



Shields Township

906 W. Muir Avenue, Lake Bluff, IL 60044

Regular Meeting of the Shields Township Board of Trustees

Thursday September 19, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)

LAKE COUNTY) SS.

TOWN OF SHIELDS)

THE TOWN BOARD OF SHIELDS TOWNSHIP held its Regular Monthly Meeting on Thursday September 19, 2024, at 5:30p.m.

PRESENT:

Lisette Rothing	Deputy Clerk
Jeff Urso	Supervisor
Brady Andersen	Town Trustee
Michael Machnicki	Town Trustee
David Weil	Town Trustee

ABSENT:

Vanessa Grum	Clerk
Matt Garrity	Town Trustee

- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call:** Supervisor Urso called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Supervisor Urso led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:33 p.m.
- III. **Comment From Supervisor Urso:** Supervisor Urso stated that a member of the public brought to his attention that a Township credit card was improperly used by a Township employee. Specifically, the card was used to make a \$75 contribution to a local political campaign. Upon learning this matter Supervisor Urso immediately addressed the issue with the employee in

question. The employee explained that the charge was made in error and has since reimbursed the Township in full. Supervisor Urso extended his gratitude to the member of the public who brought this issue to light. He also stated that as the Treasurer, he takes his responsibility of public funds very seriously. The misuse of taxpayer dollars, regardless of the amount, is unacceptable. Since Supervisor Urso has taken office, the primary focus is ensuring that the residents of Shields Township receive maximum value for their tax dollars. He knows that the Township has drastically reduced administrative costs while simultaneously enhancing the services provided to our residents. Supervisor Urso has taken immediate and decisive steps to maintain the public's trust and ensure that such issues do not reoccur. Effective immediately, the following remedial measures have been implemented. There will be a comprehensive audit of all Township credit card statements for the past 12 months. Additionally, all Township employees will undergo mandatory ethic training within the next 90 days. Finally, we have asked the attorney to review the Township's policies and procedures going forward.

IV. Public Comment: Three (3) minutes per speaker

- a. Janice Schnobrich:** Stated on the front page of the Shields Township website, the second paragraph seems to be a mission statement that reads “we are dedicated to meeting the needs of our community in a fiscally sound and responsible manner...”

The Board report for the year end February 29,2024, listed legal fees for the Town, Road and Assessor totaling \$145,141.33. The legal fees do not appear to have met any needs of the Shields Township community in a fiscally sound and responsible manner. The Roads report for the year end February 29, 2024, listed the new truck and new golf cart totaling \$113,083. Mrs. Schnobrich said she made some FOIA requests on September 8, 2024, one of which concerned the golf cart. The cost of it, who uses it, what is it used for, where it is stored, etc. Mrs. Schnobrich received an invoice for the golf cart and was asked to touch base with Supervisor Urso for any further questions. The golf cart does not appear to meet any needs of the Shields Township community in a fiscally sound and responsible manner. Mrs. Schnobrich stated the other FOIA request involved the cost and placement of speed humps in the Knollwood area. Shields Township gave an extension letter as they needed more time to find and gather all the information responsive to the request. Mrs. Schnobrich stated that she has yet to see any maps or authorization forms for the placement of the humps. The speed bump efforts do not appear to meet any real needs of the community in a fiscally sound and responsible manner. The final FOIA was a request for receipts which the Township needed more time to gather. These things appear to stem from lack of sound accounting practices.

- b. **Kathy Blahunka:** Stated the Supervisor and Road Representative hired contractors to paint directional arrows on the speed humps in front of Jeff Urso's neighbor's house at 9pm on September 4th. It now seems that 4 individuals who have made comments about the Supervisor or Road Representative that they did not like, now have speed humps in front of their homes. Additionally, Mrs. Blahunka urged the Board to not approve the right-of-way ordinance. This might be a potential avenue for bullying. The document needs careful review to assure it is clear to the public prior to approval. How would the Board hold the public accountable if all historical road records were destroyed. If the Township does not have the records, the public should not be responsible for having the record. Mrs. Blahunka also wanted to make sure that everyone is aware that the budget reporting through August show a spend of \$8100 through the Township credit card. The charges included items from 3 restaurants, a donation to A Safe Place and a donation to Grum for Lake County, who is a candidate for the Lake County Board. Mrs. Blahunka believed those last two expenditures to be illegal. She also noticed there are office Supplies purchased from various vendors like Target, staples, Ace hardware, Menards, Amazon and Sams Club and Illinois Tollway. Mrs. Blahunka stated as a taxpayer from a municipality whose road funds were reallocated to the Town fund two years in a row, this kind of spending makes her angry. This does not seem responsible use of tax dollars.
- c. **Ben Miller:** Stated that a 'no parking sign' was installed by his residence and said that people still park there, and no law enforcement actions have been taken. Was hoping something could be done about this. Wonders why the Township is not enforcing this.
- d. **Janice Aull:** Stated she is the one who wrote and managed the \$60k foster avenue grant project. On April 22, Earth Day, the Township removed the fencing and 'no mow' signs for the Foster Avenue project. At the time, it was said that the Township would not cut down the area. On August 22, the Township cut the full 700 feet of native plants and shrubs. When Mrs. Aull inquired about why the area was cut, the Township lacked any substantial reasoning or proof for the need to cut. Mrs. Aull urged the Board to use their business expertise and common sense when deciding about the right-of-way Ordinance. She is hoping they will identify and discuss the core problem. Determine if the lawyer incorporated the correct laws passed last month by the State of Illinois regarding the use of native plants to support proper stormwater management. Mrs. Aull feels concerned that the current ordinance does not require documented proof like photos, approval from the board or appeal process prior to any action being taken by the Township. Mrs. Aull

just wants the Board to be rational with the decision since taxpayers rely on them to shape policies that are fair and equitable to the taxpayer.

