dundas, Fire Chief  
Emily England, Senior Director  
Jay James, P.E. Building Official  
Hans Rentrop, Township Attorney  
Wendy Reyes, Lieutenant OCSD  
Ben Sebrowski, Director of Technology  
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director  
Mark Stacey, DDA Director

Rob Widdis of MERGE LIVE, Multimedia Group, a digital content provider, is host of the meeting tonight.

Ben Sebrowski, Director of Technology, is co-host of the meeting.

**ITEM 1: Public Comments**

Pam Jackson, 5736 Lancaster Lane, is looking forward to hearing all of the results from tonight's agenda items.

Supervisor Scott opened the Public Hearing and asked to hear from those who are opposed to the SAD.

**ITEM 2. Public Hearing**

**First Amended and Restated Lower Straits Lake Aquatic Weed Control SAD**

Greg Weber, 3372 Edgewood Park Drive, thanked the Board and feels it is essential to keep the Lower Straits Preservation Committee intact and continue including them as a part of discussions going forward.

Supervisor Scott said if anyone would like to address the Board or have a specific comment regarding the SAD to please raise their hand.

Rob Widdis said there were no other raised hands.

Supervisor Scott closed the Public Hearing.

**ITEM 3: Resolution - Revising Special Assessment Roll for the SAD Designated First Amended and Restated Lower Straits Lake Weed Control SAD**

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Magner, to approve the Resolution Revising Special Assessment Roll for The Special Assessment District Designated First Amended and Restated Lower Straits Lake Weed Control Special Assessment District.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

**AYES:** Sovel, Magner, Creech, Phillips, Weber, Scott

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:** Berkheiser

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 4: Resolution - Authorizing Proceedings to Acquire Easement Interests in the Benstein Water Main Project**

Hans Rentrop, Township Attorney, said they have approvals for appraisals and title work, therefore he recommends the Board approve the Resolution authorizing the offers to acquire easements to be made.

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Sovel, to approve the Resolution of the Township Board of The Charter Township of Commerce Authorizing Proceedings to Acquire Easement Interests in the Benstein Water Main Project.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

**AYES:** Weber, Sovel, Magner, Phillips, Creech, Scott

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:** Berkheiser

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 5: Intention Resolution to Tentatively Establish a Special Assessment District to be Known as Special Projects No. 46**

Hans Rentrop, Township Attorney, said the Township Treasurer would like to have this closed out before the end of the year for accounting/audit purposes.

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Creech, to approve the Resolution of the Township Board of the Charter Township of Commerce, Tentatively Declaring its Intention to Establish a Special Assessment District to be known as Special Projects No. 46

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

**AYES:** Sovel, Creech, Phillips, Weber, Magner, Scott

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:** Berkheiser

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 6: Authorization for Appraisal Regal Entertainment Group, Parcel No. 17-36-400-027**

Hans Rentrop, Township Attorney, recommends the Township Board retain the appraisal services of John R. Widmer of Frohm & Widmer, Inc.

Trustee Weber asked Attorney Rentrop why he chose Mr. Widmer over Craig Fuller. He said Mr. Fuller did an appraisal on this property in the past. What are the pros and cons for switching appraisers?

Attorney Rentrop said he has worked well with Mr. Fuller in the past although Mr. Widmer has broken his numbers down in two sets, a preliminary cost and a secondary cost as opposed to one cost and he is more experienced in the field of theatres.

Trustee Sovel said since they were shut down for most of 2020 why couldn't they appeal to the MTT for 2020?

Attorney Rentrop said an example of the way tax appeals work is the evaluation date of December 31, 2019 is your 2020 tax year and the December 31, 2020 is your 2021 tax year. They will be receiving a large reduction in 2021.

Trustee Sovel asked if it gets reduced to the \$900,000 does that mean it will be subject to Headlee and can only increase it 5% a year thereafter.

Attorney Rentrop answered yes. We received an offer of \$750,000 that was below what the petitioner's number was. The refund on \$900,000 for the Township alone is \$4,600. At \$750,000 you are probably looking at a refund of approximately \$5,000-5,200.

Trustee Sovel asked if this has an impact on the SAD's.  
Attorney Rentrop answered no.

**ITEM 6: Authorization for Appraisal - Regal Entertainment Group, Parcel No. 17-36-400-027 (continued)**

Trustee Weber asked if we have any information from other municipalities on recent appraisals of theatres.

Attorney Rentrop answered no.

Trustee Magner said if they do not open, then this is for naught if they decide to close down. She also asked if they are open right now. She does not want to spend money if they are not going to open.

Attorney Rentrop said we do not know, but it is possible. Once the property is sold that uncaps it anyway. They are not open right now; they are closed indefinitely at this time.

Supervisor Scott questioned if this is a COVID-19 related incident and if it is, there is a high probability that this entertainment source may be able to seek relief from the Cares Act or one of the other federally funded avenues.

Attorney Rentrop said that is possible.

