

**Sangamon Township
Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

September 12, 2019

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

Also present were Guests Thomas Scott Sr, Thomas Scott, Jr., Cemetery Sexton Francis Dick, Clerk Kevin Duff, Highway Commissioner Larry Sebens, and Assessor Denise Dees.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Public Comment: none

Minutes:

A motion was made by Trustee Blickhan and seconded by Trustee Nolan to approve the minutes of the regular August meeting. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Invoices:

Clarification was made about the invoice from Illiana; the County paid as is typical all but \$14k of the \$116k for oil and chip and rock. A motion was made by Trustee Nolan and seconded by Trustee Foley to approve the invoices. A roll call vote was taken and approved unanimously.

Communications:

Supervisor Piatt passed around a legislative proposal form from the State for Township Officials.

On October 7, 2019 at 6:00pm, the U of I Extension Services will host a wind farm informational meeting at Livingston Center in Monticello. Trustee Piatt will contact township residents Fellers and Hitmeyers to advise since they have contacted the Township with concerns. The Township will not give mailing names to Extension Services. A motion was made by Trustee Piatt and seconded by Trustee Olsen to put the meeting notice on the Township's website. A voice vote was taken; the motion passed with a majority of aye votes given, one no vote and one abstained vote.

Old Business:

Trustee Foley met with County Attorney Dana Rhoades's assistant Ellie Dobson on August 29 to discuss the status of the County's response to resident's concerns about abandoned/unsafe properties. Ms. Dobson was very encouraging of the Township to meet with property owners of abandoned properties. Mike Schroeder from the County Health Department was to come back out to look at the properties in question on August 23. If the property owners have not made remedial actions, a letter from the Health Department will be sent to Attorney Rhoades who will file a suit asking the Owners to correct the issues. If no response, the County or the Township

has the authority to correct with any cost incurred applied as a lien to the property. An intermediary step is to levy fines but that action is typically not effective because property owners typically do not have the money to pay the fines. There is no cost to the Township for the County Attorney's services while the process is at the County level. The County Attorney cannot help the Township if the process moves to the Township level. If the Township works on private properties to correct issues, there may be insurance issues; if the Owners cooperate with the Township, there might not be insurance issues. The White Heath Community Club probably has no money to help but might be a good ally for the Township. As the residents' complaints go through the County process, the Township's next step is to talk to Attorney Amy Rupiper. The Township could select 1 or 2 properties likely to succeed with corrective action. The Township will draft parameters to select abandoned properties to receive help such as having no resolution at the County level, having an organization or individuals willing to partner with the Township for corrective action, having a clear title, having an Owner with other assets, and not being adjacent to neighboring structures. The selection process will allow all properties in the Township to receive equal consideration and not just the abandoned properties in White Heath. Trustee Olsen will check with the Fire Department about their possible help. Trustee Blickhan will investigate the process for White Heath to incorporate. Trustee Foley will draft criteria for selecting abandoned properties to help clean up and with Supervisor Piatt will consult in October with attorney Rupiper about the Township cooperating with property owners to clean up abandoned properties. The Township needs to go to the County Board to encourage them to set aside funds for clean up. A discussion about increasing the levy to add a budget item for the Township to assist with clean up was had. An increase in the levy greater than 5% will need to follow the Truth in Taxation process for public vetting and filled with the County prior to the last Tuesday in December. Funds can be moved within the Township's budget to create the budget item. The Board is committed to help and will discuss further in October.

Assessor Dees reported that the County has not yet completed the final assessed value but expects the increase to be 1 1/2% to 3%. New houses can offset increases.

Trustee Nolan reported that the Cemetery Committee will meet in October prior to the regular Township meeting.

The Kelly's Accounting Report included employee payroll withholding taxes on the year to date summary for the Town and Road and Bridge accounts. The taxes are paid on line. Property taxes are being received in installments; \$99k has been received now with \$155k total eventually. In the spreadsheet accounts, the grant money for the park is not shown yet in the Park Fund. Supervisor Piatt will talk to the Trustees of the park grant to see if they want public recognition for the grant. A discussion about splitting the Highway Commissioner's salary and health insurance between the Town Fund and the Road and Bridge Fund was had. The auditor's recommend the split happen every month. If the Commissioner agrees to a 50/50 split, perhaps the Township can pay more of the accounting and audit cost. Additional discussion will happen as next year's budget is developed.

The audit report was distributed and will be discussed at the October meeting.

Trustee Blickhan will discuss with the contractor about coordinating with Prairie Central about killing the weeds and seeding 5 acres of the proposed ball field. The Board thanked Highway Commissioner Sebens for mowing the site again.

The closing for the park purchase is set for Monday, September 16, 2019. The Township will receive a credit for paying the property taxes next year. Additional cost include closing fees, search fees, recording fees, survey recording fees, and our attorney fee. Supervisor Piatt made a motion seconded by Trustee Nolan to transfer \$10k from the Township Fund to the Park Fund

to temporarily cover the cost to purchase the land. A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously. Supervisor Piatt made a motion seconded by Trustee Blickhan to authorize expenditure up to \$112k for purchase of 11.64 acres from Richard Pontious and Christina Pontious. A roll call vote was taken and approved unanimously. Supervisor Piatt will call Torma to increase the Township's insurance to cover the additional land.

New Business:

The issue of creating a three way stop at Commercial Street and Meridian was discussed. The Board decided to keep the intersection as it is but suggests complaints be given to the County Sheriff about drivers not stopping at the existing signs.

A draft of the budget for the next fiscal year was distributed for consideration. The final budget must be submitted to the County by December 11, 2019.

Trustee Foley made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Trustee Nolan. The meeting adjourned at 10:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Duff, Clerk