

Holly Township
Board of Trustees – Special Meeting
Minutes of March 31, 2009

Call to Order: Supervisor Jesse Lambert called the March 31, 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.

Roll Call:

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Peter Clemens, Holly Village President
Marsha Powers, Holly Village Manager
Chief Rollie Gackstetter, Holly Village
Larry Lilly

1. Agenda Approval

- **Clerk Karin Winchester moved to approve the agenda, as submitted. Trustee Steve Ruth supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**

2. Mission Statement

Supervisor Jesse Lambert indicated Board members and residents made contributions regarding what they would like to see in a Holly Township Mission Statement. He has put those contributions together in a proposed Mission Statement.

Trustee Janet Leslie questioned whether the “we” at the beginning of the proposed Mission Statement refers to Holly Township or the Holly Township Board of Trustees. She suggested beginning the paragraph with “Holly Township is committed to”. She noted other terms such as “balanced neighborhood” and “civic” should be further defined. Rural refers to a lot of the township but doesn’t refer to all of it. There are many neighborhoods in the township, as well as a village. This seems to refer to retaining the character that exists within the township. She offered the following proposed Mission Statement, which includes amendments by Board members following Board discussion:

“Holly Township is committed to preserving and enhancing a safe community of caring and involved residents that are proud to call Holly Township home. We will do so by providing vision and leadership which will allow for managed growth that respects our Township’s natural resources and cultural history. We will endeavor to deliver our services cost effectively, while embracing the highest standards of integrity and accountability to those we serve.”

- **Supervisor Jesse Lambert moved to approve the Mission Statement for Holly Township, as amended. Clerk Karin Winchester supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**

3. Newsletter

Supervisor Lambert indicated he would like to send out a newsletter with the tax bill this July to let residents know of events going on and other information to help educate them on how things work within the township. It could be anything from what a Planning Commissioner does to the Board of Review process. He has included a sample newsletter in the Board packet.

Trustee Steve Ruth noted there are many things in the newsletter that may raise questions. It appears to be editorial comment.

Trustee Leslie noted the intent to educate residents regarding taxes and what the review process is for is a good idea. The information in the proposed newsletter isn't clear.

Clerk Karin Winchester indicated she wouldn't approve the newsletter. It should be in a format that contains blocks of information such as hours of tax collection, office hours and things such as dog license information that is factual only.

Treasurer Mark Freeman agreed with Clerk Winchester's comment, noting residents' tax statements have mills broken down on them already. Oakland County sent out assessments in February and there was a brochure included in each one. In the brochure was a simple, but detailed explanation of terminology and also a formula of how to compute your taxes.

Board members continued to discuss what they would like to see in a newsletter, which included basic information such as office hours, contact information, deadline dates, recycling information, burning permits, dog licenses, Clean-Up Day and an easy table for millage rates. Information pertinent to the Village could also be included.

Ms. Marsha Powers indicated Holly Village sends out a newsletter already.

Clerk Winchester and Treasurer Freeman noted it would be good to see what Holly Village sends out to ensure there are no statements in either newsletter that conflict with each other.

Treasurer Freeman stated he would prefer the format of the newsletter to be just an informational fact sheet, and not call it a newsletter. Newsletter connotes we're sending information that's news. A fact sheet would supply actual facts regarding the operation of the township. It will have to be reviewed as a Board and approved.

Supervisor Lambert indicated a rough draft of the fact sheet would be at the next Board meeting on the 21st of April.

- **Clerk Karin Winchester moved to postpone the newsletter until the next Board meeting. Trustee Steve Ruth supported the motion. A voice vote was taken; all those present voted yes; the motion carried.**

4. Survey

Treasurer Freeman noted the material in the board packet is titled public opinion survey and is exclusively about police services.

