

SENECA TOWNSHIP
Regular Monthly Minutes
March 10, 2009

The regular monthly meeting of the Seneca Township Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Ersel Schuster at the Seneca Township Building located at 16506 Garden Valley Road, Woodstock, Illinois.

Township Officials in Attendance: Supervisor Ersel Schuster, Trustees Rosemary Bartman, Susan Mathews, Thomas Dahlfors, and Michael O’Leary, Road Commissioner Robert Helfers, Assessor Donald Andrews, and Clerk Dawn Seemann. Absent officials: None.

Guests in Attendance: James Kagel, Dean Rowe, Dick Kaman, Gary Votava, Judy Kavanough, Bob Pope, Mark Keil, Scott Swanson.

Public Speaking: None.

Minutes: Bartman motioned to approve the February 10, 2009 Regular Monthly Minutes as presented. Second by Mathews. Motion passed.

Audit of Current Bills:

Road District – Dahlfors motioned to approve the Road District bills for payment for the period of February 10, 2009 through March 10, 2009 in the amount of \$5,134.75. Second by O’Leary. Voting yes: Bartman, Mathews, Dahlfors, O’Leary, Schuster. Voting no: None. Motion passed.

Town Fund – Dahlfors motioned to approve the Town Fund bills for payment for the period of February 10, 2009 through March 10, 2009 in the amount of \$21,436.21. Second by Mathews. Voting yes: Bartman, Mathews, Dahlfors, O’Leary, Schuster. Voting no: None. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: February 1, 2009 through February 28, 2009, as listed below:

Illinois Fund – O’Leary motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the Illinois Fund for the period of February 1, 2009 through February 28, 2009. Second by Dahlfors. Motion passed.

Illinois Fund	Prev. Bal.	Trans/Prime	Expenses	Income	Ending Bal.
General Assistance	\$26,344.51	0	0	\$9.36	\$26,353.87
Town Fund	\$79,790.38	0	\$24,972.68	\$28.67	\$54,846.37
Road & Bridge	\$141,716.73	0	\$5,642.02	\$49.80	\$136,124.51
Permanent Hard Road	\$77,192.18	0	0	\$27.55	\$77,219.73
Building & Equipment	\$42,393.47	0	0	\$15.07	\$42,408.54

Prime Fund – Dahlfors motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the Prime Fund for the period of February 1, 2009 through February 28, 2009. Second by Bartman. Motion passed.

Prime Fund	Prev. Bal.	Trans/Funds	Expenses	Int. Income	Ending Bal.
General Assistance	\$76,230.40	0	0	\$29.98	\$76,260.38
Town Fund	\$3,175.00	0	0	\$1.24	\$3,176.24
Road & Bridge	\$123,236.76	0	0	\$48.48	\$123,285.24

Guest Speaker:

a. **Dean Rowe, Director of Productions – Global Village Webcast:** Dean Rowe spoke to the board about his plans to possibly have the county board meetings available for viewing on their website. His reason for this is so everyone has a chance to see what is happening in McHenry County without needing to attend the actual meeting. He feels this would be a benefit to the McHenry County residents at election time because they would have the opportunity to see what the elected officials do at the meetings, including their views of specific issues, and how they vote on certain matters. Mr. Rowe would like the support of the townships to back his idea. At this point in time, he stated he would start with the county board meetings and in time hope to get the township meetings online, as well. Cost was not discussed, however, Mr. Rowe did state that volunteer high school students would be taping/recording the meetings. Information was distributed to the board for review. Mr. Rowe and his partner Dick Kaman would like the board to review the information given and offer feedback of what we think of this idea. The township board will also discuss it and possibly draft a letter of recommendation for them.

General Assistance Report: There were no calls this month.

Clerk's Report: Seemann had nothing to report this month.

Road Commissioner's Report: Helpers reported that he no longer uses Marengo Disposal for the road district's garbage pick-up due to having trouble with them. Waste Management is now the company the road district will use for their refuge.

- Helpers received a notice from the county regarding Route 23 being closed beginning April 3rd. The bridge replacement is scheduled to be complete by October 15th. The traffic detour for north or southbound traffic, with the exception of overweight trucks (over 73,280 lbs), is 176 East out of Marengo to Deerpass, north on Deerpass to either River Rd. back to Rt. 23 or continue to Kishwaukee Valley Rd. to Rt. 23. Any trucks over 73,280 lbs or permitted trucks with wide loads their detour route is 176 to 47 to 14 to 23, which is a 23 mile detour, which in Helpers' opinion will make the truckers look for shortcuts. Helpers doesn't understand how the county could allow the state to allow this detour without any compensation to the county or the townships for the road wear. Schuster asked Helpers for a copy of that letter he received. She informed him that the District 6 county board members are meeting with the county transportation department on the 13th and would like to bring this issue up.

