

**GREEN GARDEN TOWNSHIP  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 18, 2023**

The Green Garden Township Annual Meeting was called to order by Clerk, Crissy Kraft at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, in the Green Garden Town Hall. There were 35 electors present, plus, 4 non-resident.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**SELECTION OF MODERATOR**

Clerk Kraft called for nominations for a meeting moderator. Bill Wagner nominated Don Murday. There was a second motion by Gary Mueller. Clerk Kraft asked for any other nominations. Belinda Olszewski nominated Dean Christofilos. There was a second by Dennis Olszewski. Clerk Kraft called for a vote by a show of hands for the two electors, Don Murday or Dean Christofilos to be moderator of Annual Town Meeting. The results were, 13 votes for Don Murday and 18 for Dean Christofilos. Clerk Kraft asked for a motion to elect Dean Christofilos as moderator of the Annual Town Meeting. Don Murday made the motion, seconded by Jerome Wayman. All in favor say AYE, motion carries unanimously. Oath of Moderator administered by Clerk Kraft.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF TOWNSHIP MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

Clerk Kraft read the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held April 12, 2022, prepared by Clerk Kraft. Dean Christofilos asks for motion to approve minutes. Kim Koran makes the motion, seconded by Jim Hilliard. Christofilos asked if any discussion. Belinda Olszewski wanted to add that Trustee Newton provided a calendar showing the 18th is the first Tuesday after Passover, therefore the date being used by the clerk and the moderator was based on the Trustees assistance and wanted it documented. Christofilos asks for a second in favor of amending the minutes, seconded by Don Murday, all in favor with Aye, motion carried unanimously.

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Christofilos asked Clerk Kraft to distribute or read the AFS. Clerk Kraft said it was posted on the bulletin board in the vestibule. Jane Bushong said according to TOI it is not correct and we either have to read every line of the financial report or it has to be distributed. The township attorney noted that there is case law supporting that posting on the walls of town halls is acceptable and in compliance with the statute and is the general practice. Christofilos asked Jane Bushong if she was not familiar with it and wanted it read and she said yes, believed the public should have it read. Jane Bushong made a motion read the annual financial statement. Clerk Kraft then told Christofilos that she is now to be taking minutes and if they needed to be read then he would have to do it because after giving the meeting over to the moderator her job is to clerk. Christofilos asked for someone to get the document and told Jane it was quite lengthy, Jane asked if we could change the motion and make copies since we had a printer and was told she could amend the motion. Jane Bushong makes a motion for the public to have copies, Christofilos asked if anyone would volunteer to make copies, township attorney suggested to have those wanting a copy to raise their hands to make only necessary copies. Christofilos questioned counsel and he stated his name, Bryan Wellner, the township attorney and then Christofilos asked if he lived in the township and he stated he did not live in the township but is the township attorney. Christofilos asked for a raise of hands and came up with 15 copies, someone questioned if it was available electronically to not make 150 pages, Christofilos did not know and after discussion went forth with the copies. Don Murday suggested posting them on the website, no later than tomorrow. Christofilos objected and proceeded asking for a motion to print copies to make available at the meeting. Belinda Olszewski makes the motion, seconded by Sue Shepherd. Christofilos asked if there were any discussions, Bill Wagner asked for a motion to post them on the website, a resident suggested just printing a couple copies for people to share if they want to review them to then ask questions and also put on the website. Christofilos asks for an amendment to put on the website rather than make copies for this evening. A resident commented that at this point they could have been read already. Ralph Dietz asked if the meeting would be postponed since the time its posted on the website and react on it the meeting is over. Bill Wagner stated that questions concerning should be brought up at regular town meetings. Christofilos asked everyone to address the moderator if wanting to speak so it does not get crazy. Belinda Olszewski asked if the financials are posted monthly outside the door. Bill Wagner said that was not what he said and what he did say was if it is posted on the website the time to bring up the questions would be the next monthly meeting. A resident asked if copies could be made for those that want it and post on the website. Christofilos said that was the first motion to make 15 copies and said do it that way unless they wanted to challenge the moderator. Christofilos wanted to ask for a vote, if the discussion was over, to see if it is to be posted on the website and not printed and asked if that was correct, Bill Wagner said correct. Again Bill Wagner makes the motion, seconded by Cherie Newton. Christofilos asked for a call of hands with Aye 11 and those opposed 14, motion is set aside. Christofilos addressed the original motion

