

**Fremont Township Minutes**  
**Public Hearing**  
**July 16, 2014**

The Public Hearing for the Fremont Twp. Board of Trustees was held on July 16, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. at the Fremont Township Hall.

Board members present: H. Wymore, C. Sherwin, A. Holbrook, J. Welke & I. Barrons.

Guests: 19

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. by H. Wymore

**MINUTES:**

Without objection or correction the July 10, 2014, minutes were approved. Motion made by I. Barrons, seconded by C. Sherwin – motion carried.

**BRIAN GARNER (Twp. Attorney):**

Brian explained the process for creating a special assessment district for fire protection and what the next steps that need to be taken. He explained that if the township board decides to move forward after this meeting that there will be another public hearing.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

A Resident asked if this was something new and what they would be getting from it. H. Wymore stated that we have always had a fire contract but we are with the cost rising we are looking for a way to fund the contract. It was also mentioned that if this assessment goes through, there would be no more additional charges to property owners if they had a fire. Another Resident stated that their insurance covers fire runs and why should they have to pay more. J. Welke commented that he agrees that insurance covers fire runs but usually it is only \$500 unless the property owner pays for additional coverage. J. Welke also stated that with this assessment property owners would no longer need the additional coverage on their insurance because they would not receive a fire bill. This Resident also commented that we need to go after the property owners that do not pay their fire run bills instead of making everyone pay. J. Welke stated that we have tried several options for collecting fire run payments and that we are still losing money. A Resident asked how we came up with the \$25 per parcel and who will pay for the abandoned properties. H. Wymore stated that we may not receive the payment right away from abandoned properties but that we would get the money if the property was sold for back taxes. This Resident stated that wouldn't get us the money we would need each year if abandoned properties didn't pay. Another Resident asked if someone owned more than one parcel if they would be charge a \$25 fee for each parcel. H. Wymore stated yes. A Resident asked if the Township was looking to have their own fire department or continue contracting with Mayville. H. Wymore stated that we currently have a 3 year contract with the Mayville Fire Department. Another Resident asked if the Township Board could increase the amount whenever needed and Brian Garner stated that the law says that the Board can increase it up to 10% each year without a Public Hearing but anything over that 10% would need to have notices sent out and a Public Hearing. A Resident asked if this was placed on a ballot, would the township have to pay the cost associated with the election. Brian Garner stated that if the Township would hold a special election they would be responsible for the cost, but if they would put it on a regular ballot that there would be a charge but it would be minimal. A Property Owner stated that they live in Vassar Twp. and that Vassar Twp. had an assessment but they dropped it and made a flat rate of \$500 per fire run. They stated that this makes the residents more responsible because if they had a fire, they would have to pay. A Resident asked if the money collected with this assessment would be put in a designated fund for fire protection only. H. Wymore stated yes. Another Resident stated that it is easy to tax people but we need to watch our spending and not just charge people more money. Another Resident asked if the Township has done as much as we can to collect on fire runs. H. Wymore stated yes. A Resident asked if

