

NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP  
6755 S Brooklyn Road. PO Box 385  
Napoleon, Michigan 49261  
Telephone: (517) 536-8694  
FAX (517) 536-0112

June 12, 2018

To: Napoleon Township Board of Trustees and Township Residents

From: Dan Wymer

The purpose of this letter is to provide further clarification for the board and township residents as to why I requested a salary of \$34,000 to resume the role of Napoleon Township Supervisor rather than the \$17,000 I received during the 4 years I served previously in that role. In my past experience, with the township running smoothly and the office staffed by highly experienced long term employees, the supervisor needed to work about 20 hours per week. With turnover in the deputy clerk and assessor positions as well as elected officials, and elected officials holding full time day jobs that severely limit the amount of time they can spend in the township office during normal business hours, that is no longer the case in Napoleon. As the only elected official usually available during township business hours, I will need to spend more time in the office and take a more active role in township affairs, many of which are overdue for attention. In addition, there are very difficult and demanding new challenges on the horizon for our township.

Before laying out the details, I want to make clear that I offered to resume this role with great reluctance. I have other important things I had planned to spend my time working on at this point in my life. I have taken on this responsibility because I am convinced the challenges facing Napoleon are so serious that there is no time for someone without township supervisor experience to learn the job. As I go through the details below, I hope that will become clear.

1. The JACTS Policy Committee allocates funding for road projects. Napoleon has a voting seat on the committee and access to funds for Napoleon Township road projects through the committee. For the past 18 months Napoleon has not been represented on this committee. I will be attending these meetings. Napoleon may have already missed opportunities to have road projects funded.

2. The Leoni Regional Utility Authority is where the Leoni Wastewater Treatment Plant user community of 12 municipalities comes together to address system wide issues and decisions. The group has been working on a plan to change from Residential Equivalent Unit billing (how sewer service is currently billed) to a billing based on measuring the actual volume of sewage generated by customers. Napoleon has a seat on this authority and a voice in decisions made there. Napoleon has not been represented on this authority for the past 18 months. I will be attending these meetings and representing Napoleon interests.

3. The Region 2 Planning Commission makes decisions that impact Jackson and adjacent counties. Napoleon pays for a membership in this group and has a vote on decisions, but Napoleon has not been represented in this commission for the past 18 months. I will be attending these meetings and representing Napoleon interests.

4. The County Supervisor Association is an organization where supervisors from all Jackson County townships meet to address common opportunities and problems. It provides an opportunity to develop and maintain positive working relationships with other leaders. The Napoleon Township Supervisor needs to have those relationships because Napoleon shares many services with adjacent municipalities:

- Summit Township operates the Napoleon water system.
- Summit Township operates Napoleon's Ackerson Lake sewer system.
- Village of Brooklyn operates Napoleon's Village and Wolf Lake sewer systems.
- Napoleon shares a zoning administrator with Summit Township.
- Napoleon shares a building inspector with Summit Township.
- Leoni Township treats the sewage from the Village and Wolf Lake sewers.
- City of Jackson treats the sewage from the Ackerson Lake system.
- The Wolf Lake sewer system serves both Grass Lake and Napoleon residents.
- Columbia Township's Clark Lake Interceptor transports Napoleon sewage.
- Napoleon's fire department covers the northern half of Norvell Township.

Napoleon has not been participating in the Supervisor Association for the past 18 months. I will be actively participating in the association.

5. On May 1 Napoleon Township assessor Jane Gallant turned in a letter of resignation giving 90 days notice. She has been Napoleon's assessor for 18 years. In the past it has been easy to find an assessor but hard to find a good one. Today there is a severe shortage of assessors of any kind in the local job market. Replacing Jane will be a very difficult challenge. Columbia, Grass Lake and Norvell have had serious problems with their tax roles in the past. Columbia's tax role was actually seized by the state two times because of irregularities. Jane provided us with the resume of one of the most competent local assessors who happened to also be looking for a job and was highly recommended by Jane. No one from Napoleon contacted her during the month of May to indicate our interest, so she accepted a job with the City of Jackson. By state law, the township supervisor is the Chief Assessing Officer and directly supervises the assessing function. Finding a replacement for Jane will be my responsibility.

6. In addition to assessing, Jane Gallant serves as department head for the township building department. It is not yet clear how the building department will be supervised when she is gone. The fee structure for permits needs to be monitored closely to ensure there is not a buildup of excess funds. The building department is expected to break even, not accumulate excess funds.

