

Elgin Township Board
729 S. McLean Blvd Elgin, IL 60123
Meeting of October 11, 2021 Minutes

The regular meeting of the Town of Elgin, Illinois was held in the board room. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Ken Bruderle at 6:05 p.m. Deputy Clerk Mihalec led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Michael Murschel of Caring Farewells gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Trustees Mark Bialek, Alex Lopez, Janet Rogalla, and Eric Stare, and Supervisor Ken Bruderle were present. **Quorum was established.**

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

There were no general announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Getz spoke about HB 433, eliminating townships, consolidating its functions under Kane County.

Enoch Essendrop stated that he does not see a reason to consolidate local governments. He believes that the older and unincorporated areas are satisfied and that the Township is doing a good job.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Trustee Stare to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021, regular Township Board meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Rogalla. Motion carried 5-0-0.

REPORTS

1. Assessor Comments: The Deputy Clerk read the Assessor's submitted report that was included in the board packet.
2. Road Comments: The Road Crew did its final mowing last week and has started its fourth and final brush pick-up. They are doing several road repairs and patch jobs, along with normal activities such as batteries and shoulder work. Land acquisitions for the Coombs Road are going well.
3. Kane County Sheriff Dept Representative: Not present.
4. South Elgin Police Dept. Representative: Not present.
5. Elgin Police Dept. Representative: Sergeant Rick Demiere encouraged residents to lock their cars, roll up their car windows, and hide their valuables. He also gave a reminder that an unlocked car allows for a burglar to gain access to the house via the garage door opener. Additionally, residents have been leaving garage doors open. The department has been reaching out to kids who need interaction. It has developed a new program (YEP: Youth Empowerment Program) that involves school resources officers and others in outreach mode to offer students access to social services. The EPD will have a Halloween open house on October 28th, and registration information is available on the department's Facebook page. Ring Video Doorbells and other camera services help in getting the word out to neighbors when crimes are committed in a neighborhood.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Review and Audit of Bills/Funds: Discussion held. A motion was made by Trustee Lopez to approve the audit/bills funds for the period on or before 10/11/21 in the amount of \$26,517.43 for General Town fund, \$6,652.14 for General Assistance fund, \$8,123.01 for the Senior fund, \$94,938.29 for the General Road fund, \$2,588.33 for the Insurance fund, for a total of all funds \$138,819.20. Motion seconded by Trustee Stare. Motion carried: 5-0-0.

2. Senior Services Funding & Senior Utility Assistance Update: Supervisor Bruderle stated that the Senior Utility Assistance Program has been in the budget for a few years, but there has not been a mechanism in place until recently for an application process. As seniors are having a tough time, the budgeted \$15,000 will be very helpful to the fifty individuals who received the award from the Township that is paid directly to the utilities. Additionally, all of the senior referendum money allocated for Senior Services Funding has been distributed based on the board's approval of recommendations by the Committee on Seniors. Facebook posts by the recipient organizations of the checks being received has gotten a lot of mileage and created awareness of the Township's impact.

3. Township Newsletter Update: Supervisor Bruderle stated that the Township does a lot and does it efficiently, but that no one knows all of what the Township does. The newsletter – entitled “Greetings from Elgin Township” – has proven to be a great outreach tool and a catalyst for encouraging residents to contact the Township regarding their preferred methods of communication and for residents to better understand via the published list many of the things that the Township does for residents. Additionally, the newsletter has helped greatly with the promotion of the new Senior Access Pass which allows all seniors to participate in Senior Services Associates' activities, events, and other wonderful opportunities. The Senior Access Pass indirectly addresses isolation and/or embarrassment in that it allows them to participate in nearly all of these opportunities at no cost to them. They also will receive the Senior Services Associates membership (a requirement for participation) at no cost, along with an Elgin Township lanyard and mask, and staff has been doing outreach to Senior Access Pass walk-ins regarding SSA opportunities for Township residents. Township staff will go to any senior who cannot come to the Township offices to help them obtain a pass.