Supervisor Lambert indicated other general questions could be included to determine residents' general perception of how Holly Township operates. If the survey is too general, vague results would be obtained. Referring to a specific area will give a good picture of a certain aspect. Then in November we can pick another one. We could send out a North Oakland County Fire Authority (N.O.C.F.A.) survey, a library survey or Parks and Recreation and get different pictures until a mosaic is built.

Trustee Leslie indicated her understanding is there is a problem to be solved, an issue before the Board. The purpose of the survey is to gather information regarding the issue. There is no reason to add in other questions unrelated to the problem at hand. There are a number of residents who are concerned about police response times. Chief Lintz from N.O.C.F.A. has concerns about police response times.

Treasurer Freeman noted the problem was primarily identified as a radio communication problem between the various agencies.

Trustee Leslie noted she had discussion with Chief Lintz from N.O.C.F.A. regarding what was going on with the communication systems. Chief Lintz indicated it will not be fixed any time soon. Oakland County dispatch, Michigan State Police dispatch and N.O.C.F.A. are on different radio systems. The question is whether there are only certain areas interested in additional police services because those have been the most vocal residents, or whether the issue is township wide. If we send out a survey and ask what expectations are for police services, we can understand whether we are meeting expectations or whether the Board needs to move forward on the issue.

Supervisor Lambert indicated the survey would give the Board information regarding what interest the residents of the township have regarding police protection. If it's menial and the data doesn't point to a need for additional police protection, the Board will learn that.

Clerk Winchester noted information was gathered at the Town Hall Meeting regarding police services.

Supervisor Lambert indicated there were approximately 100 people there, which was 1 percent of the population. Even if everybody would have said yes at that meeting, he would still want to send a survey out.

Treasurer Freeman stated Holly Township has police services provided by the Michigan State Police. There are many, many townships in Michigan who have state police services and Holly Township is not unique in that regard. There are important questions that have to be answered before pursuing a survey. Rose Township and Groveland Township are neighboring townships and also have Michigan State Police as their police services. If the Michigan State Police need to call for mutual aid, they do so. If the Holly Police Department needs to call for mutual aid, they do so. He doesn't agree with the argument that the Township should be reimbursing the Village for mutual aid. If it's beyond mutual aid, that could be looked at.

Much of this depends on what the Village wants to have for protocol. Do they want to respond to every mutual aid call or do they want to have a protocol where they're only going to respond to emergency mutual aid calls. If the Village is concerned about mutual aid calls being an additional expense and it's a burden to them, there are ways for them to control the mutual aid calls. That is an issue in itself. It's not part of whether Holly Township needs to have a contract for police services for Holly Township.

Clerk Winchester noted the issue was brought up because of response concerns of N.O.C.F.A. N.O.C.F.A. is an Act 57 entity which is separate from Holly Township. Holly Township and Rose Township pays N.O.C.F.A. to provide services. If NOCFA has a problem with services of MSP in Holly and Rose Township then Chief Lintz and the NOCFA board should address the issue and contract for additional polices services. If that means they have to increase our service fees, that needs to be addressed, but not until NOCFA radio issue has been resolved. NOCFA's radios are not compatible with MSP radios so NOCFA does not know when or if MSP is responding. If they're calling for a service from, let's say, the Village and the state police are already on the way, they would be wasting taxpayer money paying for a call from the Village that MSP was responding to. Number one issue is the radios. Number two is with emergency calls and response times from MSP.

Trustee Leslie indicated whatever community is contracting for police services, whether it's Holly Village or Oakland County Sheriff, those communities are paying to come to Holly Township's aid. That's not being a good neighbor.

Treasurer Freeman noted N.O.C.F.A. responds to mutual aid calls. The Michigan State Police also respond to mutual aid calls.

Trustee Leslie indicated the Michigan State Police is not Holly Township's police agency. They owe every resident the same coverage as they do the residents of Holly Township. We can't ask them to put another patrol car on the road. They can't differentiate between someone in the next township or us if they get two calls. They don't belong to Holly Township, they belong to the state. When they assist another community, everyone in the state is paying for that and everyone shares the cost.

