

GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Meeting
January 21, 2025

MINUTES

Call to Order

Supervisor Spicher called the regular meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Board to order at 6:30 pm at the Township Hall.

Invocation

Supervisor Spicher led the invocation for the Board and the members of the public.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum for the transaction of business: Kevin Spicher, Janene Deaton, Candie Hovarter, Robin Hunt, Bill Reiber, Rick Soucy, and Todd Walker.

Also present was Township Manager Kelly VanMarter and seven people in the audience.

Call to the Public

The call to the public was opened at 6:31 pm with no response.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Mr. Walker asked to have Item #2 moved to the Regular Agenda.

Moved by Walker, supported by Hunt, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended **The motion carried unanimously.**

1. Payment of Bills: January 21, 2025

2. ~~Request to approve the January 6, 2025 regular meeting minutes. (moved to Regular Agenda)~~

Approval of Regular Agenda:

Moved by Deaton, supported by Hovarter, to approve the Regular Agenda as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Request to approve the January 6, 2025 regular meeting minutes. (Moved from the Consent Agenda)

Mr. Walker noted changes to be made.

Moved by Walker, supported by Hovarter, to approve the January 6, 2025 regular meeting minutes as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- 3. Consideration of a recommendation for approval and adoption of proposed Ordinance Number Z-25-02 regarding zoning map amendments involving 9.76 acres of land located at 410 S. Hughes Road (parcel 4711-03-300-011) to rezone from Public Recreation Facilities (PRF) to Suburban Residential (SR).**
- a. Disposition of Rezoning Ordinance Z-25-02 (roll call)**
 - b. Disposition of Environmental Impact Assessment (dated 10/22/24)**

Mr. Brent LaVanway of Boss Engineering and Ms. Jill Bianco, the property owner, were present. Mr. LaVanway reviewed the request and provided the details of the property.

Supervisor Spicher asked how much of the property is buildable. Mr. LaVanway stated approximately three acres are buildable.

Ms. Deaton asked if the applicant intends to put only one home or split the property and build more houses. Ms. Bianco stated she will only be building one home. Ms. Deaton asked if the new septic system is appropriate for the new home. Ms. Bianco stated she told them how big the home is, and they dug the septic based on that. Mr. LaVanway stated there is no municipal sewer in the area.

Ms. Hunt stated that both the Township Planning Commission and the Livingston County Planning Commission recommended approval.

Commissioner Reiber asked if Ms. Bianco will be living in the home and she answered, "yes".

Ms. VanMarter stated that the plans show a 50-foot front yard setback from the water, but this zoning requires a 100-foot setback. That is being met; however, she would like the plan revised so it is correct in the file. There is a stream along the property that is also a regulated wetland so she would like that noted on the plans. Additionally, Item B of the Environmental Impact Assessment states there is a 9.76 area of wetland. That is not correct. Mr. LaVanway agreed to make all those changes.

Ms. Deaton asked if the new home will be built in the same location as the existing one. Ms. Bianco said yes, but it will be a bit bigger.

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hunt, to approve and adopt Ordinance No. Z -25-02 to rezone parcel 4711-03-300-011 from Public Recreation Facilities (PRF) to Suburban Residential (SR).

The proposed amendment to the zoning map is consistent with Section 22.04 of the Township Zoning Ordinance and the request is consistent with Township's future land uses map, goals of the Township, and will not have a negative impact on the citizens of the Township.

The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote (Walker - yes; Reiber - yes; Hunt - yes; Deaton yes; Soucy - yes; Hovarter - yes; Spicher - yes)

Moved by Soucy, supported by Hunt, to approve the Environmental Impact Assessment dated October 22, 2024 to rezone 410 S. Hughes Road, parcel 4711-03- 300-011 from Public Recreation Facilities (PRF) to Suburban Residential (SR), with the following condition:

- Item B of the Environmental Impact Assessment shall be revised to state the correct area of wetland on the site.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 4. Request for approval to renew the Cropland Agreement for 2025 with Cathy and Tim Esper to maintain the historical agricultural use of 50.5 acres of fields located on parcel 4711-23- 100-005 with revenue to be placed in Parks and Recreation Fund line item #208-000-434- 001.**

Ms. VanMarter reviewed the agreement that the Township has with Cathy and Tim Esper. They have been farming this land for many years so when the Township purchased it, they requested to continue to farm it. Last year, the Township yielded \$2,777.50 in revenue from the farming activities here.

