

**ROSS TOWNSHIP  
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD – SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
May 31, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Supervisor Hutchings called the special meeting of the Ross Township Board to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Ross Township Hall.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present:       Christina Hutchings  
                  Cynthia Genung  
                  Michael Bekes  
                  Diana Langshaw  
                  Lynn Harmon  
                  Mike Sulka

Absent:         Alexander Harris

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Upon a motion made by Trustee Bekes, and seconded by Trustee Langshaw, the agenda was approved unanimously.

**CITIZEN COMMENT:**

David Scott, of East Gull Lake Drive, indicated that he liked the public comment at the end of the meeting. He additionally indicated that he would like to start seeing tickets issued with regard to the no wake law. Furthermore, he suggested that we have the police officers on Gull Lake coordinate to split their time to cover more hours and be more effective.

Connie Lavender, North 40<sup>th</sup> Street, addressed the Board regarding various issues and provided the attached written comments relecting her oral comments for inclusion in the minutes.

Dan Vandermeulen indicated that he's normally very negative but thanked the Board for this past Memorial Day at Gull Lake. He indicated that the Township's new Police Chief, Martin Brown, is lovely.

Public comment was closed at 5:43 p.m.

## ROSS TOWNSHIP POLICE CHIEF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT:

Supervisor Hutchings explained the police chief contract and indicated that the salary under the contract is \$65,000.00 plus a \$500 monthly insurance stipend. Supervisor Hutchings explained the role of the Township Police Department and the flow of work. The Board then engaged in general discussion regarding the contract. A motion was made by Trustee Bekes, seconded by Trustee Sulka to approve Martin Brown's police chief employment contract with back pay at the contract wage for the hours previously worked. In discussion of the motion, Trustee Sulka indicated that the primary need in the Township for police services is in the summer and he discussed with the board allowing flexibility in the Police Chief's hours to address the Township's seasonal needs. Upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Trustee Bekes, seconded by Trustee Langshaw to pay Martin Brown on a special payroll to cover the time since he started work for the Township. Upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

## ARPA OVERVIEW/REVIEW:

Trustee Bekes provided the Board with an ARPA overview. The Board reviewed an ARPA framework handout. A motion was made by Trustee Bekes, supported by Trustee Harmon to have Clerk Harris provide updated information regarding the ARPA allocation of the items on page 4 of the handout. Upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Park employee pay was discussed for clarity purposes. Upon a motion by Trustee Bekes, seconded by Treasurer Genung it was clarified that park employees are to be paid \$14.00 per hour and team leaders \$16.00 per hour with the pay scale to be applied since the park opened in 2023 and that any prior pay adjustments be paid by a special payroll.

Upon roll call vote on the motion, the following voted:

Aye: Christina Hutchings  
Cynthia Genung  
Michael Bekes  
Diana Langshaw  
Lynn Harmon  
Mike Sulka

Nay: None

The motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Bekes indicated that the Township does not have anyone yet to cover the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals since Rebecca Harvey resigned. He indicated that he would like to ask her to participate in these meetings for the time being. A motion was made by Trustee Bekes that he reach out to Rebecca Harvey to ask her to extend her resignation and

participate in Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings at least until the RFP process has been completed, and if she would rather not, then to have Trustee Bekes take the meeting minutes at both Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings at 75% of Rebecca Harvey's old contract rate, paid as an extra duty from the ARPA funds. The motion was seconded by Trustee Langshaw.

Upon roll call vote on the motion, the following voted:

Aye: Christina Hutchings  
Cynthia Genung  
Michael Bekes  
Diana Langshaw  
Lynn Harmon  
Mike Sulka

Nay: None

The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding the prior ARPA expense for a police rifle. It was inquired as to how the \$900.00 prior expense for the police rifle does not show up in the inventory. Board consensus was to figure out why and it was indicated that the Supervisor would investigate.

#### PORT-A-POTTIES NEAR SOUTH BAY:

Supervisor Hutchings led the Board in a discussion regarding port-a-potties near South Bay. Trustee Bekes indicated that Planning Commissioner Sherry Snyder had come up with the idea of a portable building containing the port-a-potties. He indicated that this could be a big win for the Township and questioned whether there was a business owner that will allow the port-a-potties to be located on their property. General discussion ensued and it was noted that the port-a-potties would be a positive benefit over people now using other's peoples lawns and bushes. It was indicated that the Township first need to procure an area for the port-a-potties. Trustee Sulka inquired as to what funding source the port-a-potties would come from. Trustee Bekes suggested that the cost would be attributable to parks. It was indicated that the Supervisor would continue to work on this issue.

#### GRANT WRITER POSITION – DEFINED COMPENSATION:

Supervisor Hutchings led the Board in discussion regarding the grant writer position. Trustee Sulka indicated that he had been told that often grant writers are funded out of the grant itself. General discussion ensued. A motion was made by Trustee Bekes, seconded by Trustee Sulka to give Supervisor Hutchings authority to hire with flexibility in determining an hourly rate for the grant writer position with an overall funding cap of \$4,000.00 from ARPA funds; further the performance and success of the position is to be presented by Supervisor Hutchings to the Board for discussion on expanding the program or terminating it when reviewed again in 2024.

Upon roll call vote on the motion, the following voted:

Aye: Christina Hutchings  
Cynthia Genung  
Michael Bekes  
Diana Langshaw  
Lynn Harmon  
Mike Sulka

Nay: None

The motion carried unanimously.

#### CLOSED DOOR SESSION ATTORNEY-CLIENT MEMORANDUM:

Trustee Sulka moved that the Township Board convene in closed session under Section 8(1)(h) of the Open Meetings Act, to consider material exempt from disclosure by state statute, Section 13(1)(g) of the Freedom of Information Act, being the letter from our attorney dated May 31, 2023, for the reason that the letter is exempt from disclosure under state law as attorney-client privileged. Trustee Bekes seconded the motion.

Upon roll call vote on the motion, the following voted:

Aye: Christina Hutchings  
Cynthia Genung  
Michael Bekes  
Diana Langshaw  
Lynn Harmon  
Mike Sulka

Nay: None

The motion carried unanimously.

The Board went into closed session at 6:15 p.m. The Board then returned from closed session at 6:55 p.m. and Supervisor Hutchings called the special meeting back to order. A motion was made by Trustee Harmon, seconded by Trustee Sulka that in an ongoing commitment to transparency to our residents, that they direct Attorney Thall to release the attorney-client privileged memorandum, dated May 31, 2023, as discussed, and further in the interests of protecting the Township from further harm, we request that Alexander Harris immediately resign his position as Ross Township Clerk. In discussion of the motion it was added that the memorandum be put on the Township's website.

Upon roll call vote on the motion, the following voted:

Aye: Christina Hutchings  
Cynthia Genung  
Michael Bekes  
Diana Langshaw  
Lynn Harmon  
Mike Sulka

Nay: None

The motion carried unanimously.

#### SECONDARY CITIZEN COMMENT:

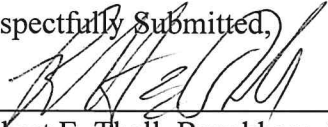
Connie Lavender indicated that she appreciated the second comment section and also wanted to know what could be done if Clerk Harris doesn't resign.

Mary Stage indicated that she appreciated the transparency of the Board. She further indicated that over the past year of coming to Board meetings she has seen the transparency by the Board first hand and that they are doing their best for the Township.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Trustee Sulka, seconded by Trustee Bekes the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



---

Robert E. Thall, Bauckham, Thall, Seeber,  
Kaufman & Koches, P.C.  
Township Attorney