

**State of Illinois
County of Cook
Township of Northfield
Northfield Township Board of Trustees Meeting March 8, 2011**

The following board members were present:

Jill Brickman, Northfield Township Supervisor
Brendan Appel, Northfield Township Trustee
Carol Blustein, Northfield Township Trustee
Karen McCormick, Northfield Township Trustee
Mary Reynolds, Northfield Township Trustee

Also present:

Laura Fine, Northfield Township Clerk
Patricia Damisch, Northfield Township Assessor
Peter Amarantos, Northfield Township Road District Commissioner
Wally Kehr, Northfield Township Road District Foreman
Lucinda Fuller, Northfield Township Finance Director
Marylou Kratochwill, Northfield Township Staff
Wanda Tarnowska, Northfield Township Staff
Tom Norton, Northfield Township Resident

Supervisor Brickman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the minutes of the February 8, 2011 meeting

Trustee Blustein moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2011 board meeting.
Trustee Reynolds seconded the motion.
The minutes were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

Approval of the minutes of the January 11, 2011 Executive Session

Trustee Reynolds moved to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2011 Executive Session.
Trustee McCormick seconded the motion.
The minutes were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

Recess Town Meeting

Open Sewer Meeting

Approval of the sewer bills

Trustee Reynolds moved to approve the February, 2011 sewer bills.
Trustee Appel seconded the motion.

Trustee McCormick corrected the date of the bills to March, 2011.
Trustee Reynolds amended her motion to approve the sewer bills for March, 2011.
Trustee Appel approved the amendment.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

Sewer Collections

No discussion

Old Business

No discussion

New Business

Road District Foreman Wally Kehr said he put out a bid notice for a new sewer truck. The bid opening is set for the April 12 board meeting.

Reconvene Town Meeting

Approval of the Town Fund Bills

Trustee Blustein moved to approve the March, 2011 Town Fund bills.

Trustee Appel seconded the motion.

Trustee Appel asked for a clarification of our current fiscal year. Supervisor Brickman explained this is the 13th month of the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The additional month is due the change of the fiscal year. The new fiscal year will now begin in April.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

Approval of the Road and Bridge Bills

Trustee Appel moved to approve the Road and Bridge bills.

Trustee Reynolds seconded the motion.

Trustee Blustein asked about the different service addresses noted on the Daniel Creaney Company bills. Mr. Kehr explained they are for various services. For example, one of the bills was for a meeting with the MWRD, updating the storm atlas (showing where the pipes are located), and another one was for a new house under construction. Supervisor Brickman added for construction projects the township has to sign off on permits for water retention and drainage, and Dan Creaney's office reviews those plans. Supervisor Brickman explained that the township has input into the grading plans of new construction projects so new houses are not draining into other properties. She said the township and the village that provides the water must sign off before the county can issue a permit.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

Line Item Adjustments

Supervisor Brickman explained that every year there are movements that must be made within each budget in order to balance the budget by year end.

Trustee Blustein moved to approve the line item changes for the Town Fund for the 2010-2011 budget year with the total line item adjustments of \$18,412.00

Trustee Reynolds seconded the motion.

Trustee McCormick asked if the line item for *newsletter* was for the assessor's newsletter. Ms. Fuller said it was.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

Trustee Reynolds moved to approve the line item adjustments for the General Assistance fund for the 2010-2011 budget year for the Road and Bridge Fund of \$52,600.

Trustee McCormick seconded the motion.

Trustee Blustein asked if these amounts are similar to the amounts in past years. Supervisor Brickman said yes.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

Future Township Interns

Trustee Blustein said she felt it was a good idea to have a township intern last summer. She suggested writing a proposal for future interns, including an outline of the job description. She would also like to see compensation for the intern, for example, \$1,000 for the summer. Trustee Appel said compensation may be difficult due to budget constraints. Trustee Blustein suggested the supervisor and the office staff create the intern's job description.

Grant Writing

Trustee Blustein asked if the township has written any grants. Supervisor Brickman said the Food Pantry and the Road District have written requests for and received grants in the past. Trustee Blustein asked if there are any grants available for a Pace bus. Supervisor Brickman said she is not aware of any funding for that type of transportation, but it would be great if the township could find something. Trustee McCormick suggested the township look at where it had to cut this year and see if there are grants available to supplement some of those programs.

