

**Forsyth Township Board
Special Meeting
Gwinn Community Center (Clubhouse)
September 17, 2015**

Supervisor Minelli called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Supervisor Minelli, Clerk Nordeen, Treasurer Roberts, Trustees Adams and Trustee Bodenus

Board Members Absent: None

Also Present: UPEA Representatives Matt Treado and Carr Baldwin, Superintendent of Public Works Eric Jancsi, Police Officer Jesse Cadwell, Police Chief Gordon Warchock, a number of township employees and concerned citizens.

Public Comment: Supervisor Minelli announced that any comments regarding the Water and Sewer Project should be held until that item was addressed. A resident asked why the recycling center is not open all day on Saturdays. It would be a used by the residents.

Agenda: Motion by Nordeen, supported by Roberts, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Adams, supported by Roberts, to approve the Minutes for August 27, 2015 Regular Board Meeting, August 31, 2015 Special Board Meeting, and September 3, 2015 Special Board Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS:

Essence of Time Contract (6a.): Motion by Adams, supported by Nordeen, to approve the Essence of Time Contract & Proposal, and for it to come out of the contingency fund. Discussion ensued. Supervisor Minelli explained that this company is out of New York, and is fixing the clock. Trustee Roberts expressed her concern with the shipping charges, as they are not clearly stated in the contract. Motion carried.

2015 Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution (6b.): Motion by Roberts, supported by Adams, to approve the Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution, as presented. Roll call: Clerk Nordeen – aye, Treasurer Roberts – aye, Trustee Adams – aye, Trustee Bodenus – aye, Supervisor Minelli – aye. Motion carried.

Forsyth Township
Resolution No:
2015 Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan

WHEREAS, Forsyth Township is committed to the mitigation of potential hazards and the protection of the public health, and the reduction of property damage and loss of life that can result from hazardous events;

WHEREAS, The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that communities have an adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan as a requirement to receive funding under certain FEMA programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Forsyth Township Board hereby adopt the Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan, as updated in 2015.

Motion made by _____, seconded by _____, to adopt the Resolution as stated above. Effective September 17, 2015.

Upon roll call vote, the following voted:

YES:

NO:

ABSENT:

Supervisor Minelli declared the motion passed on the 17th of September, 2015

Jane Nordeen, Clerk

DISCUSSION:

Water/Sewer Project (8.): Supervisor Minelli explained the UPEA Representatives were here to answer any questions that anyone may have regarding the Water and Sewer Project, then turned the floor over to UPEA Representative Matt Treado and Carr Baldwin.

Mr. Treado introduced himself. He explained he had placed sign-up sheets in various places throughout the room, and asked the residents to sign up and explain their specific problems so he could better serve their concerns. He then passed out a letter he had written regarding Water Rate Structure. After reading the letter containing two options; option 1 – Permanent Disconnection Fee, and option 2 – Temporary Water Shutoff Rate, he reiterated that the budget for the project needed to balance. Carl Erickson asked if a bunch of people moved off the water system would we need to raise all the others. Mr. Treado explained the income would need to stay the same, so yes, everyone else would need to pay more. Pat Anderegg inquired if the money for the project was a grant. She also asked if new customers were required to connect, as there was a new section being added. Mr. Treado explained that the money is a low interest loan, not a grant. The DEQ is requiring the new loop. The customers that are in that loop that currently have a well are not required to hook up to the new section, but do have the option if they so choose. Another resident stated that she hasn't lived here for 10 years. Mr. Treado stated that she may want to choose a permanent disconnect option, should the Board choose to make that an option. A resident stated that the math for the rate increase does not make sense to him. Mr. Treado clarified the reasons and amounts needed for the rate increases. Tina Cass explained she had adjoining properties. The property next to her home is used for cold storage, yet she was being charged for water. Mr. Treado explained that those with livable structures are being charged for water and sewer. Mrs. Cass explained there hasn't been water there for 20 years and does not believe she should be charged. In its current condition, it is unlivable. Gigi Nyquist asked Mr. Treado to define livable structure. Mr. Treado stated it was a building that someone could legally live in. Matt further explained that the fixed costs are still incurred even if water is not currently being used. Darcia Mattson said she leaves for the winter. Although she believed the old \$5.00 rate was very low, she believes paying full rate for water is not fair. Mr. Treado stated that Board is looking into that vacation rate. He also explained that the sewer fixed rate may be lower than initially expected, as they have joined the

