

**Special Board Meeting
Approved Meeting Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
September 7, 2023**

Attendee Name	Title	Roll Call Status
Christina Hutchings	Supervisor	Present
Syndee Genung	Treasurer	Present
Diana Langshaw	Trustee	Present
Michael Bekes	Trustee	Present
Lynn Harmon	Trustee	Present
Mike Sulka	Trustee	Absent
Robert Thall	Attorney	Absent

Also in attendance were about 13 interested people.

Supervisor Hutchings called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm with all rising to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Trustee Langshaw motioned to approve the agenda as written. Treasurer Genung seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Valli McDougale thanked the board and Christina for working out an arrangement for the best interest of the residents, precluding us from going through the recall process.

Jean Hansen – Ditto on what Valarie just said.

Connie Lavender – Thanks all for everything we do, both the board and the staff. She sits in on many meetings and sees the dedication. She admires us and knows others do too.

With no further people approaching the podium, Supervisor Hutchings closed public comment at 5:03 pm and thanked everyone for their kind comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointing Temporary front office phones/tax help:

Trustee Bekes moved to appoint Trustee Diana Langshaw to work in the office temporarily at Deputy Treasurer compensation to help the Treasurer and Office staff. She has already been working in the role, so this motion is to make it official. This motion also includes paying her for hours already worked. Supervisor Hutchings seconded the motion. Board discussion included Trustee Harmon confirming the

role is temporary and Trustee Bekes/Supervisor Hutchings described the office pace is very high primarily due to tax collections and being short staffed. The motion passed unanimously.

Appointing Temporary Clerk/Minutes help:

Trustee Langshaw motioned to add board meeting minutes as an extra duty to the May 31, 2023 motion which gave Michael Bekes the approval to write both Planning Commission meeting minutes and ZBA meeting minutes when necessary. The original motion covered the period either committee was absent the Planner and this additional duty will only cover the period before a new clerk is hired. Supervisor Hutchings seconded the motion. Board discussion included Bekes sharing he will immediately start working on the last three board meeting minutes and Supervisor Hutchings shared we are out of compliance with open meeting act requirements due to their being late and shared appreciation of Trustee Bekes taking on the responsibility. Trustee Harmon clarified the responsibility is temporary and the rate of pay would be the same as that approved in the May 31, 2023 motion. Supervisor Hutchings opined having just one rate would help payroll stay clean. The motion passed unanimously.

Appointing Temporary Clerk/Elections Help:

Trustee Bekes moved to appoint Mary Carol Wilkens as temporary Clerk, due to Township disability whereas the Township does not have either a Clerk or a Deputy Clerk at the present time. This role will be paid Clerk compensation and cease within two weeks of onboarding a new Clerk. The appointment comes with authority to access the Clerk's email, have access to BS&A, sign checks and handle all election material including QVF. This motion also includes appointing Tim Snow as Deputy Clerk to the Clerk. Supervisor Hutchings seconded the motion. Board discussion pointed out Tim Snow is available, Mary Carol's wealth of knowledge on elections with 30+ years of experience, only sworn in people can handle ballots and ballot materials are currently unsecured in the office because no one can touch them. The motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Bekes moved the board to authorize a project regarding board meeting minutes that entails two items: Item 1, carve out all passed motions from meeting minutes between November 20, 2020 to present and list them as a record for easy viewing with an expectation all future passed motions would be added to the document. Item 2, assess all board meeting minutes from November 20, 2022 to present and cross reference for board materials that were available at each respective board meeting to ensure inclusion into the record. Trustee Harmon seconded the motion. Board discussion confirmed this motion aligned to the agenda item 'minutes help' and the work should help organize this area of our business as the output could be considered board briefs with minute binders organized in a way that could save a lot of time when searching for specific material. The motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Harmon suggested the team canvass for volunteers for phone help and for filing help.

Appointing Community Volunteer to Payroll/Elections help:

Trustee Bekes moved the board to assign general ledger oversight including payroll and accounts payable to Community Volunteer Phoebe Moreo and Trustee Michael Bekes. This assignment's focus would be to streamline the general ledger, create training materials for users and to make necessary journal entries and reversals to bring our accounts up to date. The product would be financial statements that gives the board a great view into our Township finances monthly. Trustee Harmon seconded the motion. Board discussion defined how the gap between what is currently being done and best practice per our

auditor would be determined and closed. Supervisor Hutchings thanked Phoebe for her work to date stating her expertise, knowledge level, zest for numbers, problem solving abilities, energy and love for the Township are a gift to the Township. The motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Hutchings updated the board on Tim Snow's availability and various other people she has contacted regarding election material. She shared all have been very supportive to Ross Township and shared she feels we are in really good shape. Trustee Bekes stated our ballot printer is no longer in business, we don't have another ballot printer identified to date, we have no access to the Qualified Voter File, we all need new voter ID cards and new absentee ballot sleeves. The board was made aware of all of this information just this within the past two days.

Board Time

A meeting will be scheduled at 5:15 pm on Monday September 11th to appoint our next Clerk. Attorney Thall gave an opinion the board has the right to appoint Mary Stage as Clerk as she was the candidate with the same number of votes as our prior Clerk during the primary election, but only lost in the drawing of the name at the Kalamazoo County draw. The vote to appoint cannot happen today as this item was not on the agenda so the Special Board Meeting is being scheduled. Trustee Bekes then explained to all the information from Attorney Thall just came this morning and because we did not have 100% board presence at this meeting the agenda could not be expanded to other topics. Had we had 100% board presence, the item could have been voted on during this meeting. No other candidate had applied as of this meeting time and Trustee Bekes suggested Supervisor Hutchings remove the job posting down. Supervisor Hutchings took the suggestion under advisement and no decision was made regarding taking the job posting down.

Adjournment:

Trustee Harmon moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Langshaw seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Supervisor Hutchings adjourned the meeting at 5:28 pm.

Minutes submitted by:

Michael Bekes
Township Trustee
Temporary Acting Recording Secretary