

**NORMAL TOWNSHIP
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2021
NORMAL TOWNSHIP HALL
304 E. MULBERRY, NORMAL, IL 61761**

1. Meeting Opening

The meeting was held at the Normal Township Hall with the option to join remotely via Zoom in consideration of emergency COVID protocols. The meeting was called to order at 8:15am by Township Supervisor Sarah Grammer.

Roll Call conducted by Clerk Pat Turner

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Trustee Floyd Aper | Present |
| Trustee Arlene Hosea | Present |
| Trustee Sally Pyne | Present |
| Trustee Art Rodrigues | Present (via Zoom) |
| Supervisor Sarah Grammer | Present |

Also Present

Elected Officials: Arin Rader, Road Commissioner
Rob Cranston, Assessor
Pat Turner, Clerk

Township Staff: Rick Lewis, ARC Director of Operations (via Zoom)
Elicsha Sanders, ARC Member Services Manager (via Zoom)

Other: Mary Wurhmann, ARC Volunteer (via Zoom)

2. Approval of the May 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Trustee Pyne commended newly elected Clerk Pat Turner for a great job on the minutes. Trustee Hosea did also, sharing she appreciated the thoroughness of the minutes.

Motion for approval: Sally Pyne
Second: Floyd Aper

Roll Call

Aye: Arlene Hosea, Sally Pyne, Art Rodriguez, Sarah Grammer, Floyd Aper
Nay: None

3. Approval of Expenditures from May 21, 2021 – June 17, 2021

Motion to discuss: **Arlene Hosea**
Second: **Sally Pyne**

Trustee Aper posed inquiries regarding the legal fees in the amount of \$3,553.00 listed on the General Town Fund expense list. Supervisor Grammer explained that the amount reflected some fees connected with the recent election with other amounts being for attorney services provided for reviewing the roof bid packets and for a newsletter question for ARC.

Trustee Aper also asked about the general insurance expense of \$27,704.00 on the General Township Fund list. Supervisor Grammer responded that the insurance is an annual expenditure due to Townships of Illinois Risk Management Assn. (TOIRMA) which is billed each Spring between April and May and is present on the expense list in three lines which include liability, general insurance and workman's comp. She added that the bulk of our liability is related to the ARC. Trustee Aper asked about the bid process for that. Sarah responded that it was bid in the past and it was found that the best price is through TOIRMA, who specializes in township government. Other bids came in as much as twice as high. Floyd suggested considering an annual bid process. Grammer pointed out that such process would need to be done around December in order to be in on time.

Trustee Pyne asked for clarification regarding the Senior Citizens Utility expense. Sarah explained that Gas and Electric bills paid today reflect usage that occurred 30-60 days ago. The Gas expense therefore reflects winter usage at the ARC and was budgeted based on the previous year. She also pointed out that the June bill of \$1,076.80 includes a \$26.80 charge from Ameren with the \$1,050.00 balance reflecting a monthly charge for the solar finance project. At the end of 6 years, that fee will drop off leaving just maintenance and insurance to be paid on the panels. She noted, during the six years period, maintenance and insurance is not charged to the Township.

Trustee Pyne additionally noted that the General Assistance list is much shorter and wondered if it was due to the eviction moratorium. Sarah responded that the 17 assistance clients is indeed down substantially. The Township would typically serve 40-50 households a month. It is expected that the numbers will start to increase as the moratorium is set to expire.

Roll Call to approve the following expenditures from May 21, 2021-June 17, 2021:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| General Town Fund: | \$101,339.51 |
| General Assistance Fund: | \$9,244.25 |
| Senior Citizens: | \$33,457.99 |
| Road and Bridges Fund: | \$5,617.22 |

Aye: **Floyd Aper, Arlene Hosea, Sarah Grammer, Art Rodriguez, Sally Pyne**
Nay: **None**

4. Reports

A. Community Engagement

Trustee Pyne praised the Veterans event held at the ARC and commended the Township Board's forward thinking in establishing Juneteenth as a Township holiday. Supervisor Grammer expressed gratitude at seeing all of the Trustees present at the event. Trustee Hosea also applauded the event and felt the "fly over" was especially nice.

Sarah and Arlene attended a "Township and the Environment Lunch and Learn" sharing what townships can and can't do. Both found the information quite worthwhile. Arlene was especially interested in the info on butterflies and milkweed. She also said the workshop brought up the topic of "coal tar" a product used in road repairs according to Road Commissioner Rader. Trustee Hosea announced that another "Lunch and Learn" on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Open Meetings Act (OMA) will be held at noon today.

B. Assessor

Township Assessor Rob Cranston stated he is on target to turn in numbers around the middle or end of August. Everything is on schedule.

C. Clerk -No Report at this Time

D. Highway Commissioner

Commissioner Rader has been patching cracks, holes and seams in preparation for micro surfacing work on a 2-mile segment (Towanda-North Town Road). He also shared that a county program that we're in is doing seal coating- (5 ½ miles) using funds from the Motor Fuel Tax. He signed a contract for micro surfacing for \$104,349.06 which is 15% less than county estimate. He considers it to be a good price. The start date for the project is to be determined. Seal Coating will begin in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Rader also attended a Highway Commissioners meeting where the topics were Motor Fuel Tax Funding and Rebuild Illinois. He had a conversation with the township attorney on selecting a good architect for the maintenance building. He has chosen a firm and will make others aware that they were not selected. He will move forward with the architect.

Supervisor Grammer thanked Commissioner Raider for working with the sign company to get the rigging on the flag pole fixed. It was in much need of repair. The bill for the job has not yet come in.

E. ARC Staff and Senior Advisory Committee

Rick Lewis shared that the ARC staff has been working hard to resume programming. Updates have been sent out via the ARC's email newsletter. Popular programs are coming back now with paid programming coming soon. They have increased the number of people allowed in the building in accordance with the new COVID guidelines. Bonnie's Café at the senior center will re-open but without coffee service. Rick commended Molly Camper for her work in resuming popular programming. Elicsha Sanders and the member services staff were commended for

their hard work as well. Members are now using the online billing option. Rick also shared gratitude for Preston in maintaining the building and to Sammi Scott for her work with Communications.

Rick said that he has not heard any complaints regarding the requirement for face masks for those who are not yet vaccinated. Hours are set to increase beginning July 1st. Rick expects that there might be some pushback regarding Friday closures but felt it is necessary to accommodate members whose work schedules did not allow them to use the ARC during the day. He will keep the board updated.

Rick also met with “Faith in Action”, one of the tenants on the second floor of the ARC building regarding arming and disarming on Fridays when the ARC is closed. He will meet next with ISU hearing, also a second-floor tenant. Rick is looking to resume shuttle bus service as some 12 members have expressed interest in the service, but needs to hire an additional driver. The previous shuttle bus rider fee of \$1.00 each way has been removed.

Rick is excited about upcoming activities and highlights including Heritage Health, Evergreen, Outdoor Bingo, Captain Ron-Outdoor Concert and Food Truck (See menu sample in ARC Newsletter).

Echo Show device distribution is in process. Background checks for SHIP Counselors have been ordered and should be complete the first week in July in order to be in compliance with IL Dept. on Aging Guidelines.

Rick thanked everyone for the strong show of support at the Veterans’ Day Program. He also made an appeal for help with landscaping/weeding which is urgently needed. He is trying to get a contractor to do sealing and striping of the parking lot some time in July. Will work on concrete issues later.

Sarah expressed her thanks to Rick and the staff as she is encouraged to see the ARC members are coming back. Elicsha shared that there are currently 2,207 members in response to Sally’s inquiry of current number of members. Elicsha mentioned that many are waiting for July 1st to renew their memberships and to bring their friends. She expects a huge increase for June and July. Rick stated that of the total membership, 35 are completely new to ARC. They are registering approximately 2-3 new members daily. He is looking to get orientations for the new members under way.

F. Supervisor

Supervisor Grammer informed the board that there are 17 monthly general assistance clients including some seeking re-employment or Social Security Disability. Assistance was also given to two successful applicants for rent assistance needs that were not COVID-19 related. There have been quite a few requests for emergency assistance with water bills. This is assistance that is not available elsewhere in the community even among those who also work to keep people in their homes.

An update was given on the roof replacement re-bid process. (Fifteen Plan holders; last time 6,

with 3 site visits) Bid opening to be held on June 30th at the Township office. Grammer is hopeful for competitive pack of bids. Property Taxes have begun coming in. The outside auditors were here for a week. They are now doing off-site work. Their full report is expected in August. Trustee Aper inquired if info on grants would be included in the report. Sarah answered in the affirmative, explaining that this part of the report will be in by the end of June. She added that grant recipients can be invited to the July meeting. There were four in total. Trustee Pyne suggested allowing time for each recipient to share at the July meeting.

5. Public Comment

No community members present in the building

No public comment given in person or via Zoom.

6. New Business

A. Discussion on ARC Greenspace Project

A portion of land on the east side of the building in the middle of the parking lot has been designated for the Green Space Project. The board approved a project design done by Cathy Bilow last spring. Not sure if Cathy's drawings will completely vet out but Farnsworth has done survey work and to ensure that the area will be ADA accessible as much as possible. The patio area will be permeable using crushed granite and continue to serve as a drainage area. The grassy area will have very little grade change. It can be used for activities such as Tai-Chi. The area is big enough for about 60 people (15ft per person) and will accommodate wheelchairs.