projects together. They will be looking into those costs, which could potentially lower the sewer rate. He reminded the residents that these rates are temporary. When the meters are put in and studied, the rates will change. They will be on a use basis. Linda Peterson stated she had a company house. It has been converted to one dwelling. She asked if there would be a charge to disconnect the other line that was needed when it was a two family dwelling. Mr. Treado explained that if the home was recognized as a permanent one family dwelling, it would be treated as such. Carl Bryzek addressed a letter that he wrote to the Board which contained many questions. He is opposed to Smart Meters. UPEA Representative Carr Baldwin explained the meters being used were not Smart Meters. He explained that Smart Meters could be monitored in the office. The meters going in are radio monitored. Another resident explained that he was a single parent, living with another person. He does not live in the home being charged full rate, therefore no water is being used. He further questioned how he can be charged for a service he is not using, even if he had it turned off at the street. He explained his income would not allow him to pay for services he was not using. Putting the growing balance on his taxes would make him lose his home for unpaid taxes. Gigi Nyquist questioned how long they would be paying the current rates. Mr. Treado explained the Board would be reviewing the comments made and making some decisions in the future. He also commented on the loan closing that would be taking place next month, and how things should not be changed at this time as it may delay the loan closing. A resident asked if there would be a disconnect fee charged separately for sewer and water. Mr. Treado explained the Board may choose a combination rate. Georgia Aho stated her building on the water system was used for cold storage. Mr. Treado went over the possibilities of changing those charges, by raising the rest of the resident's rates. Carr Baldwin stated that if buildings are truly cold storage, they would not have meters. The meters would be installed at livable structures. Bernadette Jensen asked how the meters would work, as people leave for the winter and turn off their heat. Mr. Baldwin stated the meters would be fine as the water would be drained out of them for the winter. Bob Taylor asked if there could be an option for not paying any general disconnect fee, rather pay for a connect fee. Mr. Treado stated that could be an option, should the Board chose to do it that way. Pat Anderegg asked about the people turning on their water illegally. Mr. Treado explained that should be taken care of by the current rate structure, and the fact that meters will monitor usage. Carl Bryzek asked if the meters need heat for use. Mr. Treado explained that the meter pits are designed for our weather. Mr. Bryzek demanded the questions on list be answered. Mr. Treado explained he would answer all Mr. Bryzek's questions in writing. Supervisor Minelli asked Mr. Treado if anything was destroyed by the construction would be fixed by the contractor. Mr. Treado stated things torn up would be put back together. Mr. Bryzek asked if the bond had been voted on. Mr. Treado explained the legality of the project. Mike Jakubowski stated he had been working with UPEA Representative Matt Treado to come up with different rate structures. He believes if you don't use the service, you should not have to pay for the service. He further explained the need for the new systems. He believes the rate structure should change, but it will not happen before the end of October. Mr. Treado reiterated that the USDA requires a rate structure be in place that will sustain the loan. The rate structure could change as expenses are solidified. Mike Jakubowski suggested going through October, then reanalyze the rates. A resident asked where the meters will be placed. Some may go into the houses. Dale Jacobson, Laundromat owner, asked what a fair rate was. His rate went up \$40 per month, which he believes is unfair. He questioned how someone came up with his water usage. Mr. Treado stated all rates went up 13%. Supervisor Minelli requested that the businesses get their meters first so their usage can be evaluated first. Mike Jakubowski suggested giving refunds. Mr. Treado stated the Board would have to make that decision. Mr. Baldwin explained that if refunds were given it would mean that people that used more, would need to be billed more. A resident asked why the rates have to go up before the new system is installed. Mr. Treado explained the USDA requires rates are in place to sustain the system prior to loan approval. Dale Jacobson asked how long the roads would be torn up, as his business will suffer. Mr. Treado explained it would probably take all summer, but they would probably be doing sections, therefore there would be as little effect as possible. Pat Anderegg questioned the effect on lake levels.

