

**Special Meeting of the Burt Township Board**  
**Wednesday, March 1, 2023**  
**Community Center, 1:00 PM**

DRAFT

**Attendance:** Sheri Shafer, Lori McShane, Lou Lundquist, Tara Dongvillo, and Deb Lundquist.

**Agenda:** Motion by McShane, second by Dongvillo, to approve the agenda with addition of Pump Solutions quote and Woodland Park laptop under new business item C&D. 5 ayes

**Public Comments:** none.

**Unfinished Business:**

**DNR Surplus Land:** The DNR sent out a list of land they are putting up for disposal, offering to the township first before public auction. The township has until April 1, 2023, to respond. There are two parcels located in Burt Township, one off of Lowder Rd. near Towes Creek, and the other a 40-acre parcel by our airport (where our rifle range currently operates). We do have an active 25-year lease with the DNR for the rifle range parcel, which means the DNR cannot offer this land for public auction if the township does not purchase. The cost is \$300 to initiate an appraisal for the purchase price. Motion by Lou Lundquist, second by Deb Lundquist, to respond with the \$300 fee to request the purchase price from the DNR. 5 ayes.

**Bayshore Park Plans/DNR Grant:** At this time the board has decided NOT to move forward with the plans to apply for a DNR grant this spring. One of the requirements for the DNR grant is to hold public hearings and garner public input, and the board does not feel there is sufficient public support at this time. We will continue the conversation to ensure the public is supportive of any plans for improvements to Bayshore Park and to look for alternate funding methods.

-Letter was received from Lisa Marks, forwarded to the board by Larry Shaffer, to be read into the record on this subject. The letter included the definition of a Master Plan and the responsibilities of the Planning Commission in creating the Master Plan and making decisions on zoning and development going forward. The letter pointed out concerns with the planning process, concerns with our consultant/contractor selection, concerns with the grant, and recommendations to the board about the process going forward. There was much discussion after the letter was read into the record, and it would be negligent of the township board to not address the false allegations included in this correspondence that was read into the public record, as requested, and encouraged to be distributed broadly and as publicly as possible.

- Quote from the letter: "Township leadership claim that plans for development of the bay shore and beach are in response to a 2020 Recreation Survey and Plan which was hastily developed at the behest of the Board in 2020 without a Master Plan in place. A Recreation Plan is necessary for consideration for many grants and the Board felt too many grant opportunities were being missed without a Recreation Plan – thus they advanced it prematurely – without an approved Master Plan and its related prioritization of projects and capital improvements plan and budgeting."

*Township response: There was an approved Master plan in place that was created in 2013. Master Plans are for 10 years, so this one expires in 2023, hence why we are working on the new one. The recreation plan is addressed once every five years and the last one completed and approved by the PLANNING COMMISSION was submitted to the DNR in 2021 and is set to expire in 2025. Improvements to Bayshore Park are prioritized in both of these documents.*

- Quote from the letter: "The Planning Commission and community have invested greatly in the development of Burt Township's Master Plan – including a \$20,000 payment to CUPPAD to assist in the process."

*Township response: The contract with CUPPAD for the completion of the master plan is for \$10,000.00. (Please reference the minutes from July 13, 2021 regular board meeting) To date, nothing has been paid to CUPPAD as the master plan has not been completed.*

- Quote from the letter: “The Planning Commission has not been involved or requested to be involved in any aspect of the proposed bay shore, beach, and dune/hillside development, and they were not made aware of the Township’s intention to apply for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. The contractor/consultant hired by the Township to develop landscape plans and apply for grant funding, Elise Cormier, has advanced all planning without the insight or leadership of key community members – and without the benefit of the Planning Commission proactively addressing concerns prior to public presentation and approval.”

*Township response: Elise Cormier has personally attended many planning commission meetings and met with CUPPAD representatives to ensure that everyone was aware of the Bayshore park plans and that they were incorporated into the master plan. Ms. Cormier has not done any planning or development without the township boards approval and has made great efforts to garner public input.*

- The letter alleges that the township has prematurely developed a plan without conducting comprehensive studies and not engaging the various governmental agencies for permits .  
*Township response: We have been discussing this project since August, 2022, as is referenced in approved board minutes. We have contacted various agencies for advice, but our plans have not advanced far enough to require permitting. We had a public meeting to talk about the ideas and plans created by the township leadership and our contractor Ms. Cormier, but nothing had been submitted. The township would never advance a project without proper involvement of the EGLE (proper name for the DEQ) and the health department as well as DNR, Army Corps, or anyone else that has a stake hold in the project.*
- Quote from the letter: “Elise Cormier, is being paid \$100 per hour as a consultant for grant writing and development of landscape planning. Elise was hired without a competitive bid process.”