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Weber, to retain the appraisal services of John R. Widmer of Frohm & Widmer, Inc. for the pending Michigan Tax Tribunal appeal by Regal Entertainment Group for parcel No 17-36-400-027. Funds to come from the General Fund in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

**AYES:** Sovel, Weber, Phillips, Creech, Scott

**NAYS:** Magner

**ABSENT:** Berkheiser

**MOTION CARRIED**

**ITEM 7: Township Owned Property Strategy**

Discussion took place on having a strategy plan for 145 parcels owned by the Township. Supervisor Scott would like to see the Board review the parcels to see if we should keep them, sell them or protect them.

Trustee Weber agrees with Supervisor Scott's plan, provided there is a Sub-Committee to do this in place of the full Board. It would take too much time, too many meetings and schedule conflicts if you involve all 7 Board members. He suggests David Campbell, Jay James and Treasurer Phillips should be the minimum key members of the Sub-Committee. We need to look at all 140 parcels and categorize them appropriately and this needs to be consistent with the Township's Master Plan. He volunteered to be a part of the Sub-Committee.

**ITEM 7: Township Owned Property Strategy (continued)**

Supervisor Scott made an inquiry to our senate and legislature. His first request was to facilitate the sale of the Union Lake boat launch to Commerce Township for a pocket park. The other one is for a grant request we did to the Federal government for Scott Air Paks.

**ITEM 8: List Property for Sale with Agent – E-17-03-431-004. Formerly 485 W Beechdale**

Supervisor Scott said this property is in a neighborhood that already has a riverfront park that the residents use for their personal use and enjoyment. They have no need for an additional parcel, therefore he feels this parcel should be sold.

Trustee Weber said if there is no urgency to sell this lot. We could list all the parcels the Township wants to sell at one time. This would be done after the Strategic Plan Sub-Committee's review and recommendation.

Trustee Weber would like to see **Item 10 Union Lake Road Realignment Strategy** be included in the Strategic Plan Sub-Committee.

**ITEM 9: 8585 PGA Drive – Sheriff's Substation Remodel Sub-Committee**

After discussion, it was agreed upon to form a Sheriff's Substation Sub-Committee. Trustees Sovel and Weber and Supervisor Scott volunteered to be on the Sub-Committee. Supervisor Scott volunteered Jay James to assist the Sub-Committee.

Supervisor Scott said there are three tenants remaining at 8585 PGA Drive. He would like to negotiate a buyout with the tenants. If the tenants stay until 2023 this will hold up future plans the Township has for the building and we will continue to pay taxes on the building.

Treasurer Phillips suggests we abide by the Township Purchasing Policy if funds are over \$10,000.

**ITEM 10: Union Lake Road Realignment Strategy**

This will be included in the Strategic Plan Sub-Committee.

**ITEM 11: Long-Term Bond Repayment Strategy**

Trustee Weber said we need to have an annual or semi-annual review of the Township's long term expenses. One of the largest one is the bond repayment.

Treasurer Phillips said besides following the debt schedules there really isn't anything we can do differently. The amount of money it would cost to refinance the bonds again does not make it worth it.

**ITEM 11: Long-Term Bond Repayment Strategy (continued)**

Discussion:

- The DDA outstanding debt and the debt sinking fund.
- How to prepare for and add more money into the Debt Sinking Fund.
- At the present run rate, the Debt Sinking Fund will be exhausted.
- Sale of DDA property.
- Financial analysis of the DDA

**ITEM 12: Code Enforcement Job Description & Code Enforcement Officer**

Supervisor Scott read a draft of the job description. Supervisor Scott and Jay James will put together an accurate job description for the Board to review at the November Board of Trustees Meeting.

**ITEM 14: Employee Handbook (out of order)**

Janet Bushey, Finance/HR Director reviewed the draft handbook with the Board. Discussion ensued and recommended changes were made by the Board. Director Bushey will make changes and present it to the Board for approval.

**ITEM 13: Director Level Employee Evaluations**

Review and discussion took place on the form that will be used for evaluations. Three Board members will meet to review the forms and then offer their recommendations for compensation to the Board for review and approval.

**ITEM 15: 2021 Budget Discussion**

Discussion took place on the changes made by Janet Bushey to the Debt Sinking Fund, Budget Stabilization Fund and Employee Salaries.

Supervisor Scott said swearing in of the new Supervisor will be on or about November 19, 2020. An Oakland County Township Supervisor's luncheon will be held on November 16, 2020. While this was not offered to him when he first became Supervisor, he would like to escort the new Supervisor and buy him/her lunch and introduce him/her to the 20 other Township Supervisors. He will assist in a smooth transition of Supervisor duties. The Township Board of Trustees will be sworn in on November 19, 2020.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Scott, to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

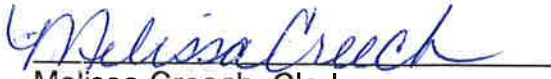
**ROLL CALL VOTE**

**AYES:** Weber, Scott, Creech, Phillips, Magner, Sovel

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:** Berkheiser

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

  
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Melissa Creech, Clerk  
Charter Township of Commerce