

## ***Amended Minutes***

### **State of Illinois**

### **County of Cook**

### **Township of Northfield**

### **Northfield Township Board of Trustees Meeting August 12, 2009**

#### **Attendance:**

The following board members were present:

Jill Brickman, Supervisor  
Brendan Appel, Trustee  
Carol Blustein, Trustee  
Karen McCormick, Trustee  
Mary Reynolds, Trustee

#### **Also Present:**

Laura Fine, Northfield Township Clerk  
Eric Patt, Northfield Township Attorney  
Patricia Damisch, Northfield Township Assessor  
Peter Amarantos, Northfield Township Road District Commissioner  
Michele Wilson, Northfield Township Staff  
Marylou Kratochwill, Northfield Township Staff

#### **The following Northfield Township Residents were present:**

Matthew Cole	Michael Gerstein	Michael Kreloff	Liz Slavin
Dave Edmonds	Bruce Horigan	Thomas Norton	Brannon Smith
Gary Edmonds	Justin Horigan	Pat O'Donoghue	
James Evenson	Jamie Hubbard	Margy Parcels	
Barry Fleming	Tim Hubbard	Howard Silver	

#### **The following nonresidents were present:**

Jen Belkov, Representative Coulson's Office  
Eric Miller, Representative Coulson's Office  
Todd Shields, Pioneer Press

Supervisor Brickman called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes of July 14, 2009 Meeting**

Trustee Reynolds moved to approve the minutes.

Trustee Blustein seconded the motion.

The minutes were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

### **Recess Town Meeting**

### **Open Sewer Meeting**

Trustee Blustein moved to approve the sewer bills.  
Trustee Appel seconded the motion.

Trustee Reynolds asked about the monthly engineering service bill from Berryman for 'lift maintenance and repairs'. Supervisor Brickman explained that this is ongoing work. It is managed by the Road District personnel because they have sewer expertise. The Road District has handled this responsibility for many years. There is no written contract, the work is allocated month to month. It can be ended by either party at any time.

Trustee Reynolds asked if there is an annual budget for the sewer system. Supervisor Brickman said there is a general budget that she can make available to the trustees.

Trustee Reynolds asked if the work bills submitted from Berryman Equipment Company and Robert Barber could be itemized since it is a substantial amount. Supervisor Brickman said she thinks it could be done.

Commissioner Amarantos explained Berryman has been taking care of the lift stations and maintaining the pump stations since the 1980s.

Trustee Reynolds asked if there is a written strategic plan for the sewers, as a written plan would be in the interest of good government. Commissioner Amarantos explained that the three sewer systems were consolidated to benefit residents, and now that the project is complete, they are putting the strategic plan together.

Trustee McCormick asked when the plan will be complete. Commissioner Amarantos said in about six months.

Trustee Appel asked when the lift stations will be replaced. Commissioner Amarantos said hopefully in the next month.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Appel, Blustein, McCormick, Reynolds, Brickman (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried, 5-0.

## **Reconvene Town Meeting**

### **Town Fund Bills**

Trustee Blustein moved to approve the Town Fund Bills.

Trustee McCormick seconded the motion.

Trustee Blustein commented that when the board approved to change this month's board meeting date, the trustees did not know there would be a \$62 cost. She said they would be reluctant to do it in the future. Supervisor Brickman said any time a meeting is added or changed, it needs to be published.

Under 'Expenses', Trustee Blustein's name was misspelled.

Trustee Reynolds inquired about the \$165 for the purchase of 6 Laws and Duties Handbooks and the disc from TOI. Officer Manager, Michele Wilson explained that the books are for the Trustees who do not have a handbook, the Clerk, the Collector, the Supervisor and one copy for the office. The disc is very useful for the office.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Appel, Blustein, McCormick, Reynolds, Brickman (5)

Nays: None (0)

The Town Fund Bills were approved as amended, 5-0.

### **Road and Bridge Bills**

Trustee Reynolds moved to approve the Road and Bridge Bills.

Trustee Appel seconded the motion.

Trustee Reynolds asked Commissioner Amarantos what the nature of the overtime was for July, and if it would be possible to have that itemized in the future. Commissioner Amarantos said it was for the recycling event and the sanitary system, and she can get the itemization from the accountant.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Appel, Blustein, McCormick, Reynolds, Brickman (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0.