Mr. Soucy questioned if \$50 per acre is a fair price. Supervisor Spicher stated that it is. Mr. Reiber likes that it will continue to be an agricultural use.

Moved by Walker, supported by Hunt, to approve the Cropland Agreement for 2025 with Cathy and Tim Esper to maintain the historical agricultural use of 50.5 acres of fields located on parcel 4711-23-100-005 with revenue to be placed in Parks and Recreation Fund line item #208-000-434-001. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- 5. Consideration of a request to authorize the Township Supervisor to execute a Letter of Engagement with Foster Swift to act as special counsel in regard to the validity of the Innovation Park Planned Unit Development Agreement and the S. Latson Road area.**

Ms. VanMarter stated Staff is recommending Foster Swift as the counsel in regard to the validity of the Innovation Park Planned Unit Development Agreement and the S. Latson Road area.

Mr. Soucy asked if there is a conflict of interest with the attorney. Ms. VanMarter stated they are required to determine there is no conflict of interest prior to them submitting a letter of intent, which they have done.

Mr. Reiber asked if they provided an estimate of how much this will cost. Is the Township going to place a maximum cost on the approval? Supervisor Spicher stated there is no estimate of cost and there is no maximum being placed on the approval.

Moved by Reiber, supported by Hovarter, to authorize the Township Supervisor to execute a Letter of Engagement with Foster Swift to act as special counsel in regard to the validity of the Innovation Park Planned Unit Development Agreement and the S. Latson Road area. **The motion carried unanimously.**

6. Request for approval to direct Township Staff to generate a vacancy report of businesses and land for parcels along Grand River Avenue as requested by Trustee Reiber.

Mr. Reiber feels this information is important to Genoa Township. There is a lot of vacant land and vacant storefronts along Grand River. He is requesting a list of the vacant buildings or tenant spaces. He would like it to include addresses, owners, lease month, and sale amounts.

Ms. VanMarter stated this is an important topic and it should continue to be discussed. When the 2023 Master Plan was updated, there was a lot of discussion regarding the Grand River corridor. The Master Plan addresses redevelopment. She noted that the Grand River Plaza is being redeveloped with a large, big box store. This will spur redevelopment in that plaza. There are two other locations in the Township where there is interest for redevelopment of vacant buildings.

She reached out to the Livingston County Economic Development Council, and they provided her with a report. It is 45 pages long, so she did not put it in the packet. She showed a map of the vacant properties. There is also a table that shows there is 3.5 percent vacant space in the Township. If there are additional details that are being requested, she would like the economic development group do it instead of staff taking a lot of time on it. She is confident that there is a market correction being made on its own.

Supervisor Spicher stated The Economic Development Council is working on a staffing issue. Township Staff has a lot of work to do so he would like to see the County handle this project instead of having it done by Staff. This is what they do. Ms. VanMarter stated the LCEDG has access to a lot more data than Township Staff would have. Mr. Reiber wants this to be done quickly.

Ms. Deaton stated there is a website for commercial real estate that is available to the public. It is called www.loopnet.com and it can generate reports.

Moved by Reiber, supported by Hunt, to direct Staff to coordinate with the Livingston County Economic Development Council to refine the report that has been provided and postpone this item until the March 17, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

7. Request for approval of a proposal to return existing copier/printer equipment in accordance with current lease and purchase new copiers/printers from General Fund, General Government, Equipment/Software/Software Maintenance Fund #101-261-751-000.

Supervisor Spicher spoke with Staff and asked them of their requirements for a copier and printer. He provided that information to three vendors and they submitted proposals. It has been narrowed down to Sharp and Toshiba. The reps for both companies are Genoa Township residents. They investigated another lease, but it was determined that a purchase was a more economically sound decision.

