

**Ross Township
12086 M-89
Richland, MI 49083
269-731-4888**

**Regular Board Meeting
January 18, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Supervisor Hutchings.

ROLL CALL

Present: Christina Hutchings Syndee Genung
 Lynn Harmon Diana Langshaw
 Carin Louis

Absent: Michael Bekes and Mike Sulka

Also Present: Attorney Rob Thall and approximately 8 interested residents.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

CONSENT AGENDA Trustee Langshaw moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Trustee Harmon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Trustee Harmon moved to approve November 16, 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes with two changes to Trustee Sulka's and Trustee Harmon's statements. Clerk Louis seconded motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT Attorney Rob Thall stated that Special Land Use will be discussed at the next meeting. A Public Hearing is scheduled for Monday January 24, 2021 to review Draft Master Plan.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT Supervisor Hutchings stated that the Township has been receiving numerous communications and phone calls from concerned Citizen's regarding Public Water being introduced to the area in and around Gull Lake. Supervisor Hutchings stated that Public Water is not on the horizon at this time. There is no Public Water Ordinance in Ross Township and if there was a proposed Ordinance or change it would be up to the Ross Township Board to vote on any prospective changes. She also stated as a Board member of the Gull Lake Sewer and Water Authority she can substantiate the fact that public water in Ross Township is not on the Gull Lake Sewer and Water Board's Agenda as it's not topic. Ultimately, no Board outside of Ross Township has the authority to enact new Ordinances or Rates upon Ross Township Residents, only the Ross Township Board can enact ordinances. All letters received regarding Public Water have been provided to board members in today's meeting packet.

CLERK UPDATE Clerk Louis reported that Ross Township was in receipt of a Notice of Right to Referendum from the Office of the Great Seal. The Ross Township is eligible to become a Charter Township. The Ross Township Board will need to Vote on this Referendum in the future. Attorney Rob Thall will provide information for review to the Board Member's review describing General Law Townships versus Charter Townships. Clerk Louis stated that as required by the Office of the Great Seal the Notice of Referendum was posted on MLIVE and will be posted a second time on MLIVE. The main difference brought to light between General Law Townships and Charter Townships is that Charter Townships can levy additional operating mils where General Law Townships are capped at one mil for operational budges. This will be placed on the February Agenda as discussion item. Clerk Louis relayed that the 2021 Salary, W-2 and 1099's are in good order per Auditor Ann Knafel of Siegfried Crandall. Clerk Louis attended the Sherman Lake/Gull Lake Sewer and Water Authority Meeting at the YMCA on January 11, 2022 and felt that it was well attended by Residents of the Sherman Lake area and many questions were asked and answered in the open forum regarding the Special Assessment District. Attorney Rob Thall presented a Power Point presentation which was included in today's Board Packet as well as explained how the Residents may take advantage of a 20-year financing option via the SAD. He also explained the Township's Ordinances regarding Mandatory Sewer Hookup, State Law and the DEQ supporting the connection of Sewer as it is a matter of public health and safety. Clerk Louis stated the Mid-year Audit performed by SeberTans will be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Hutchings opened the floor to Public Comment at 6:20pm.

Jim Corstange of Gull Lake spoke regarding Public Water Concerns.

Debbie Sutton of Sherman Lake spoke regarding the Public Meeting at the YMCA and asked for clarification of Trustee Harmon's requested changes to November's Draft Minutes.

Debbie of Sherman Lake questioned the Fifteen-year deadline and wondered why everyone was being required to hook up to Septic.

Supervisor Hutchings closed the floor to Public Comment at 6:33pm.

FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE Chief Bogema stated he is hiring a new Fire Fighter from Richland and has a few other applicants. He is work on a 50/50 Grant from MDOT for turn out gear and safety items. The Emergency Sirens at the Island Landing need to be replaced. Cost for a refurbished is about \$25,000 and there is talk that emergency sirens may no longer be required by Law as technology (phones) are common place for emergency notification. It was agreed the further discussion would be held on this subject. Chief Bogema stated he is waiting on the new Fire Truck which has a May 2022 manufacturing date. The Department is currently down one truck due to a wiring failure that is being repaired off site. Chief Bogema concluded that during month of January to date they had 22 runs.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Ross Township Master Plan-Public Hearing scheduled for January 24, 2022
- B. Short Term Rental Ordinance-Per Attorney Thall we are waiting on legislation at this point and may be able to discuss this further in the Summer.
- C. No Parking Ordinance in the South Bay-Pending
- D. Marijuana Caregiver business in Residential Zoning-Attorney Thall will address as the legislation is pending in Senate and the Planning Commission will be brought up to speed as well once the legislation passes.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ross Township Law Enforcement: Mutual Aid Agreements. Final Contracts are in Attorney Thall's hands and slight changes are being made to satisfy all parties involved. Supervisor Hutchings has established a list of "call types" to be addressed by the Contracted Agencies.
- B. Property split of platted lot 3904-07-276-050 (Overbeck & Clarkin): A memo was provided to the Board by Assessor Story regarding the party's request to divide parcel. Trustee Harmon moved to approve the property split. Trustee Langshaw seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.
- C. ARPA Committee: Supervisor Hutchings stated that she wishes to appoint a committee to advise the Board on Budgeted spending and use of funds. ARPA spending was broadened by the Federal Government. Spending is now allowed to include any Government services. The possibility of a future Town Hall meeting to explain spending of Ross Township's Funds was discussed by the Board. It was confirmed by Supervisor Hutchings that the Funds will have its own General Ledger Number to track and report Revenue and Expenditures with will be reported to the Federal Government as required under the Grant.
- D. Establish future budget meetings and a Public Hearing Date in regard to future budget: a discussion was held amongst members as to possible dates for meetings. It was agreed that February 9th and 23rd and March 9th will be used for the Boards Budget planning meetings.
- E. 2022 Board of Review Resolutions:
 - a. RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FOR ALTERNATE STARTING DATES FOR MARCH 2022 BOARD OF REVIEW-RESOLUTION: 03-2022
Treasurer Genung moved to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Langshaw
A Roll-Call Vote was held:
Gegung: aye
Beekes: absent
Langshaw: aye
Hutchings: aye
Louis: aye
Harmon: aye
Sulka: absent
Resolution 03-2002 adopted 5 ayes 2 absent.
 - b. RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF LETTERS OF PROTES FROM TAXPAYER RESIDENTS FOR THE MARCH 2022 BOARD OF REVIEW. Trustee Harmon moved to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Treasurer Genung.
A Roll-Call Vote was held:
Beekes: absent
Gegung: aye
Harmon: aye
Hutchings: aye
Langshaw: aye
Louis: aye
Sulka: absent
Resolution adopted 5 ayes 2 absent.
 - c. A RESOLUTION UPDATING STATE REQUIRED POVERTY LEVEL INCOME STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY TAX POVERTY EXEMPTION GUIDELINES FOR TAX YEAR 2022.

Clerk Louis moved to adopt the Resolution . Seconded by Trustee Harmon.

A Roll-Call Vote was held:

Sulka: absent

Louis: aye

Langshaw: aye

Hutchings: aye

Harmon: aye

Gegung: aye

Beekes: absent

Resolution adopted 5 ayes 2 absent.

CLOSED SESSION: to discuss proposal regarding Sikkema vs. Ross Township

- A.** Motion to assemble in closed session made by Treasurer Gegung and seconded by Trustee Langshaw.

A roll call vote was held:

Hutchings: aye

Harmon: aye

Gegung: aye

Beekes: absent

Sulka: absent

Louis: aye

Langshaw: aye

Motion passed 5 ayes and 2 absent.

The Board moved to Closed Session at 7:18pm.

The Board re-convened to open meeting at 7:38pm.

Trustee Harmon moved to follow the recommendations of counsel as discussed in closed session regarding the litigation filed in Kalamazoo County Circuit Court entitled:

William Sikkema and Nora Sikkema v. Ross Township

Kalamazoo County Circuit Court Case no. 20211-0088-CH

A Roll-Call Vote was held:

Beekes: absent

Gegung: aye

Harmon: aye

Hutchings: aye

Langshaw: aye

Louis: aye

Sulka: absent

Motion passed 5 ayes and 2 absent.

MEMBERS TIME: No statements.

Trustee Harmon moved to adjourn meeting. Seconded by Trustee Langshaw. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carin Louis
Township Clerk