from Jane Bushong printing 15 copies, Jane Bushong made the original motion, seconded by Sue Shepherd, Christofilos asked if any discussion, hearing none asked for a show of hands vote, all in favor Aye 17 Nays 6, motion carries.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Christofilos asked for a few minutes to share thoughts regarding public comments, he mentioned if commenting to stand, if able, if not raise your hand, that there is no 2 minute limit, have as much time as you'd like. He is following parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules. If motions are made there will be a second and then discussion, he noted its very important the person who makes the motion is entitled to speak first. Everyone has a right to speak, the discussion should be related to the pending motion, and avoid using personal names, direct to moderator not particular persons. Kim Koran asked for a motion to put on the website so its always there to review at any time from this day forward, every year. Don Murday asked before doing so, and explained that in order for something to be moved it needs to be on the agenda, public comments are not for making motions, if there is a motion to be heard then it has to be on the agenda, if not on the agenda it cannot be heard. Clerk Kraft also said it was not her understanding either and Christofilos said it was not his understanding. Don Murday asked if it could be referred to the township attorney and Christofilos, said with all due respect, this isn't a court of law, and was not interested in an attorney's viewpoint, but was interested in the procedure. Bryan Wellner said he could provide the benefit that the open meetings act have set and if it's not on the agenda action cannot be taken and if action is taken on something not on the agenda a complaint can be filed with the Attorney General's Office, that it is a serious issue. Christofilos asked if anyone had the township book, Wellner said it may not be in a book as it an Open Meetings Act statute, clerk Kraft found information on it and Christofilos asked what it was and she said the Clerks book from the state. Christofilos read the rule aloud from the Township Clerks of Illinois Clerk's handbook, if not on the agenda it cannot be heard but items could be considered at a special meeting at a later date. Don Murday suggested discussing at the next meeting to have a motion made to put financials on the website. Christofilos asked if it could be discussed but not in motion, Don Murday responded in public comments it could be discussed but a motion could not be made and the discussion ended. Belinda Olszewski commented on the March 31, 2021 Green Garden Financial Statement read a paragraph from it, she also went through numerous minutes posted on the website where general assistance fund training were noted and nothing has been done with the \$38,000 dollars or given to residents. Bill Wagner asked if anyone had come to the board asking for that money in which counsel, Bryan Wellner suggested that the public commenters give their comments but no other discussion, that it is not back and forth, it's a time for individual comment. Bryan Wellner, spoke on the proposed resolution and explained township government, powers of the township/electors, requests of electors, and how the board moves forward with requests. He also said there were no plans to build a township hall and if it were to change the electors would be involved and the imminent actions that would be taken. Bryan Wellner commended whoever began the CAPITAL fund, that having money in the capital funds is of benefit to the citizens for the future and that the resolution tonight has limited effect. Kim Koran had a question for the attorney which was if the electors are involved in any improvements made to the building or if just done by the town board. Bryan Wellner said there would probably not be any elector involvement for improvements within the building by way of votes at a meeting like this and could always be involved with public comments or talking with the board members. Monroe Striggow asked what funds/money comes out of that go into the capital fund and who has the right to move that money. Dan Butler explained following the set agenda, how Robert's Rules can be confusing, its designed to get meetings done quickly and through as much information as possible, so doing public comments generally not answering. That Robert's Rules there'll be a new discussion in which it could be brought up but not if not on agenda and could ask to have a discussion you'd like added for a meeting. Christofilos thanked Butler for good clarification and said for public comments to say what you'd like to say and then address at another meeting. Heidi Christofilos commented on the fabulous job the township has done with the website and asked if possible to put on the website information on what the general assistance fund could cover for residents of Green Garden. She is concerned that people have needs but may not know where to go or whom to ask and wants to assure people know there are funds set aside for them.

## **VOTE ON PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING TOWN HALL**

The resolution has to do with future plans of township hall, Christofilos read the proposal. After the reading Christofilos asked for a motion to accept the resolution as read, Belinda Olszewski asked for a motion to have a discussion about it, Christofilos explained there would be a discussion and asked if she was making a motion to accept the resolution for the future of town hall, as stated and read and she said yes. Motion made by Belinda Olszewski, seconded by Don Murday. Belinda Olszewski said she attends every meeting and that there is a lot of property to build a town hall, if there was a ballpark figure, why couldn't a commercial property that already exists

