

Synopsis  
Milton Township  
Meeting Minutes  
July 12, 2021

Members present: L. Bargy, S. Ball, L. Atkinson, T. Cole, and B. Pharo

Also present: Attorneys B. Derman, C. Weinzapfel, Sheriff D. Bean, J. Ball, B. Hefferan, B. Kingon, B. Johnson, and 8 audience members

Bargy called the meeting to order at 7 pm and the Pledge was recited

Agenda approved by consent

Approval of regular meeting minutes of June 14, 2021  
Motion to approve by L. Atkinson/S. Ball. Motion carried.

Approval of special meeting minutes of June 22, 2021  
Motion to approve by L. Atkinson/T. Cole. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:**

Jim Pesta of Juniper Dr. asked if he could be placed on the agenda to discuss the O'Dell road end access. July 4th was very busy. I'd like to discuss what this property is and how it should be used.

Pharo said the end of the road is public access. Pesta said the township needs to come to a decision as to what this property is for. What does access mean? What can you do on a public access? I have no way of managing your property. Right now you aren't managing this land. The split rail fence you put up is not enough. The property owners along the lake own to the high water mark. We are reasonable, but there has to be some indication for the public.

Jerry Mensing thanked the officers who worked the Torch River Bridge and the Sandbar for July 4th.

**Sheriff's Report:** by Sheriff Bean

237 service calls for June 2021. Bean compared these numbers to the same time last year. Bean provided an update on Torch Fest and the president's visit to Antrim County. Marine Patrol wrote 30 tickets. They booked 10 people on arrest. Update on staffing issues. Bean thanked the board and Chief Ball for their help and the use of Station 2 during Torch Fest.

**Fire Department Report:** by Chief J. Ball

11 calls for service for June. Reports given on FD programs, grants, training and personnel. Update on Torch Fest and station maintenance.

**Zoning Report:** by C. Weinzapfel

Discussion of park and road end hours. After reviewing, we recommend sending it to the planning commission to review use and time in the police ordinance. The Planning Commission meeting tomorrow night will be in a hybrid form where we will have people present up to capacity of 68. The rest will have to join by Zoom or by phone. This will be my last board meeting. Weinzapfel thanked everyone.

Atkinson said it's always been our intention to have all of our parks and accesses be open dawn to dusk. Derman said you own the parks, you don't own the road end accesses. You have an agreement to maintain them with the county.

The board members decided they would like the planning commission to look at the issue, rather than make a motion tonight. Pesta discussed the problems with ingress and egress for the neighbors. Derman said you bought the property next to a road end access. If it's a road end, is it a public beach? Derman said it's in the ordinance. The question is still open. Cole said we aren't going to solve this tonight. Pessa said he realizes this is a sensitive subject and I want to find a solution that works for everyone.

**Planning Report:** by B. Hefferan

Hefferan clarified the board's desire to look at road end accesses and parks. Hefferan said with Weinzapfel leaving, that will pose some challenges with staffing. To be honest, every time we try to legislate civility and behavior we fail miserably. Tomorrow it will have been a year since we started working on the Torch River RV Park. This is the only thing on our agenda. It is a continuation of the public hearing.

**Ambulance Report**

There is a report in the packet

**Attorney's Report:** by B. Derman

Contacted American Tower regarding our lease. Waiting to hear back. Report on Antrim County Bill Bailey case. Nothing back on FOIA requests from True North. Update on ER District Library survey and Birch Lake Road infraction.

**Supervisor's Report:** by L. Bargy

As far as the American Rescue Plan, we could get upwards of \$200,000. L. Atkinson said she set up much of the structure to do this last December. We haven't seen anyone do motions on this. Elk Rapids hasn't. The application process has opened last Friday and it's a short window and must be done by July 27.

Motion by B. Pharo/T. Cole that we apply for the funds from the American Rescue Plan. Motion carried. 5-0

L. Atkinson read from the newsletter requesting residents take a survey about the township recreation plan. She encouraged everyone to participate. She can also get you a hard copy and it's available by email.