people have a fire who should have obtained a burn permit but did not will still benefit from this fire assessment. J. Welke stated that it would be considered an illegal burn and would be dealt with according to that. Another Resident asked if they would obtain a burn permit from the Township or the Fire Department. H. Wymore stated that burn permits are gotten from the Fire Department and there is no cost. Another Resident stated that they felt whatever language we came up with should be placed on a ballot for the people to vote on. This Resident also commented that in other township's they charge a flat fee for parcel with dwellings on them and there is no charge for vacant land. This Resident also thought that maybe the Board should consider charging one price for property with a dwelling on it and include any adjacent vacant property parcels in that one charge. H. Wymore stated that if we didn't include the vacant property it would cost more than \$25 per parcel. This Resident also had questions as to what it would take if the people wanted to petition to have it put on the ballot. Brian Garner discussed the law with this Resident. Another Resident stated they think it would be better to charge \$25 per parcel including vacant land because if there is a fire on vacant land they owners would expect the same treatment as the parcels that do pay the \$25. A Resident stated that they had a fire in the past and they would have to pay the \$25 almost 48 times to make up the amount that they had to pay for the fire run. They also feel that it is fair to charge every parcel including vacant land. Another Resident stated that they also feel it should be charged to all parcels including vacant land so that is fair for everyone. Another Resident asked what would happen if the Board just raised the price of the fire calls. H. Wymore stated that at this time we already have trouble collecting the fire run amount. It was mentioned at this time by I. Barrons that we did receive a letter from a property owner and this property owner wasn't against the assessment but they were not in favor of assessing each parcel of land if they were adjacent as this person would have to pay \$100 instead of \$25 because they have 4 parcels. H. Wymore also stated that he had a phone call from a Resident that could not attend the meeting but wanted the Board to know that they did not agree with the \$25 charge because they are on a fixed income. Another Resident asked that if this assessment doesn't go through that eventually the Township will have to have a millage for roads or something else to help with the budget. H. Wymore stated that would probably be the case. A Property owner asked if this is the first year we have had a fire contract and H. Wymore stated no. A Resident commented that it seemed to them that people thought that if you own vacant land you wouldn't have a fire. This Resident felt that it was more possible to have a fire on vacant land than property with a home on it because the property with the home on it is watched. At this point our Assessor (Connie Lipka) stated that regarding the earlier question about who would pay for abandoned houses, she stated that the majority of abandoned houses are owned by the mortgage company and the mortgage company pays the taxes. Another Resident asked how we funded the fire contract before. H. Wymore stated that it was out of the general fund. A. Holbrook commented that the fire contract does increase every year. Another Resident stated that the Board cannot go wrong by putting it on the ballot for the people to decide. This Resident stated that they are sure it would pass. Another Resident stated that if it going to pass on the ballot than why spend the money and just let the Board decide to put it on the taxes. A Resident asked if this would be on the summer or winter taxes and it was stated that it would apply to the winter taxes.

Meeting was closed to public comments at 7:20 p.m.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION:**

J. Welke stated that he felt we should continue forward with the special assessment. I. Barrons stated that she felt we should put it on the ballot and also stated that she appreciated the flat rate fee instead of the millage rate. A. Holbrook stated that she felt that maybe we should put it on the ballot to see what everyone thinks. It was brought up at this time that the deadline to get ballot wording on the November ballot is sometime between now and the end of July. Someone asked the attorney if he would be able to get the ballot wording within that timeframe. He stated that he may be able to but it depends on what other jobs/appointments he has. A. Holbrook stated that she looked up the deadline for putting something

on the November ballot and it is July 29<sup>th</sup> and she felt that we may not have enough time to get all the necessary things in order to get it placed on the November ballot. If we didn't get it on a November ballot we would have to either have a special election or wait two years for the next regular election. H. Wymore asked the attorney if it would be possible to put some kind of wording in the resolution so that the Township Board could not increase the specially assessment at all unless they send out notices and hold a public hearing. Brian Garner stated that the Board could add that in if they wanted. H. Wymore also stated that this assessment is just to collect most of the fire protection costs but it may be necessary to use some money from the general fund to totally cover it.

J. Welke stated that he would not be voting since he lives in the Village, it would not affect him and so he is going to abstain from voting.

Motion made by H. Wymore, seconded by C. Sherwin to adopt the Resolution Creating Special Assessment District for Fire Protection, Determining Boundaries, Determining total levy and directing the supervisor to spread the levy with the added verbiage that "any increase would require the Township Board to send out notices and hold a public hearing". Roll call vote: C. Sherwin-yes, A. Holbrook-yes, I. Barrons-no, J. Welke-abstain, H. Wymore-yes. Resolution adopted.

Brian Garner stated that the next step would be for the Supervisor and Assessor to create the assessment role and then pass another resolution at the next township board meeting and set the date for the next public hearing.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Amy Holbrook, Fremont Township Clerk