be purchased for town hall to go into, and why on March 31, 2021 it showed zero in the capital fund and all of sudden went up to \$650,000, where did it come from and asked for transparency and share their plans. Bill Wagner stated he had put together information on how the capital fund started and a better perspective and if ok with the moderator come up front and follow his notes on his laptop to better inform the people of the history behind all of it. Christofilos asked the history behind the capital fund and the resolution, Wagner said yes since the resolution is directly addressing the capital funds, Christofilos said sure, absolutely and appreciated it. Wagner started by saying there were not 40 acres like stated in the resolution where a new town hall could be built, but have an active town hall renovation committee that reports monthly to the board meetings. He points out that the resolution strategically only mentions two of four alternatives. He explained how typical government bodies work and that the current board is different in that unlike others they take on a major capital project where they borrow funds because taxpayer funded bonds are easy to come by as long as there are property taxpayers which places the burden of debt on next generation. The idea of debt for future children or spending tax dollars on debt services is not responsible spending and as much as possible avoid paying interest charges. The point of his explanation is one of the alternatives in the resolution is to give the money back and giving the money back is not responsible planning. Giving the money back would mean borrowing money for a new town hall and paying interest. Another alternative mentioned is upgrade existing town hall, where reporter Karen Haave was told and he quoted, "there has been no forward movement to replace or renovate the old, tiny, ADA noncompliant building at the corner of Center and Manhattan-Monee Road." He continued to explain how that was untrue and the town hall renovation committee has been reporting at the monthly meetings, money has been budgeted and seeking grant monies. The County stated town hall is protected, grant monies secured, not using tax dollars, and some budgeted town funds, not the capital fund. He asked who the author of the resolution was, Belinda Olszewski stated it was her. He explained the fund was created when Manhattan-Monee Road would be upgraded to four lanes and town hall may be at risk, but the County said town hall would not be condemned. Tax rates have gone down for the past five years, over the years any surplus funds at the end of the year were moved into the new town hall capital fund. Efforts are under way by the already formed town hall renovation committee using grant monies, not the capital funds. The first two alternatives are spelled out, give the money back or upgrade town hall, the third alternative don't jump the gun, the future is in great shape. The fourth alternative is strategically specify evaluating all possible solutions, why is it so important at this time that this fund be attacked, and mentioned Monroe trying to sell the building to the township, Christofilos asked to not use personal names and that it's still open discussion and what the motion for the resolution is. Wagner pointed out the first two signers of the resolution were the people who own the building, the next two signers are close neighbors/friends, four signers on the second page are the realtor selling the building, and that the person who wrote it attended meetings where town hall renovation upsets were provided. Wagner wrapped it up by explaining the burden of the capital fund on the taxpayers, \$659,000 has accumulated for nearly 20 years building up surplus funds, \$33,000 per year for roughly 1500 properties, \$22 per year or 42 cents a week. He closed by saying "the board has done a fantastic job of responsible spending and planning," the board rejected buying the building, asked for supporting the board's effort's to upgrade the building using grant money, continue saving to design a new town hall, and recognize being played. Christofilos asked Wagner to wrap it up and said he was being accusative, Wagner said if there were questions to not wait for the annual meeting bring them to the monthly meetings. Christofilos thanked Wagner and reminded everyone that the resolution is for a committee to be formed as a recommending body only to the trustees. Nina Gemma commented that if what was said was stated in the opinion was true that there should be full transparency and nothing wrong with having a board that is involved with full transparency. Belinda Olszewski commented that Bill said there were not 40 acres, she did research and has the PIN numbers, also that she attends meetings and asks questions under public comments, but don't always get answers, FOIA's information, listens to the township upgrades, is talking about having a committee that can do research to inform residents about whats out there, ie: new building, purchasing a building, the reason for FOIA's is to get answers that she does not get from asking at monthly meetings, she just wants to help and be a part of it. Christofilos said he was not aware there was already a committee in place and asked Bill, in which he said yes there was a Renovation committee in place since before February. Wagner also clarified that the reason we don't have 40 acres to build a town hall is 36 acres is bought with park donation funds and can only be used for park. Wagner asked what is the need, there is no absolute need to build or buy today so why do research for something in the future and the prematurity of it. Dennis Olszewski called for a question, Christofilos unsure how to do that, but mentioned 2/3 vote and there's a motion to end the debate and discussion to take it to a vote, that a call to question takes a 2/3 vote. Dennis Olszewski motions to call to question to end the discussion, seconded by Kim Koran, all in favor with Aye 28 Nays 1, motion passes. Vote for those in favor of the resolution as read, AYE 20 NAYS 11, motion passes. Christofilos noted the resolution is passed, and explained it was a committee of electors,

considered a recommending body to the trustees who make the final decision of the township, along with the capital funds. Christofilos asked who goes forward with progressing the resolution forward, Wellner responded that the township board carries out the actions in the resolution.

**DATE AND TIME FOR 2022 MEETING**

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 7 p.m., Monroe Striggow motioned, seconded by Mark Kovar, no discussion, All in favor AYE, 1, motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Don Murday, seconded by Gary Mueller, no discussion, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Crissy Kraft, Clerk for Green Garden Township