

Invigorate your annual town meeting!

HAS YOUR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING become nothing more than a routine function you conduct each April?

Is it so mundane that even you would not attend if you were not, well, expected to be there as a township official?

If so, it may be time to rethink what you can do to give residents a reason to attend, and make the annual meeting an opportunity to let people know what your township does, or would like to do.

In New Trier Township, Supervisor Pat Cantor and staff were meeting in January to make plans to get a speaker for the annual town meeting to address building vital communities.

“We try to really have a welcoming spirit at this and make the annual meeting a fun event,” Cantor said. “We have a lot of former officials who come, and we send invitations to our legislators, and if they are

unable to attend, they usually send a representative. We try to get through the business part of the meeting without too much boredom, using summaries of our activities and using PowerPoint presentations.”

New Trier Township (Cook Co.) ordinarily uses the annual meeting night to honor volunteers or highlight youth programs, but this year because of the dismal economy, the focus will be on civic engagement, and looking at the assets of the community rather than the liabilities.

“We want to look at the positive things and build up from there,” Cantor said. “We’re looking at ways to get the community involved and at problem solving.”

This year, the township will award \$60,000 in grants that will be announced at the annual meeting last year, she said.

Encouraging participation from scout groups and other organizations, New Trier Township attracts residents who might not realize what services the township provides, she added.

“We had people who didn’t know we had a food pantry, but since August, we’ve had 50 percent more in food and donations for the pantry that has seen an increase of 22 percent in clients served since October. This is a fairly wealthy township, but we have increasing numbers of working poor.”

Coffee, soft drinks and cookies will be served at the annual town meeting, with an attendance of 100 or more expected, she said.

“We try to make it a focus night to the community of what the township does,” said Cantor. “Last year, we honored our active volunteers, and the year before we focused on persons with disabilities, and had a wheelchair basketball match.”

And the township doesn’t stop there.

A collage of photos from annual town meeting night hangs in the township board room and has brought a lot of questions from residents, while a slideshow of last year’s meeting can be seen on the township’s Web site, www.newtriertownship.com. They also have plans to produce a DVD highlighting the programs offered by the township.

In Naperville Township, Clerk Carol Bertulis feels annual town meeting night is a chance to show township residents what their money goes to, and the services the township offers.

**ANNUAL
TOWN MEETING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

To the legal voters, residents of the Town of _____
in the County of _____ and State of Illinois, that the
Annual Town Meeting of said Town will take place on

Tuesday, April __, 20__
being the second Tuesday of said month
at the hour of __ o’clock __ M. at

for the transaction of the miscellaneous business of the said town; and after a
Moderator having been elected, will proceed to hear and consider reports of
officers, and decide on such measures as may, in pursuance of law, come
before the meeting; and especially to consider and decide the following
(Place meeting agenda below):

Dated _____ 20__.



THE NORTH SHORE Senior Center Stompers were among groups participating in New Trier Township's annual town meeting in 2008.

"We used to always meet in the city building, but we decided we have this big garage for our equipment and there's plenty of parking there, so we pull the trucks and equipment outside, we borrow 100 chairs from the school district; the garage is free, the chairs are free, and it's a way we can reach out to the people," she said. Elected officials bring in snacks and soft drinks, the building is decorated in red, white and blue, and Bertulis said the refreshment time allows people to stay after the meeting and talk, where they might not speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

"They can talk to us one on one, and you get to know your neighbors this way. We have a vast turnover of people in our township; in many cases, people only live here two-three years, and a lot of them don't know what township government is."

As people sign in at the meeting, they are given a yellow card with a number on it for voting purposes, making it easier to define who is eligible to vote, she said.

Local Boy Scouts present and retire the colors at the meeting, she added, earning them credit on their badge work and providing a service for the township.

"My whole goal is to have some kid step up and



NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP residents ask questions at last year's annual town meeting

hold township office. That's why I like to get the kids involved, and I do tours here at the township office for the Brownies and Scouts."