Treasurer Freeman indicated he would question any information gathered from a survey because the majority of residents will throw this in the wastebasket. Those that don't will have some emotional connection to it, such as they've had a police issue or they are aware of the slow response time. The results will be skewed.

Clerk Winchester questioned whether the Township would be willing to impose a millage at this time if the survey results came back positive.

Supervisor Lambert indicated if 2,000 survey responses come back and 1500 or 1200 said yes, he would ask the residents for a vote.

Clerk Winchester indicated she doesn't agree with putting a millage on a ballot without residents passing a petition saying, we, the people, want you, our government, to put this on a ballot. We need to clarify whether we're willing to move forward without a petition from residents. She is not willing to without a request from the majority of the residents.

Supervisor Lambert indicated he believes the survey will come back with information saying additional police protection isn't needed. It will be a benchmark piece of data that can be referred back to on a given issue. If someone two months from now comes up and says I want police protection and I'm out in the township, what's our police protection like, anybody with any questions at all, we can say everybody in the township thinks very highly of the state police and they do the following things for us. These are your neighbors, these are the people that gave us back information and this is hard data. This is data that anybody else sitting in these chairs after us can look at to measure some amount of change in the local society.

Ms. Powers indicated she was supplied a copy of the proposed survey and discussed it with Holly Township Police Chief Gackstetter. Part of the survey asks Township residents to give an opinion of the Holly Village Police Department and the Township residents should not be doing that.

Clerk Winchester noted generally governments don't do this for very specific reasons. If they do send out a survey, the survey is developed by consultants. In the past there was a professor that did a One Government for Holly study and told us how to go about government surveys and how to arrange then to get the kind of data we wanted back. It shouldn't be done off the cuff. At this time she doesn't agree with spending any money on a professional survey.

Trustee Leslie noted many board members have problems with many of the questions on the proposed survey.

Clerk Winchester suggested putting a request in the newsletter indicating to please let us know of any of your concerns on police and other issues and include an e-mail address. If people have concerns, they will let us know.

Trustee Leslie indicated she believes people have concerns and they just move. This is an important enough issue that it's worth asking the questions. Many of these are not questions that need to be asked. We could take it to an expert. She's fine with that if it doesn't cost a lot.

- **Clerk Karin Winchester moved to deny the mailing of any kind of survey with the July tax bills. Treasurer Mark Freeman supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ruth: Yes; Freeman: Yes; Lambert: No; Leslie: No; Winchester: Yes.**

5. Any other business that may legally come before the board (If all board members are present).

No other business was brought forward.

Public Comment:

Mr. Larry Lilly, 110 Clarence Street, made the following comments: I'm a firm believer in surveys. Every time somebody mentions a survey out here at the Village government, Township, townsmen, I'm all for it, let's have it. I'm also a firm believer in utilizing our resources, our town and knowledge of the 10,000 residents here, promote within our community, not outside it. We should be uniting the whole community. That's 36 square miles. We want ... we should have a green community, you're talking about (inaudible). Within that green community, 36 square miles, we do have a 2 ½ square mile green Village community. We all should be uniting and utilizing our resources. We're not doing that. We're fighting one another. And you always say Township, Village. I don't go that way. The police service in the Village is excellent since we have a new police commander. I've experienced all this for ten years. Works great what we do have. But we have local control if we go with the whole 36 square miles. And you find out what the people want, just ask them what they want. You don't have to say we're going to have this, we're going to go that way. But I'm a firm ... and I speak out and I'm very firm about utilizing our resources and the police services. They've done an excellent job, never had a problem. Any time I've come to them, I've gotten answers. And that's what we should be using. Thank you.

Adjournment: Supervisor Jesse Lambert, hearing no other business, adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Zo Turner, Recording Secretary
Holly Township

Karin Winchester, CMC
Holly Township Clerk