

UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Regular Monthly Meeting
Grass Lake Charter Township Board
February 13, 2024

The **regular monthly** meeting of the Grass Lake Charter Township Board was called to order on Tuesday, February 9, 2024 at 6:32 p.m. by Supervisor Lesinski at the Grass Lake Charter Township Meeting Room.

Board Members Present by Roll Call: Bednarski-Lynch, Loveland, Lamborghini, Brennan, Bray, Harris, Lesinski. Absent: none.

Also Present: County Commissioner Walz, Fire Chief Jones, Village Manager Edgar, approximately 60 Public and 17 Zoom Attendees.

Pledge to flag was recited.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Bednarski-Lynch and supported by Brennan to approve agenda as presented. Motion Carried.

Consent Agenda Items: - **Meeting Minutes** – as prepared. **County Sheriff Report** – no report. Deputy Hackworth is on vacation. **Assessor's Report** – as prepared. The 20% required fieldwork for the 2024 assessment roll is wrapping up. March Board of Review is quickly approaching. **Zoning Administrator's Report** – as prepared. **DPW Report** – as prepared. **Zoning Enforcement Report** – as prepared. **Building and Grounds Report** – no report. **County Commissioner Report** – There is a contentious topic in the county that Walz will have to vote on involving Flocks cameras. These cameras will record every vehicle's license plate that passes by and holds it for 30 days. One advantage is the cameras can help solve crimes, like theft and home invasion. The disadvantage is it feels like an invasion of privacy. She would like the community's input on this subject to help her decide how to vote. Motion by Brennan to accept the consent agenda items as reported and discussed. Supported by Bray. Motion Carried.

Closed Session Minutes: Minutes from the closed session portion of the special meeting held on January 16, 2024 were distributed to board members, signed, collected and sealed. Motion by Brennan to accept the closed session minutes. Supported by Loveland. Motion Carried.

Monthly Bills: A few bills that came in after the January board meeting including LRS, KCI and Comtronics were paid and included in the February bills total. Motion by Brennan to pay the General Fund bills in the amount of \$68,494.00 and Fire Fund bills in the amount of \$17,682.68. Supported by Loveland. Roll Call: Yeas – Brennan, Loveland, Bednarski-Lynch, Lamborghini, Bray, Harris and Lesinski. Nays – None. Absent – None. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Loveland has not had time to create a paper report due to the last day to pay property taxes quickly approaching. Any taxes paid after February 14 accrue a 4% fee for the winter tax and a 9% fee for the summer tax. On March 1 any unpaid taxes will be sent to the county. Loveland was able to make transfers to MI Class for the general fund and fire fund, so they can gain extra interest.

Correspondence: The board received several emails concerning the rezoning request. Consumers is clearing trees in the area and are working on their blueprint to build a stronger electric grid. The Township received a 13% dividend refund for workers comp. A company will be installing fiberoptic in the whole township for Comcast.

Old Business: **a) – ARPA Update** – Nothing new. Chris Payne will come by the office to discuss upgrades to the building. **b) – Parks Report** – There will be a meeting February 21 at the Township Hall. **c) – Short-Term Rental Ordinance** – will be discussed at work session. **d) – .gov Website** – Lesinski sent in the paperwork to change the Township website from .com to .gov. This will also change the emails.

Public Comment: Several in favor of the rezoning. Several not in favor of the rezoning. NextEra committed to working with community. The Township and County Planners recommended to approve the rezoning according to the master plan. Farmers are having a hard time making money and may have to sell land if property is not rezoned. The Master Plan outlines four criteria for the Township to consider.

New Business: **a) – ZBA Appointments** – There are two seats whose terms have expired and the board needs to make appointments to those seats. Motion by Lesinski to have Chris Payne and Tim Waskiewicz remain in those seats until the term ends in 2026. Supported by Brennan. Motion carried. **b) – Set Public Hearing Date for Tims Lake Blvd SAD** – A date for a public hearing for Tims Lake Blvd to create a special assessment district was set for March 12 at 6:15 p.m. **c) – Permit Fees** – Lesinski discovered the Township charges the lowest fee in the county for inspections and would like to increase that amount \$10 to \$15. Loveland stated in the past the fees were increased in smaller increments, but understands because the cost of living has increased. Motion by Loveland to increase all inspection fees by \$15, to go from \$60 to \$75. **d) – WAVE Presentation** – Shasta Grifka representing WAVE bussing service out of Chelsea would like to expand the service to Grass Lake. She needs residents of all ages to fill out a survey at ridethewavebus.org. **e) – Rezoning Request – Grass Lake Solar, LLC** – The process for rezoning six parcels started with the Township Planning Commission who recommended denying the request even though the Township Planner suggested it should be approved. Then it went on to the County Planning Commission and the same thing happened. They recommended denying the request even though the County Planner suggested approving it. Now it is before the Township Board, who has three options, approve it, deny it or table it. Last Thursday Lesinski received an amended rezoning application with conditions via email from NextEra's attorney Dan Ettinger. Board members received the information of that email on Friday. The properties shall not be used for the removal and processing of topsoil, stone, rock, sand, gravel, lime or other soil or minerals. The properties will revert to single family residential (R-2) once the proposed solar project is decommissioned. As elected officials the decisions are based on rules and facts. Attorney Matt Kuschel, township counsel, was present to explain the conditions in more detail. These conditions do not have to go back to the Planning Commission. Since the Board received the conditional application just a few days before the board meeting, tabling the decision for one meeting would be appropriate. Loveland questioned condition 2 if property owners have a say in the zoning after the solar project is complete. Yes, the owners are preserving the land for R-2. Solar regulation under Siting Legislation if an applicant provides all of the correct information the State can approve it no matter the local zoning. There are no zoning districts included in the criteria, so a solar energy system will probably be able to go

anywhere. If the Township has a compatible ordinance the Township could require involvement in solar energy projects that have applied to the state. Bednarski-Lynch believes tabling the decision will not only give the Board more time to educate themselves but also the community. Motion by Bray to table the decision for one month to study new information. Supported by Loveland. Roll Call: Yeas – Bray, Loveland, Bednarski-Lynch, Lamborghini, Brennan, Harris and Lesinski. Nays – None. Absent – None. Motion carried.

Fire Department Report: as prepared by Fire Chief Jones. The Fire Department has a new program for the reports and are still working through the bugs.

Public Comment: Residents are concerned about the solar project being unsightly, impacts on wildlife, how it effects the airport, and loosing property value. Lesinski thanked everyone for voicing their opinions and will take them into consideration, but the Board needs to do what is right and legal.

Adjournment: Motion by Brennan to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Supported by Bray. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted, Gail Harris, Township Clerk