*Township response: Excerpt from the minutes of August 9, 2022 regular meeting:*

*Smart Landscapes – Bayshore park grant application estimate: Motion by Shafer, second by McShane, to approve the level of effort estimate from Smart Landscapes for a concept design and assistance with DNR grant application for the improvements to the stairs going down the hill and an expanded parking area and new bathhouse, for a cost of \$3,450 (\$1,380 as an in-kind donation – net cost to township of \$2,070). 5 ayes.*

*Excerpt from our approved Township and Board Policies: Any purchase for goods or services exceeding a cost of \$1000.00 must require the department head to obtain as many quotes possible, or up to 3. A department head may request permission from the township board to waive the bidding requirements when there is only one known supplier or there is some other compelling reason to waive the bid procedures.*

- Quote from the letter: “Elise is also listed in the grant as the Prime Professional (prepares plans, reviews, selects and approves contractors etc.), as well as the subcontractor for design work.  
*Township response: No grant has even been initiated within the MiRecgrants portal, so Elise could not yet be listed as a Prime Professional. It is common practice to list your engineers and architects within the grant as prime professionals so they have access to upload additional documentation needed for the application.*
- Quote from the letter: “All Township board members must be present to make a change to a Township Meeting agenda. February 17th, 2023, Board Member Debbie Lundquist was absent. During this meeting there was no discussion of the grant, despite no change being made to the agenda. Instead, Elise presented the bay shore and beach development plan.  
*Township response: Agenda for Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, special meeting stated: PUBLIC HEARING – DNR GRANT APPLICATION – BAYSHORE PARK. That is exactly what was discussed at that*

meeting, our intent to apply for a DNR grant for improvements to Bayshore Park, and presentation of those ideas. Please review the minutes from this February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting posted on our website.

- Quote from the letter: "This grant (Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant) defines the borders of the project – the bay shore and beach and dune/hillside and shoulder above the dune. The grant states that if approved the land defined in the project plan is put in "trust" with the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and its future use and development will be determined by the Department of Natural Resources in perpetuity".

*Township response: Excerpt from the MNRTF Application Guidelines:*

*"LONG-TERM GRANT OBLIGATIONS Receiving MNRTF assistance commits the grantee to certain long-term responsibilities. These commitments include: • The land included in the boundary of the project site must remain open to public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. This requirement pertains to both acquisition and development projects. • The grantee must maintain the site, including facilities constructed with grant assistance and any other facilities necessary for their use, such as entrance drives, parking, walkways, and restrooms. This includes access in compliance with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. • All new projects must install a 12" x 18" MNRTF plaque from Rotary Multifarms, Inc. (unless a MNRTF recognition plaque already exists on site)."*

- Quote from the letter: DEQ closing the current bathhouse due to outdated septic systems and/or requiring raised drain fields on the beach with the improvement of the bathhouse restrooms and/or determining public restrooms are not allowed so close to the bay shore.

*Township response: The bathhouse on the beach in Bayshore park was never closed by the EGLE (correct name for the DEQ). This bathhouse was closed by the township board after recommendation from the Woodland Park manager due to lack of ventilation and black mold.*

- Quote from the letter: "A previous/recent grant and park development plan led by Elise Comier that included building finger docks along the bay at Coast Guard Point – won grant approval, but after receiving the grant the Township was told they cannot build docks along the fragile shoreline of the bay, and thus, the Township lost most of the grant funds."

*Township response: **NONE OF THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH IS TRUE**. There was never a grant application for finger docks and to imply the township lost "most" of the grant funds but kept the rest and never developed the project is reckless. **This is a made-up story!***

After the letter was read, a comment was made by Lisa Marks that there was a revised version sent to the board -- but this was received too late for presentation at this meeting. This letter will be addressed at a later meeting if requested.

Please understand if the township decides to undergo any plans for a new bathhouse or additional parking, or any kind of improvements, we would do so completely within the rules of all government agencies.

And last of all, if you ever find your township board leadership concerning, please contact us, stop in the office, communicate and get the facts.

#### **New Business:**

**Community Center Furnace Replacement:** Motion by Lou Lundquist, second by Deb Lundquist, to approve the bid from Bowman Gas for a new furnace at the cost of \$2,830. 5 ayes.

**Fuel Pump Card Reader replacement:** Motion by McShane, second by Dongvillo, to approve the bid from Northwest Petroleum to replace the card reader at the gas pump with a pin pad fuel control system for a cost of \$7,740.00. 5 ayes.

**Pump Solutions:** Motion by Shafer, second by Deb Lundquist, to accept the bid from Pump Solutions to replace the two main pumps in the Woodland Park septic system, at a cost of \$45,000. 5 ayes.

**Woodland Park Laptop:** Motion by McShane, second by Lou Lundquist, to approve the purchase of a new laptop computer for the Woodland Park Manager at total cost of no more than \$1,200. 5 ayes.

**2023-24 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET WORKSHOP:** \*\*This was the second round of review for the requested 22/23 budget. Discussion of COLA increases for full time employees, park improvements including a new bathhouse on the west end, possible new roof and siding on the pole barn, and siding on the community center, new siding on the medical center, and \$20,000 worth of sidewalk repair/replace. Discussion regarding re-prioritizing park funds to have a professional review the status of the bathhouse on the beach. Also discussed possible funding options for a New Brush truck for the Fire Department and additional SCBA gear and an increase in tax revenue due to the assessments and an increase in water rates.

**Other:**

**Public Comment:** Toni Whaley suggested starting a campaign to ask for donations and raise funds for the necessary fire equipment. Mark Steinke suggested we get the health department to do a perk test on the septic for the bathroom down in Bayshore Park, and he also mentioned the Sportsman's Club may be interested in partnering with the township for the DNR surplus land where the rifle range is.

**Adjournment:** 3:15 PM

Respectfully submitted March 3, 2023

Lori McShane, Clerk

**\*\*COPIES OF THE REQUESTED BUDGET WORKSHEET CAN BE PICKED UP AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICE**

**\*\*Copies of any of the referenced agendas, minutes, or policies can be found on our website or picked up in the township office.**