- Next Thursday is a road commissioner's meeting about the rock salt issue and securing rock salt for the 2009-2010 winter.

- The township roads were posted February 17th. There are four houses under construction in the township, which Helpers did inform 2 weeks prior to posting the roads and told them to get all their material in because the road conditions are so bad that we're not giving any permits to anybody. Two days after they were posted a load of concrete, bricks, shingles were needed to get to the properties. Helpers stated that last week a truck on Pleasant Valley Road was stopped that was 30,000 lbs over the weight limit. Helpers guessed that the fine was approximately \$2500. Although the township doesn't get any money from the fines, it does educate the drivers that the road posting signs are out there for a reason. The truck enforcement officers will also be at Thursday's road commissioner's meeting to give them more input.

- Helpers informed the board that State Representative Pam Althoff is currently a "non-dedicated" road program member. He explained what the current county code for a road to be developed according to the county specifications is, and stated that there is a homeowners

association of about 50 homes along the river that want their roads brought to county specifications, and then the townships would accept those roads at the homeowners expense. Pam Althoff is trying to get a bill passed in legislation that townships accepts all costs to improve that road with a 40 foot right-of-way. Helfers stated that there are two roads in Seneca Township that are “non-dedicated.” A while back, someone approached Helfers about having one of the roads improved and accepted into the township, to which Helfers told the people that they had to pay for the improvements - that ended the conversation. No requests to improve the other road have been received. He doesn’t feel this will change.

Assessor’s Report: Assessor Andrews informed the board that this time of the year is pretty slow. He stated that when he can, he goes out to take pictures. Due to the weather not much can be done with the measuring either. Until the county gets out the new books he can’t actually figure out what the new taxes should be. The real estate companies “bug” him a lot with information they need.

- Schuster told Andrews that we now have occupancy on the building addition, so he could begin moving in his assessor records.

Planning Commission Report: Information/review/action

A. Commission Activity Report – Committee reviewed/action on pending petitions:

The planning commission reviewed one petition. (#08-71 Freise/Gieske)

B. Zoning petitions for consideration, review, and/or action by the town board:

- i. Petition #08-74: Freise/Gieske – A1 Ag Dist. To E1 Estate Dist – 1 acre:

Schuster sent copies of the information on this petition to the town board prior to the meeting for their review. The petitioner wants to take 1 acre of A1 agriculture zoned land and rezone it to 1 acre of E1 Estate zoned land. The planning commission voted unanimously to oppose the E1 zoning. The petitioner was not present at the planning commission meeting. Bob Pope, who is a planning commission member, stated that they felt this was spot zoning, and thought rezoning it to A2 was a better way to go to keep the property zoned ag, whereas the petitioner could actually do more with the property being zoned A2 rather than E1. The town board had questions regarding the reasoning behind the E1 zoning rather than the A2. Because petitioner George Freise was in attendance at tonight’s meeting, but not on the agenda to speak, Mathews motioned to allow George Freise to address his petition to the board so they could get the answers they are looking for. Second by Dahlfors. Motion passed. Mr. Freise explained to the board that all he wants to do is get his dad’s house zoned so he could buy it out of the estate and move into it because he cannot afford to buy the entire estate. He added that he contacted his attorney about this because he doesn’t know anything about zoning and it was his attorney who suggested the E1 zoning. Mr. Freise stated that he has no objections to changing the zoning to A2 instead of the E1. Upon conclusion of further conversation, Dahlfors motioned to deny the E1 request – but recommend A2 zoning to stay within our land use plan. Second by Mathews. Roll call vote taken - Voting yes: Mathews, Dahlfors, O’Leary, Schuster. Voting no: None. Bartman abstained with no explanation given. Motion passed. Schuster suggested to Mr. Freise to talk to the McHenry County zoning office, rather than go through the expense of the hearing, to see if he could amend the petition before the zoning hearing.

- ii. Merryman Petition – court date moved – A copy of the hearing transcript is available for review. The next court date is March 30, 2009. The petitioner is still claiming that the objection by the county was arbitrary and capricious and they had not right to deny.

