

ROSS TOWNSHIP REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Minutes
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
April 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm

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

There were several interested residents in attendance.

Call to Order:

Supervisor Hutchings called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with all rising for the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Approval of Agenda

Motion
Trustee Harmon motioned to approve the agenda, with one change, to move the Eagle Scout Presentation to right after Agenda approval, supported by Clerk Stage. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Harman
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Eagle Scout Presentation for Scholarship – Ross township Park Project

“Hello Ross Township Board, my name is Ayden Weddington, I am an Eagle Scout Candidate in Troop 294, I am here today to apply for the J Allen Harmon Eagle Scholarship to help fund my Eagle Scout project in Ross Township Park. My project is to build a retaining wall to help stop soil erosion in the lake side pavilion.”

Ayden explained that he would use landscaping ties, to form a wall, filling in behind the ties with dirt and covering with stones. He is also seeking assistance from Lowe’s and area business to support his project.

Motion
Trustee Harmon motioned to give Ayden an additional \$500.00 out of the Park Fund to use, if needed, for the project, supported by Clerk Stage. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Harman
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Motion
Trustee Bekes motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, supported by Trustee Harmon, Clerk Stage asked for the Interlocal Fire Department Agreement be pulled out. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Trustee Harmon
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Clerk Stage asked about Item 19: Audit and Financial Statement it states that an audit should be done every two years. The Township is audited once a year should that be updated in the Agreement. Attorney Thall stated it was not necessary to change the verbiage. Item 22 Contributions for Operating expenses and Capital Expenditures: Clerk Stage wanted to make sure all involved individuals were aware of how invoices were to be handled, the Fire Board Approves them to be paid, the Treasurer will then bring the invoice to the Clerk for payment.

Motion
Clerk Stage motioned to return the Interlocal Agreement as is to the Consent Agenda, supported by Trustee Bekes. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Trustee Bekes
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

John Crumb, Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority: GLSWA is updating their Interlocal Agreements currently. During the stormy weather the GLSWA crews were able to make sure all the generators on lift stations were working correctly, with no failures. GLSWA will be working with Attorney Thall’s office on the Sherman Lake Residents that have not hooked up yet to available public sewer and are not part of the Special Assessment District

Citizen Comment:

Supervisor Hutchings opened Citizen comment at 6:19 pm.

Linda Scott: Told the Board that the new house being built next to their home, blocks her view of the north bay. She felt that her concerns about the build were not adequately addressed by the Township.

Larry Stehouwer: Representative from Road Commission Kalamazoo County, stopped by to say hello and address any concerns. Trustee Harmon asked if there were any updates on the G Ave project. Larry stated the project is moving forward and an update will be out soon.

John Thomas, Village of Augusta President: Would like to set a date for a joint meet with individuals from the Village and Township to go over the Interlocal Fire Department Agreement. Attorney Thall will amend the document so the Village and Township comments and requests for changes can be seen by both entities, when we sit down to negotiate the final agreement.

Larry Carter: Would like the Board to take into consideration the large covered boat lifts that are now being put into the lake when updating the View Shed Ordinance. See letter provided.

Various Committee Reports:

Fire Department: Chief Bogema stated the Department went on 88 calls in March and 30 thus far in April. In the public relations department some of the Firefighters did a Boy Scout Fire Safety program and in May they will address Galesburg/Augusta High School students with a Prom Education Drinking and Driving program. The Department had a party to celebrate the retirement of Craig Perkins and Syndee Genung and the new fulltime firefighters Branden Shirley and Isaac Schumaker, as well as handing out top recognition awards.

Police Department: Chief Brown stated that March was a normal month. The Department will be updating their record system to the State of Michigan’s system which will save the Township up to \$1,600.00. Chief is working with the DNR to put in buoys near Grass Island and looking at a new no wake zone by Gull Lake Ministries swimming area, which will come before the Board for approval. He will be doing security training with St Ann Church and School staff, this summer.

Clerk Report: Clerk Stage had several updates as follows:

Resolution
Clerk Stage resolved to update the Election budget for 2024.2025 by \$9000.00 to cover the cost of the County wide agreement for Early Voting, supported by Trustee Bekes. There was a roll call vote, the resolution carried unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Trustee Bekes
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Motion
Clerk Stage motioned to if necessary to move Precinct 1 to the Sherman Lake YMCA if the Augusta Fire Barn is under construction or an inspection rules it not safe for use, supported by Trustee Bekes. There was a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Trustee Bekes
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Motion
Clerk Stage motioned to be allowed to sign the Audit Agreement with Siegfried Crandall, supported by Supervisor Hutchings. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Supervisor Hutchings
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Clerk Stage presented an Appointing Policy for the Board to review. After discussion the Board decided to have Attorney Thall go through the document and make amendments from the discussion and return to the Board for review, next month.

Infosafe Quote: the Board discussed the services provided by Infosafe. The Board requested that Supervisor Hutchings and Clerk Stage get with Infosafe to break out costs for storage, travel time hours and billable hours.

Fire Board: Trustee Langshaw gave the update to the Board:

A special meeting of the Fire Board was held April 11th, with all members present.

The Millage for 2025 – 2029 was discussed and Chief Bogema gave a report of finances. There are funds to run the department for a year if the millage does not pas. This covers mainly maintenance, necessities such as gas and salaries. It does not include equipment purchases.

The goal is to have the updated/new agreement approved by all entities (The Fire Board, the Village of Augusta, and The Ross Township Board) for the August election with the proposal turned in by the required date of May 14, 2024.

There were several complaints received that a camper has been parked on several occasions beside the Fire Hall in the Village, with an extension cord being put through the window of the Fire Hall that is leased by the Fire Department, which was plugged into the electrical unit inside the fire building which is paid for by the Fire Department/Fire Board. Upon investigation the camper/trailer unit was not authorized, the Fire Chief was not notified nor was the camper part of the Fire Department or owned by a firefighter.

We were advised that an unlocked window leaves fire equipment unsecure. This is unsafe, and is illegal to pay for personal use of electricity via taxpayer millage. The Board is concerned with the security and safety of the use of this building when several fire trucks, fire equipment and other Fire Department items are stored there.

It was noted that meetings were in progress at the Village of Augusta and Ross Township regarding approval of the interlocal agreement and the millage and there might be a need for another meeting before May 14th. All three entities have to have approval of their Boards before we can move further.

New Business:

Resolution
Trustee Sulka resolved to accept the Ross Township Fire Protection Millage Renewal as written, supported by Trustee Harmon. There was a roll call vote and the resolution carried unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Sulka
Second	Trustee Harmon
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Motion
Trustee Harmon motioned to accept the Noise Ordinance, supported by Trustee Langshaw. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Harmon
Second	Trustee Langshaw
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Motion
Trustee Harmon motioned to accept the View Shed Ordinance, supported by Supervisor Hutchings. The motion carried unanimously.

After further discussion Trustee Harmon rescinded her motion and the Board agreed to send the Ordinance back to the Planning Commission for further input. The Board asked that the Planning Commission return the Ordinance to the Board in June.

Second Citizen Comments:

Larry Carter: He appreciated the Board reviewing his concerns about the boat lifts. The Board considered asking ask the Planning Commission to look into regulating boat lifts, completely blocking views of the lake.

Trustee Updates:

Supervisor Hutchings: Updated that Board on the outstanding PILT payments from Michigan State University Kellogg Biological Station. The outstanding PILT payment has been submitted for payment of \$42,972.36.

Supervisor Hutchings addressed the Board and explained that she did tell Linda Scott that her concerns should be taken to the Planning Commission, who was responsible for approval of the site plan of Allendale Park, adjacent to her property.

Trustee Bekes: Requested that the Board began to look at a Police Millage to support our Police Department. General discussion ensued.

Motion
Clerk Stage motioned to adjourn, supported by Treasurer Wiersma. The motion carried unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Treasurer Wiersma
Result	Resolution Adopted: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 0 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Aye
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasure Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Supervisor Hutchings adjourned the meeting at 8:56 pm.