- e. **Josh Hucker:** Stated that the right-of-way ordinance does not seem to be very clear to the public and is written in a way to benefit Shields Township. Mr. Hucker also talked about the speed humps in the Knollwood neighborhood and how they are inconsistent in height and do not meet ADA standards. Mr. Hucker is looking for transparency and clarity on both matters.

V. Reports:

- a. **Supervisor:** Supervisor Urso addressed the public comments first by stating that Roads are not part of any ADA compliance laws as he has mentioned and proven to a different resident in the past. As far as enforcing parking signs, we urge the community to call the Lake County Sheriff if they feel there is a problem there. Supervisor Urso reiterates that we are a responsive community and we do not have our own police department to micromanage these efforts. When it came to striping the speed humps, we use Lake County as they are much more inexpensive. We do not have control on the time frame in which they come out to stripe the humps. They probably come out at the evening hours as a convenience since there tends to be less traffic at the 9pm hour. And finally, Supervisor Urso addressed the concerns that residents had about the Township spending and like he said he will be taking measures to ensure these things do not go unnoticed going forward.
- b. **Trustees:** No report.
- c. **Assessor's Office:** No report.
- d. **Community Service Committee:** No report. Supervisor Urso asked if Committee could investigate the Grants and recommend any renewals to the Board next month.
- e. **Road & Bridge Committee:** Supervisor Urso stated the Roads Committee had a meeting and unanimously agreed upon the right-of way ordinance to be passed by the Board of Trustees. He also wanted to let the public know that Kimley Horn will be doing some engineering for core samples around the area.

VI. Approval of Bills

- a. **Town Fund:** Trustee Machnicki motioned to approve the Town Fund for \$14,496.28 and Trustee Andersen seconded the motion. Deputy Clerk Rothing took roll call and motion passed.
- b. **GA Fund:** None

- c. **Road & Bridge Fund:** Trustee Weil motioned to approve the Road Fund for \$26,603.73 and Trustee Machnicki seconded the motion. Deputy Clerk Rothing took roll call and motion passed.

VII. Old Business:

- a. **Approval of Resolution to set the Compensation of Elected Township Officials of Shields Township, Lake County, Illinois:** Supervisor Urso let the public know that every 4 years the Board of Trustees must set the compensation for the next election on April 1, 2025. The Township code requires the Township Board to set the compensation of all Township Officers at least 180 days before the next terms of office. Shields Township presented a compensation that is a flat rate for the first year then the compensation will increase 2% every year after. If the next Supervisor or Assessor decided that they want to be full time, then they are able to trigger health insurance. As for now, Supervisor Urso is part time and will not be receiving health insurance. Supervisor Urso asked if there is a motion to approve resolution NO. 091924-01 as presented. Trustee Machnicki motioned to approve, and Trustee Anderson seconded the motion.
- b. **Approval of Ordinance Regulating Rights-of-Way under the Jurisdiction of Shields Township, Lake County, Illinois:** Supervisor Urso stated the draft Ordinance was discussed at the last meeting. Since that time Supervisor Urso met with the Township Attorney to finalize the ordinance, The Road & Bridge Committee has reviewed and approved the document. Finally, we distributed a final draft ordinance to the Board Members to review before the meeting. (A lot of discussion ensues with community members concerns). Supervisor Urso clarified to the community that all the laws on the ordinance are already in place. This Ordinance is to reiterate to the community what things will be enforced when it comes to rights-of-way in the Township. Supervisor Urso stated that we already have the authority to enforce and fine anyone who does not mitigate the problem in a timely manner. This document is simply a way to inform the public of the parameters. Trustee Anderson motioned to approve Ordinance NO. 091924-01 and Trustee Weil seconded the motion.

VIII. New Business:

- a. **Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2024:** Trustee Anderson motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Weil seconded the motion.
- b. **Authorization to Dispose of Surplus Road District Equipment by Public Auction:** Supervisor Urso stated that the equipment will be Auctioned off by Obenauf Auction

Services, Inc. Things like an old trailer, snowblower and plow will need to go. Trustee Machnicki motioned to approve getting rid of the Road District Surplus by Public Auction. Trustee Weil seconded the motion.

- c. **Award of Contract for Forest View Drive Repaving Project:** Supervisor Urso stated that Lake County puts out the bid for paving and oversees the entire process. They are extremely professional and always strive to get the best price. Subbing this kind of work out to the County is much more beneficial than hiring a private contractor. Chicagoland Paving Contractors Inc came in with the best bid to pave Forest View Drive at \$142,000. Trustee Weil motioned to approve contract and Trustee Anderson seconded the motion.

IX. Executive session: None

X. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:40p.m.