

CUNNINGHAM TOWNSHIP BOARD
Monday, February 05, 2018

The Cunningham Township Board met in Regular session Monday, February 05, 2018 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Urbana City Building, 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT:

Chair:	Diane Wolfe Marlin
Trustees:	Aaron Ammons; Bill Brown; Dean Hazen; Eric Jakobsson; Jared Miller; Maryalice Wu; Dennis Roberts
Township Clerk:	Charles A. Smyth
Supervisor:	Danielle Chynoweth
Assessor:	Wayne T. Williams

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Frederic Grosser; Members of the Media

1. **ROLL CALL**

Chair Marlin called the meeting of the Cunningham Township Board to order at 7:02 p.m. following a special meeting of the Urbana City Council.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Trustee Ammons made a motion to approve minutes from January 8, 2018, and January 8, 2018 (Special Meeting). Trustee Miller seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no additions.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Chair Marlin read a prepared statement on behalf of the City of Urbana to address opinions expressed by the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners in a letter dated 1/31/18 regarding the City's recent appointment of Ms. Danielle Chynoweth as Commissioner.

She noted the City's strong support for the mission and purpose of the Housing Authority (HACC) reading from their mission statement and bylaws. She reviewed the appointment process for city representatives to the Board, the history and current disposition of the property tax exemption for Hamilton-on-the-Park. The former Township Supervisor, Michelle Mayol, and the current Supervisor, Danielle Chynoweth, had no say in, or control over, this resolution of protest. The Illinois Department of Revenue will determine the outcome of this case; no further actions by the HACC Board can have an impact on the outcome, other than to possibly withdraw it.

The housing authority contends that a conflict of interest exists for Ms. Chynoweth to serve as a commissioner as long as this tax case is being considered. Whether or not a conflict of interest exists is a matter of opinion that can be resolved by an impartial third party. To date, the housing authority has not furnished citation to legal authority for their opinion on the conflict of interest.

She noted that The City of Urbana is more concerned about recent actions taken by the housing authority that reflect a lack of transparency, what appears to be a deliberate lack of communication with a duly-appointed Commissioner, and overstepping authority related to board appointments by not informing her of a meeting January 30, 2018. It is important to note that the housing authority is a municipal corporation subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

Chair Marlin noted the timeline for Ms. Chynoweth's appointment approval by city council, communication with HACC, and the subsequent failure of Ms. Chynoweth to be notified of the meeting. Chair Marlin stated that this violates HACC's bylaws, the spirit of the Open Meetings Act, and the principles of trust and accountability reflected by our Intergovernmental Agreement. Since this meeting was conducted in violation of HACC bylaws, the city believes the vote should be repeated in a properly noticed meeting to eliminate any possibility that the action was null and void. The City of Urbana insists that our appointee, Ms. Chynoweth, receive proper notification of all meetings and access to documents.

Chair Marlin reviewed the HACC Bylaws and intergovernmental agreements concerning the HACC stating that the HACC Board does not have the authority to reject an appointed commissioner. Further, the HACC needs to follow the Open Meetings Act, reactivate their website, and that all HACC meetings be recorded and broadcast on UPTV like other meetings of public bodies. She believes that the HACC should respect the right and responsibility of the City of Urbana as the appointing authority to determine who will represent us on the Housing Authority Board and that the City of Urbana stands behind the appointment of Ms. Danielle Chynoweth to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. She has the right and the duty to serve.

The City is committed to helping people obtain decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in Champaign County. We are committed to proactive and collaborative administration of programs and grant funds that will improve housing in our communities.

5. **COMMITTEE TO VERIFY BILLS**

The following items presented in omnibus fashion by Supervisor Chynoweth:

1. Town Fund - \$93,588.07
2. General Assistance Fund - \$39,523.85

Trustee Brown asked if the bills include the payouts to separated employees, which Supervisor Chynoweth affirmed. Trustee Wu asked about the payment for Administrative Services – Maximize Career Services. Supervisor Chynoweth explained that an outside HR firm was initially hired to update position descriptions, evaluate current employment, and develop job descriptions for hiring process; they delivered on a portion of their contract but it was terminated and Vacillia Clark has been hired to finish this work in house.

