

MEMBERS PRESENT: CRAWFORD, OPRITA, BUECHLER, BRADLEY, KISH AND ARMBRUSTER  
 MEMBERS ABSENT: BRUCKNER  
 ALSO PRESENT: PAT SMITH, FIRE CHIEF  
 ROB MONTGOMERY, ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS / PARKS COMMISSION

7:00 O'CLOCK P.M. - SUPERVISOR OPENS PUBLIC HEARING TO SEEK COMMUNITY INPUT REGARDING PROPOSED **MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT** AND A **RECREATION PASSPORT GRANT** FOR PARKER ROAD WEST; and continued with the Regular Agenda at this time.

Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Oprita, to approve the Minutes of the **REGULAR MEETING** of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, as printed and posted. Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED.**

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:** \* NONE

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Bradley, seconded by Oprita, to approve the Agenda, with the addition of Item #5, NEW BUSINESS: Owner's Work Directive Change No. 1 to Professional Services with Spicer Group, Inc. Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED. AGENDA APPROVED, AS AMENDED.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

GENERAL FUND	\$ 2,528,883.25
FIRE DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 1,985,998.04
FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$ 242,939.34
POLICE PROTECTION FUND	\$ 1,009,482.38
TRASH / RECYCLING FUND	\$ 764,950.38
BUILDING DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 105,597.51
UTILITY RECEIVING FUND	\$ 2,048,317.76
TOTAL	\$ 8,686,168.66
MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS	\$ 1,036,405.12
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 9,722,573.78

Motion by Kish, seconded by Buechler, to receive the Treasurer's Report, as given. Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. TOTAL TREASURER'S REPORT APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 9,722,573.78.**

**BILLS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL:**

GENERAL FUND	\$ 23,711.04
FIRE DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 8,130.92
FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$ 7,815.16
POLICE PROTECTION FUND	\$ 84,484.80
TRASH / RECYCLING FUND	\$ 60,962.70
BUILDING DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 300.00
UTILITY RECEIVING FUND	\$ 43,020.50
TOTAL	\$ 228,425.12
MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS	\$ 0.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 228,425.12

Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Bradley, to pay bills, as presented. Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. BILLS APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 228,425.12.**

\* According to Section 6 of the Charter Township of Fort Gratiot By-Laws adopted 02/20/2003.

**SHERIFF DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Given by representative of Sheriff Department: Captain, M. Pohl

Total Calls for Service for the month of February, 2023, (499). Number of Patrol Hours, (1008). 7 Animal Complaint; 2 Assault & Battery; 39 Assist Other Depts.; 245 Assist Public; 16 B&E/Alarm; 2 B&E/Building & Vehicle; 9 Disorderly Persons; 12 Domestic Assault; 8 Fraud; 8 Harassment & Threats; 5 Juvenile Matter; 5 Larceny; 1 MDOP; 1 PI Traffic Crash; 26 PD Traffic Crash; 7 Retail Fraud; 1 Sex Offense; 23 Suspicious Incidents; 2 Trespasser; 80 Misc.: School Checks/Warrant Arrests/Follow-up/BOL, 911 Hang-ups, etc.; 131 Traffic Stops; 70 Tickets Issued.

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE SHERIFF:** \* NONE

**FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Total runs for the month of February, 2023, (129). 8 Fire; 105 Rescue/EMS; 2 Hazardous Condition (No Fire); 1 Service Calls; 7 Good Intent Calls; 6 False Alarm/False Call. Total Cost, \$19,429.25.

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Total permits issued for the month of February, 2023, (16). 1 New Home (Val. 380,000); 10 Residential Addition / Alteration/Repair (Val. 198,559); 1 Accessory Structure (Val. 8,000); 1 Fence (Val. 6,000); 2 Commercial Addition/Alteration/Repair (Val. 1,777,244); 1 Commercial Sign (Val. 35,000). Total Valuation, \$ 2,492,175.00. Total Fees, \$ 11,225.00.

**PLUMBING/MECHANICAL INSPECTOR'S REPORT:** Total permits issued for the month of February, 2023, (10). 8 Mechanical (1,425.00); 2 Plumbing (273.00). Total Fees, \$ 1,698.00.

**ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Total permits issued for the month of February, 2023, (5). Total Fees, \$ 943.00.

**ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT:** Total Complaints for the month of February, 2023, (5). 3 Blight; 2 Misc. Code Violations. Total Hours, 10. Total Miles, 28.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. COMCAST notification of HBO & HBO Max price increase, from \$14.99 to \$15.99 per month, effective 04/03/2023; and effective 05/12/2023, ShopHQ will no longer be available with Xfinity.

Motion by Kish, seconded by Buechler, to accept Reports and Correspondence, as presented. Vote, Unanimous.  
**MOTION PASSED.**

**PUBLIC HEARING(S):**

1. PUBLIC HEARING TO SEEK COMMUNITY INPUT REGARDING PROPOSED *MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT (\$500,000)*; AND A *RECREATION PASSPORT GRANT (\$150,000)* FOR PARKER ROAD WEST:

Cindy Todd, Spicer Group, as well as associates, Jessica Hufnagle and Don Scherzer, attended the meeting over Zoom and described and explained the Grant Applications processes and proposed improvements which includes a campground and walking path on the Parker Road West property.

Supervisor Crawford asked for citizen comments and/or questions, at this time:

Rob Montgomery regarding the Land and Water Conservation Grant Fund Passport Grant, which deals with the campground portion of development and asked if funding, that would have to come from the General Fund to cover utilities, is available? It seems a substantial contribution, from the General Fund, for only 25 sites. He has spoken with the Port Huron Township Supervisor regarding their campground and the reason for selling it. He is concerned that the park won't be able to bring in enough revenue to sustain the infrastructure. He also asked about the point system used to determine the award of the grants. He asked if, almost 1 million dollars from the General Fund, is a good investment, not only for the Township but for the residents needs and wants. The Passport Grant for the path is much less expensive and something he hears residents want more of. But he feels the Land & Water Grant is a substantial investment for just 25 campsites.

Ms. Todd stated her firm has ran the points based on how the system was rated over the last six years. Her associate explained the numbers they came up with for each grant. The Land and Water Grant, for the campground, was above the threshold; the Passport Grant (path) was right at the threshold.

**PUBLIC HEARING, ITEM #1, CONTINUED:**

Supervisor Crawford stated he has also filed the applications for a appropriations of request through, both, Senator Stabanow and Senator Peters office. In the past, they have worked together on projects like this. He has asked them for funding for the infrastructure.

Trustee Kish noted, by his numbers, that each campsite would cost the taxpayers \$20,000. If you asked the residents if they are willing to put out that much for a campground, he is betting this meeting room would be full. He also pointed out that Port Huron Township is ditching their campground. It becomes a liability over time and he doesn't know what the Township would generate on a campsite. It is seasonal and sits empty for 6 or more months, but the expense is still there. It must either be staffed or handled by internal staff and is an additional burden on our DPW if they are to manage and care for the surrounding areas. He agrees it is a lot of money. He has nothing against the trails and for an infrastructure that helps service most of our residents, such as ballfields. But, he questions that expense as a Board Member and a taxpayer of this community.

Mr. Montgomery asked, as far as the Grant goes, the Township has to come up with the match money as well as the infrastructure. So, we have to come up with \$900,000 from the General Fund. Hypothetically, if we don't get any other funding from Senators Stabanow or Peters, is the Township in a financial position and willing to spend that \$900,000 to put in a 25 site campground? He understands you have to spend money to get money, which is \$6,000 for the Land & Water Grant. If the Township spends the \$6,000 and receives the Grant and nobody else comes through, is the Township able and willing to spend the \$900,000 out of the General Fund?

Trustee Kish noted the \$1,000,000 the Township received in ARPA funds. But, Mr. Montgomery pointed out that the ARPA funds have already been spoken for with the infrastructure. The Township still needs \$400,000 short, plus the \$500,000 matching fund for the Grant (\$900,000).

Supervisor Crawford stated the Township would be able to execute the funds, however, that would be a decision the Township Board would have to make at that time.

Trustee Armbruster asked if there is a deadline as to when the ARPA funds have to be spent or earmarked for a project? Clerk Buechler stated 2024 to be earmarked and 2026 to be spent.

With regard to the Land & Water Grant, Mr. Armbruster asked if total asks are awarded 100% of the time or could there be a partial award? Ms. Hufnagle, from Spicer Group, stated she has only seen partial awards on the Trust Grants; she has never seen a Land & Water Grant get partially funded. He asked if that applies to the Passport Grant, as well and Ms. Hufnagle stated yes.

Trustee Armbruster also asked, if additional funding does not come through, can the Board, then, vote to not proceed.

Supervisor Crawford replied, yes. It has happened, in the past, with a grant application to purchase a piece of property.

Trustee Armbruster stated he does have concerns. He is in support of the project. He would probably be piecing it out in a different order than how it's being done. He has concerns about the investment into a 25 site campground and its ability to make money directly for the Township. He is concerned with managing a campground. He understands that money spent in a community cannot be taken into account, fully. At the same time, he thinks it makes sense to go after money in the hopes the Township can come up with a way to make it feasible. But, if it does come down to \$900,000 being spent out of the General Fund, he would have a very hard time voting yes.

Trustee Kish asked if it is possible to Bond for a project like this? Supervisor Crawford replied, yes. The most intelligent way to do the project would be to bond it out and do the entire project at once. But, then you have to have the income in order to pay for the Bond. And, you cannot apply for a Bond and cover it with a Grant.