7. Napoleon Township is required to develop annual budgets for the General Operating Fund and several separate restricted funds. This process normally begins in March and takes about two to two and a half months to complete through a series of budget work sessions with the township board and department heads. The budgets must be adopted by June 30, and must be presented in a public hearing before adoption. Advance notice of the public hearing must be published in a local newspaper. **This year the first budget work session was held on May 31**, leaving about two weeks to develop the budgets in time to satisfy the public hearing and advance notice requirements of state law. **The penalty for not having budgets finished and approved by the board by June 30 is severe – The township is not allowed to write checks beginning July 1.** Bills could not be paid, including employee paychecks. We are scrambling to get this work done in time. The township supervisor is the township's Chief Financial Officer and responsible for ensuring budgets are completed on time.

8. Employee health benefits are a significant township expense. Each year our insurance agent normally presents us with several alternative plans, each with different costs and coverage. The board then chooses which plan will be offered to employees and whether the township will absorb additional cost. This year alternatives were not provided to the board for decision. The current plan was left in place and an automatic price increase allowed to take effect. I spoke with our insurance agent and she stated that she had developed a set of alternatives and sent them to the township as usual. The evaluation of alternatives will now need to take place while additional cost is already being incurred by the township.

9. Bonds that financed construction of the township hall are close to being paid off. The last installment of the special assessment collected to make the payments will be on the winter 2019 tax bill. That would be the optimum time to implement a public safety millage to provide additional funding for Napoleon police and fire services. A committee should be brought together to determine what the needs of police and fire are, and to determine whether the community would be receptive to replacing the special assessment with an equal or smaller public safety millage. Remaining time is short to complete this work and effort will need to proceed at an accelerated pace when the committee is formed.

10. Bonds that financed construction of the Wolf Lake sewer system are close to being paid off and the special assessment collected to make the payments will end shortly. There needs to be careful analysis of the combined Napoleon and Grass Lake money in the Wolf Lake Common Fund in preparation for the payoff and division of remaining funds between the two townships.

11. We have 6 months remaining to complete the work funded by state SAW grants on the Village and Ackerson Lake sewer systems and be reimbursed for our incurred expenses. A representative from the DEQ contacted the township recently and expressed concern that no claims for reimbursement have been received yet by the state for these Napoleon projects. She stressed the importance of beginning to submit claims now and not waiting until the very end to submit them all. We also need to make sure we implement the new maintenance and inventory management

requirements imposed by the state and look closely at our sewer rates to determine if they should change,

12. All treatment contracts between the City of Jackson and adjacent municipalities have expired and are being renegotiated. We need to work closely with Summit, Blackman, Spring Arbor, and Sandstone townships negotiating fair contract renewals. Our Ackerson Lake system sends its wastewater to Jackson for treatment.

13. The Napoleon trailer park is a great opportunity to clean up an eyesore in the heart of our business district, but bankruptcy proceedings and other legal complications make it a difficult challenge. The supervisor needs to take a very active lead and ensure an optimum outcome for our community. I expect this to consume a large amount of supervisor time before it is finished.

14. The County Commission is again attempting to impose on Napoleon and other municipalities an ordinance that gives a county committee the power to force street name changes and address changes on Napoleon residents without approval of the Napoleon Township board. The supervisor needs to defend Napoleon's right to control these decisions locally.

15. Napoleon's personnel policies need a major rewrite. This has become obvious with the departure of long term employees and recent new hires.

16. Napoleon's sewer connection policies and pricing need major revisions. The documentation is no longer consistent with current practices and service providers, and creates confusion when sewer connections are being priced.

17. At some point in the near future Fire Chief Hawley will retire. The future of our fire department will have to be decided and implemented. It may not be as simple as just hiring a replacement fire chief.

18. Part time fire fighters are becoming more and more difficult to recruit. In the near future it may become impossible to adequately staff our fire department with part time people.

19. Part time police officers are becoming more and more difficult to recruit. In the 2018-2019 budget year we are faced with either funding an additional full time police officer or cutting our patrol hours because we do not have enough part time officers to fill our schedule.

20. The Cady Road sewer lift station that pumps Napoleon village sewage into the Clark Lake interceptor belongs to Columbia Township. Columbia has long pushed for Napoleon to take ownership of the deteriorated lift station or share in the cost of addressing its problems. This issue needs to be resolved.

21. MTBE contamination remains in the ground water under the airport. Wells at homes along Napoleon Road continue to be monitored and a BP funded extension of the Napoleon municipal water supply north along Napoleon Road is likely in the future.

22. The much publicized Southern Interceptor lawsuits are not yet over. Some parties involved in these suits have attempted to have Napoleon sewer users become responsible for part of the Southern Interceptor costs. Developments around these lawsuits need to still be monitored.

Any Napoleon Township resident with additional questions or concerns is welcome to contact me or one of the other board members.

Dan Wymer