

**Ross Township Regular Board Meeting
Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
May 21, 2024**

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

Call to Order:

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

Prior to the approval to the agenda, Supervisor Hutchings wanted to add:

DNR Grassy Isle buoys
Flood Plain Ordinance with FEMA
Tree Work stump grinding

Clerk Stage asked that item G & H be moved from Consent Agenda to under John Crumb, Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority.

Approval of Agenda

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to accept the agenda with changes, supported by Trustee Langshaw the motion passed unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Motion	
Trustee Harmon moved to accept the consent agenda with changes, supported by Trustee Bekes the motion passed unanimously.	

Mover	Trustee Harmon
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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

John Crumb, Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority: Trustee Harmon asked why John was not at the meeting, Supervisor Hutchings read an email from John as to why he was not attending tonight's meeting, see attached email.

Clerk Stage stated that she was concerned that the Bylaws are not in best interest of the Township. Supervisor Hutchings also voiced her concerns about the Bylaws. For Residents in attendance to understand, Trustee Harmon brought up that the reason we have never discussed the Bylaws is because this is the first time seeing the Bylaws. After further discussion, Clerk Stage requested that the Board members review the draft Bylaws for the GLWSA that were sent to them by Supervisor Hutchings and send suggested changes to Attorney Thall by the end of May. He will pass long suggested changes to Board members of the GLWSA Board and their Township Boards.

The next item Clerk Stage wanted to make the Board aware of the Operating and Maintenance Agreement between GLWSA and The Bluffs. In the agreement it states that the GLWSA will take ownership of the drinking water wells on The Bluffs property.

After discussion, Trustee Harmon asked in the letter to the other Township Boards who have Commissioners on the GLWSA Board, it's come to Ross Township's attention some matters are being voted on at the GLWSA meetings before they have been properly vetted by the Township Boards represented. The Bylaws are at times in conflict with the Articles of Incorporation and each Board Municipality should vote on Bylaws the way they voted on the Articles of Incorporation.

The Board will get their concerns, on the Bylaws and O&M Agreement, to Attorney Thall before the end of the month, so a letter can be sent.

Citizen Comment:

Supervisor Hutchings opened Citizen Comment at 6:34 pm.

Valli McDougle – Expressed her appreciation of the Board looking out for the best interest of the Residents at the GLWSA meetings. Encouraged others to write their concerns to the GLWSA so they can become part of the record

Bob Cook – Appreciates the Board looking into Bylaws for GLWSA. Concern about the water push into Ross Township. Stated Residents & Ross Board should get the word out about cleaning up the PFAS contamination.

Carin Louis – Residents should be looking at the EGLE website because the PFAS is statewide and in Ross Township. Shel would support having the PFAS site focus back on being cleaned up.

Bill Sikkema – Express appreciation to the Board watching out for the Residents best interest, and the needs to getting other Townships involved on the GLWSA issues and PFAS site cleanup.

Nancy Boyd – President of Sherman Lake the Resident Association; updated Board on the aeration project. The north end of the lake is doing well, the project will be focusing on the south end, the channel and Isle. There have also been additional treatments for evasive weeds in the Lake.

Tom Boyd – Thanked the Board for their support on the Sherman Lake sewer hookup.

Helen Lang – Concerned about water push into Ross Township. Also, that there is talk of a Ross and Kalamazoo Operation agreement. Interested in forming a committee to get the PFAS site cleaned up.

John Thomas – Village of Augusta sewer rates are set by the City of Kalamazoo, and GLWSA adds a handling fee. Fire Board did not elect new Chair at the April meeting. Removal of Fire Board members should be left to the municipalities. Need to set a date for the Committees to get together to go through the Interlocal Agreement.

Bob Cook – Wolverine Worldwide, in Rockford, MI has a way to cleanup PFAS.

Supervisor Hutchings closed public comment at 6:51 pm.

Committee Reports

Fire Department – Chief Bogema fire runs are down for this year. After the tornado in Portage, Ross Augusta Fire Department lent one truck and four firefighters to assist in their efforts after the storm. Chief has quotes on new and used sirens. Used sirens are \$18,000.00/ea and 'used is possible as municipalities are removing them to go with cell phone emergency alert systems.

The siren in Augusta and at the Isle parking area did not work the night of the tornado, the one at Sherman Lake did work.

The Fire Department is doing a walk through at The Bluffs tonight to train in the event of fire..

Chief is meeting with new Ft. Custer Fire Marshall tomorrow.

