

**Ross Township Regular Board Meeting
Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
July 16, 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.

Trustee Harmon requested that the Closed Door Session – Attorney / Client Memorandum be moved to after Second Citizen Comment. Clerk Stage requested that the Review of Quarterly Budget be added to New Business.

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 Bekes moved to accept the consent agenda with removal of the June 18 minutes, requested by Trustee Harmon, 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

Trustee Harmon requested a couple of changes to the June 18, 2024 minutes.

Motion	
Trustee Harmon moved to accept the June 18, 2024 minutes with changes, supported by Treasurer Wiersma, the motion passed unanimously.	

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

Citizen Comment:

Chief Brown – Explained the discussion of a slow/no wake zone in front of the Gull Lake Ministries began after the 2023 Boat Parade. The Boat Parade reportedly was moving too fast, creating a large wake, causing docks to shift and potentially dangerous swim conditions due to the wake. Based on feedback on last year’s event, Chief inquired if the Ministry and residents in the cove would like to pursue a slow/no wake zone, but they declined. Chief then contacted individuals in charge of the Boat Parade and explained the wake and safety concerns at issue. The Boat Parade sponsor changed the lead driver for the 2024 Boat Parade and there were no issues with wake or swimmer safety at GLM or in the cove. This safety matter was for discussion only. Any claim of actions by the Township and Police Chief beyond discussion and problem solving are simply rumors.

Megan Buwalda, Representative from Michigan Congress Representative Matt Hall’s office - introduced herself, offered her business card and offered assistance to us when needed.

Larry Stehouwer, RCKC - stated it is road repair season, please obey all road working signs.

Frank Guarisco – Informed the Board that he is running for Trustee and gave the Board and residents a brief history of his employment & qualifications history.

Aditya Rama, from Metro Service - Left information and discussed “Metro Connect” a service that replaced Dial-A-Ride. In 2023, Ross Township residents used the service 375 times, in 2024 Ross residents are averaging 67 rides/month, which is a significant increase over 2023.

Mary Carol Wilkins, Ross Twp. Office Manager – Commented on social media posts, the sharing of inaccurate information to Ross residents. Many individuals posting rumors and misinformation on social media do not even attend the Ross Township Board meeting.

Connie Lavender – Agreed with Ms. Wilkins comments, she praised the Township Board for the job they are doing and encouraged them to continue the good work for the whole Township.

Various Committee Reports:

Fire Department: Chief Bogema stated the total calls for the month 44 emergency medical calls, 20 general calls, and 2 structure fires, giving mutual aid in Richland Township, which RAFD assist. The Department assisted in water search and rescue in Fort Custer, unfortunately the individual did not survive. The Firefighter attending Chaplin school should be completing his studies soon and other area Departments are already reaching out to him for assistance in their communities.

LifeCare Ambulance, Steve Frisbee: July – November are the busy months for LifeCare. The number of siren calls were up slightly, they are working with team members to bring that figure down. There is a new State Mandate to reduce siren calls by 30%, and only use sirens for true medical / life threatening emergencies.

Fire Board: Diana Langshaw stated the Fire Board hopes to have all personnel evaluations completed by the end of the month. There will be a review of the evaluation form and changes will be made for next year’s evaluation.

Supervisor: Supervisor Hutchings spoke about the process for creating a slow/no wake zone. A petition drive starts with the residents. The petition is then brought to the Township, where the names/addresses on the petition are verified by the Clerk & Assessor to be property owners, not renters, and a signature match is also verified. Once deemed valid and a majority of property owners in the land to receive the slow, no wake zone, the petition is brought before the Township Board for a vote to proceed to the DNR. If the Township Board votes to move forward, the DNR receives the petition of signatures with the requested area for the slow, no wake zone. The DNR performs a study to evaluate if a slow/no wake zone is necessary and legally permitted. If deemed appropriate, the DNR releases findings to the Township Board, along with their recommendations. Once again, the Township Board would hold a Public Hearing to consider the DNR’s study, and vote on whether to approve. If the vote is approved, the DNR would also hold a public hearing. There are multiple approvals required from the DNR and the Township, and no slow, no wake zone CANNOT be implemented until ALL steps are completed. The slow, no wake zone rumor at Gull Lake Ministries was simply that.

A reminder that anyone can request DRAFT minutes, available on the 8th business day after the meeting, because the Township only posts officially approved meeting minutes. One can obtain these by contacting the Ross Township Office, either in person or with a request by email.

Old Business:

Sherman Lake Sewer Connections: Attorney Thall informed the Board that the Hearing for a dozen or so Sherman Lake residents who did not connect to public sewer under Ross Township Ordinance 179 and under Michigan Law, Public Health Code Act 368 of 1978 - is scheduled for Monday, July 22, 2024.

LifeCare Ambulance Contract: Is still in legal review and will be revisited after the 2024 elections.

New Business:

Viewshed Ordinance: Attorney Thall went over the changes to the Viewshed Ordinance. Discussion ensued for clarification and understanding. Upon conclusion of discussion a motion was made.

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to approve the revised Viewshed Ordinance, supported by Clerk Stage. After roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

Trustee Sulka inquired if the Planning Commission was going to pursue an Ordinance on the boat canopy lifts. Attorney Thall stated the Township does not have authority; it is a riparian rights matter. Residents sort out complaints on boat canopy lifts themselves, or through civil proceedings. The Township does not get involved in riparian matters or property line disputes between neighbors.

Continue Discussion regarding Renewable Energy Regulations: Attorney Thall advised the Board that the petition to put the renewable energy regulation on the ballot in November did not meet the required signatures. The State Regulation will go into effect on November 29, 2024. After discussion with the Board and Legal Council, a motion was made.

Motion

Trustee Sulka moved to have the Planning Commission (PC) work on a Renewable Energy Ordinance for the Township. Due to the time frame that the Ordinance will need to be completed he also moved that the PC may need to have special meeting to complete the Ordinance, supported by Trustee Harmon, 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:

Supervisor Hutchings opened comment at 7:29 pm.

Christina Thomas – She would like to see more candidates fill out information on the League of Women Voters site.

Connie Lavender – Renewable energy has not been studied sufficiently to know what effect will have on the environment.

Closed Door Session – Attorney/Client Memorandum

Trustee Langshaw read the Memorandum to go into Close Door Session to discuss material that is Attorney Client privileged and exempt from public disclosure.

Motion

Trustee Langshaw moved to go in to Close Door Session, supported by Treasurer Harmon. After roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mover Trustee Langshaw
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

Motion	
Trustee Sulka moved to come back into open session, supported by Trustee Langshaw motion passed unanimously.	

Mover	Trustee Sulka
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

Trustee Updates:

Trustee Sulka – The joint meeting with the Village Council went well and supported a good service to all of the residents.

Trustee Harmon – Will be setting a date for a dedication of the Boy Scott Eagle Project at the Ross Township Park after Labor Day. Also suggested that The Township get a plaque to list all the projects that have gone on in the Township from the Alan Harmon Boy Scott Eagle Project fund.

Motion	
Trustee Bekes moved to stop using a Planner, if issues arise and a planner is required, we can contract with them for the project, supported by Trustee Harmon, 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

Supervisor Hutchings – Please review the information given to the Board regarding *Kalamazoo County Emergency Management Warning Sirens*, for Board discussion & action in August’s Township Board meeting.

Motion
Clerk Stage moved to adjourn, supported by Trustee Sulka, the motion passed unanimously.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Trustee Sulka
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 8:41 pm.