

**Charter Township of Van Buren  
Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes  
February 09, 2021 via Zoom**

Prior to the start of the meeting, the public was given instructions on how to take part in the meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Daniel Belanger.

**Members Present:** Clerk Wright, Denise Willoughby, Todd O'Neill, Tammy Wall, and Daniel Belanger

**Excused:** Kimberly Nofz, Deputy Director Jennifer Zaenglein, Director Jennifer Wright

**Unexcused:** Charles Coleman

**Staff Present:** Director Best, Executive Assistant Elizabeth Renuad, and Secretary Dohring.

**Audience:** 35 via Zoom, 15 via YouTube

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion O'Neill, Wall seconded to approve the agenda

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

**Motion Carried**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion Wright, Wall seconded to approve the minutes from February 11, 2020 as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

**Motion Carried**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1.Election of Officers:**

a. Motion Wright, Willoughby seconded to nominate Belanger for Chairperson

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

**Motion Carried**

b. Motion Wright, Willoughby seconded to nominate Coleman for co-chair.

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

**Motion Carried**

**2. Proposed Update to 2021 Meeting Schedule**

Motion Wall, Wright seconded to approve the proposed update to the 2021 Meeting Schedule with two additional meetings, March 9, 2021 & May 11, 2021.

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

**Motion Carried**

**3. Discussion on proposed Van Buren Township Community Center**

Director Best introduced the results of the feasibility phone study conducted by Epic MRA, on 250 residents late 2019-early 2020, on building a new community center within the township, stressing that the information on the center included in the packet was conceptual, and not a final plan. He introduced Bert Kosek, an architect from Newman Smith to further discuss the details regarding the results of the study and the proposed concept.

Mr. Kosek began the power point presentation by mentioning the other companies also involved in this project, Plante Moran Cresa, Russell Design, and Epic MRA. He demonstrated that the majority of those surveyed were in favor of a community center, as an addition built on the current township hall location. The proposed facility has an estimated cost of 7.2 million, with no cost passed on to the residents. Mr. Kosek showed the tentative layout of the proposed community center with a large gym and walking track, fitness studio, locker rooms, child watch, senior center, lounge area, and multi-purpose rooms, all items the survey participants expressed interest in. He also stated that a pool was an option, but it would be an expensive addition, and most likely that additional cost would be passed on to the residents.

Administrative Assistant Renaud covered the proposed phases of the project. Phase one was the feasibility study. The next phase to begin is additional community involvement.

Director Best and Clerk Wright discussed that the funds to build the community center would be coming from a fire station bond that is expiring and already calculated into the budget, therefore the 7.2 million would not be an additional cost to residents.

Executive Assistant Renaud and Director Best reviewed public comments received on social media and email prior to this meeting.

Members of the Committee reiterated that they agree the initial expense of building a pool, and the continued expense of operating and maintaining a pool far outweigh the revenue at the local level. The members inquired about the demand for gym space, outdoor areas usage and storage

space. Director Best responded the types of demands on gym space, mainly pickleball, fitness, and basketball, tend to happen at different times of the day. The outdoor areas, as of right now, are a place holder for future uses, like outdoor concerts or movies, picnics, etc. Mr. Kosek stated that there are large storage areas outside of the gym area, on the concept drawing.

Clerk Wright addressed many of the public comments regarding tax money being used, increased, or possibly refunded. He explained that out of all the money collected for property taxes, approximately only \$26-\$28 per household goes to the township, with the rest going to schools, jails, Wayne County Community College, etc. The amount that is received by the township covers the cost of the state mandated offices in the township. The rest of the funding for the township expenses comes from the landfill funds and building and planning revenue. The study shows that a township of approximately 30,000 residents can not cover the costs associated with providing a pool, at this time.

Director Best shared the remainder of the public comments and questions presented in the chats and question and answer sections of the social media platforms, most of which were answered throughout the earlier presentation and discussions. He encouraged residents to reach out to the township via Facebook, Instagram, website, email, phone, or schedule an appointment with any further questions or comments, there will be many more discussions before finalized plans are made.

## **General Discussion:**

### **Recreation Updates:**

Director Best shared that the Recreation Dept. will be putting together outdoor pickleball leagues for spring, summer, and fall.

The Township has partnered with RecDesk, a recreation software company, in an effort to be paperless and more efficient. This will be available on the new Township website and will allow residents to sign up and pay for a variety of recreation services, such as leagues, events, programs, pavilion rentals, park passes, etc. This is anticipated to be live for use in March or April.

### **Park Updates:**

Director Best stated that a handful of benches at Riggs Heritage Park had come loose from the foundations. Over the next few months these benches will be replaced.

Director Best also shared the French Landing Park will begin Phase 1 improvements, this includes a large outdoor tent, which is a pavilion for picnicking, recreation classes, meetings, relaxing, etc. All of the sidewalks will be getting replaced, as well as the turf grass and landscaping. The final design will be brought to the committee for approval.

Executive Assistant Renaud stated that the Public Services Dept along with the Communications Department partnered with Ideation Orange to design new signage for the Township Parks. The current signs are outdated, in need of repair, or nonexistent. The new park signage will be cohesive with the proposed new Van Buren Township gateway sign, which is to be bid out in the spring and was also designed by Ideation Orange. The signage concepts will be brought

forward to the Township Board to approve for bidding, and will be brought to the Recreation Committee at the next meeting for approval.

**Adjournment:** Motion O'Neill, Wright second to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Yeas: O'Neill, Wall, Willoughby, Wright, Belanger

Nays: None

Absent: Coleman, Nofz

Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Dohring  
Recording Secretary