

**Palmyra Township
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Supervisor Dave Pixley at the Palmyra Township Hall, 6490 Palmyra Rd.

Members present: Dave Pixley, Matt Koester, Steve Papenhagen, Mark Crane. and Chris Whited

Members absent: None

Audience Attendance: 19

Motion Whited, support Koester to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried**

Add to Reports:

- County Commissioner Report

Add to New Business:

- 2022 Poverty Exemption Resolution

Minutes & Reports:

- County Commissioner Jim Goetz: Reported that an open house to tour the renovated Old Court House will take place sometime after January 1, 2022; The county secured \$2.3 million for the Phoenix Project property purchase; A \$2 million EGLE grant was also awarded to the project.
- Minutes: presented by Clerk Whited
- Financial: report presented by Treasurer Koester
- Fire & EMS: report presented by Chief Paul Rohlan
- Code Officials:
 - Code Enforcement: report presented by Clerk Whited
 - Building Inspector: report presented by Clerk Whited
 - Electrical Inspector: report presented by Clerk Whited
 - Mechanical Inspector: report presented by Clerk Whited
 - Plumbing Inspector: report presented by Clerk Whited
- Planning Commission: N/A
- Building Committee: N/A

Motion Whited, support Crane to approve the November 9th Regular Meeting minutes and the December 7th Special Meeting minutes as written. the reports as presented and place on file.

Motion carried

Motion Whited, support Crane to approve the reports as presented and place on file. **Motion carried**

Public Comment:

- Rod Skow, 2578 Ogden Hwy., stated that there have been several meetings addressing solar, and yet there has been no resolution. He stated that if the Board approves a permissive ordinance of 50-foot setbacks and unlimited coverage, then the SES Ordinance will definitely be taken to a referendum vote. He also stated that he has spoken to many individuals who oppose the ordinance.
- Matt Drennan, ESA Solar, presented maps to illustrate the impact a 300-foot setback would have on property, showing that 68.43% of the property would be unusable. He said that the Township must have justification for lot coverage maximums. He also stated that a Special Use Permit allows the Township to determine if a solar project is suitable.
- Mark Knoblauch, 2191 Bleasner Hwy, Blissfield, read the letter he emailed to the Board. He stated that a 300-foot setback around a parcel will result in unusable land. He stated that the MSU document recommends a 50-foot setback from nonparticipating parcels and 100-feet from any existing building. He feels that 100-150 feet would be a fair compromise.
- Eileen Crique Sylvania, OH, commented that a solar project would bring revenue to the Township to pay someone to clean up the debris that is around the building, as well as support the schools. She also said that Fletcher Mangum of Mangum Economics said that the property values would not decrease unless there is extreme noise or odor.
- Dan Sauter, Palmyra, commented that the estimated \$7.4 million of tax revenue generated within a year is not true. He said that \$36,000 may be more accurate, with \$24,000 allocated to the fire department and \$12,000 allocated to the Township.
- Tom Crique, 9555 Sylvania Rd, Sylvania, OH, agreed that landowners will make money from the solar projects placed on their property.
- Jeff Ehlert, 4333 Ricker Hwy., Blissfield, stated that there are other people who are not necessarily farmers who could benefit from solar projects. He asked if it would hurt to have this solar project in the county. He stated that the project would provide opportunity to provide support for the fire department.
- Bill Reed, Blissfield, accused the Board of bowing to peer pressure, allowing the majority to dictate to those who want solar.
- Cynthia Zimmerman, Ogden Hwy, stated that solar panels may be put on the property that is behind her home, and she does not want to look at it. She stated that she objects to solar projects in the Township.
- Daniel Knoblauch, Blissfield, stated that the Board needs to compromise and come up with an ordinance that will fit everyone.
- Alan Gust, 3947 Humphrey Hwy., Palmyra, stated that there is standing water on the north side of US 223. Supervisor Pixley said that he has notified MDOT, and MDOT must finish their engineering analysis to determine the cause of the standing water. He also stated that he is against solar.
- Laura Brown, Palmyra, stated that common ground must be found, but the other side is not willing to meet in the middle. She also stated that there should be regulations for SES. The ordinance does not allow people to do whatever they want with their property.

She said that tax revenue is not a viable argument, because tax revenue can change. She stated that it would be irresponsible going forward if there is no cap or regulations on solar projects.

- Paul Vergote, Blissfield, stated that Northern Michigan communities welcome solar. He said the government is mandating green energy and we need to be flexible in order to prevent eminent domain.
- Rod Skow, 2578 Ogden Hwy., commented that he read in the *Planning and Zoning News* bulletin, which he picked up in the Hall, that there is an uncertainty of the tax revenue that wind energy developments would produce. He said that solar creates the same uncertainty. He also stated that you cannot put sheep and goats on the same property where solar is located due to the nature of sheep and goats chewing wires.
- Matt Drennan, ESA Solar stated that there are solar farms with sheep all over the country. He also shared that the Carroll Road Solar Farm, a 200-megawatt producing project, is the largest tax payer in Lenawee County. He also stated that there are no solar leases on Ogden Hwy.
- Dan Sauter, Palmyra, stated that someone made a comment that “human crops” can be planted around solar panels. If that is the case, will the equipment and pickers be allowed in the development? Matt Drennan answered the question with a “no.”
- Jeff Ehlert stated that farmers do not want unreasonable setbacks and wasteful land. He said that the farmers do not want the 300-foot setbacks all around each parcel. He also said that not every farmer will do solar on their property.
- Laura Brown, Palmyra, stated that we should not adopt an attitude of “Don’t worry about it, because it’s not in your backyard.” The residents have outwardly spoken that they do not want solar in their township. The people who vote said they don’t want this. Please find some middle ground so this doesn’t go to referendum.
- Don Keller, Sylvania, OH, stated that 10% of the land is owned by homeowners, and the remaining 90% own the land. He asked, “Why should we bow to the 10%?”

