

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING
September 15, 2020
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

Due to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order to "Stay Home, Stay Safe", this meeting was held via Zoom, video conferencing technology.

CALL TO ORDER: Clerk Melissa Creech called the meeting to order at 6.03 p.m. and introduced the members of the Board.

ROLL CALL: Present: David E. Scott, Supervisor (joined meeting at 6:27 p.m.)
Melissa Creech, Clerk
Molly Phillips, Treasurer
Robert Berkheiser, Trustee
Vanessa Magner, Trustee
Rick Sovel, Trustee
George Weber, Trustee

Also Present: Jim Dundas, Fire Chief
Janet Bushey, HR/Finance Director
Alyson Lobert, Library Director
Jay James, P.E. Building Official

Ken Milburn, President of Merge Live, Multimedia Group, hosted the meeting.

ITEM 1: PUBLIC COMMENT

Clerk Creech opened Public Comments.

Advised by Ken Milburn there were raised hands.

Jason Chwalek, 1901 Bridge Pointe Court, disappointed by the construction equipment in the Commerce Memorial Cemetery and the the newly constructed parking lot. He asked how that happened.

Clerk Creech advised Mr. Chwalek that Public Comment is not a discussion session and he should contact a board member during business hours.

Mr. Chwalek said he is disgusted by what was done.

Bruce Jaquays, 1841 Lerene Drive, winter taxes due in roughly 75 days, does the board have a plan if people and business are unable to pay due to the COVID lock down? Does the board have a plan to help residents and businesses if there is another lock down?

ITEM 1: PUBLIC COMMENT (continued)

Michael Miller, 5320 Bridge Trail West, You know how my family feels about the cemetery. During the whole phase of the sale of the cemetery to a private company, what process did you go through and what logic did you go through to reach the conclusion that selling phase 3 of our cemetery, which we're running our ot property and we're going to need, was a good decision for Commerce Township? Because I can't get there. I try to check the ethical box, the spiritual box, the moral box, the financial box and I can't. I'm sure you guys went through some process in order to come to the conclusion that it was a good deal for the residents of Commerce Township and I just can't get there. I would like to know, in selling that property, what advantages do we have now as Commerce Township residents. In addition, I'd like to know if you are contemplating selling any other piece of property we own currently to a private company? I say this as respectfully as I can that I do want to understand where you guys are coming from in order to reach this conclusion. I want to understand it. Covey says "Seek first to understand, then to be understood". I am open to that but I just can't see it right now. My heart's heavy on this, my younger son, Austin, is buried over there and it means a lot to me. Going through the minutes and prior meetings, I can only see one board member, Trustee Rick Sovel, that had the understanding that this may not be a good deal and so he did check the moral box, he checked the financial box. I don't know what everbody else did but I do want to understand where you're coming from. Maybe I'm not seeing something but I'm open to that. But that's where I stand today. Thank you for listening.

Trustee Weber asked Mr. Miller to reach out and Trustee Weber would be happy to go through the whole thought process on this.

Michael Miller, Jr., 151 Wabasso Street, I am calling in support of my parents, Mike Miller and Kyrston Miller, in regards to the parking lot that was put up next to the cemetery. I know there's a right way and a wrong way to do a lot of things and I feel that the right way wasn't done with the property next to to the cemetery. So I'm just here in support of them. Thank you.

Advised by Ken Milburn there were no other raised hands, Clerk Creech closed Public Comments.

ITEM 2: 2021 TOWNSHIP BUDGET

Clerk Creech asked Library Director Alyson Lobert to present the Library's proposed 2021 budget.

Director Lobert wants to maintain library services for the community and maintain staffing levels so we can manage those services and essentially wait out COVID. It's a hard task to know what the library's going to be like in the summer of 2021 and in the fall. She wants to grow the electronic services, downloadable books, audio books, and databases, and continue to purchase library books at the same level.

A general discussion followed regarding staffing levels, raises, contractual obligations, wait times for books, lower revenues due to COVID, and the price of digital books versus traditional paper books, Hoopla versus Overdrive services and costs, patron education, cost of

ITEM 2: 2021 TOWNSHIP BUDGET (continued)

MergeLive meetings, Library Advisory Board meetings, Story Walk, generator at the Library versus the Richardson Community Center, utilities, and computer services.

The Board agreed to approve tentatively the proposed 2021 Library budget.

Clerk Creech would like to amend the agenda.

MOTION by Scott, supported by Sovel, to amend the agenda and add Item 3: **ALS CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 3: ALS CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Trustee Sovel asked if the Township Attorney, Hans Rentrop, has reviewed the contract.

Supervisor Scott said yes.

Chief Dundas said Star EMS will provide better professional service than Community EMS.

A general discussion followed regarding response times, level of service, complaints from citizens and fire fighters, how soon Star EMS could begin coverage of Commerce Township and do they currently have enough staff, turnover of EMS personnel and the difficulty of the job, and other communities covered by Star EMS.

MOTION by Weber, supported by Scott, to provide Chief the authority to make the decision to move the ALS service contingent upon Township Attorney contractual language.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Weber, Scott, Creech, Phillips, Berkheiser, Magner, Sovel.

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 2: 2021 TOWNSHIP BUDGET (continued)

Supervisor Scott asked Jay James, PE Building Official, to present the Building Department's proposed 2021 budget.

ITEM 2: 2021 TOWNSHIP BUDGET (continued)

Jay James reviewed his budget and discussed the impact of COVID-19.

A general discussion followed regarding contracted services, future developments, building permits and inspections, the fund balance, re-inspection fees, the impact of COVID on in-home inspections, tablets and printers, ordinance services, outstanding permits, and a code enforcement officer.

The Board agreed to approve tentatively the Building Department Budget.

The Road Improvement Fund and Tri-Party Funding was discussed.

The Museum Fund was discussed.

The Cemetery Fund was discussed along with headstone restoration.

The Trustees would like to discuss the Museum and Cemetery Funds at the October Quarterly Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Scott, supported by Berkheiser, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce