

FREEDOM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
APPROVED Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
September 10th, 2019 8:00 pm

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Supervisor Weidmayer called the meeting to order at 8:00pm

Members present: Weidmayer, Bristle, Layher, Huehl, Schaible absent: none 40 were present in the audience.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Change to Agenda:** Moved by Huehl supported by Schaible to:

Add cemetery lot pricing and Bridgewater drain to new business.

Motion carried with all Ayes. CARRIED

**4. Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Layher supported by Huehl to:

Approve the August 13, 2019 Township Board minutes.

Motion carried with all Ayes. CARRIED

**5. Treasurer's Report:** Moved by Bristle supported by Huehl to: Approve August 13, 2019 Treasurers report.

Roll call vote was unanimous. Aye: Huehl, Weidmayer, Schaible, Layher, Bristle

Nay: none

CARRIED

**6. Communications:** Supervisor Weidmayer reported he inquired about the ownership of Boettner Road and it is a Township road and not a County road. Wash. Co. Clean-Up Day will be Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm at Thomson Reuters Office Complex 6300 Interfirst Drive (@ State & Textile Road). There will be a DTE public hearing in Lansing on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 and 9:30am. The annual financial report from the Saline Library was received. The Wash. Co. Road Commissioners are talking about putting a road millage renewal on the August 2020 ballot.

**7. Public Comment:** Matt Little presented a DRAFT Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan to the board. The board will review the plan and discuss it at next month's meeting. Theresa Langen expressed her concern about the home at 5202 Happy Hollow Dr. operating as an airbnb. It is listed on [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com) and rented 3 times in the next 6 weeks. The letter the township sent regarding the ordinance violation doesn't seem to be stopping them. What does the township plan to do next? Fines? Hattie Carson shared as the neighbor to 5202 Happy Hollow, their private drive used to be a nice area to live but not since that house changed owners in April of this year. Catherine Roberts remarked if one house can act as a short-term rental then what is stopping the other 150 around the lake. We need to stop this now. Carol Westfall expressed the enforcement of the ordinance. Helen Parker shared the house next to her is for sale and she doesn't want a person to buy it and try to use it as a short term rental property. Beth Heuser wants the board to take action. A resident stated that Happy Hollow is a private drive, can that stop this rental use? A resident mentioned that House Bill 4046 is before Michigan Legislature to eliminate a local unit of government's ability to control short-term rentals. Matt Little expressed that it is not the township board, planner or attorney's fault that this situation is not resolved. We have a resident that is not abiding by an ordinance and steps are being taken to rectify the situation. It would be a good idea to pass a resolution to oppose HB 4046. Doug Higgins asked the board to consider a meeting with the township attorney, and residents would have an opportunity to relay their concerns regarding short-term rentals. Chris M shared, as a lawyer herself, it may be best to let the voted township officials, who we trust to act on our behalf, handle this situation with the township attorney.

**8. Reports:**

Planning Commission report: Larry reported the StoneCo renewal was tabled. A boundary adjustment for Touch Down Ranch LLC was approved. A land division for Mark Johnson was tabled needing more information. There was discussion regarding an art studio that Tom Batlett would like to construct. P.C. reviewed the allowable land uses in the lake district and will continue to review them at next month's meeting. The township should consider updating the zoning maps. Larry shared some figures and options with the board and it will be on next month's agenda. A full copy of the PC minutes is available from clerk.

Ordinance Enforcement Officer: Austin Helber reported that he sent a violation of the weed ordinance letter to 10995 Pleasant Lake Rd. He also sent a violation of the weed ordinance letter to 11181 Pleasant Lake Rd. He spoke with the Michigan Department of Agriculture regarding the hemp growing operation on Bethel Church Rd. and it is a licensed operation by the State. A civil infraction citation was issued to June Fowler regarding the temporary camping ordinance violation. He will inquire about the port-a-john on the property. He received several calls

regarding the rental of 5202 Happy Hollow Dr. And he spoke with someone at the Carver's property regarding cleaning up the property/cars and they have till the end of September to do so.