Communications:

- **Land Splits:** A Land Split Application for PA0-118-1700-00 was submitted by Danny Wilson.
- **FOIA requests:** None
- **Cemeteries:** Clerk Whited reported that the Cemetery Commission met for their annual meeting on November 30th.
- **Roads & Bridges:** N/A
- **Consumers Energy:** Supervisor Pixley stated that there is a meeting on December 14th to consider applications for 2022 power cost recovery.

Unfinished Business:

- **SES Ordinance:** Motion Whited, support Koester to send to Attorney Mike Homier the December 7, 2021 amended SES Ordinance, the 2035 Master Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning map, the letter from Community Transition Planning, and any other required documents. **Roll call vote:** Whited – yes; Crane – yes; Koester – yes; Pixley – yes; Papenhagen – yes **Motion carried**

New Business:

- **PTFD –**
 - **Employment applications:** None
 - **Probation terminations:** None
 - **Resignations:** None
- **Planning Commission member appointment:** Motion Whited, support Papenhagen to appoint Carmen Loar as a Planning Commission member, serving a 3-year term (Jan. 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024) **Roll call vote:** Crane – yes, Koester – yes, Whited – yes, Pixley – yes, Papenhagen – yes **Motion carried**
Motion Koester, support Crane to appoint Laura Brown as a Planning Commission member, serving a 3-year term (Jan. 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024) **Roll call vote:** Papenhagen – yes; Pixley – yes; Whited – yes; Crane – yes; Koester – yes **Motion carried**
- **Snow removal:** Motion Pixley, support Koester to contract Paul Rohlan to plow the Fire department and the Palmyra Township Hall at a cost of \$75 per push, and plowing will begin when 2 inches of snow has accumulated on the ground. **Motion carried**
- **PFD Officer appointments:** Motion Pixley , support Crane to appoint Paul Rohlan as the Chief; Brian Wilcox as the Assistant Chief; Charlie Deslover as Captain; Ryan Hlavka as Captain; Jeff Jackson as Captain; Troy Swanson as Captain; Stacey Rohlan as Ambulance Coordinator; and Ryan Hlavka as Training Officer, all serving a two year term (Jan. 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023). **Roll call vote:** Koester – yes; Whited – yes; Crane – yes; Pixley – yes; Papenhagen – yes **Motion carried**
- **2022 Regular Meeting dates:** Motion Papenhagen, support Crane to approve the 2022 regular meeting dates. **Motion carried**
- **Road Commission annual meeting dates:** Discussed that the Supervisor would submit first choice of February 25, 2022, 1:00 pm and second choice of March 1, 2022, 9:00 am.
- **Cemetery Ordinance Amendments:**
 - **Clean up period:** Motion Whited, support Koester to amend the Cemetery Ordinance by adding the following amendment in Section 9 as letter (g):
Cemetery cleanup periods shall be April 1st to April 15th and October 1st to October 15th. All items that are on the ground and not attached to the headstone or foundation must be removed during the cleanup periods. If weather conditions require the cleanup dates to be changed, the Palmyra Township Board will designate, publish, and post the modified cleanup periods. The other lettered items in Section 9 will advance to the next letter.
Roll call vote: Crane – yes; Papenhagen – yes; Koester – yes; Whited – yes; Pixley – yes **Motion carried**
 - **Increase of cost of Nonresident Burial Site:** Motion Whited, support Papenhagen to increase the cost of a nonresident burial site from \$400 to \$550, effective January 1, 2022. **Roll call vote:** Pixley – yes; Whited – yes; Koester – yes; Papenhagen – yes; Crane – yes **Motion carried**
 - **Cremation monuments/headstones:** Motion Whited, support Pixley to add in Section 8 as (f) ***Cremains may be placed in a cremation monument/headstone***

specifically for the incasement of urns, with a limit of 6 cremations per monument/headstone.

Roll call vote: Whited – yes; Pixley – yes; Crane – yes; Papenhagen – yes; Koester – yes **Motion carried**

- **Cemetery bids:** Motion Crane, support Koester to table the discussion until the Supervisor drafts a job description of the cemetery/township groundskeeping position. **Motion carried**
- **Cemetery flag holders:** Motion Whited, support Papenhagen to purchase a flag holder to place on the burial site of Don Marcus. **Motion carried**
- **Microphones:** Motion Whited, support Koester to reimburse Supervisor Pixley the cost of the cordless microphones and to allow him to purchase mic stands and batteries. The total cost shall not exceed \$300. **Motion carried**
- **Land Split, PA0-118-1700-00, Danny Wilson:** Motion Pixley, support Papenhagen to approve the land split application for PA0-118-1700-00. **Roll call vote:** Koester – yes; Whited – yes; Crane – yes; Pixley – yes; Papenhagen – yes **Motion carried**
- **2022 Poverty Exemption Resolution:** Motion Pixley, support Crane to adopt the 2022 Poverty Exemption Resolution. **Roll call vote:** Koester – yes; Papenhagen – yes; Pixley – yes; Whited – yes; Crane – yes **Motion carried**

Bill Payment

Motion Koester, support Crane to pay all Twp. and PTFD bills as presented.

Motion carried

Adjournment

Motion Koester, support Whited to adjourn at 10:43 p.m. **Motion carried**

Next Regular Meeting: January , 2021