Ms. Deaton asked if there were warranties. Mr. Matthew Day, who owns Image Tech, was present and asked to speak. He stated there is a standard manufacturer's warranty for 30 days for defective parts, including labor. She noted that the other quote talks about an on-demand ballot printing printer. The Clerk's department will not be printing any ballots. They print voter registration cards, which are the size of a postcard.

Ms. Hunt would recommend the Toshiba quote. It is higher but based on her discussions with Staff they would prefer the faster printer. Mr. Soucy agrees with Ms. Hunt. He would like the high-speed printer and have a locked in rate, instead of the rate based on previous usage as proposed by Image Tech. Mr. Day reviewed his bid vs. the bid for the Toshiba quote and stated he will save the Township money. He reviewed his warranty information, and he is local so he will be able to respond to requests quickly. There are three printers where they will simply take over the service of them but not replace them. Fixed costs would be wasted based on the Township's historical usage. Ms. Hunt stated the Township does mailings of over 8,000 pieces multiple times per year. Supervisor Spicher noted that Staff was in favor of the faster printer.

Mr. Reiber asked if the high cost of \$5,000 for the faster printer is worth it because the large print projects are only done a few times a year.

Ms. Hunt stated there was a lot of information in the packet for this item in the packet and it is not comparing apples to apples. Based on her discussion with Adam and Staff, she is recommending Toshiba. Adam was in favor of them because they will be returning all our existing equipment and will not be charged penalties, and he is more comfortable with the machines being recommended by Toshiba. The one is fast, holds more paper, and they are capable of maintaining the large-scale plotter. Mr. Day stated they do service those types of printers, but he did not put it in the quote. He reiterated that with the Toshiba quote, the Township will be spending \$160 per month for printing and copying that is not going to be used.

Mr. Reiber stated that since the plotter operates fine now, he would recommend not having this on the contract and have it repaired as needed. He would recommend staying with the Sharp

products and the machine that makes 55 copies per minute. He likes the benefit of not paying the ongoing maintenance fee for the plotter.

Ms. Deaton asked Mr. Day if he could provide her with a price to replace the three printers that were not originally planned to be replaced. This would be able to determine the total cost comparing Toshiba and Sharp. She cannot support any decision at this time. She would support new printers, but would like to compare apples to apples to get a fair and equal estimate

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to return existing copier/printer equipment in accordance with current lease and purchase new copiers/printers from General Fund, General Government, Equipment/Software/Software Maintenance Fund #101-261-751-000. accept the quote from Toshiba for \$41,118.85. **The motion carried with a roll call (Walker - yes; Reiber - no; Hunt - yes; Deaton - no; Soucy - yes; Hovarter - no; Spicher - yes)**

8. Consideration of approval to authorize a per diem allowance for elected and appointed official participation in the Livingston County Citizen Planner Program offered March 6th through April 17th, 2025.

Ms. VanMarter stated this is an educational opportunity coming to Livingston County. It is an excellent training program, and she recommends that the Trustees attend. The Township Board must authorize all per diem allowances for multi-day events.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Soucy, to approve and authorize payment of a per diem allowance for elected and appointed official participation in the Livingston County Citizen Planner Program offered March 6 through April 17, 2025. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Items for Discussion:

9. Review of second draft budget for the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year.

Ms. VanMarter provided a revised draft budget, noting the new fiscal year starts April 1. There will be a public hearing and then adoption of the budget by the Township Board.

Mr. Soucy noted the cable franchise fee is decreasing and that is because people are moving away from cable television and towards streaming.

Ms. Deaton stated that the election reimbursement item shows now funding. There is no election scheduled this year, but if there is one, then the budget would just be amended to have that put in that line item. She added that the Township is being reimbursed \$5,820 by the County for the November 2024 early voting.

Mr. Soucy asked for clarification on the \$8,000 that is budgeted in the "Wellness" line item. Ms. VanMarter advised that the Township gives incentives to employees for wellness activities and goals. If they meet those goals, bonuses are given to employees.