70th Anniversary of the Fire Department will be Saturday, September 28, 2024 from 11am – 2 pm, Chief will recognize Mac, who started the Ross Augusta Fire Department.

Fire Board – Diana Langshaw reported the siren in Augusta was officially abandoned to the Village of Augusta for their use. The Ross Board needs to decide whether we are going to keep the sirens or go to a phone warning system. Car Show will be in August of 2024. The Fire Board did elect new officers at the May meeting, as per the Agreement. For the 70th Anniversary there will be a Food Wagon. The evaluation on the Chief, Assist Chief and Deputy Chief have begun per policy of the Fire Department.

Motion
Trustee Langshaw moved to have the Township set aside \$2000.00 for the Anniversary celebration, supported by Trustee Bekes. After a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Police Department – Chief Brown and the Richland Police Department recently solved a few crimes in the area.

Chief advised Residents to empty mail boxes daily, there are individuals stealing items from mail boxes at night.

Chief successfully returned a stolen car to its owner, a Kia.

The Police Boat is in the water and weekend patrols have started.

Eagle Scout Project – Trustee Harmon stated the project is almost complete at Ross Township Park. Ayden has gotten all the material today donated by various businesses. Ayden will soon be planting grass and flowers to enhance the area. A former Ross Township Board member, Jerry Harmon has been mentoring Ayden on his project at the park.

Old Business:

ViewShed Ordinance: Trustee Bekes updated the Board that the final draft will be to the Planning Commission by May 30th, they will make sure to have the Ordinance to Attorney Thall by June 7th to set the Public Hearing for June 20th and have the final Ordinance to the Township Board for our July meeting and approval.

Sherman Lake Sewer Connection: Attorney Thall updated the Board that one of the defendants passed away, and the hearing date was rescheduled July 22nd. Due to the delay other individuals who have not hooked up will hopefully be included at the hearing on the same day.

LifeCare Ambulance Contract: Supervisor Hutchings advised that this item was still with Attorney Thall's office.

Fire Department IGA/Millage: Clerk Stage advised that the millage was sent to County and is on the ballot for August elections.

Draft "Appointing Policy": Attorney Thall handed out to the Board an amended copy for review and discussion at June's Board meeting.

New Business:

Buoys for Grassy Isle: Supervisor Hutchings had Attorney Thall update the Board that the request for permits for DNR to place four buoys at Grassy Isle in order, to place the buoys, permission from the land owners is necessary. Some Residents do not want the buoys and because of this he is hesitant in moving forward. Four buoys at the cost would be \$5,994.34, the DNR will not assist with cost. The Board agreed to postpone the decision on the buoys, giving them time to hear from the Residents who live near Grassy Isle.

Flood Plain Ordinance: Supervisor Hutchings has an Ordinance from the Attorney's office that needs to be adopted because the US Government has updated their flood plain maps. The Ordinance would allow Residents living in a flood plain area to secure insurance for flood plain areas. Trustee Bekes motioned to approve the Ordinance, supported by Trustee Langshaw. After discussion Trustee Bekes and Langshaw rescinded their motion and the Board postponed the decision until their June meeting, pending their review of new FEMA Floodplain documents at the Office.

Tree Work/Stump Grinding: Supervisor Hutchings explained the work would be done at Yorkville Cemetery. Michael King got a quote from Turf Work for \$1,500.00. Trustee Harmon asked if there were other quotes, Supervisor Hutchings stated that because of the recent storm tornados, businesses are not taking on other work at this time. Trustee Langshaw suggested getting quotes from local stump companies, if no other option's or if \$1,500.00 was best quote, to proceed.

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to get additional bids and to approve up to \$1500.00 for stump removal at the Yorkville Cemetery, supported by Trustee Harmon. After a roll call vote the motion passed 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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

James Baker, PE – Public Services Director City of Kalamazoo James presentation dealt with the Kalamazoo’s property on 37th St and Greer Road. The City has implemented a Forest Stewardship Plan for the property. They are also working with the DNR to arrange a Public Hunt on the property to manage wildlife.

James updated the Township Board on the Grant & Loan Funding Application, that was approved by the City of Kalamazoo Board. the application must be filed with the State on June 1st. We should know by September 2024 what the results are of the Application could be some, could be none. The Ross Township Board will have until January 2025 to decide to move forward with the water for PFAS project.

Supervisor Hutchings asked the Township Board and James if we would consider allowing Residents in attendance to ask questions of James, and was agreed to by all. Residents asked various questions focusing on the PFAS levels in the City Water. The City water is below EPA level standards and they have until 2029, when the new standards go into effect currently, to update equipment to comply with the new EPA standards.