C. Zoning Petitions – status:

- i. **Petition #08-31; Schueler; Kunde Rd.** – No further information at this time.
- ii. **Petition #08-13; John & Kristine Benoit – A1 to A1C – Commercial Kennel** - No further information at this time.
- iii. **Petition #08-30; Steven & Susan Schmieding; A1 to A2C** - No further information at this time.
- iii. **Petition #08-51; Michael & Cynthia Winters – Request for a variance** – They were shut down by the county planning department because they are way beyond what they presented to the county as to what their plans stated. They had more ground disturbed, they were putting in manholes, and 10” plastic pipe, they were changing the drainage. New plans must be drawn up.

Old Business: Information/review/action

A. Building Project Update– Schuster informed the board that we now have occupancy on the offices. We didn’t have to do a letter of credit.

- The plans for the driveway were updated and filed.
- Helpers felt that when we are ready to get bids for the asphalt on the driveway we should point out to the people who are bidding that the south edge of the existing blacktop where it meets the gravel has to be saw cut back because it’s all cracked off. He also wondered how the handicap parking was going to be worked into the parking spaces.
- Dahlfors informed the board about the sign he inquired about for in front of the township building. He showed a picture of the proposed sign and said it could be made for approximately \$100. He also suggested getting signage for inside the building that would direct people to the offices.
- Bartman questioned when the driveway in the front of the building would be completed? Schuster said it would be done shortly after the taxes come in. If we wanted it done sooner, we could take out a short-term loan. Bartman feels we should do it as soon as possible because she feels there isn’t much parking in the back.
- Schuster asked the board for permission to purchase an entry rug for the new entrance and finish sealing and waxing the tile. The board feels that more information is needed before proceeding with the tile. O’Leary motioned to direct Schuster to purchase only mats & rugs for the entry ways. Second by Mathews. Voting yes: Bartman, Mathews, Dahlfors, O’Leary, Schuster. Voting no: None. Motion passed.
- Mathews suggested that we have some Eagle Scouts plant our landscaping because they need a community project to do in order to earn their Eagle rank. It would be free labor. The board is okay with that idea.
- There is a key missing from one of the office doors. We’ll need to get that door re-keyed.
- O’Leary informed the board that he has moved all the furniture into the offices that he received as a donation to the town hall office addition.

B. Website – Schuster informed the board that the new website is in the process of being updated. It should be ready by the end of the week.

C. Legislative – McHenry County Council of Governments (McCog) sent a letter informing us of a list of bills they are asking for support on or for us to be aware of.

D. Policy – Building Use – Schuster has been looking into drawing up a policy for the rental of the town hall. In addition, she suggested having the new board follow-up with fulfilling the policy process.

New Business: Information/review/action

- A. Building – update/sign/asphalt/parking spaces – Disregard.**
- B. Budget – Town Fund 2009-2010:** Dahlfors motioned to place the 2009-2010 Town Fund Budget on display until the April 14, 2009 Budget Hearing. Second by O’Leary. Motion passed.
- C. Budget – Road District 2009-2010:** Dahlfors motioned to place the 2009-2010 Road District budget on display until the April 14, 2009 Budget Hearing. Second by Bartman. Motion passed.
 - The Town Fund and Road District Budget Hearings are set for April 14, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. respectively.
- D. 2008-2009 Certified Audit:** Schuster informed the board that this year we need a certified public audit. The board decided to let the newly elected board send out letters to get the cost on this. FYI – Whoever does the audit must know the GASBY 34 accounting.
- E. Annual Meeting Agenda:** Mathews motioned to put the 2009 Annual Town Meeting Agenda on the floor for discussion. Upon the conclusion of the review/discussion of the proposed 2009 Annual Town Meeting Agenda and with the correction of the word “amended” being removed, Mathews motioned to approve the 2009 Annual Town Meeting Agenda. Second by Dahlfors. Motion passed.
- F. Township Road Speed Limits:** The McHenry County Division of Transportation sent a letter to the township regarding speed limits for township roads for the board to review.

Other: Information/review/action

- Schuster informed the board that she received information from Lindow’s Appliances in Marengo advertising a floor model sale they are having. She asked if anyone would like to check out the sale to see if there is a refrigerator that would be appropriate for the new town hall kitchen. O’Leary volunteered to look into this.

Adjourn: At 8:45 p.m. Dahlfors motioned to adjourn tonight’s regular monthly meeting. Second by Bartman. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn M. Seemann
Township Clerk