

**GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
WATER & SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES ~ MAY 21, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A Water & Sewer Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Tim Haagsma at 4:03 p.m. on Monday, May 21, 2012 at the Gaines Charter Township Offices located at 8555 Kalamazoo Avenue SE, Caledonia, Michigan 49316.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Tim Haagsma, Jeff Gritter, Jan Boone, Don R. Hilton, Sr.  
Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mike Kortman

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

*Jan Boone made a motion to approve the November 21, 2011 minutes, supported by Don R. Hilton, Sr.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.

Nays: None.

Abstain: None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**CURRENT MATTERS:**

**Mobile Home Park Containment Program – Southwood Estates**

Mike Kortman explained that Southwood Estates Mobile Home Park is proposed as the next project in the Mobile Home Park Containment Program. Southwood has two separate water services resulting in a higher estimated cost (\$45,500) than previous projects. Two quotes have been submitted for each part of the projects.

Tim Haagsma asked what the status of the program is?

Mike Kortman replied that there was one more project to be completed next year.

Tim Haagsma stated that it makes sense to go with the cheapest quotes received.

*Jeff Gritter made a motion to recommend approval of the Southwood Mobile Home project using the bids submitted by Lee's Trenching (\$3,800) and Generation Builders (\$5,840) to the Township Board, supported by Don R. Hilton, Sr.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.

Nays: none.

Abstain: none.

### **8197 Kalamazoo Avenue Payment Plan Request**

Jeff Gritter explained that Mr. Jim Mayo of 8197 Kalamazoo Avenue had experienced a failure of his septic system several weeks ago. Mr. Mayo owns a 3 acre parcel with 300 feet of frontage resulting in an extremely high connection charge of \$26,713.40. Mr. Mayo and his wife were living without septic or sewer service for a week. Due the emergency circumstances, the Mayos were allowed to connect to the sanitary sewer system. Mr. Mayo would like to participate in a payment plan to pay for the connection fees.

Jan Boone explained that it is quite a hardship for these residents to pay a \$26,000 connection charge up front.

*Don R. Hilton, Sr. made a motion to recommend approval of a 15-year payment plan with an interest rate of 4% to the Township Board, supported by Jan Boone.*

Discussion: Jim White of Mika, Myers, Beckett & Jones has recommended an interest rate of 4% for this payment plan.

Ayes: All.

Nays: none.

Abstain: none.

### **9571 Eastern Avenue Variance Request**

Jeff Gritter explained that Mr. Dan Fennema is building a house at 9571 Eastern Avenue in Gaines Township. Mr. Fennema has requested a variance from Article 12, Section 1202 c. of the Gaines Township Water & Sewer Ordinance which states that all water services must be constructed of an approved copper material. Mr. Fennema would like to connect to public water but the cost for copper would be excessive and has asked to use polyethylene material instead.

*Don R. Hilton, Sr. made a motion to recommend approval of the variance request to the Township Board provided that all other BGUA, AWWA, and State of Michigan standards are met and a tracer wire is installed, supported by Jan Boone.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.

Nays: none.

Abstain: none.

**1056 – 60<sup>th</sup> Street Refund Request**

Jan Boone explained that Ms. Grace Albers had a leak in a water pipe on her property that caused a large bill. Dan Van Dyke of the BGUA went to the property and located the leak in a pipe in an old pump house. The water did not go into the sewer system. Jan reviewed Ms. Albers' usage for the previous five years and has recommended a refund in the amount of \$197.96.

*Don R. Hilton, Sr. made a motion to recommend approval of the refund request in the amount of \$197.96 to the Township Board, supported by Jeff Gritter.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.

Nays: none.

Abstain: none.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

**Dutton Industrial Drive Watermain Improvements**

Jeff Gritter stated that Kamps Hardwoods of 6925 Dutton Industrial Drive had recently constructed a new building. During the planning review process, the Planning Commission noted that there is no public water available to Dutton Industrial Drive. In 2003 and 2004, the township worked with Vandellen Steel to draft an easement to install public watermain but the easement was never finalized. The Planning Commission raised concerns regarding the several vacant and commercial sites without public water. He would like the Committee's input.

Tim Haagsma said it makes sense to discuss the easement with them again.

Jeff Gritter added that sanitary sewer is available but there is limited use for the parcels on the street due to the lack of public water.

Jan Boone asked if condemnation was an option?

Jeff Gritter replied that it would be up to the Committee to pursue that option.

Tim Haagsma said that we should ask politely first.

Don R. Hilton, Sr. said this negotiation has been ongoing for over 15 years.

Jeff Gritter stated that Mr. Kamps said he is willing to pay for water because it would pay for itself over time in reduced insurance premiums for his business located on Dutton Industrial Drive.

*Jan Boone made a motion that Jeff Gritter pursue negotiations with the Property Owner for a watermain easement agreement so that public water service can be provided to Dutton Industrial Drive property owners, supported by Don R. Hilton, Sr.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.

Nays: none.

Abstain: none.

### **Long Term Capital Improvement Projects**

Jeff Gritter submitted a copy of the capital improvement list that the BGUA is required to file with the MDEQ. The list gives a good idea of where improvements are necessary.

### **Water Meter Replacement Program**

Jeff Gritter reported that he and Jan Boone had discussed the need for a water meter replacement program. Water meters become less accurate over time. Some of the meters were installed in the 1980's and need to be replaced. Replacing the meters would also improve the efficiency of the meter reader as they would be upgraded to the latest meter reading technology (radio read-out). The meters would be replaced by BGUA staff as time allows; required operation and maintenance activities would continue to take priority.

Jan Boone added that it would also increase safety as the meter reader would not remain in one location for any length of time.

Jeff Gritter stated that the new meters would also decrease errors as the meter reader would not have to manually enter data. The program would cost approximately \$92,000 per year and over a four year period all manual meters in the Gaines water system would be replaced.

Don R. Hilton, Sr. stated that this would be an expensive project but it could be more costly to wait until a later date.

Tim Haagsma said he noticed that his bill increased after his meter replaced. Given the accuracy of the new meters, it is probably in the best interest of the water system to replace the meters.

Jeff Gritter said that the older meters aren't as accurate; so customers with newer meters are making up the difference. Accuracy of water meters degrades over time as it is a mechanical device that does wear out.

Jan Boone added that meter replacement should be an ongoing program for the Township. In the past the Township has not invested much in updating the water meters and it's time to put money back into the system to keep it up to date and to be as accurate as possible in billing.

Tim Haagsma said that it is a good idea to start the program and then budget something each year to continue this program into the future.

*Jeff Gritter made a motion to recommend approval of the Meter Replacement Program to the Township Board to replace 250 manual meters per year, supported by Jan Boone.*

Discussion: none.

Ayes: All.  
Nays: none.  
Abstain: none.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

*Don R. Hilton, Sr. made a motion supported by Jan Boone that Water & Sewer Advisory Committee Officers continue as follows:*

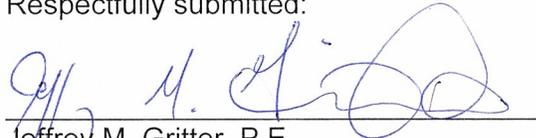
- 1.) *Chairman – Tim Haagsma;*
- 2.) *Vice Chairman – Jan Boone; and*
- 3.) *Secretary – Jeff Gritter.*

Discussion: None.  
Ayes: All.  
Nays: None.  
Abstain: None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Tim Haagsma adjourned the meeting at 4:46 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted:



Jeffrey M. Gritter, P.E.  
Township Engineer