

Merrill Township Special Board Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2017

Agenda

1. Barry Baldwin called meeting to order 7:03 pm
2. Frank Jackson led the Pledge of The Flag
3. Denise Suttles led prayer
4. Roll Call- Present were; Supervisor, Barry Baldwin, Clerk Janet Osmolinski, Treasurer Cathy Stroop, Trustee Denise Suttles, and Trustee Frank Jackson.
5. Public Comment- None
6. Assessor- Barry Baldwin introduced Mark Barnett candidate for Assessor . The Board was asked to interview Mark as Barry Baldwin and Janet Osmolinski had both met and interviewed Mark at an earlier date.

Denise Suttles- How long has Mark been assessor, Mark replied over 15 years, he is licensed, along with his wife who is also an assessor and would help with Merrill Township. He keeps office hours at his home and had a dedicated phone line for just office calls. He is assessor for Lilley Township, Lake Township in Lake County along with a few others.

He is asking for \$10 per parcel (per Cathy Stroop) this is a fair rate some assessors are asking \$15 and more. Merrill has approximately 2700 parcels.

Frank Jackson- How long assessor at Lilley, Per Mark over 10 years. The first thing Mark would do is review records for next year taxes. Catch up on phone calls, take care of paperwork left on Earl Spalo's (previous Assessor who passed away) desk. Mark would meet with Earl's wife Kay Spalo and get work that is still at Earl's desk. Mark would bring his wife to the meeting. As no one can find Earl's passwords to his computer not sure how much information Mark would be able to get. Mark would not be able to spot vacant land or do the whole year at once. The work that has been left is priority. Along with PRE's (homestead), VA exemptions and poverty exemptions. Mark has confirmed with Newaygo County that he can get Merrill Township data base, if hired. Mark stated the residences of Merrill Township should pay the taxes they were billed and then complete out the different forms needed for exemptions.

Cathy Stroop- How closely does he, Mark, work with the treasurer at Lilley Township? Mark has his name, address and phone number on the tax bills. He and Lilley work together on address changes. Most important that address changes get to county. Mark would have a cell phone number to give to board members in case he is out of his office we can still get in touch. Cathy added she had not heard any negative comments from the Newaygo County Equalization Department.

Janet Osmolinski- Asked if Mark would have office hours here at Merrill Township? Per Mark no his office hours are in his home. He would stop every 2 weeks to check on mail or anything else he might have to get. Mark does everything electronically.

Barry Baldwin stated he called Lilley Township they spoke highly of Mark, Lilley. BOR also spoke highly of Mark.

7. Public Comment- The board turned the meeting over to the residence to ask questions. Several questions were asked and Mark answered all of them. A question was even asked about a certain zoning issue and Mark answered that also.

8. Continued discussion by the board:

Denise brought up the fact that she felt the looking to hire an assessor to replace Earl Spalo has been dragged out. This should have been in the works long before Earl passed. Janet Osmolinski, reminded Denise that she had brought this up at 3 different board meetings and was told by Barry Baldwin nothing will be done at this time. Denise agreed, she remembered those conversation at the board meetings. Denise stated she hoped that business would be handled better in the future as now we are in crisis.

It was brought up that no one on the board had seem any resumes that Barry had received. Nor was an ad placed in the Times Indicator. Our board procedures state Barry as head of the department can weed through the resumes and bring the best candidates to the board. However, the open position should have been placed in the paper. Janet Osmolinski, read the hiring procedures to the board. Frank stated the position should have been in the paper. Frank is interested in hiring Mark but it needs to be done correctly especially as a few of the residence are looking to make trouble for the board. Janet felt we should at least put an ad in the Times Indicator and see what happens. After some more discussion it was decided the hiring of the assessor was not following procedures.

Barry Baldwin made the motion to hire Mark Barnett at \$10 per parcel starting on August 1, 2017. Frank Jackson seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Frank Jackson Yes; Cathy Stroop No; Janet Osmolinski No; Denise Suttles No; Barry Baldwin refrained from voting as the Nays had carried the motion.

Adjourned – Barry Baldwin adjourned at 8:05pm

Janet Osmolinski
CLERK