

**BENGAL TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEETING 7:00 PM, JULY 14, 2021**

The Bengal Township Board meeting was brought to order by Supervisor McDonald at 7:00 pm.

Members present: Nick McDonald, Sharon Bassette, Eric Boak, Denice Schultheiss, and Stan Sillman

Community present: Brett Feldpausch, Brenda Zlotek, Kurt Koenigsknecht, Glen Feldpausch, Jill Feldpausch, Tim Epkey, Meredith Heisey, Shirley Weber, Gary Weber, Robert A. Thelen, Aime Dedic, Brenden Miller, Darlene Miller, Tom Miller, Tom McComb, Ron Rowell, Dave Pohl, San Simon, Brian Thelen, Rose Thelen, Lewe Ann Thelen, Doug B Thelen. Steve Pung, Marcia Pung, Tom Nobach, Neil Feldpausch, Francena Gartella, Jessi Chant-Smith, and Lori Pung

The **Pledge of Allegiance** was said and the meeting commenced.

Supervisor McDonald presented the **agenda**, Supervisor McDonald moved to accept the agenda as presented, supported by Treasurer Schultheiss, motion carried.

The **May 12, 2021 Board meeting minutes** were presented by Clerk Bassette, Trustee Boak moved to accept the minutes as presented, supported by Trustee Sillman, motion carried. The **June 9 2021 meeting minutes** were presented by Clerk Bassette, Treasurer Schultheiss moved to approve the minutes with changes, supported by Clerk Bassette, motion carried.

Treasurer Schultheiss gave the **Treasurers Report** and reviewed the June Activity Report with nothing unusual to mention. Trustee Boak made a motion to accept the Treasurers Report, supported by Trustee Sillman, motion carried.

Clerk Bassette gave the **Clerk's Report** discussing the volunteers for the Park Exploration Committee, got signatures on the MTA Principles of Governance certificate, reviewed changes to the ZBA membership, and went over the amended Bengal Township Fire Ordinance. A roll call vote was taken for the amended ordinance: McDonald, yes; Schultheiss, yes; Sillman, yes; Bassette, yes; Boak, yes. Trustee Sillman made a motion to accept the Clerk's Report as presented, Trustee Boak supported, motion carried.

Clerk Bassette presented the **current bills to be paid**.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lori Pung had questions about the assessor.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sheriff Report: n/a

1. **Francesca Martella Kehl, the Project Developer for Orsted Onshore North America LLC** (FRKEH@orsted.com) presented the **Bauer Solar Project** they would like to put in the Bengal and Dallas Townships. An “Economic Impact of Bauer Solar Project”* was given to the board members. The company currently is in the process of expanding their Solar Farms across Michigan and the United States with one farm completed in Texas already and many in the beginning stages as they are with the Dallas and Bengal project. She shared the overall benefits of the project and took questions from meeting attendees. Questions and comments were made by:
 - a. Sharon Bassette, Bengal Township (BT): jobs were mentioned as a benefit during construction, what can we expect for jobs after construction, what are the benefits to the township once completed, what happens once the useful life is completed;
 - i. Francesca Marella (Francesca): a local economy boost, during construction they will employ up to 300 workers, after construction there are generally 2 on site managers;
 - ii. Francesca: benefits will be the energy produced will go to 23,000 homes over the course of the years; \$1.6 million aggregate over the years for roads and bridges; \$26,000,000 aggregate over 30 years personal property taxes;
 - iii. Francesca: solar panels should last up to 30 years, Ormsted will make the decision when the panels will be decommissioned, there is a decommission bond that would cover the cost of decommissioning if Orsted didn’t take care of it, but that will not happen, decommissioning will happen within 6 – 12 months after down;
 - b. Brett Feldpausch, Lebanon Township: Purchase Power Agreement, payment calculation per kilowatt hour, 34th for solar radiation, notes Orsted has one active project in the US, fencing code;
 - i. Francesca: was not sure about the payment calculation per kilowatt hour;
 - ii. Francesca: was not certain about the solar radiation;
 - iii. Francesca: true only one in Texas, but working on others like Bengal and Dallas;
 - iv. Francesca: fencing will be done as required by the township;
 - c. Brenda Zlotek, BT: why choose Michigan, what is the efficacy rate in Michigan (11-15% efficacy), how do they make money when there is less sun shining in Michigan, what point are they considered not producing enough energy, who maintains the property;
 - i. Francesca: Ormsted believes that the Michigan projects will maintain levels of efficacy to the level needed to maintain business at the site;
 - ii. Francesca: Ormsted management would make the decision as to when a farm would be decommissioned.
 - iii. Ormsted would not pursue if they did not think it would work;
 - d. Bob Thelen, BT: will Orsted be here in 30 years, intentions of selling its assets, mentions company cannot answer since they’ve only been around for 20 years (1990);
 - i. Francesca: Orsted has no intention of selling its assets;
 - ii. Francesca: it is true that Ormsted began in 1990, but we are doing well and plan to continue in that path;
 - e. Gary Wood, BT: property may be adjacent to his property and they have an easement for drainage ditch, how will Orsted handle property issues like this;
 - i. Francesca: Orsted will abide by the requirements of the township;
 - f. Shirley Webber, BT: how many long-term workers will the property have versus farming workers currently;
 - i. Francesca: 2 employees will maintain the property, cannot respond to farming;
 - g. Tim Epkey, BT: what % of solar panels are toxic, what are the panels made from, why should we be guinea pigs since you only have one other active facility and that is in Texas;

