

Holly Township
Board of Trustees - Special Meeting
Minutes of February 4, 2009

Call to Order: Supervisor Jesse Lambert called the February 4, 2009 special meeting of the Holly Township Board of Trustees to order at or about 6:00 p.m. at the Holly Township Hall, 102 Civic Drive, Holly, Michigan, 48442.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Members Present:

Supervisor Jesse Lambert
Clerk Karin Winchester
Treasurer Mark Freeman
Trustee Steve Ruth
Trustee Janet Leslie

Others Present:

Peter Clemens, Holly Village Manager
Mark Diaz
Diane Ducat
Mike Gould
Larry Lilly

1. Agenda Approval
 - **Trustee Janet Leslie moved to amend the agenda, adding Holly Township slogan and moving the Board of Review Appointment following Agenda Approval. Clerk Karin Winchester supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**
2. Board of Review Appointment

Supervisor Jesse Lambert stated there were four applications for the Board of Review position. He conducted phone interviews and recommends Diane Ducat. She has a strong real estate background and good interpersonal skills. He believes the Township would greatly appreciate having her knowledge, experience and interpersonal skills.

- **Clerk Karin Winchester moved to appoint Ms. Diane Ducat to the Holly Township Board of Review for this term. Trustee Janet Leslie supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**

The Board of Trustees welcomed Ms. Diane Ducat.

3. Holly Township slogan

Supervisor Lambert noted Board members had a slogan sheet in their packets. He stated a recurring theme in the slogans submitted had something to do with up north or outdoors and the sparseness of our environment.

“Up North in Oakland County” was chosen as the Holly Township slogan by a 3/2 vote.

- **Treasurer Mark Freeman moved to make “Up North in Oakland County” the new Holly Township official slogan. Trustee Janet Leslie supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**

4. Town Hall Meeting
5. Police Services

Supervisor Lambert asked for Board input regarding town hall meeting procedures which would give the meeting structure so the Board can come away with good information. He noted the meeting would follow normal meeting

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procedures and minutes will be taken. He suggested putting Public Comment up front, then a Board decision following input from residents.

Clerk Karin Winchester noted the Board would receive public input regarding things residents would like the Board to do or not do, what they're happy with, what they're not happy with. It's not necessarily a Board meeting.

Trustee Janet Leslie stated the Board would be taking in so much information that it may look hasty if the Board made decisions at the town hall meeting. The Board will gather information and analyze how many people were present to speak on certain issues.

Treasurer Mark Freeman noted it would take time to process the minutes following the town hall meeting. Further steps can be taken at the March Board meeting.

Supervisor Lambert noted the Board packet contains a list of tasks Board members can volunteer for. Promoting the event is part of what will make it successful. He can create the flyers and put them up at township businesses.

Trustee Leslie noted she could help put flyers up if the Board could move quickly enough to do it this weekend.

Trustee Steve Ruth noted he could help visit businesses and ask them to display flyers regarding the town hall meeting.

Supervisor Lambert stated Friday night he will be doing a mass e-mailing which will contain the flyer, along with other useful information.

Trustee Leslie indicated it would be useful to have the survey card in hand at the town hall meeting to explain to residents they will be receiving it in the mail, to look for it and what to do with it.

Supervisor Lambert stated he would be speaking with Joe Mischler regarding resources the Township can use at the high school, including use of microphones for residents who wish to speak. The number of volunteers the Township has will dictate what can be done. He believes a handful of volunteers would be needed to pass out programs, to take care of lists floating around at the meeting and possibly the survey if it is at the meeting, as well.

Trustee Ruth indicated a statement should be made at the opening of the meeting as a preface as to why we're gathered here, that the Township wants residents' input regarding whether they think we have adequate police services. We could briefly explain what we know about crime in the area, how it's changed or hasn't changed. We should also make sure it's understood that adding significant services will cost money.

Treasurer Freeman noted the meeting's format would be similar to a public hearing. A Q & A meeting format would get bogged down and the length of the meeting should be limited.

Board members agreed based on past experience that two hours would give residents time to comment.

Supervisor Lambert noted there could be information tables containing cost estimates for police services.

Clerk Winchester noted the Township hasn't identified there is a need for additional police services.

Trustee Leslie stated when your only public safety official in the Township comes to you and says there is a need, we have a pretty strong voice saying there is a need.

Clerk Winchester indicated an issue has been brought to the Township and the Township is researching the issue.

Treasurer Freeman questioned whether Board members believed there was a crime problem in Holly Township.

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Trustee Ruth indicated the police services the Township has are fine. He understands certain people in the township don't believe there is enough coverage.