B. Discussion and Vote -Senior Advisory Committee Guidelines

Guidelines were included in the packages a couple of times this year and were recently distributed to the new Trustees. The guidelines were brought to the board by members of the Senior advisory committee last year. Sarah met with Deb Skillrud of Bloomington Township to discuss forming an intergovernmental agreement on how advisory committee members are appointed. While Deb was not interested in going forth with such an agreement, she does plan to continue to give their annual \$40,000 grant to the ARC. Trustee Pyne expressed concern that the grant is tentative without such an agreement, but Supervisor Grammer shared that the intent is that the grant will be continued as long as it is financially feasible as Bloomington Township has no focused Senior programming of their own.

Trustee Pyne asked for clarification on who appoints members to the committee. Sarah explained that two of the seats are to be filled by the City of Bloomington Township and the remaining 7 by Normal Township. She further clarified that while membership on the board is not restricted to residents of Normal Township or City of Bloomington, no more than one board member may be from a neighboring township. She highlighted two Bloomington appointed members; one a gerontologist and the other an advocate for accessibility issues that have been extremely valuable to the advisory board.

Sally suggested removing the responsibility of the Bloomington Township Supervisor making the appointment in lieu of Normal Township making all appointments. When asked if the

appointees needed to be ARC members, Grammer answered that new guidelines make it a requirement whereas previous guidelines did not even require them to be 55 or older. Trustee Rodriguez agreed that they should all be ARC members.

Rodriguez expressed concern with the non-discrimination clause as written in the guideline as he feels the definition of “sexual orientation” seems to be broadening in current culture to include pedophilia. Supervisor Grammer explained that we are simply using the standard non-discrimination clause as advised by our attorney. She expounded that any questions about race, sexual orientation, and other issues covered in the clause do not come up when appointing committee members as it would be illegal to do so. However, criminal offenses such as pedophilia could cause a non-appointment.

After further discussion, a motion was made to approve the guidelines with changes stating that all nine members of the advisory committee will be appointed by the Normal Township Board.

Motion: Sally Pyne
Second: Arlene Hosea

Aye: Floyd Aper, Arlene Hosea, Sarah Grammer, Sally Pyne
Nay: Art Rodriguez

C. Discussion of ARC operations

Discussion was held regarding the use of key fobs at the ARC. Even though pre-registration is no longer a requirement, the key fobs help to show who is in the building at any given time. Trustee Pyne asked about the number of fobs that have been distributed. Elicsha Sanders reported that close to 1,200 have been distributed. This is up from the report of 1,050 at last meeting.

D. Discussion and Vote on Room Rental Policy

Supervisor Grammer informed the board that the meeting room in the Township Office building has not been rented out since March of last year due to the pandemic. Recently however, requests are flowing in for its use. Discussion topics included rental rates, type of users such as private vs non-profit, deposit requirements, smoking & alcohol restrictions and food and beverage use in the space. It was determined that a more thorough review of the usage policy is needed with an emphasis on clear and consistent language. Board members volunteered to look at similar policies from other similar facilities and bring proposals. Sarah offered to send out drafts that can be discussed at the next board meeting. Current requestors will follow the existing guidelines but will be told in advance that changes are forthcoming.

E. Discussion of Township name

Trustee Rodriguez expressed concern over the constant confusion that local citizens have regarding the difference between the Normal Township and the Town of Normal. He suggested that a name change, omitting the word “Normal” for the Township may solve the problem. Sarah rebutted that the word “Normal” describes clearly who we serve. She noted, that may not be as

clear if we take on another name as has happened with other township governments. Trustee Aper was also opposed to changing the name as he saw it as following a trend of losing pertinent history. He also pointed out that it may put the unit of government at risk altogether. He suggested that we try educating the public instead. Trustees Hosea and Pyne agreed, adding that our new website and the ARC's senior focus are helping with the "branding process". Rick said that he addressed an issue with the Illinois Township Association to assure that links referring to the Township led to the right place.

Trustee Aper suggested holding a grand re-opening with tours and free discounts to help promote the ARC and clarify what Township Government does. Rick was concerned about offering free memberships as the ARC already suffered losses due to the pandemic, but will follow up on Grammer's request to plan for a Grand Re-Opening event that could be timed for September.

7. Suggested Items for the Next Agenda

Supervisor Grammer- *Revisit Meeting Room Usage Policy*

Trustees Pyne, Aper -*Discuss Meeting Procedures*

Trustee Pyne- *Planning for future pandemics (Trustee Rodriguez proposed that Rick start a committee for this purpose) (Pyne also requested to see grant recipient reports when available in June.)*

All- *Ways to help citizens distinguish between the Township and Town or Normal*

8. Adjournment

Supervisor Grammer adjourned the meeting at 10:09

Next Normal Township Board Meeting: Thursday, July 15, 2021 – 8:15 AM

Next Senior Advisory Committee Meeting: Thursday, July 1, 2021 – 9:30 AM