In O'Fallon Township, Supervisor Gary Ahle said depending on what's going on, they may have several

attend the annual town meeting, but usually it's 20-25 people.

"We used to hand out certificates to our volunteers at the meeting, but it got to where it was the same people getting the same certificates, but I still acknowledge our volunteer groups," Ahle said.

The township serves refreshments, Ahle introduces township employees and elected officials, he gives a financial report and reports on capital projects and grant moneys, and the highway commissioner gives a report, then it's opened up for questions/answers.

Volunteers from the township's food pantry will be recognized, Ahle said. The township holds a rummage sale the second Saturday of each month, giving proceeds to the food pantry.

"We've been doing quite well with it. We're not their only source of income but it helps," he said.



NAPERVILLE TOWNSHIP residents attend the annual town meeting held in the highway garage

Township trustee for 56 years still running

CLIFFORD CONAWAY, Mt. Auburn Township trustee, is running for township office again, at the age of 97.

Conaway was first elected township auditor (the office was later changed to trustee) in 1953, and he's held the job ever since. He'll turn 98 on Feb. 25.

"If I am elected and finish out the four years, I'll be 102," said Conaway. "I hope to live to 102 and get shot by a jealous husband."

At the Jan. 13 Democrat caucus, Conaway had no opposition, but he wasn't sure if there might be Republicans running.

Conaway was first asked by the township supervisor to run for office after serving 14 years on the Christian County Board.

"I wasn't going to run this time but they wanted me to run again," said the retired farmer. Conaway still lives in his home and drives 16 miles to Taylorville each morning for breakfast, where he alternates between two restaurants and visits with the regular breakfast crowd. His wife, Nellie, died 14 years ago, and a neighbor farms the ground he once worked. He has three children, a son in nearby Edinburg and two daughters who live in Springfield.

"If I don't get out, it makes the day so long," he said. Conaway quit farming in 1978, then worked for the State Treasurer's Office as a security officer in the Banking Division at the State Capitol Building for nine and a half years.

"They got tired of looking at me, and they changed back to the Secretary of State supplying the security officers," he said.

"I like working with the township," he said. "Quite a bit has changed. We didn't used to have an accountant, and I've worked with three different clerks, and three highway commissioners."

Conaway said he never aspired to holding any other township office but trustee.

"I always thought the ones running were better for the job than I would be," he said.

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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

April 14, 2009

NEW PUBLIC ACT 95-761, effective July 28, 2008, changes procedures for agendas and notices for annual and special town meetings. For annual meetings, it requires that the Township Board adopt an agenda at least 10 days before the meeting. Voters may request an agenda item for consideration by giving written notice of a specific request to the Township Clerk no later than March 1 before the annual meeting. Items not on the published agenda may not be considered. This eliminates adding agenda items at the meeting, previously allowed if approved by a three-fifths majority vote of electors present.

Annual Town Meeting Notice – Notice of the time and place of holding the annual township meeting shall be given by the township clerk (or in the clerk's absence, the supervisor, assessor or collector) by posting written or printed notices in three of the most public places in the township *at least 10 days before the meeting and, if there is an English language newspaper published in the township, by at least one publication in that newspaper before the meeting.** The notice shall set forth the agenda for the meeting.

Agenda – Not less than 10 days before the annual meeting, the township board shall adopt an agenda for the annual meeting. Any 15 or more registered voters in the township may request an agenda item for consideration by the electors at the annual meeting by giving written notice of a specific request to the township clerk no later than March 1 prior to the annual meeting. The agenda published by the township board shall include any such request made by voters if the request is relevant to powers granted to electors under the Township Code.

Additional Agenda Items – Any matter or proposal not set forth in the published agenda shall not be considered at the annual meeting other than advising that the matter may be considered at a special meeting of the electors at a later date.

Supervisor's Annual Financial Statement – It is the duty of the Township Clerk to post a copy of the supervisor's annual financial statement at the place of holding the Annual Town Meeting. This **MUST** be done at least 2 days before the Annual Town Meeting is held.