**PUBLIC HEARING, ITEM #1, CONTINUED:**

After hearing no further comments, questions and or discussion, a Motion was made by Kish, seconded by Buechler, to close the Public Hearing seeking community input regarding Proposed Michigan Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Grant; and Recreation Passport Grant for Parker Road West. Time, 7:27 o'clock p.m. Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED. PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.**

Treasurer Oprita stated she understands the concern about the cost of these Grants. However, the Township does have income coming in, for example, from interest on bank accounts. Those funds are not earmarked and can be used by the Township without taking it out of tax dollars and fund balance, in order to apply for Grants to get projects moving along.

Trustee Kish stated he is in favor, as long as the Board has the option to not proceed if additional funding can't be found.

Motion by Kish, seconded by Oprita, to adopt Resolution 2023-004, *In Support of Making Application to MDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant*, in the amount of \$500,000.00. Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. RESOLUTION 2023-004, ADOPTED.**

Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Bradley, to adopt Resolution 2023-005, *In Support of Making Application to MDNR Recreation Passport Grant Application*, in the amount of \$150,000; and committing \$37,500 Financial Obligation. Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. RESOLUTION 2023-005, ADOPTED.**

Because representatives from Spicer Group were still with the Board Meeting, via Zoom, Supervisor Crawford moved Item #5, NEW BUSINESS, to be heard before continuing with the regular agenda:

5. Motion by Crawford, seconded by Bradley, to authorize the Supervisor to sign the *Owner's Work Directive Change No. 1 to Professional Services with Spicer Group, Inc.*, totaling \$18,000.00 to complete the MDNR Grant Applications for Parker Road West.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* Proposed Fee billed hourly to complete MDNR Grant Applications:

<i>Land &amp; Water Grant</i>	= \$ 6,000
<i>Recreation Passport Grant</i>	= \$ 5,000
<i>State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)</i>	= \$ 7,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. Motion by Kish, seconded by Buechler, to adopt Ordinance No. 227, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING MAP OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FORT GRATIOT, BY REZONING 2917 NORTH RIVER ROAD (74-20-695-0003-000) FROM R1A-RESIDENTIAL TO C2-COMMERCIAL.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* Introduction accepted March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. ORDINANCE NO. 227, ADOPTED.**

2. Motion by Bradley, seconded by Oprita, to adopt Ordinance No. 228, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FORT GRATIOT, BY REZONING TWO (2) VACANT LOTS ON BRACE ROAD (74-20-004-4037-101 & 74-20-004-4037-110) FROM AG-AGRICULTURAL TO R2-TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* Introduction accepted March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED. ORDINANCE NO. 228, ADOPTED.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Motion by Oprita, seconded by Armbruster, to approve the IT Service Agreement with St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), at a cost of \$12,000, plus \$4,380.00 for the period covering July 1, 2023 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* \$12,000 for period covering July 1, 2023 thru June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 plus Virtual Server Hosting totaling \$4,380.00

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Motion by Kish, seconded by Bradley, to approve the wage increase, from \$15.53 to \$18.00 per hour for Ground Crew employees returning for their second (2<sup>nd</sup>) year, effective April 1, 2023.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* Ground Crew employees work from April 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. Motion by Bradley, seconded by Oprita, to approve the Fire Chiefs request to hire Tanner Malcolm on the Fire Department as Paid-on-Call Firefighter, at a probationary rate of \$11.00 per run.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: \* Upon completion of six (6) month probation period his pay will increase to \$17.50 per run.

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

4. Motion by Bradley, seconded by Buechler, to approve the St. Clair County Road Commission Agreements at a total cost to the Township of \$ 47,300.00, as follows:

LOCATION	TYPE OF WORK	TOTAL PROJECT COST	COST TO TOWNSHIP (50%)
BUCKLEY DR., JAMES CT. & TERRANCE CT.	Cape Seal	\$ 41,500.00	\$ 20,750.00
SIMPSON ROAD (M-136 to Estates Dr.)	Cape Seal	\$ 48,600.00	\$ 24,300.00
BRACE ROAD	Design & survey for replacement of culvert C-043 (Brace Road over #205 County Drain, approx.. 1,640' east of State Rd.	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,250.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ 94,600.00	\$ 47,300.00

Roll Call Vote, 6/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

**BOARD DISCUSSION:**

- UHY Water Rate Study will be on the April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Meeting Agenda.
- Appropriations requests sent out for assistance with culvert replacements to Congresswomen McClain's, in addition to Senator Stabenow, Senator Peters and Representative Beeler for various projects.
- DPW truck (ordered a year ago) to be delivered on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 2022 Audit.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Car Wash status.
- MDOT has been contacted re: completion of sidewalks on 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- SEMCOG offering safety & educational bundles for bicyclists. Clerk Buechler has applied for a bundle.

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:** NONE

Motion by Crawford, seconded by Kish, to adjourn. Time, 7:47 o'clock p.m. Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED.**  
**MEETING ADJOURNED.**

ROBERT D. BUECHLER, CLERK  
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP

RDB/RCC/vo

ROBERT C. CRAWFORD, SUPERVISOR  
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP