

**Special Board Meeting
Draft Meeting Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
December 27, 2023, at 1 pm**

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

Also, in attendance were about four interested people

Supervisor Hutchings called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm with all rising to cite the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Bekes moved to approve the agenda. Trustee Langshaw supported. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Hutchings opened public comment at 1:04 pm.

Valli McDougle: Read the attached letter to the Board.

Marcia Drouin: Current Treasurer for Richland Township cited most of the job training for Treasurer is on the job training and asking others for help. One of the people being considered for the position of Ross Treasurer had already contacted her for advice and had also already gone through a tax mailing as the Deputy Treasurer. Appointing her would give her a chance to experience the job, allowing her to determine if she would run for the office in November and if someone comes in fresh right now the person would not know half of the things the Treasurer needs to do.

Rob Baker: Thanked Syndee for her service to the Township and wished her well in her future endeavors.

Supervisor Hutchings closed public comment at 1:08 pm.

Trustee Harmon motioned for the Trustees to forgo their stipend for special meetings when there is no board meeting in the month that the special meeting is held. Trustee Sulka supported. Trustee Bekes asked Attorney Thall if the motion could be considered because it was not on the agenda as approved. Thall reported because the entire board was present, the agenda could be amended. Thall also added having this motion effect this meeting could not happen, since members of the board came to the meeting with the expectation of being paid. Trustee Bekes motioned an amendment to the motion to postpone further discussion on the motion until the January 2024 meeting. Supervisor Hutchings supported. After further discussion, Genung, Bekes, Hutchings, Stage and Langshaw voted aye, and Harmon and Sulka voted nay. The motion carried 5 to 2. Supervisor Hutchings then asked for a vote on the original motion to discuss the stipend pay for special meetings when no board meeting occurs during said month at the January 2024 meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS – Replacement for Treasurer

Attorney Rob Thall informed the board if a Treasurer is not in place as of January 1st, the date of Treasurer Genung's retirement, the Deputy Treasurer cannot step into the job. There would be no one who would be able to collect taxes until a new Treasurer is in place. Further discussion identified no checks could then be properly counter signed, tax payments could only be collected but not processed, there would be risk of late payment fees, a temporary appointment would need to fill the role until the next election and potential audit findings exist as tax payments could not be processed timely until a Treasurer is in place.

During an open discussion period, Treasurer Genung cited several examples of why she supports Deputy Treasurer Wiersma to be appointed as her successor. Trustees Langshaw and Bekes both cited several examples of their direct observations of Deputy Treasurer Wiersma's work performance and engagement as support for her appointment to Treasurer. Trustees Sulka and Harmon had no direct interaction with Deputy Treasurer Wiersma and Clerk Stage cited examples of both support and concerns of an appointment to Deputy Treasurer Wiersma.

Clerk Stage motioned to post the Treasurer job, have people apply and interview people for the job. Further discussion included the potential for Treasurer Genung to postpone her retirement and acceleration of the hiring process by shortening response timeframes to the minimum. Treasurer Genung stated she would not be able to postpone her retirement, taking that option off the table. Trustee Sulka seconded the motion. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Bekes, Langshaw, Hutchings and Genung voted nay. Stage, Harmon and Sulka voted aye. The motion did not pass with three votes aye and four votes nay.

Trustee Bekes motioned the board to appoint Deputy Treasurer Amanda Wiersma to Treasurer asking the board to take into consideration all that was discussed. Supervisor Hutchings supported. After further discussion including Attorney Thall's affirmation that by law, Treasurer Genung could not vote on her replacement, a roll call vote was taken. Bekes, Langshaw, Hutchings, Stage and Harmon voted aye. Sulka voted nay. The motion passed 5 - 1 in favor of appointing Amanda Wiersma as Treasurer of Ross Township.

Adjournment

Trustee Bekes moved to adjourn; Supervisor Hutchings supported. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael Bekes
Ross Township Trustee