4. Native Basin/Butterfly Garden: Ryan Altop/Encap, Inc. presented to the Board regarding the native plantings for the stormwater basins at the east end of the Township's property and the end game. He explained that the advantages of the native plants are that they do not require much water during non-drought years, so they usually survive not being watered. They also offer efficiencies cost-wise for treating the stormwater via their roots and would filter pollution from the water that drains from the parking lots. They also work effectively despite the property's soil, which is primarily clay and gravel. Trustee Lopez asked if the stormwater basins on the Township's property are detention ponds or retention ponds, and Mr. Altop stated that they are detention ponds. Trustee Lopez asked what was there before, and he received the answer that it was previously just weeds.

Mr. Altop offered to have one to two members of his crew train the Road crew so that they could do the future work. Trustee Lopez stated that Encap has trained experts who can help, versus putting the Road crew in an area in which they do not have this specific expertise. Mr. Altop added that, as the drought affected many of the plugs that were planted earlier in the year and the maintenance was discontinued, there is still maintenance that needs to be done, especially because of the drought and because there is still more that would need to be planted to complete the project. Road Commissioner Krabbe stated that the Road crew mows this area three to four times a year, but it has not mowed the area since the plugs were planted early this spring. When Mr. Altop was asked about the consultant element and monitoring of the original contract, he stated that the consultant inspection is not needed, nor is the monitoring. When asked about why Encap stopped maintaining the property, Mr. Altop stated that he thought based on communication issues that they were no longer under contract. However, there is no record of a directive to stop service on the project. Supervisor Bruderle stated that there was a communication breakdown regarding the project that was inherited, starting with the focus of the project being designated a “Pollinator Project” intended to attract butterflies and a walking path that is not recommended; hence, this is why the project stalled earlier in the year.

Trustee Stare stated that the Board has a responsibility to the taxpayers, and he recommended that the issue be tabled, as the Board needs more information. Trustee Lopez explained that because of the building and parking lots, these native grasses would provide the necessary filtering to prevent salt and other chemicals from our property's drainage to go into neighbors' groundwater, and that abatement is required by code. It will save money for the taxpayers, and cleaner water will then be going into the river. Additionally, by using a company such as Encap, the wear and tear on the Township's mowing machines would be avoided, and the expertise regarding the plants would be more cost-efficient. Mr. Altop stated that his preference is to train the Road crew to maintain the property, but he also stated that there could be another company in Elgin that could be cheaper than Encap. However, if the original contract were reinstated, Encap could turn the basin into a native basin via overseeding next year in the winter to help restore the original plugs and move the project forward. Road Commissioner Krabbe suggested that Encap do one more treatment/planting and assessment. Mr. Altop recommended overseeding and stated that Road Commissioner Krabbe's suggestion is currently in the contract at a rate of \$833.

It was decided that the discussion would continue at a later date, but not at the November meeting, as the agenda is very full.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Transportation Funding Request from a Collaboration of PADS of Elgin, Community Crisis Center, Ecker Center, AID, and the Kane County Mental Health Court: Supervisor Bruderle gave the background on past transportation grants to this collaboration and explained that there is a special transportation grant request from the collaboration. While the previous Supervisor gave the presentation in the recent past and the previous board awarded the grant, a representative from the collaboration was to give a presentation to go over their request for \$22,500. As the representative was not present, Trustee Stare stated that the board should not approve the request without a presentation, and he made a motion to table the request until a presentation is given. Motion seconded by Trustee Lopez. Motion carried: 5-0-0.

2. Committee Appointments: Supervisor Bruderle stated that the Township is trying to get the Committee on Youth going. Joann Hartmann and Trustee Stare will be working together to make this happen. Trustee Stare and others will recommend candidates to be nominated for this committee.

A motion was made by Trustee Lopez to appoint Joann Hartmann and Nicole Dean to the Committee on Youth. Trustee Bialek seconded the motion. During the discussion Trustee Bialek asked about the terms of the committee members. Supervisor Bruderle stated that committee members would have staggered terms of one, two, and three years. Former committee members will be consultants to the new committee members.