Zoning Inspector- Jim reported for the month of August he had 3 zonings. A pole barn at 4911 Schneider Rd, a pole barn at 14481 Pleasant Lake Rd. and a new address at 10947 Pleasant Lake Rd.

Library- Jan Davis shared that the Manchester Mirror will be publishing all the events the library will be hosting throughout the year.

Clerk report: There may be an election on November 5th for Chelsea school district voters. There will be a clerk's meeting at the end of the month. The clerk will be meeting with the township insurance agent next week to review the township's policy. A FOIA request was received. Clerk is working on completing the clerk's statement for the county by the end of the month. And working with the township auditor to complete the F-65 report for the state.

## **9. Unfinished Business:**

Short-Term Rentals- The current zoning ordinance does not allow short-term rentals as a possible use in the lake district. Also a commercial operation in a residential zoned dwelling is not allowed. This is not a home based occupation. The township had a letter sent to the property owner regarding the violations and a request to cease and desist the residential house being used as a short-term rental. The property owner had her attorney send a response letter challenging the violation and use. The township board is working with the township attorney to bring this property into compliance with the township ordinances.

The following resolution was offered by Bristle, and supported by Layher to adopt resolution 19-04 now therefore be it resolved that Freedom Township Board of Trustees ask that HB 4046 be rejected and that local zoning decisions be left in the hands of local government where they belong.

Roll call vote was unanimous. Aye: Weidmayer, Bristle, Schaible, Layher, Huehl Nay: none CARRIED

## **10. New Business:**

Manchester Fire Department Incident Reports- The fire department is no longer allowed to provide the township with the contact information needed to invoice the parties involved when the fire department responds to a 911 call within the township. Currently the Fire Protection Contract between Freedom Township and the Manchester Fire Department is paid out of the general fund and invoices are sent to individuals who received services from the fire department. The township has only been able to collect about 10-15% of the cost through these invoices. Since the township can no longer invoice for the Manchester Fire Department responding to a 911 call the township will need to consider the general fund budget and the possibility of a fire protection millage to cover the cost of the fire protection contract. Tabled till next meeting.

Bridgewater Drain- The Bridgewater drain is almost 100 years old and in need of serious repair. The county is proposing a 1.2 million dollar special assessment (for 10 years) to replace the entire drain. The drain runs along the edge of Freedom Township and would cost the township around \$36,000 for its portion. Many property owners in both Freedom and Bridgewater Township are not happy with the cost of this project.

Broadband Representative- Motion by Weidmayer supported by Huehl: To appoint Clerk Bristle as the Freedom Township representative for the Washtenaw County Broadband Task Force.

Roll call vote was unanimous. Aye: Layher, Schaible, Huehl, Bristle, Weidmayer Nay: none CARRIED

No Smoking Policy- Discussion on a designated smoking area outside of the town hall. The board will take a look at the cigarette bud containers and see if they need to be replaced.

Cemetery Lot Pricing- Prices that surrounding churches offer were shared. There are roughly 16 plots available at the Freedom Emanuel Evangelical Memorial Cemetery. The board will gather more information from other townships and present at the next meeting.

Motion by Weidmayer supported by Schaible: To send Larry Lindemann to the MTA training in Chelsea on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>. Roll call vote was unanimous. Aye: Schaible, Bristle, Huehl, Weidmayer, Layher Nay: none CARRIED

**11. Warrants:** Motion by Weidmayer supported by Huehl: To approve the online payments for the 941 tax withholding and warrants 4304-4327.

Roll call vote was unanimous. Aye: Layher, Bristle, Huehl, Schaible, Weidmayer Nay: none CARRIED

**12. Public Comment:**

Beth Heuser handed out the PLPOA newsletter to the township board members. Jessica Roberts asked if there was any interest in the Pleasant Lake Inn property. Several township officials have received calls from interested parties but there have been no offers that we are aware of. Also asked about the possibility of a light at Pleasant Lake and Schneider Road. Beth Heuser mentioned the need for a limited sight sign on Heiber Road.

Adjourned at 9:58 pm

Valisa L. Bristle, Clerk, Freedom Township