Treasurer Freeman and Clerk Winchester indicated that there has been no evidence showing there is a crime problem in the township.

Trustee Leslie indicated if there is one crime, that's a problem. She doesn't believe there is a crime wave. Her issue is not how much crime the township has, but how prepared we are to respond to it.

Treasurer Freeman questioned if you believe there is a crime problem in the township, is it an emergency?

Trustee Leslie answered it was an emergency. Any time a life could be at risk, that's an emergency.

Supervisor Lambert questioned whether it was enough of an emergency that the Township needed to act fast and put their feet before their brain. He doesn't believe it is. There is time to gather information. There are people who say they need it. Many people he has spoken to say they may not need it.

Trustee Ruth noted the Township has very fast response time for EMS where a police response is not needed.

Treasurer Freeman noted the Board is not even in a consensus as to whether it's an emergency situation, whether we have a crime problem or whether we have a police response problem.

Supervisor Lambert stated residents at the town hall meeting can comment regarding the need for police services and what part of the community they're from. There are areas of the community that have said they're interested in more police services. One of the Board's courses of action has been to set a town hall meeting.

Trustee Leslie stated residents should be advised they can also mail or e-mail in their comments.

Trustee Ruth indicated if he were in the audience, there are three questions he would ask: Why do you think we need additional police services, what would adding those services specifically provide and how much would it cost.

Treasurer Freeman noted he believes each Board member would give a different answer to Trustee Ruth's questions based on the response to Treasurer Freeman's questions. No Board member will be able to speak on behalf of the Board as a whole. There is no consensus right now regarding this issue.

Trustee Leslie noted residents who are not aware of our meetings, who haven't been able to attend will have an opportunity to express their opinions.

Mr. Mike Gould stated the role of the Board should be to gather information and publish the town hall meeting so people will come. He personally doesn't believe there's a crime wave. Based on the tape heard at the last meeting, you have a situation where EMS are not coming in because they're in danger and the closest police response is coming from someplace further away. That's a problem.

It behooves you to at least make a larger volume of information that you've collected from the state police and the village available to the community. You cannot postulate the question are you concerned unless people know what to be concerned about. If you were to tell people, for example, in the last 12 months there was only one violent crime and only half a dozen break-ins, that wouldn't do much to raise anyone's ire. If you tell them that the average response time is nine or ten minutes, people start thinking how long it takes them to call 9-1-1. They may find that their perspective, irrespective of whether anyone was hurt or killed, is very much a concern.

If you don't have information so people understand why they're taking their time to come to the meeting and you're not going to respond to any questions from the floor, you're going to have some very upset people. You

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may not have all the answers, but not to answer any questions is going to create far more problems than you'll solve because this is a concern that will only get worse as the economy continues to break down.

Clerk Winchester noted the town hall meeting may have been scheduled too soon. We need to gather information on what response times are. We haven't been able to analyze that information. She suggested pulling together the factual information Chief Lintz provided and analyzing it. Then the Board can review how to solve the problem.

Supervisor Lambert stated the statistics he had at the last meeting were what he had gotten over a couple days.

The Board reached a consensus the Michigan State Police, Oakland County Sheriff's Department and the Village of Holly Police Department will also be invited to the town hall meeting.

Mr. Mark Diaz stated it makes total sense to find out whether it's the entire township or certain districts who want this particular service. He believes the majority of residents will say, sure, we want more police protection; what's it going to cost me? It will be a question from everyone at the meeting. He understands from the previous Board meeting the Village of Holly wants to know what the Township wants as far as police protection and the Township wants to know what the Village and other police agencies have to offer. He agrees that maybe the town hall meeting has been set too soon and more time is needed to collect all the data necessary to give the answers at the meeting. It should be taken into consideration before there is a room full of 500 people asking how much it's going to cost.

Clerk Winchester suggested mailing the survey out with the tax bills in July, then have the town hall meeting. A second tax bill goes out somewhere around November 1st where you can do follow-up with residents, whether it be a survey or a newsletter, asking for public input to a Township e-mail address or asking residents to provide information and not require them to physically come out.

Trustee Leslie stated the Board has 17 days to get information. It's ridiculous you can't get information from the Michigan State Police or the Village of Holly within 24 hours. She suggested asking all police agencies involved what the cost would be for the full amount of coverage for the full township, 24/7. Then we can determine the options for paying for it, be it millage, special assessment or pay per parcel.

Clerk Winchester noted this is a Board effort. Survey questions have to be agreed upon and a lot of other preparation needs to happen before a town hall meeting.

Trustee Leslie stated she would be happy to make phone calls and put pressure on people the Township needs information from. She has run out of patience personally and she can see that residents have run out of patience. If anyone wants to continue to tell the Township no, they're not part of the equation.

Mr. Gould noted other than setting a date, nothing else has happened. The meeting could be postponed until all the material is gathered to present to residents.

Clerk Winchester stated the election isn't until 2010 which gives the board plenty of time to collect the data they need. She would not consider a special election by any means.

Supervisor Lambert stated if a great number of people say, yes, we need service, he would say schedule a special election in a month or two. Gather as much information as you can, tell the press and inform the people. Or this could just be one of those hot button issues where it's here this month, then gone tomorrow.

Clerk Winchester stated she believes the Board is rushing this and it can cause more damage to public perception if we indicate we have a problem that we may not really have.

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Treasurer Freeman indicated that's why he wanted to find out from the Board if there was a consensus this was an emergency situation. He personally doesn't feel it is an emergency situation. He feels no need for the Board to rush into this. He is not diminishing the seriousness of the issue to an individual that has experienced a problem. Their problem is very real. Obviously the Board cannot be all things to all people at all times. We represent all the people of the township. We don't know what the majority of the voters in the township think yet on this issue.

Clerk Winchester noted if more residents felt this was an issue, they would have been calling and coming to Board meetings many more times and there would be a full house at this point. Residents know when the meetings are.

Trustee Leslie questioned whether Clerk Karin Winchester had ever been to the oval office and questioned if she cared what the president does. You cannot depend on people showing up to where you do your job and think they don't care what happens here.

Clerk Winchester clarified that she believed if residents felt they needed more services, they would speak up and they haven't.

Trustee Leslie stated she's been hearing it for four years from neighbors, residents and people she speaks to throughout the township.

Clerk Winchester agreed in the neighborhood Trustee Leslie resides there is a want for additional police services. Those residents in those areas have a mechanism for them to create their special assessment district.

Trustee Leslie noted residents in her neighborhood have a mechanism for talking to each other because of the proximity of their homes. She worries about people in the outer township, people who have businesses in the township who are isolated from one another and don't have the opportunity to chat about this in their backyard. That's why there is going to be a town hall meeting.

Clerk Winchester indicated the Township should have the opportunity to make contact with every single tax payer with an invitation to the town hall meeting and follow up in another month, maybe two at the max in the second tax bill. That way we're not spending tax payer's money for surveys. They know when to come to the meeting and the Board will be prepared.

Mr. Diaz agreed that notice should go out to the entire township. If the majority of the township wants the services, the township could barter for a better deal. By only taking into account "Pulte Town" and saying let's just call it a special assessment district, they're going to get the highest price for police services. It may be 30 percent of the township desire police services. In the event it comes to a vote at a later date, 2010, they're going to be outvoted. Right now the only way this issue should be handled is as an entire vote within the entire township.

Clerk Winchester noted if a town hall meeting invitation was sent out in a newsletter to all township residents with information the township has regarding police services, residents would have an opportunity to mull it over and see if they have interest in coming out and making comment.

Supervisor Lambert stated the Board will over the next 17 days gather every amount of data we can so information will be available.

Mr. Diaz stated as the weather warms there will be problems that he believes with proper patrols could be thwarted. He would hate to see problems escalate this year because this Board cannot work together to get this resolved.

Supervisor Lambert indicated in 17 days the Township can collect information from the Village of Holly, Oakland County Sheriff's Department and the few statistics still missing from the Michigan State Police, get the information

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into an easily digestible state, and get it to the residents for the meeting. It will follow the format previously discussed, keeping questions limited. Getting information out there will limit the amount of questions residents will need to ask. A time limit will be set to give comments. Standard note taking procedures will be followed. It will be a public hearing format. It needs to be done.

Treasurer Freeman and Clerk Winchester both noted the information to be disseminated to residents would need to be approved by the next scheduled Board of Trustees meeting.

Treasurer Freeman noted unless a majority of the Board votes to release it at that time, the information cannot be released. This is an opportunity for the public to attend a town hall meeting and express their opinions so the Board can gather information and process it, then offer options towards taking action.

Trustee Ruth indicated response time is a key issue. It's not a blanket average response time that's important, it's a response time for emergencies that also require police response. If you had a break-in, whether police arrive in five minutes or an hour doesn't matter. We don't want to falsely alarm residents because a cat is up a tree.

Adjournment: Supervisor Jesse Lambert, hearing no other business, adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Zo Turner, Recording Secretary
Holly Township

Karin Winchester, CMC
Holly Township Clerk