Annual Town Meeting Day – No Annual (or spe-

cial) Town Meeting may begin before 6:00 p.m. The Township Clerk, if he/she is present, shall call the meeting to order. After this, the clerk shall call for nominations for a Moderator and the electors present will elect someone to serve as moderator. Before the moderator enters the duties of office, he/she shall take this oath of office administered by the Township Clerk: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of Moderator at this Town Meeting, so help me God."

Please note: The Township Clerk is the **ONLY** township official acting in ANY official capacity at the Annual (or special) Town Meeting. Everyone else present, regardless if they are an elected official or not, are there as electors (voters) and each have an equal vote in each matter voted upon.

Voting at Annual Town Meeting – Only registered voters of the township may vote at the annual (or special) town meeting. The township clerk therefore must obtain a list of the township's registered voters from the county clerk prior to the meeting being held. This list must be used to establish who is or isn't a registered voter and able to participate in the meeting.

Minutes of Annual (or Special) Town Meeting – After a moderator is elected, the Township Clerk acts as clerk of the meeting and keeps an accurate record of the proceedings at the meeting. The minutes shall be signed by the Township Clerk and the Moderator of the meeting.

Reading Annual Financial Statement – It is the duty of the Township Clerk to read aloud to the electors present at the Annual Town Meeting the annual financial statement of the township supervisor.

Powers of Electors – There are many powers that the electors **MAY** take at the Annual (or special) Town Meeting. The following page lists all of those powers. You might keep this list of powers available for your annual town meeting.

**The last day to publish/post the notice is April 1, 2009.*

Whenever the annual town meeting date designated conflicts with the celebration of Passover, the township board *may* postpone the annual township meeting to the first Tuesday following the last day of Passover. In 2009, Passover begins at sundown April 8, and ends nightfall April 16.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Electors Present at the Annual Town Meeting Have the Power To:

1. Take all necessary measures and give directions for the exercise of their corporate powers. (60 ILCS 1/30-25)
2. To fix the hour at which town meetings shall be held. (60 ILCS 1/30-30)
3. To spend monies for preparation of a detailed property record system. (60 ILCS 1/30-45)
4. Make orders for the purchase and sale of property. (60 ILCS 1/30-50)
5. May declare property of the township to be surplus for purposes of donating the property to a historical society or other not-for-profit corporation. (60 ILCS 1/30-53)
6. To authorize the township board of trustees to appropriate monies in excess of the sum provided in the Public Graveyards Act, for the purpose of putting any old, neglected graves and cemeteries in the township in a cleaner and more respectable condition. (60 ILCS 1/30-60)
7. Provide for the decoration and maintenance of graves of persons who at any time served in the armed forces of the United States which are within the township. (60 ILCS 1/30-65)
8. Provide space in any township building for courtroom and office use by Circuit Court. (60 ILCS 1/30-70)
9. To authorize the township board of trustees to exercise the powers conferred by the "Township Zoning Act". (60 ILCS 1/30-75). This does not apply in any county where a county zoning ordinance or resolution is in effect.
10. Offer premiums, and take such action as shall induce the planting and cultivating of trees along the highways in the town, and protect and preserve trees standing along or on highways, and purchase, plant and cultivate along the streets and highways in the township. (60 ILCS 1/30-85)
11. Make rules and regulations for ascertaining the sufficiency of all fences in the town, and determine what shall be a lawful fence within the town; except as otherwise provided by law. (60 ILCS 1/30-90)
12. Prohibit animals from running at large. (60 ILCS 1/30-95)
13. Establish and maintain pounds where deemed necessary. (60 ILCS 1/30-100)
14. Impound animals. (60 ILCS 1/30-110)
15. Construct and keep in repair public wells or other watering places, and regulate the use thereof. (60 ILCS 1/30-115)
16. Prevent the deposit of night soil, garbage or other offensive substances within the limits of the town. This section does apply to refuse disposal facilities regulated by the Illinois State Department of Public Health and the county in which the facilities are located. (60 ILCS 1/30-120)
17. To adopt ordinances regulating standing or parking of recreational vehicles on township roads within each township. (60 ILCS 1/30-125)
18. Declare inoperable motor vehicles a nuisance. (60 ILCS 1/30-130)
19. Authorize the licensing and regulation and direct the location of all places of business of purchasers, traders and dealers in junk, rags and any secondhand article, including motor vehicles, except in cities, villages and incorporated towns in such township which, by ordinance, provide for such licensing, regulation or places of location. (60 ILCS 1/30-135)
20. Regulate hawkers, peddlers, pawnbrokers, itinerant merchants and transient vendors. (60 ILCS 1/30-140)
21. Authorize the township board of trustees to provide mental health services, including services for the alcoholic, the drug addicted, and the mentally retarded, for residents of the township by disbursing existing funds if available by contracting with mental health agencies approved by the Department of Human Services, alcoholism treatment programs licensed by the Department of Public Health, and drug abuse facilities and other alcohol and drug abuse services approved by the Department of Human Services. (60 ILCS 1/30-145)
22. In counties having less than 1,000,000 inhabitants, to authorize the board of trustees to contract with one or more incorporated municipalities lying wholly or partly within the boundaries of such township, or with the county within which the township is located, to furnish police protection in the area of such township that is not within the incorporated area of any municipality having a regular police department. (60 ILCS 1/30-150)
23. Authorize contracts with county sheriff to furnish police protection in unincorporated areas. (60 ILCS 1/30-155)
24. In counties having a population of 1,000,000 or more, to authorize the board of trustees to contract with one or more municipalities in the township or with the county within which the township is located to furnish police protection in the unincorporated area of the township. The board of trustees may declare the unincorporated area of the township a special police district for tax purposes, proof of which authorizes the county clerk to extend a tax upon the special police district in the amount specified in the annual town tax levy, but not to exceed a rate of .10% of the value of taxable property as equalized or assessed by the Department of Revenue. (60 ILCS 1/30-160)
25. Authorize fire protection in unincorporated areas. (60 ILCS 1/30-165)
26. To authorize the board of trustees to contract for the furnishing of mosquito abatement services in the unincorporated areas of the township. (60 ILCS 1/30-170)
27. To authorize the supervisor to file an application for the township and all other bodies politic established by or subject to the control of the electors to participate in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. (60 ILCS 1/30-180)
28. Allow for voters at the Annual Town Meeting to transfer funds from one or more funds to other or different funds, or to the general road and bridge fund or any fund raised by taxation or bonds for road and bridges. (60 ILCS 1/30-185 and 1/245-5)
29. Make all such by-laws, rules and regulations deemed necessary to carry into effect the powers herein granted and may impose fines deemed proper, except when a fine or penalty is already allowed by law. No offense shall be classified in excess of a petty offense. (60 ILCS 1/30-190)
30. Apply all penalties, when collected, in such manner as may be deemed most to the interests of the township. (60 ILCS 1/30-195)
31. By a vote of the majority of electors present at a town meeting, the electors may authorize that an advisory question of public policy be placed on the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election in the township. The township board shall certify the question to the proper election officials, who shall submit the question in accordance with the general election law. (60 ILCS 1/30-205)
32. Adopt revised tax schedule for town purposes. (60 ILCS 1/235-5 and 1/235-10)
33. Increase tax rate for road purposes. (605 ILCS 5/6-504)
34. Tax for construction of bridge at joint expense of county and road district and obtain aid from county. (605 ILCS 5/6-508)
35. Request referendum to issue bonds for road purposes. (605 ILCS 5/6-510)
36. Petition for road or road improvements. (605 ILCS 5/6-601)
37. Request referendum to repeal special tax for road purposes. (605 ILCS 5/6-617)
38. Authorize the use of permanent road funds, general road and bridge funds, or town funds for the purpose of collecting, transporting, and disposing of brush and leaves. Allow general road and bridge or town funds to also be used for the purpose of providing disaster relief and support services approved by the township board of trustees at a regularly scheduled or special meeting. (60 ILCS 1/30-117)