

**ROSS TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2006 MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Ross Township Board was called to order by Jeff Bither, Supervisor at 7:00 P.M. Roll Call of members showed as follows:

Present:	Jeff Bither, Supervisor	Cynthia Genung, Treasurer
	Martha Chambers, Clerk	Jon Scott, Trustee
	Sid Durham, Trustee	Diana Langshaw, Trustee
Absent:	Owen Murray, Trustee	

Motion by Genung to approve the agenda as proposed, second by Chambers and the motion carried.

Consent Agenda:

Motion by Chambers to approve the Consent Agenda as amended which includes the minutes of 12/22/05, 1/10/06, 1/21/06 and 1/28/06, the Treasurer's Report for January, the bills paid for January and the bills payable for February. The motion was seconded by Langshaw and carried.

Reports:

Fire Dept.:

Genung reported that there has not been a Fire Board Meeting. The Fire Dept. is looking to interview some new firemen.

Ordinance Enforcement Report:

Bither reviewed the Ordinance Enforcement Report from AGS dated February 6, 2006. Powells have had all final inspections and AGS is going to issue an occupancy permit. Bither is still waiting to hear from the DEQ on the Buckner property..

Police Report:

Bither reviewed the police report from the Sheriff's Dept.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Cable Access Discussion:

Randy Walbridge, President of Cable Access was present along with a group from the Cable Access to discuss with the Township Board the value of keeping the three cable access stations. Walbridge stated that cable access offer many services such as the training in and use of high tech quality portable video equipment plus the access to a television studio and the education and use of the equipment necessary to create television at no charge. There are three channels available to the public.

Gull Lake High School and Galesburg Augusta Schools makes the most use of the access center; one of the biggest uses is the message board.

Walbridge questioned the Board on what issues and concerns we have that are making us withhold funds from the Cable Access?

Bither reviewed a letter he wrote to Cable Access on November 17, 2005 regarding the Board's concern about what we are receiving for the 5% franchise fees. Section 4 of the Cable Agreement states that there be no expenditures without an approved budget being accepted by all members of the Cable Commission. The Agreement also calls for an annual audit of the books. Bither reviewed the answer to this

letter stating that the Cable Access has not done an official budget for the last few years and an audit has not been done in several years.

Bither stated that the above situation is not acceptable to the Township Board, if cable access wants the franchise fees then we want to know where the money is going and we want to have some say in how it is spent. Bither reviewed a letter dated December 14, 2005 that the Board directed him to write stating that Ross Township is withdrawing their membership in the Cable Commission. The Township Attorney has stated that because Cable Access has not supplied an approved budget or an annual audit that they are in breach of contract with Ross Township.

Scott stated that he feels that the Township Board has a responsibility to our residents to make sure they are receiving something for the 5% fees that they are paying. The Township Bd. has the right to demand an accounting of where the money is going.

Paul Gobble, member of the Richland Village Council, explained that he originally objected to the Village paying franchise fees to the Cable Access until he realized that the fees are tied to usage and that the funds are not paid out of Village dollars. Gobble stated that he is very supportive of Cable Access.

Brian Carpenter, member of the Cable Commission stated that they are looking to purchase a software program where each community can upload their activities directly to the access channel which would be a great way to promote each community.

It was the consensus of the Ross Twp. Board that since we are paying the franchise fee to Cable Access that we have the right to be part of their budgeting process and to request that an audit of the books be received.

Salary Resolutions for 2006-2007:

Motion by Chambers to establish the salaries for the Supervisor, Treasurer and Clerk at \$39,500 each for the fiscal year beginning 4/1/2006 and ending 3/31/2007; the salaries for each Trustee to be set at \$1,800. The motion was seconded by Langshaw. Roll Call showed: Scott - aye, Genung - aye, Chambers - aye, Bither - aye, Durham - aye and Langshaw - aye and the motion carried.

Resolution for alternate dates/protests by mail for March, 2006 Board of Review:

Motion by Chambers to approve a Resolution to accept alternate dates and protest by mail for the March 2006 Board of Review. The motion was seconded by Genung. Roll Call Vote showed as follows: Langshaw - aye, Durham - aye, Bither - aye, Chambers - aye, Genung - aye and Scott - aye and the motion carried.

Approval of Zoning Ordinance #171:

After review of Zoning Ordinance #171, it was the consensus of the Board to send Ordinance #171 back to the Planning Commission for the following amendments:

Page 8 - bullet #3 - add the following wording at the end of sentence: "except as where might be determined to be necessary to promote, enhance, or protect the ecological balance or integrity of the wetland areas by a wildlife biologist or ecologist."

And

Page 10 - Item #6 - The minimum 100 foot should be consistent with other lakefront setbacks in the Ordinance. Also the word "undisturbed" open space (this wording may be handicapping the developer as some open space areas have been disturbed for a long time and need to be enhanced to create a better habitat). *Need more fundamental language saying that if a developer goes in and does something to enhance the habitat or to protect the waterway or lakeshore then the P/C will provide them with some benefit.

Motion by Durham, second by Genung to send Ordinance #171 back to the Planning Commission with the suggestion that the P/C meet with Jon Scott and incorporate his suggestions into the Ordinance. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Martha Chambers
Ross Township Clerk