Supervisor Brickman said in the last year, the township applied for and received grants from the Glenview Women of Today, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, World Hunger Relief, Google Ad Words, the Rotary Club of Glenview Sunrise, the Rotary Club of Northbrook and the Village Treasure House. Trustee McCormick asked if the board could be notified when the township receives a grant. Supervisor Brickman said yes.

Trustee Appel said he just received notice that his wife's car died and his family is stuck in a parking lot. He left the meeting at 6:26 PM.

Status of Work on Township Website

Trustee Reynolds asked for an update on the township's website. Supervisor Brickman said she does not anticipate any progress until this summer, as an employee's relative is donating his time to do the work, and he is in college.

Township Handbook Workshop (Employee Manual)

Trustee Blustein said she has been working on updating the Township Handbook. It is the operating document for the township for employees. She would like to schedule a workshop to review the manual. She suggested a date in early May so she would have time to distribute materials prior to the workshop. Supervisor Brickman said she will schedule the workshop.

Membership on Board Committees

Trustee Reynolds suggested that any individuals who wish to be on a committee should be allowed to participate, although the board members will only be paid for 6 meetings. She said she would prefer the Finance Committee become a committee of the whole. She asked Supervisor Brickman to be part of the committee because her historical knowledge would be helpful.

Supervisor Brickman said she does not want to move away from a committee type of structure because good governance in a board should stay at an oversight level, not a management type level. She added background and discussion happens at the committee meetings, and decisions are made at board meetings. She did, however, say that she would be happy to attend Finance Committee meetings.

Trustee Reynolds said there is so much information discussed at the Finance Committee meetings when deciding the budget, and it is too hard to transfer all the information at a regular meeting. Supervisor Brickman recommended changing the Finance Committee to a committee of the whole for now.

Inclusion of Monthly Meeting Agenda Items

Trustee Blustein recommended the board have a set process to include monthly agenda items. Supervisor Brickman said it is the supervisor who runs the meetings and sets the agenda, therefore any agenda items should go to her so she can structure an agenda that makes sense. Trustee Blustein asked how we include going into a closed session on the agenda. Supervisor Brickman explained we are supposed to put the reason for the closed session on the agenda. There are very specific exceptions to the Open Meetings Act that allow the board to go into closed session. The supervisor said on the Attorney General's website there is a link that outlines the reasons acceptable to go into a closed session.

Relocation of Township Office Timeline and Specifications

Assessor Damisch said there are 2 more years on the township's current lease, and the committee is sensitive to the fact that it needs to have enough time to make any adjustments to a property. Specifications for the property include it should be 6,000 square feet, with 2,000 of those square feet for the pantry, and it must be accessible by public transportation. The committee is deciding between 2 local real estate brokers to help find a new site, and it is looking at both leasing and buying. She asked the board for any input regarding the selection of the broker but none of the trustees have any knowledge of or contacts in that industry.

Annual Town Meeting Honoree

Trustee Blustein suggested honoring Robert Barber at the annual town meeting.

Supervisor Brickman said that would be a great idea. Mr. Barber recently retired, and he has worked for the township since 1978. Trustee Blustein asked Wally Kehr to introduce Mr. Barber at the meeting. Mr. Kehr said he would.

Annual Town Meeting Location

Clerk Fine noted the Glenview Police Department and the Northbrook Village Hall are already booked by other organizations the night of the town meeting. She said she would contact Midwest Palliative care to find out if their board room is available.

Posting or Placement of Monthly Meeting Agenda

Trustee Blustein talked with the District 225 superintendent about posting the township monthly meeting agenda on the building. He said the township can post the agenda, just be sure it says Northfield Township at the top of the agenda.

Pace Versus Dial-a-Ride

Trustee Reynolds noted the amount spent on Dial-a-Ride is getting close to the cost of a Pace Bus.