Mr. Treado referenced a Well Study that was performed recently, which suggests there is plenty of water and the lakes located near our water system will not be effected. David Butterfield asked if there will be an assessment for the water lines from the main to the homes. Mr. Treado said the lines will have to be pressure tested. He also stated that Rural Development has grants ranging from 100% to 25%, depending on eligibility. Georgia Aho commented that if the past due bills go on our taxes, we could lose our houses. Aaron Jacobs asked if a resident could permanently disconnect from water and put in their own well. Mr. Treado is unsure of that answer, so he will research.

Supervisor Minelli thanked everyone for coming. He stated that the Board has listened to all the situations and suggestions. There will not be any changes before the loan closing. If anyone has any questions, please call. He then reminded the residents to use the sign-up sheets that Mr. Treado placed throughout the room, so Mr. Treado can assess their specific situations. Supervisor Minelli then asked Mr. Treado to check with Oberstar to make sure that the Commercial residents get meters first. Trustee Adams would like to know who is never using water and if there will be a disconnect or reconnect fee established.

Public Comment (7.): Carl Bryzek would like the answers to his questions sent to all 850 water users. He would also like rates checked in other towns. He believes the lines are good and should not be replaced. David Butterfield asked if the bills could show vacant rates. Sue Koski asked if the project would correct the flooding problem at her sister-in-law's house. Superintendent Jancsi stated that problem was with the storm water, therefore would not be corrected by this project. Another resident asked if low income residents could be subsidized for their water bills so they don't lose their homes due to unpaid taxes. Supervisor Minelli stated they should take their taxes to the Assessor. He can provide lower taxes for qualified people. A resident asked if the quality of our water would increase. UPEA Representative Carr Baldwin stated that Forsyth Township is one of the best in the county. He further explained that the reasons for the bad test was chloroform and explained it came from ground water that may have entered the system. It did not mean the water was bad, but there could possibly be a potential for a health hazard. Superintendent Jancsi stated we had not had a bad sample in two years. Mike Jakubowski thanked the Board and explained he had been on both sides of this table. He would like the rate structure reconfigured and thought the Board would probably do that, but not before the loan closing. If anyone had any questions they could contact him. He also reminded the residents that this had started when Evelyn was in office. If something had been done then, this would all be over.

Supervisor Minelli thanked the Engineers and Mike Jakubowski for the time they have put in on this project, and their comments.

Supervisor Minelli called for a short break at 9:02 pm.

Supervisor Minelli called the meeting back to order at 9:05 pm.

ACTION ITEM:

Closed Session for Contract Negotiations (9.): At 9:05 pm, motion by Roberts, supported by Bodenus, to approve going into closed session for USW contract Negotiations. Roll call: Clerk Nordeen – aye, Treasurer Roberts – aye, Trustee Adams – aye, Trustee Bodenus – aye, Supervisor Minelli – aye. Motion carried.

At 9:12 pm, motion by Bodenus, supported by Adams, to come out of closed session. Roll call: Supervisor Minelli – aye, Clerk Nordeen – aye, Treasurer Roberts – aye, Trustee Adams – aye, Trustee Bodenus – aye. Motion carried.

Board Comment: None

Meeting was adjourned by Supervisor Minelli at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Filizetti
Clerk/Secretary

Jane Nordeen
Forsyth Township Clerk