### **Proposed Lease from District 225**

Trustee Appel moved to approve the amendments to the lease.

Trustee McCormick seconded the motion.

Supervisor Brickman explained to the public that the board is happy with the almost four year lease because it has very small yearly increases. She said the district will eventually use the facility as an administration building.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Appel, Blustein, McCormick, Reynolds, Brickman (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0.

### **Resolution Regarding Lawsuit Reform**

Trustee Appel introduced a resolution for township elected officials to sign. The resolution calls to reform the legal system in Illinois and prevent lawsuit abuse. It asks the Township to call upon the Illinois legislature to pursue lawsuit reform.

Attorney Patt explained the Township is a non-home-rule governmental unit, and it is limited to the powers given to it by the state of Illinois. He said use of a resolution is a declaration of a belief or a statement of purpose, but it is not enforceable.

Township resident Michael Gerstein said he is opposed to the township signing the resolution. He feels it is not the business of the township to legislate.

Trustee Blustein said there is nothing in the TOI handbook that talks about townships addressing tort reform, and she is concerned that the resolution looks like electioneering.

Trustee McCormick said she is not comfortable signing the resolution as she feels tort reform is not within the trustees' duties.

Supervisor Brickman pointed out that as individuals the board members can sign it, but that is different from the Township endorsing the resolution. She would prefer to do it this way.

Trustee Appel moved to adopt the resolution as presented.

There was no second.

The motion failed for want of a second.

### **Approval of Appointments to Northfield Township Ethics Advisor**

Supervisor Brickman explained that following the discussion last month about the appointment to the Ethics Advisor position, there were many questions about the responsibilities of the role. Attorney Patt explained that the state legislature passed an Ethics Ordinance in 2003, and because of its non-home rule status the Township does not have the power to amend the ordinance or to pass a new ordinance unless the legislature authorizes the Township to do so. Therefore, we are acting under the existing Ethics Ordinance that calls for an Ethics Advisor. Our current Ethics Advisor is our Township attorney. Relative to the concerns about the Road District's hiring practices, that is under the authority of the Highway Commission.

Trustee McCormick asked if there is a different employee handbook for the Road District and, if so, if the Trustees could get a copy of it.

Commissioner Amarantos said he wrote his own handbook, and there is a copy of it in the office.

Supervisor Brickman mentioned that on the table, there is still a nomination of Joel Levin as the Ethics Advisor, although the position is different than was originally thought. Attorney Patt explained that the Supervisor nominates this position with the advice and consent of the board. If the board does not agree, the existing ethics advisor, the township attorney, remains the advisor.

Two trustees expressed they are comfortable with the current advisor. Trustee Blustein said her feeling is she does not know Mr. Levin, but there is a relationship with counsel. She feels we would be better served by an Ethics Advisor with whom we have a direct relationship. Trustee Reynolds said she is not comfortable bringing in an outside person, as the position is different than she originally thought it would be. She said that since we are bringing in an ombudsman looking at ethics issues that come up in the township, we would be best served by someone who knows the township well. She thinks we would be best served by the board's attorney.

Trustee Appel feels we are better off having someone not affiliated with the board. He says Mr. Levin is qualified, disinterested and nonpartisan. Mr. Levin has his vote even though he has not met him.

Trustee McCormick said she would feel more comfortable if she had the opportunity to meet Mr. Levin and talk with him about his thoughts on where ethics should go in the Township.

Supervisor Brickman said her nomination of Mr. Levin is not a reflection of our township attorneys. She said we have the opportunity to get a nationally recognized expert to do this job, and in her opinion, it would be a mistake not to avail ourselves to his services. Supervisor Brickman suggested we table the motion for another month and invite Mr. Levin to our next meeting, or hold a workshop, so the board can meet with him.

## **Public Opinion**

Gary Edmonds, Northfield Township resident, said Mr. Levin has an unimpeachable record. He added there is no reason to suggest that he, as an outsider, would not be up to the task of investigating ethics in the township.

Bruce Horigan asked what the need is for an Ethics Advisor. Is it necessary because we live in Illinois where ethics and government have come into question, or are there certain items that need to be addressed? Trustee Blustein responded that there are not currently ethics problems.

