

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, ZION, ILLINOIS

Chairman Neal called the meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Trustees DeTienne, Frierson, McDowell, and Chairman Neal. Trustee McKinney arrived at 6:31 p.m. Assessor Wicketts was absent.

MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Frierson, seconded by Trustee McDowell that the minutes of a Regular Meeting held on December 20, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. and a Special Meeting held on January 9, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. be approved, with all members having received printed copies prior to the meeting. The vote on roll call was: Trustees DeTienne, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; McKinney, aye; and Chairman Neal, aye. Motion carried.

BILLS

It was moved by Trustee DeTienne, seconded by Trustee McDowell that bills be authorized for payment as follows:

Assessor's Office	\$ 9,484.20	
Community Support	\$ 10.00	
Youth Services	\$ 0	
Senior Services	\$ 909.90	
Operating Expenses	\$ 64,664.52	
Township Fund Total Expenses		\$ 75,068.62
 <u>General Assistance Fund</u>		
Public Support	\$ 7,309.53	
Community Support	\$ 0	
Operating Expenses	\$ 12,810.59	
General Assistance Fund Total Expenses		\$ 20,120.12
 <u>FICA</u> Total Expenses		\$ 2,181.61
 <u>IMRF</u> Total Expenses		\$ 0
 TOTAL BILLS:		 \$ 97,370.35

The vote on roll call was: Trustees DeTienne, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; McKinney, aye; and Chairman Neal, aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION/REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF ZION TOWNSHIP

It was moved by Trustee DeTienne, seconded by Trustee Frierson that a Resolution (2017-R-1) be passed establishing a policy for the reimbursement of all travel, meal and lodging expenses of officers and employees of the Township of Zion effective January 1, 2017. The vote on roll call was: Trustees DeTienne, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; McKinney, aye; and Chairman Neal, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HARRIS POLICY LABS STUDY

Chairman Neal stated that the students from the University of Chicago Harris Policy Labs presented the results of the Township consolidation study at a Special Township Meeting held on January 9, 2017. She stated that a full white paper would be coming from Harris Policy Labs regarding the study results. She asked the Trustees for their initial thoughts on the study results. Trustee McDowell stated that the students did a great job but he could question some of their demographic and median household information. Chairman Neal stated that the students dug deep, provided good information, were thorough, and did a good job. Trustee Frierson stated that more input from Benton Township would have been helpful. He stated that he felt the students could have chosen different communities for comparison as those chosen did not share the best similarities, but overall, he felt they did a good job. He stated that the challenge now is how to proceed – What’s the next step? Mayor Hill asked what the Township will do with the information and how will they proceed. Chairman Neal stated that Benton Township residents are not interested in raising their taxes or the horizontal merger according to the Benton Township Supervisor and Assessor. Mayor Hill stated that that leaves three alternatives and asked what the plan would be to come to a decision. Trustee McDowell stated that there really are only two options which are maintain status quo or consolidate with the City as it was clear that the State would not dissolve the Township into the County. Assessor Wicketts stated that Lake County is pushing to have assessments done at the County level. Chairman Neal stated that only \$27 in savings would be realized for taxpayers with a home value of \$134,500. She stated that the Township is sensitive to the residents it serves. She stated that the City and the Township are two different cultures with the City being a business and the Township providing human services. She stated that the \$27 saved would go to another source and funds wouldn’t be protected for Township residents. Trustee DeTienne asked what the advantage would be to making a change. He stated that he would have a hard time supporting a big move at this time. He recommended maintaining status quo. Trustee McDowell stated that there would not be a huge tax savings per the study, but he felt there would be non-monetary value in consolidating. He stated that bureaucracy should be whittled away and services should be combined which would reduce the burden on taxpayers. He stated consolidation may set an example for other taxing bodies. He stated that it is hard to make the argument as the Township does such an excellent job. Chairman Neal stated that the Township has already set an example by doing the study before taking any action. She encouraged other organizations to do the same and consider what is best for the residents. Trustee McDowell asked if status quo was maintained, would it be possible to combine some administrative functions with the City or basically contract with the City for services such as accounting, payroll, etc. Chairman Neal stated that collaborative conversations between the Township and City would be necessary. Mayor Hill stated that the City and Township should delve into the issue of joint services in order to reduce costs. City Finance Director Knabel stated that the City has enough employees and accounting infrastructure to perform accounting services as a separate department. Chairman Neal stated that perhaps the Township and City could trade services. She stated that the newly-hired business manager has medical and personnel expertise and her services could be traded. Trustee McDowell stated that combining functions could be managed internally and no legislation would be required. Trustee McDowell stated that moving the Township offices back to City Hall should be considered and then the Township building could be sold. Chairman Neal stated that such a move would require more time to organize, City Hall building renovations would be necessary, and it would leave a vacant building in the downtown area. She stated that building adjustments could be made to better maximize use of the Township building. Trustee McDowell stated that it is not feasible to merge with Benton Township or dissolve. He asked when the Township should take the next step. Chairman Neal stated that a decision could be made at this meeting or at the next regular Township Meeting. She stated that Trustee McKinney should be afforded an opportunity to view the video of the January 9th Special Meeting to get

up to speed. Mayor Hill suggested having function combination estimates ready prior to both the Township and City budget meetings. Trustee Frierson stated that the Board should learn the efficiencies and cost savings of combining functions with the City before proceeding with a decision. Mayor Hill suggested that the Township host a public forum and have the financial information ready to share with residents.

It was moved by Trustee DeTienne, seconded by Trustee Frierson to table this item and place it on the February 21, 2017 Township Board Meeting agenda for consideration.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Chairman Neal provided the following information:

- Zion Township Monthly Report – December 2016
- LIHEAP applications processing has resumed.
- Zion Township hired a new business manager. Brittany Doxie is a Zion resident and ZBLA graduate. She is scheduled to start January 20, 2017.
- Junior Zion-Benton Leadership Academy applications are being accepted for youth ages 14-18 living in Beach Park, Winthrop Harbor or Zion.
- Top Box will be at the Shiloh Center on Wednesday, January 18th from 12:30-2:00 p.m.
- Zion Township Human Services Committee meeting will be held on February 7, 2017 at 2:30 p.m. at Zion Township. This is a collaborative meeting to network all social service agencies who reside in the Zion community.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, it was moved by Trustee DeTienne, seconded by Trustee McDowell, and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 7:03 p.m. Motion carried.

Town Clerk