

**Sangamon Township
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Held at Sangamon Township Building, 1264 Old Rt 47 White Heath, Illinois

August 8, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Sangamon Township Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Kathleen Piatt. Roll Call was taken. Present were Supervisor Piatt, and Trustees John Foley, Bill Olson, Mike Nolan, and Bill Blickhan.

Also present were guests Thomas Scott, Sr., Cara Nightlinger and Loyd Wax and Clerk Kevin Duff and Assessor Denise Dees.

Highway Commissioner Larry Sebens was absent.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Public Comment:

Mr. Scott suggested that a 3 way stop sign might be needed on the south side of the west end of Commercial Street at Meridian Street. The Board will discuss at next month's regular Township meeting when Highway Commissioner Larry Sebens is present.

Ms. Nightlinger noted the unsafe property at High and Orange and had hoped to discuss the status of the unsafe properties reported to the County.

Mr. Wax had no comment. The Board thanked Mr. Wax for his help with the recent County Zoning Board's review of the change requested for the Township's Park Project.

Minutes:

The minutes from the August 8, 2019 regular Township meeting were e mailed to the Board for review earlier in the week. A motion was made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Blickhan to approve the minutes from the August meeting. A vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Invoices:

The Board discussed the split bill from Kirby Ambulance with the bill this month being the second payment for 2019. The bill for 2020 has been received and has gone up. Supervisor Piatt will confirm to make sure that areas like Wanden Pond that are in the Township and the City are not paying twice for service. The late payment to the State was discussed. Late payments will not be an issue in the future since the payment is made on line. A motion was made by Trustee Nolan and seconded by Trustee Olson to approve the invoices. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Communications:

The article in the Piatt County Journal Republic about the proposed zoning change for the Park Project was positive.

The Farm Bureau will have an informational meeting on wind farms on August 21, 2019 from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm. The County Extension Office will also pursue an educational meeting about wind farms.

The Piatt County Mid Fire District contacted the Township for a donation. Since there is no money in the Township's budget for this item, no donation was made. Supervisor Piatt made a personal donation.

Old Business:

Assessor Dees reported that 16 new houses have been started since January and 12 more are expected for next year. Satellite Imagery is being used to try to keep up with new construction. Median assessed values are intended to be around 33.3 and Sangamon Township might not yet be at the level. Taxpayers can protest their assessment every year.

Trustee Foley distributed a handout about his research into abandoned/unsafe properties after talking to Rich Bernardoni of Marshall and Attorney Dana Rhoades of the County. He has not yet talked to Amy Rupiper, the Township's attorney. Trustee Foley outlined that the Township should address the issue since code is clearly being violated, adjacent property values are diminishing and if nothing is done, the Township will continue to decline. There are 2 legal ordinances: the County's ordinance that focuses on safety and health and a township code (by state statute 60 ILCS 1/85-50) that also addresses safety and health but also addresses disrepair and diminished value of adjacent properties. A bill is in the state legislature now to strengthen the hand of the Counties to be similar to the Township ordinance. Liens on properties cleaned up take precedence over prior liens on the property. The two paths for addressing abandoned properties are the legal path and the cooperative path. The legal path appears costly and time consuming. The cooperative path appears to work in some instances such as Westfield Village. The current Township ordinance is believed to address abandoned vehicles but none of the properties reported to the County had abandoned vehicles. Residents listed 5 concerned properties in priority order. Ms. Nightlinger will forward the emails sent to the County to Supervisor Piatt. The Board believes the cooperative path should be pursued parallel to residents filing complaints at the County. The Board might want to have a goal to clean up one property per year and partner with someone with the cost. Ideal properties will have a clear title, will have no liens, will have no close adjacent buildings, will be owned by someone with other assets, and will be thought by the County's attorney to be sure to receive a court order to be cleaned up. The first step is for the Township to contact the property owner. Since attorney costs can be significant, Trustee Foley and Supervisor Piatt will talk to County Attorney Rhoades to see if she will act as the Township's attorney if the County does not pursue cleaning up properties. Since property clean up is a budget item but not currently funded, the Township can look at funding next year. If another organization would help fund clean up, potential criticism of the Township's involvement could be deflected. Trustee Olson will contact the fire chief to see if burning might be an option for clean up.

The Cemetery Committee had no report.

Supervisor Piatt distributed financial reports from Kelly's Accounting. The profit/loss statements show the first tax payment but is not shown on the monthly account balance. Supervisor Piatt will ask Kelly to separate the payment into budget categories consistent with the audits. The Board discussed the budget process typically finished in March and that levies sent to the County in October. The Board would like to discuss a draft of the budget at the September meeting.

A preliminary audit report should be received around the 19th of August.

Richard Howland was contacted about seeding at the site of the Park Project. Trustee Nolan posted the surveyed corners with T posts and PVC. Water works needs to locate the existing manhole. Highway Commissioner Sebens talked to Hislope about getting asphalt grinding for the new parking lot. Dan Morris farmed the ground for the previous Owner and if desired could continue to farm some of the ground to be acquired. Aaron Brown from the rec league will be contacted about an updated site plan, fill dirt and parking layout. Copies of the purchase contract were distributed. Attorney John Foltz has also received a copy. The trustee for the grant has signed the grant document for the Township. A motion was made by Trustee Blickhan and seconded by Trustee Nolan to sign the purchase contract with Rick Pontious and Christine Pontious to purchase property pending the zoning change approval of the County Board. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

No new business was discussed.

Motion to Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Nolan was made. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Duff, Clerk