Attorney Patt explained since the Ordinance was enacted in 2003, we have never had any incidents.

Northfield Township Assessor, Patty Damisch, added that since this is a non-paid position, if an incident did come up, the lawyer would get paid but Mr. Levin would not.

A straw poll was taken on whether the Trustees feel it is necessary to meet Mr. Levin. Trustees Blustein, McCormick and Reynolds said they would like to meet with Mr. Levin. Trustee Appel said he feels it is not necessary. Supervisor Brickman said she will invite Mr. Levin to come to the next meeting or the meeting after that.

**Supervisor Brickman called a short recess at 8:02.  
The meeting reconvened at 8:10.**

## **Business Cards**

Trustee Blustein said that although she is concerned that we spend money in a proactive way, she thinks buying business cards for elected officials is important. She said the board is out interacting with the public, going to trainings, and meeting other officials, and business cards would be beneficial.

Supervisor Brickman asked the Trustees if they agreed with Trustee Blustein. They said they did, and the supervisor said that we will order business cards.

## **Community Events**

A monthly discussion of community events has been added to the agenda at the request of Trustee Blustein.

Supervisor Brickman said we have a fundraiser this month for the food pantry. The Corn Roast will be held Saturday, August 22 at the Northfield Farmer's Market. Sunset Foods is the driving force behind the event. We also have a community booth at the Glenview Farmer's Market Saturday, August 29. Supervisor Brickman will be unable to attend due to a celebration of her parents' 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, but she will ask the Community Coordinator to distribute information on the event to the trustees.

Trustee McCormick said she went to the Disability Seminar our township co-sponsored with West Deerfield, and it was extremely valuable. She would like to see more people in the community have the opportunity to attend events like this. Supervisor Brickman added we should look at working with other townships with similar robust business communities like ours because the idea behind these seminars is to work with local chambers of commerce. She added the seminar was phenomenal.

Trustee Blustein attended a meeting for the Hunger Project. It is a non-denominational not-for-profit organization. The next meeting is August 27. She said everyone is invited to attend as they could use as much help as possible. Supervisor Brickman said the Hunger Project has been very helpful to our food pantry.

Trustee McCormick said she has been going to the domestic violence meetings with Gayle. She said it is a fabulous program, and the planning committee is working very hard. She said she is learning more about it so she can be more helpful next year. She is encouraging everyone to attend the program because it will be a very educational event.

## **Assessor's Report**

Northfield Township Assessor, Patty Damisch, said we are about 99% done with our involvement in the 2008 Assessed Value Appeals. All of our citizens who appealed received results about a month ago. Our success rate this year was 89%; that means that 89% of the people that we helped appeal in Northfield Township were successful. The next bills should go out in October.

## **Old Business**

Supervisor Brickman explained the TOCC membership is \$2,000 a year. It is a January to December year, and they will not pro-rate.

Trustee McCormick said that is crazy for four months, but we should consider it for next year.

Supervisor Brickman said she will put it on the calendar for the December meeting and add it to the agenda. Currently, their functions are open to us, we just have to pay a non-member rate to attend. Until now, the cost-benefit ratio has not been beneficial.

## **New Business**

Trustee Reynolds asked Commissioner Amarantos about the Weather Detection System on the income statement for the Road and Bridge Fund. He said it is the fee for radar. Supervisor Brickman explained that the radar prepares the Road District for snowplowing.

Trustee Reynolds asked about the budget for Snowplow Repair. \$500 was budgeted but \$1,741 was spent. She asked where the extra money comes from. Supervisor Brickman explained that within the budget, you can give and take from other line-items at the end of the fiscal year as long as you stay within the overall budget.

Trustee Blustein asked Assessor Damsich if she could provide the board with quarterly written reports so the board can answer questions about how the assessor's office operates. *She would like this to begin in October.*

Trustee Reynolds asked if the board could receive the final certificates on the Friday before the meeting instead of receiving the amended certificates at the meeting. Supervisor Brickman explained that because of billing cycles, that would require us to send in some payments late.

Trustee Appel moved to adjourn.

Trustee Blustein seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Laura Fine - Township Clerk