Ms. VanMarter stated that the \$50,000 in the Brighton Road Cleanup items is the land that was purchased from the DNR and it needs to be cleaned up.

Supervisor Spicher will be meeting with Denise to go through the budget so he can learn what each of the budget items are for. If other Trustees would like to meet with her, please let him know.

Mr. Reiber asked about the \$50,000 for the repaving of the soccer lot that is in both this year and next year's budget. Ms. VanMarter stated it is the upper lot behind the sled hill. It needs repaving. It was intended to be done this year but was not, so it will be zeroed out for 24/25 and add it to the 25/26 Fiscal Year Budget.

Ms. Hovarter asked what the Path and Park Maintenance funds are used for. Ms. VanMarter stated that is to maintain all the park and path facilities, which include the Township Hall and non-vehicular pathways that have been built along Grand River, Latson, Bauer, and Brighton Road.

Mr. Rieber asked if there was a line item for training. Ms. VanMarter stated there is one in each department. It has been increased for next year due to new officials needing training.

10. Update regarding "My Genoa App" to improve community outreach.

Mr. Walker asked the Board if they would like to pursue this now, noting the cost is \$5,400 per year, or put it on hold and then do further investigation if the need arises. Supervisor Spicher is recommending not pursuing the app at this time. Mr. Soucy agrees. Mr. Walker recommended the Trustees download either the MyBrighton or MyHowell app to see if it is something that would be useful for the Township. It could be useful for the upcoming road projects. Updates can be given in real time. All the Board Members agreed to postpone pursuing this at this time.

11. Discussion regarding amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance as requested by Trustee Soucy.

Mr. Soucy stated that certain parcels of land are designated as having two front yards when they access their homes from the road in the front and then there is another road behind them. They do not have the same privilege and opportunity of a backyard as other residents, such as the ability to install a fence, a pool, etc. He would like the two-front yard designation to be changed or have the ZBA be lenient on these types of requests. Ms. Hunt would suggest changing the ordinance. Ms. VanMarter stated the main reason to have two front yards has to do with the aesthetics of the community. If the backyard is allowed to be on a roadway, what is

seen driving down the road changes. It is written to protect property values and the aesthetics of the Township. The Zoning Board of Appeals can look at it on a case-by-case basis. The reasons for granting a variance are set by State Law. She noted that there are times when the ZBA has been consistently approving variances for the same types of requests, then the ordinance is amended.

She does think it would be worthwhile to see how other communities address this issue and then possibly adjust the ordinance but ensure that what is being allowed is what the Township wants to be seen from the roadway.

12. Discussion regarding Per Diem Policy.

Ms. VanMarter reviewed her proposed changes to this policy and requested feedback from the Board. This only applies to the Trustees, and not the Treasurer, Clerk, or Supervisor.

Ms. Deaton supports Ms. VanMarter looking into this further. Ms. Hunt agrees. She would like to have something in place that the per diem is based on the length of the meeting. Mr. Soucy agrees. He would like clarification when someone has two meetings in one day. Mr. Walker stated it should be clear that the per diem will be paid if the official is approved to attend the meeting. Ms. VanMarter stated she would also like to discuss the situation where an alternate that is on a board or commission would like to attend a conference when a permanent member is already attending. Supervisor Spicher advised the Trustees to determine items they would like addressed and submit them to him. Then the policy can be amended and brought back to the Board.

Board Comments

Mr. Soucy attended SEMCOG University in Detroit. There were items discussed that he thought were interesting. Specifically, TAP Grants no longer require a match and they have separated grants by those from SEMCOG and those from MDOT.

Mr. Soucy stated MTA Township Focus magazine has an annual educational conference in Grand Rapids. He thinks representation from the Township would be beneficial. Ms. VanMater stated the Township has historically sent individuals to this conference. She advised the Trustees to look at what is available and if they would like to attend.

Adjournment

Moved by Walker, supported by Deaton, to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Genoa Charter Township Board Meeting
January 21, 2025
Unapproved Minutes

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas
Recording Secretary

Approved: Janene Deaton, Clerk
Genoa Charter Township

Kevin Spicher, Supervisor
Genoa Charter Township

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