Regarding the Committee on Seniors, Supervisor Bruderle discussed the conflict-of-interest policy for the committee members with an attorney, and the attorney stated that it is commonplace for qualified committee members to be involved in organizations such as Senior Services Associates. Committee members Jim Fox and Joann Hartmann have received the attorney's recommendation that there be no promoting of an organization during the grant application evaluation process unless all applicants get promoted, and the remaining committee members will also be receiving that information. With both acknowledging this directive and with all committee members continuing to abstain from votes for recommendations to the board regarding organizations with which they are involved, Supervisor Bruderle desires to retain Joann Hartmann and Jim Fox on the committee.

Trustee Stare stated that does not like the promoting of applicants by committee members, and he wants a "fair playing field" for everyone. Trustee Lopez stated that he agrees that advocating and promotion should not happen. Supervisor Bruderle stated that each applicant will only be allowed one representative to present. Trustee Lopez recommended adding a directive to the committee bylaws. Supervisor Bruderle stated that the board liaison to the committee can help with enforcement of the attorney's recommendations. Additionally, Joann Hartmann has created a checklist for the committee to use when evaluating applicants, it takes any emotion out of the allocation process, and it is an excellent decision-making tree.

A motion was made by Trustee Rogalla to appoint Maggie Beyer to the Committee on Seniors. Trustee Bialek seconded the motion. Motion carried: 5-0-0.

A motion was made by Trustee Lopez to reappoint Jim Fox to the Committee on Seniors. The motion was seconded by Trustee Stare. Motion carried: 5-0-0.

3. 2022 Meeting Calendar: Supervisor Bruderle presented the 2022 calendar, which is required to be published a year in advance. It was noted that next October's meeting will be on a Tuesday so as to avoid conflicting with the Monday holiday. A motion to accept the calendar was made by Trustee Stare and seconded by Trustee Rogalla. There was no discussion, and the motion carried: 5-0-0.

4. Social Services Funding Discussion: Supervisor Bruderle noted that Trustees received a separate packet with materials regarding the Social Services Funding requests for homework. In the case of the Social Services Funding requests, the board directly evaluates the applications, unlike the Senior Services Funding process in which the Committee on Seniors evaluates them and then submits their recommendations to the board. A spreadsheet will be sent to the Board members with comparisons of the amounts requested this year and the amounts granted to each organization in the past. Additionally, each organization will have the opportunity to present to the Board at the November meeting. Trustees Stare and Bialek commented on how little time would be available for the evaluation process and discussion. Supervisor Bruderle stated that a special session could be held. He then asked former Trustee/current Kane County Commissioner Vern Tepe for comments on how the application process played out in the past. Commissioner Tepe stated that there is a "really big learning curve the first time you do this." However, via the process, one will gain an in-depth knowledge of the organizations. The questions he said to ask oneself are: Who do you fund? At a lesser amount? At what they ask?

5. Roof Repair/Replacement Process and Options: Supervisor Bruderle asked the Board members for permission to investigate options for repair/replacement of the Township building roof. One option that the roof might be perfect for is solar panels, and he would like to investigate this option and also check for grants for different options. Kane County Commissioner was recognized and mentioned Kane County's 4,500 solar panels installed at the Kane County Judicial Center. Another entity would actually own the panels and the electricity produced, but the county is buying the electricity at a "significantly lower price", giving the county considerable savings.

Other options regarding the installation of solar panels were mentioned, and Supervisor Bruderle stated that they will look at all options. Trustee Lopez brought up examining the warranty of the current roof, while Ryan Altop/Encap, Inc. recommended contacting the Township's insurance company regarding their willingness to offer coverage if solar panels are installed.

Trustee Bialek made a motion to investigate roof options, including solar and roof replacement. The motion was seconded by Trustee Stare. Motion carried 5-0-0.

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENT

Supervisor Bruderle thanked former Township Trustee and current Kane County Board member Vern Tepe for how helpful he has been with sharing his knowledge and experience.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Stare Bialek thanked Trustee Stare for his help with the "Back the Blue" event, as well as Trustee Rogalla, Deputy Clerk Mihalec, and Mrs. Bruderle for attending the event that had estimates of at least 500 in attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next regular meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2021, at 6:00 pm at Township offices, 729 S McLean Blvd. Elgin, IL 60123.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Rogalla moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Stare. Motion carried: 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Mihalec

Karen Dowling, Town Clerk

Date