

**Special Meeting of the Town Board  
Peninsula Town Hall Conference Room  
Thursday, March 30, 2017, 9:00 am  
Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER: 9:01am**

**PLEDGE**

**ROLL CALL** Present: Achorn, Bickle, Westphal, Manigold  
Absent: Sanders, Wunsch, Wahl

**APPROVE AGENDA**—Motion to approve agenda, moved by Bickle, seconded by Westphal. **Passed unanimous**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS-None**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST—None**

**BUSINESS**

1. Resolution to designate Bluff Road as a “Natural Beauty Road” under state statute. Jim Floriday, 13617 Bluff Road, opened the discussion by providing an overview of what has transpired since Tuesday’s Town Board meeting, 3-28-2017, regarding the proposed cutting of trees along Bluff Road. A handout on the “Natural Beauty Road” state statute was distributed to the audience; he proceeded to highlight the most important points of the program. Two important points included control over all roads in Michigan by County Road Commissions; and speed limits on sections of natural beauty roads determined by user types. He then presented the Town Board with petitions from 56 residents along Bluff Road, and numerous e-mails from residents who support the Natural Beauty Road designation as a means of protecting the trees along the roadway. He recommended that the Township seek an injunction if necessary to stop the County Road Commission from cutting the trees along Bluff Road.

Rob Manigold--presented correspondence on the matter, both pro and con. He proceeded with reading the Township resolution for the benefit of those not at Tuesday’s meeting or who did not get a copy of the resolution. He recommended contacting Grant Parsons if an injunction is needed for intervention.

Hayward—outlined additional points in the state statute and recommended that there is plenty of opportunity to amend the agreement with the Road Commission (???)

VanDenBrand—Brian noted that private property rights remain intact under the designation; any modifications to the landscape are limited to the road right-of-way (ROW). The resolution and Natural Beauty Road designation gives the Road Commission a reason to exempt some of the trees from cutting. One area that could be addressed further is the type of surface material that will be laid in place and the types of

safety issues regarding non-motorized use by pedestrians and cyclists. It does not appear that the road has been engineered to provide even minimal shoulders.

One member of the audience complained about the behavior of Mr. Andy Merrick, a Road Commissioner from Interlochen, who claimed to be speaking as a private citizen, but then went on to threaten the Township with repercussions if residents opposed this road improvement. Others in the audience found such behavior unacceptable and inappropriate.

Chuck Knox, 14534 Bluff Road, observed that the recommendation for road structure change by putting a chip seal on the road is only a two-year short term resolution to the deterioration being observed on the road. It is his position, from years of experience relating to road projects, that serious modification of the subsurface materials underlying the road surface is needed to provide a long-lasting solution to the road.

Katherine Hardy, 11126 Bluff Road, noted that the closer one lives to the road, the higher the sensitivity to change along and in the road right of way.

Jim Floriday expressed concern that the road project is not just an issue of tree removal, but rather the whole approach to road improvement, including structural stability of the underlying soils.

Ellen Barnes, 11243 Bluff, noted that there was inconsistent marking of the trees along the road with the actual level of road disrepair being exhibited.

Manigold encouraged correspondence with the Record-Eagle, newsletters, television coverage, and social media to get citizen support for the resolution and protection of the trees. These are not dead trees that are being marked. He was confident that the Road Commissioners would accommodate the resolution and petitions of the residents along Bluff Road; his intent was to take both items to the Road Commission after the special meeting to get a stay of execution on the project.

## **2. Budget Meeting for purposes of finalizing the 2016-2017 fiscal budget.**

Achorn, deputy treasurer, indicated that the purpose of this business item was to close out the present fiscal year with a balanced budget. Therefore, she presented the final version of the 2016-17 budget, to show how the budget was balanced to meet state law. Certified Public Accountant, Connie Underhill, from Baird, Cotter, and Bishop, PC firm out of Cadillac, helped to organize the final budget in a form acceptable to the State of Michigan.

Bickle, Treasurer, said this final budget approval for a fiscal year ending on March 31, 2017, had to be completed before April 1, 2017, by state law. This final budget approval allows the Township to close out the budget, in preparation for opening next fiscal year's budget.

Bickle moved to accept the final FY2016-17 budget as presented, and Westphal seconded it. Roll call was taken. **Unanimous support.**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS-None**

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Achorn recommended that the Towns Board consider adopting a purchase order policy with consistent procedures relating to the purchasing of items/services commonly sought by the township staff throughout the year.

Westphal reminded the Board that we need to make a decision on per diem reimbursement, rather early in the upcoming Fiscal Year, to provide consistent reimbursement for board and commissioner time spent in the service of the Township.

**ADJOURNMENT**—Bickle moved to adjourn and Westphal seconded it.  
**Unanimous support.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Recording secretary,  
Joanne Westphal, Clerk