**Library Board Report:** by L. Atkinson

A survey has been ordered for the Island Property. The lease agreement is still pending. The building committee met June 15, and they moved to go forward with a feasibility study for a bigger and better library. At the July meeting, the motion failed for a 4/4 split. It was requested by a board member to create a strategic plan. This would happen after a feasibility study. Without evaluation our decisions, the ERDL is at an impasse.

Jerry Mensing asked about tax money going to the library. Taxes are collected and turned over to the library. Mensing said there would have to be an election to vote to end our funding. Atkinson said if she could talk the board into a feasibility study, then we could look at what our future could be. Maybe we could build a bigger/better library or maybe it should stay at the island. There was a feasibility study done, but it was just done on fundraising. Correct.

Barb Johnson of the ERDL library board said in 2015, we started the process of searching for architects to do this project and expand the library. We had public meetings and talked to all of the groups in town. We put together a packet for the council since they owned the property. Because of all of the community support and that they wanted it to be at the Island House, we went ahead and hired architects. Since then we've lost a few board members and our new board members think we've done the wrong thing and not done our due diligence. Johnson said she feels due diligence was done. It's unfortunate we found this deed, but to talk about moving the library will not sit well for the people who have already donated to the library expansion. S. Ball said we give you a lot of money to manage that library and we don't have a say. Johnson said she came and talked to Liz and Lon about it. S. Ball said she understands the process. You may have come and talked to Lon and Liz, but it was never presented to Milton residents to say if they wanted to expand it or not. Johnson said that was decided because the village owned it. Atkinson said the fact you started this process in 2015 and we voted to pause the fundraising, it's the right time to do a feasibility study. Johnson said we just can't do that because people have donated money for the expansion of the Island House. Atkinson said that's a contract for the initial sketch of the plans. Johnson said there is a whole proposal. We don't have a commitment to go forward with the architect. We aren't saying we are going to move it. We made a commitment to the donors according to Johnson. As a district library, we are separate from our townships. We do what we think is right for the library. Yenich asked what was the rationale for doing a feasibility study on the building project itself. That was for fundraising. Johnson said she can't answer that right now. She'd have to find out.

B. Pharo thanked Johnson for coming tonight.

**Unfinished Business**

None

**New Business**

None

Resolution #2021-16: Revised Poverty Exemption Income Guidelines and Asset Test  
Motion to approve #2021-16 by S. Ball/L. Atkinson  
T. Cole – Yes; L. Bargy – Yes; S. Ball – Yes; B. Pharo – Yes L. Atkinson -Yea  
Motion carried. 5-0

Atkinson is working on map for review regarding signatures on the petition.

### **Public Comment**

Mark White asked what it would take to get it on the ballot to get rid of the library. If we want a library, we will build one ourselves.

Bill Noyer said come to find out that someone is considering a lawsuit about O'Dell and Erickson road end access. This is public land and it's why I pay my taxes. His kids went to watch the sunset and they got harassed. They know the law and the law is from the water to the high water mark. They were berated for being on private land and told to leave, until they spoke up and then they were sworn at. They were accessing public property.

Joe Renis of Ridge Road asked about the sewer extension. There is a difference between a want and a need. In addition, will it go in front of the township hall? This isn't in the master plan. I don't see the reason to have a sewer come out there. Where exactly is this sewer going? We are Milton Township and I don't want to be beholden to Elk Rapids Township. Bargy said we are going to have a special board meeting to go over the petitions we got. We have to hire an engineering company to do a feasibility study. This would come after we decide how many people actually want this, then get a parcel count, and compare with those that signed the petition. Elk Tip is requesting it. Not Cairn Highway.

Terry Stites discussed the sewer project and those who are against it.

Barb Johnson addressed Mark White and the tax money. The money for the expansion is being raised. The tax dollars won't be put toward the expansion.

### **Approval of Bills**

Motion to approve the bills by S. Ball/L. Atkinson. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 8:15 pm.

These minutes are subject to approval at the August 9, 2021 meeting. A copy of these minutes are available at [miltontownship.org](http://miltontownship.org)

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Ball, Clerk