Clerk Stage asked what filtration system the City uses, it is a carbon filtration system.

At the conclusion of the discussion Trustee Harman suggested a Townhall with EGLE and City of Kalamazoo Water Professionals to answer Resident questions and concerns regarding PFAS. She also inquired of Attorney Thall if the Township was under an obligation at this time with the Funding Agreement, he stated no there is no obligation to proceed with city of Kalamazoo for public water into Ross Township.

Twp Fees & Cost Centers allocation Schedule & Chart of Accounts: Clerk Stage started with the Cost Centers Allocation Schedule, she will be sending that out to the Board for review and suggestion on improvements and changes.

The Chart of Account update is finally completed with BS&A. Clerk Stage will be working with Trustee Harmon and Treasurer Wiersma to add cost centers where needed to better track Township operating expenses.

Clerk Stage handed out an updated Township Fee Schedule, with updates around Site Plan Review and Land Divisions and Splits. After discussion the following motion was made.

Resolution
Trustee Sulka moved to resolve changes to the Fee Schedule and to have Clerk Stage investigate the other areas of the Fee Schedule to see if other adjustments are required, supported by Trustee Harmon . After a roll call vote the motion passed 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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Second Citizen Comment

Larry Stehouwer – RCKC update that the Road Commission has submitted application for a grant for 35 million to address road issues in the County. That would include the G Ave issue at M96.

Bob Cook – Buoys around Grassy Isle will go missing.

James Dally – We do not mind buoys; we believe one buoy would be sufficient. Our concern is boaters swing to close to the shore where children may be swimming under water. Educate boaters about the area perhaps through an App or maps that can be given out when putting their boat in the lake.

Vonda Dally – Concerning the buoys and Grassy Isle, perhaps an App or map would work to educate boater on the dangers that they may encounter on the Lake.

Michelle McWilliams – concerning removal, of the warning sirens, some people do not have cell phones.

John Thomas – melding of all three agreement versions, and set a meeting to go over the Interlocal agreement. Supervisor Hutchings stated that when meeting together on the Agreement there would be 3 copies, or the Village could assist in paying of the Attorney fees for the melding of the 3 version to one, to which John agreed to work from the three copies as he did not want to incur legal fees. John also suggested that the review of the Agreement and amendments be done by a committee comprised of Township Board and Village

Supervisor Hutchings closed Citizen Comment at 8:55pm.

Trustee Updates

Trustee Bekes – Viewshed Ordinance Revision

PC discussed the ordinance last night at their regular meeting.

PC agreed to several updates/changes.

As the changes were significant, Attorney Thall opined another public hearing is necessary.

Becky Harvey has a due date of May 30th to get the PC the necessary changes in written form, based on the decisions made last night.

The PC members will each review the changes and opine agreement or other commentary directly to Rob or Becky by June 7th.

Rob will timely notice the public hearing to coincide with the regular PC Meeting on Jun 24th. The notice deadline is June 9th, having it to the paper.

The ordinance will be finalized (hopefully) at the June 24th PC meeting and Rob would then present the material in full ordinance form for board approval at the July 16th Board meeting.

PC asked Becky Harvey to write up the following changes:

1. Section 18.6 – For the purpose of maintaining site lines and views on lake lots, if a fence is created with vegetation, the following would apply:
 - a. Four-foot maximum height.
 - b. OK to plant to the side yard line.
 - c. OK to plant the entire side yard property line.
 - d. 50% density maximum.
 - e. Height would be established from the natural grade.
2. Section 16.5 – Add all fences, vegetation in nature would be included, to a zoning permit requirement.
3. Article 17, Section 17.3 of the Ross Township Zoning Ordinance will not be amended to add subsection ‘D’ as outlined in the original work by the PC or the Board’s subsequent review.

All other changes made in the initial work would remain and will not be subject to public hearing.

The public attendee agreed to these changes as appropriate and complete.

Regarding ordinance for boat hoists:

1. Both Bert and Rob opined the Township does not have jurisdiction over this
2. Riparian rights were discussed, but I’m going on record it is Littoral rights. Riparian rights are rights on a moving/flowing water, Littoral rights are on a body of water (Lake, Pond, etc).

Shout out to Treasurer Wiersma for her investment of Township money.

Motion
Clerk Stage moved to adjourn, supported by Treasurer Wiersma, the motion passed unanimously.

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
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
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee Sulka	Aye

Supervisor Hutchings adjourned the meeting at 8:57pm.