

Gourley Township

Menominee County Michigan

DRAFT Minutes of April 8, 2024 Regular Meeting

Supervisor Steve Wery called the meeting to order at the Gourley Township Hall at 6:02 p.m. and then, asking all to stand, Steve led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Steve Wery, Supervisor
Stephanie Walechka, Treasurer
Ivy Netzel, Clerk
Dan Cordy, Trustee
Jesse Wery, Trustee

Absent:

Also Attending: Fire Chief Brian Mack

Agenda: Steve presented the agenda and after review, Ivy made a motion to accept the agenda with Stephanie supporting the motion; it carried.

Minutes: The minutes of the March 11, 2024, Regular Board Meeting were presented and after review, Stephanie made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Steve supported the motion; it carried.

Treasurer & Clerk Report:

NOTE: The clerk checks the tax fund check book monthly.

- The Financial Report for March 2024 was reviewed and there was \$550,385.46 in the General Fund and \$355,415.86 in the Fire Fund. Ivy made a motion to accept the Financial Report and place it on file. Dan supported the motion; it carried.

Fire Chief Report:

- There were 10 fire runs for the month: a grass fire at Blahnik residence on County Road 374: one call to the Elders Complex; one call to the Hannahville Health Center during the storm; there were numerous power lines and trees down, electrical poles across the roadway during the storm; a garage fire on DePas Lane due to a temporary generator exhaust too close to the garage; and Hannahville B-1 road power lines and trees down.
- Brian attended the Fire Chief's Association meeting in Stephenson.
- Brian attended the Biennial Menominee County Fire Chief's meeting in Bark River.
- Brian would like to use foam on grass fires, and is looking to purchase a foam inductor and put it on the pumper truck.
- Tom Philipps, EMS Coordinator for Menominee County, has a brush fire unit to be utilized by Menominee County and they are looking for a place to park it. The Fire Chief's Association would retrofit it and maintain it. Gourley Township has an extra bay in the fire hall, and would be

able to garage it. Gourley Township will need to notify Hannula to consider liability insurance impact.

- Brian contacted Any Primeaux and received 2 new pagers for the department.
- Tanner Pearson is now an official member of the fire department.
- Tyler Carlson joined the fire department.
- Brian applied for a grant for a pallet of drinking water through the National Fire Council and Anheuser Bush.
- Bernie Kusig received an invoice from the DNR for labor and equipment related to his grass fire in March.
- Regular Meeting of the Gourley Township Volunteer Fire Department will be Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at the fire house at 7:00 p.m. CDT.

Supervisor's Report:

- Thanks and appreciation to our Gourley Township Volunteer Fire Department and associated mutual aid for responding the spring snow storm that hit Menominee County. It was noted that this was the worst storm that the township has seen in many years.
- Steve will contact Darrell Cass, Menominee County Road Commission, to discuss Kellogg, DePas and Maple Lane improvements. Steve will also discuss Camp Swampy and Polfus Road and the complaints that were lodged against the improvements that are scheduled for tree removal and road repair.
- Assessor's laptop will need to be replaced as it is over 10 years old.
- Veterans Exemptions and Principal Residence Exemptions are no longer addressed at the local level at the Board of Review. The Township Assessor is the point of contact for these exemption requests. Please see the Assessor & Permits Info page on the Gourley Township website for Assessor contact information. (<https://www.gourleytownship.org/assessor-permits-info>)

New Business:

- Lawn care bids are due by May 10th.

Old Business:

- Gourley Township Volunteer Fire Department banquet: Steve proposed to provide an annual Volunteer Fire Department banquet to show appreciation for our volunteer firefighters. The banquet would be held at the township hall. A Michigan Township Association (MTA) Q&A summary sheet of how a banquet could be conducted legally by the township was presented and discussed (attachment). A written policy will need to be developed.
- Hannahville Grant for truck tires was submitted by the Gourley Township Volunteer Fire Department.
- Hannahville Grant for Township and Fire Hall replacement boilers was submitted.

Public Comment

- None

Correspondence:

- Wilson SDA School thank you cards for the Gourley Township Volunteer Fire Department
- Clayton Ross address change notification for property tax correspondence
- Michigan Dept of Treasury approval of computerized assessment roll

Pay the Bills:

- Ivy made a motion to pay the bills. The motion was supported by Stephanie. The motion carried.

Adjourn:

- Steve moved to adjourn. Jesse supported the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm CDT. The next meeting will be May 13th.

Respectfully submitted,

Ivy Netzel, Clerk

Date Approved

Ivy

Hello, MTA ... ? /January-February 2008 728 words

By Catherine Mullhaupt and Cindy Davis, MTA Member Information Services

Q. Can a township lawfully provide recognition dinners for firefighters?

Yes, but only within certain limits on the use of public money. State law does not expressly authorize the use of township funds for recognition dinners. As an employer, however, a township board may adopt a policy that it will provide certain employment benefits, such as an annual recognition dinner for all fire department personnel (or other township employees), for the public purpose of motivating and retaining employees. As MTA Executive Director Larry Merrill explains in the MTA publication, *On-Call Fire Departments*, "It would not be hard to argue that a recognition program builds morale, morale leads to volunteer retention, and volunteer retention is in the public interest."

Such a policy should be implemented consistently and objectively for any and all employees who are eligible under the policy—not just for "Bob" because we like him! The purpose should be to recognize the fire department as a whole.

A township cannot use public money for a private purpose, so if the dinner will involve family members and guests, the township should not pay for their meals or expense. Because of this, it may be more prudent to have the recognition dinner be a potluck or fund it with community donations.

A township board could combine a recognition dinner with a training program or guest speaker so that the "public purpose" test of a public expenditure is more clearly met.

Without a doubt, employee motivation, recognition and incentives can be challenging issues for townships, but according to studies conducted by Business Legal Reports:

- 73 percent of employees say they "feel engaged" when their employers offer "high recognition"
- 17 percent of employees say they "feel engaged" when recognition is low
- 70 percent of employees in a high-recognition environment say they intend to stay with their organizations
- 79 percent of employees say they leave their jobs due to a lack of appreciation

And remember, the best motivation is often free. It can sometimes be just a few simple words at the right time. A "Well done!" from a township board member or a superior officer can go a long way. Commendations and thanks from the community are common forms of recognition, and they may mean even more coming from the people the township employees serve.

Q. Can a township purchase plaques, pins or other desktop awards for firefighters?

Yes, there are options for providing recognition to individual employees, but the same requirement for furthering a public purpose and not a private interest applies.

For example, a township board could adopt a policy that it will provide a years-of-service recognition program to promote the retention and motivation of employees. Employees that reach specific milestones in years of service, such as five, 10 or 20 years in the department or with the township would be presented with pins, plaques or “desktop awards” to recognize that achievement. The program should apply to all employees or all employees in a particular department or job classification, such as firefighters. The amount spent should be minimal, not excessive, reasonable and related to the purpose.

Another option is a board resolution to publicly recognize heroic individual lifesaving efforts or other instances of employees going above and beyond the call of duty. Recognizing the individual employees at a board meeting, with press coverage and a presentation of the board resolution can go a long way to thanking employees for their efforts and letting the public know about the quality of their township programs and services.

Q. What about a retirement dinner?

It’s hard to show how using public money to recognize retiring employees furthers motivating or retaining current employees, so it’s hard to tie it to a public purpose authorized for townships by law. Arguably, a years-of-service program will recognize a long-serving employee before he or she retires. And knowing that you’re appreciated while you are working for the township may have a far greater effect on morale than knowing you might be shown some appreciation on the way out!

Retiring employees may certainly deserve some private recognition, and there’s nothing that prevents their fellow employees, including individual township board members, from chipping in with personal contributions to a dinner or gift. This is also an area where it may be more appropriate—and meaningful—when individual community members sponsor the recognition.