- i. Francesca: Orsted would follow all local, state, and federal requirements, but she does not know the % of solar panel toxicity;
 - ii. No other response given
- h. Jessica Chant-Smith, Bingham Township (Clerk): what will it do the property values, % of sun MI vs Wisc.;
- i. Francesca: Ormsted does not believe there will be a negative impact on property values adjacent to the properties; vegetation buffers could be used as required by the township;
- i. Neil Feldpausch, Dallas Township: where is the company based out of;
 - i. Francesca: Ormsted is a Danish company;
- j. Leanne Thelen, township not given: she and her husband are considering working with Omsted and can see it as an opportunity for them as well as for the community such as schools and roads, requested people consider the resulting benefits;
- k. Lori Pung, BT, (Planning Commission Chair): how many megawatts, screening around the facility, how much would come to the township vs the county, what is the capacity factor (typically 30% Lori added);
 - i. Francesca: unsure of megawatts;
 - ii. Francesca: screening will be as township requires;
 - iii. Francesca: not sure how taxes are divided;
 - iv. Francesca: unsure of capacity factor;
- l. Doug Thelen, no township given: he and his wife are considering working with Omsted and asked that the community can come to a happy medium;
- m. Glen Feldpausch, Essex Township (has farm in Bengal): he is completely against solar farms, there is nothing ag about them;
- n. Steve Pung, BT: can you guarantee our property values will not go down;
 - i. Francesca: Ormsted does not believe there will be a negative impact on property values in the township;
- o. Tom Miller, BT: what % of Bengal vs Dallas;
 - i. Francesca: is will be approximately 50/50
- p. Meredith Hodge, township not given: what if the properties cannot be contiguous, will there be an underground easement that would need to be done, does not like;
 - i. Francesca: not sure that would happen, but it would be done using local and state guidance;
- q. Stan Stillman, BT: will not affect internet service, how much will Ormstead receive in subsidies from the State and Federal Governments;
 - i. Francesca: they do work with local, state, and federal agencies but she does not know the answer to the question about amounts;
- r. Jill Feldpausch, Essex Township (has farm in Bengal): what is the carbon foot print of your traveling vs solar benefits, what are the panels made of, will panels last 30 years and then replaced;
 - i. Francesca: understands but thinks the carbon foot print from travel will be considerably less than the benefits of the solar farm;
 - ii. Francesca: the panels are made from glass, plastic, and polyester, they should last up to 30 years,
 - iii. Francesca: Ormsted will make the decision when the panels will be decommissioned, there is a decommission bond that would cover the cost of decommissioning if Orsted

didn't take care of it, but that will not happen, decommissioning will happen within 6 – 12 months after down;

*A digital copy of the Economic Impact of Bauer Solar Project is available by contacting Clerk Bassette at bengaltownshipclerk2@gmail.com.

2. **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) township funding** was discussed and a motion to complete the paperwork for the funding was made by Treasurer Schultheiss, supported by Supervisor McDonald, motion carried
3. Dave Phol attended the meeting and gave the **Commissioner's Report**, including an update on the Road Commission construction project, the Retirement Healthcare Pension and the general fund updates, September 25th will be the next tire collection, cleanup is October 16th with paper recycling at the Wood Street location, county waiving delinquent dog license fees through the end of September, county extended the emergency declaration until July 31th, ARPA funding opportunities for lost revenue and capital improvements, nationwide opioid law suit.
4. Lori Pung gave an update on **the Planning Commission**, discussing a junk issue between property owners, Tom McComb advises that they are now in compliance. If the complaining party is not satisfied it will have to go to the ZBA.

OLD BUSINESS:

No updates on the **Clinton County Area Ambulance Services**.

No **roads** updates were given.

BOARD COMMENTS: n/a

ADJOURN MEETING:

The meeting ended at 9:35 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Clerk Sharon Bassette.