Trustee Ammons made a motion to approve the Town Fund for \$93,588.07 and the General

Assistance Fund for \$39,523.85. Trustee Roberts seconded and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

- a. **Discussion – Annual Township Meeting and Agenda**: Clerk Smyth spoke to his memo noting the various deadlines.
- b. **Report of Supervisor Chynoweth**: Supervisor Chynoweth summarized her position on her appointment to the Housing Authority of Champaign County board. She stated that the HACC is one of the most important resources in the community to address housing issues and that we need to make sure that we have efficient use of their dollars. She provided a history of her attempts to be seated on the board and be notified of meetings finally getting a response on January 24, 2018. She had asked about a potential special meeting and was assured that she would be notified. She was not notified of their special meeting where a new director was hired and discussion of rejecting her appoint to the board occurred. She stated that this is in violation of HACC bylaws, intergovernmental agreement, and state law. She questioned why HACC is using public funds to defend a private corporation and called on both cities and the county to bring openness and accountability to the HACC.

Trustee Hazen stated that he thought the HACC legal standing is baseless and wondered why they would try to reject this appointment. Supervisor Chynoweth considers it puzzling.

Supervisor Chynoweth continued with her report noting that the General Assistance case number is now at 67; that the homeless assistance program has helped 53 individuals including 20 via eviction prevention assistance and 33 with emergency shelter in Urbana motels (staying well under the 12-day maximum) by turning people around to other agencies and shelter. She noted that 24 of those served have been children and the total cost about \$8500, less than she would have expected. The office is also helping another 65 individuals with other assistance issues.

Supervisor Chynoweth commented on City Goal setting and asked that the city include a goal of insuring adequate emergency and transitional housing; to work to end discrimination via the Urbana Human Rights ordinance; and to look at the financial impacts of video gambling on the LMI community. She noted that the Winter Coat drive needs gloves, mittens and hats. She introduced Tomas Delgado as the new office administrator and noted that the Personnel policy is being updated. She presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Trustee Hazen for volunteer services.

Trustee Roberts thanked Supervisor Chynoweth for standing up for principles. Trustee Ammons read a statement indicating his support for Township government and services. Supervisor Chynoweth distributed a packet for describing how to apply for Homeless Assistance and help.

- c. **Report of Assessor Williams**: Assessor Williams noted that the 2018 mailing for senior exemptions and freezes was prepared and mailed and that his office was prepared to answer questions and help with the applications. The deadline for receiving applications is Dec. 31. He reported that 2018 assessment work is in progress and that he intends to file with the county by May 31, ahead of the June 15 deadline. He is working with existing software updating it with new information and that he is reviewing the existing twenty neighborhood assessment areas. He will be looking for better conformance with state

guidelines for uniformity and disparity. Trustee Ammons asked him about Nasty Joe activities. Community Development manager John Schneider summarized Kevin Garcia's work in this area finding only one more sliver of property like the one previously discussed. Trustee Wu asked about the assessment of neighborhoods and Assessor Williams explained the process.

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was none.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Ordinance No. T-2018-02-001:** An Ordinance Establishing a Policy to Prohibit Sexual Harassment in the Township of Cunningham, Illinois

Supervisor Chynoweth provided a description and background to the proposed policy for approval per state law. With no further questions, Trustee Roberts moved approval of Ordinance T-2018-02-001. The motion was seconded by Trustee Miller and passed 7-0 by roll call: Ammons – Aye; Brown – Aye; Hazen – Aye; Jakobsson – Aye; Miller – Aye; Wu – Aye;

- b. **Adoption of Annual Meeting Schedule**

Supervisor Chynoweth noted the regular meeting schedule prepared by Clerk Smyth. Approval was moved by Trustee Miller, seconded by Trustee Jakobsson, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Cunningham Town Board, Chair Marlin declared the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Charles A. Smyth
Township Clerk

This meeting was taped.

This meeting was broadcast on cable television.

Website link for this meeting: <https://www.urbanillinois.us/node/6867>

Minutes Approved: March 5, 2018