Matters to be Presented by the Public

Northfield Township resident Tom Norton asked what the formula for care will be this summer when it comes to mowing the lawns of the empty or abandoned houses in the unincorporated areas. Mr. Kehr said the board passed an ordinance last summer that says if the Road District mows the lawn, the party responsible for the property will be charged. Mr. Norton asked about trees that need to be cut down. Mr. Kehr explained that information is sent to the Cook County Health Department. Ms. Tarnowska asked what to do if the property is an abandoned business. Supervisor Brickman said that in the case to which Ms. Tarnowska was referring, a partially-built shopping center at Central Road and Milwaukee Avenue, residents should contact the Development Department at Village Hall or the Village Manager's office.

Old Business

No discussion

New Business

Supervisor Brickman said if a board member has a question and wants the board to hear the answer, if it is informational, the supervisor can send a memo to the board. That is not a violation of the Open Meetings Act. This would eliminate some of the items on the agenda.

Trustee Blustein noted the new pantry chart. The board said it is happy with the new chart.

Trustee Reynolds said one of the issues that came up at the finance meeting was evaluations. She asked what office manager Wilson's role is in the evaluation process. Supervisor Brickman said she and Ms. Wilson work in collaboration. Trustee Blustein recommended taking the responsibility out of the hands of a co-worker. She said she feels Supervisor Brickman is better equipped to handle a difficult situation. Trustee Blustein said as the CEO of the township, the supervisor is in a much more impartial spot. It could be uncomfortable for Ms. Wilson if she has to say something to someone that they are not happy with, and then she has to face them every day. Trustee Reynolds said she agrees with Trustee Blustein. She asked if the evaluations are based on benchmarks. Supervisor Brickman said evaluation items include expectations, such as counter service and telephone service. Trustee Blustein asked if Supervisor Brickman could take over the evaluations for the next round to see how it works. Then the board can revisit it and discuss it again.

Trustee McCormick asked who is in charge of the township's hiring. Supervisor Brickman said Ms. Wilson narrows down the list of candidates and she interviews the candidates. Supervisor Brickman said hiring is not done very often because we have a very stable staff. She added if she is going to hire someone, the name and the position would be brought before the board.

Trustee Appel returned to the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Trustee Reynolds said the issue of compensation came up at the last budget meeting. She said last year, the board learned belatedly that raises were given at the hiring anniversary. As a result, the board realized part way through the year the raises the board thought had been given to the staff had not been given. As a result raises were given to everyone retroactive to the beginning of fiscal year. At this year's budget meeting Trustee Reynolds said she learned that increases are based on a merit system raise and not a step system raise. Trustee Reynolds said as a board, when we are budgeting, we need to be clear about what raises we are giving. If we see 3% allocated but it is not for all staff members, we need to be clear. She added her concept that an evaluation is an opportunity for an employer and employee to look at performance over the last year, look at strengths and weaknesses and see where improvements can be made. She proposed a step raise as she considers the raise a cost of living increase and not a motivating factor.

Supervisor Brickman said she does feel money is a key incentive. She said if there is a problem and someone doesn't get the full increase, a 90 day reevaluation is scheduled. Supervisor Brickman said if we tell taxpayers employees are receiving a 3% raise, they are going to want to make sure it is being earned.

Trustee Blustein proposed a compromise. She suggested the township board sets a base raise and everything beyond it is merit. Supervisor Brickman said the board cannot take action now, and when they do it must be in an open session. Trustee Reynolds proposed everyone stay on the same cycle of the fiscal year for a raise, and the evaluations should be presented as a block to the board of trustees. Supervisor Brickman said evaluations are available to any trustee who wants to review them. Due to privacy issues, she would rather have the trustees come in to the office to review the evaluations.

Motion to move into Closed Session

Trustee McCormick motioned to move into closed session for the purpose of discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees.

Trustee Reynolds seconded the motion.

Roll call:

Ayes: Supervisor Brickman, Trustee Appel, Trustee Blustein, Trustee McCormick, Trustee Reynolds (5)

Nays: None (0)

Motion carried 5-0

The meeting moved into closed session at 7:42 PM.

The meeting moved back into open session at 8:16 PM.

Trustee Appel moved to adjourn.

Trustee Blustein seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Fine, Northfield Township Clerk