

**Ross Township Budget Workshop Meeting
Draft Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Tuesday, March 4, 2025**

Attendee Name	Title	Roll Call Status
Christina Hutchings	Supervisor	Present
Mary Stage	Clerk	Present
Amanda Wiersma	Treasurer	Present
Michael Bekes	Trustee	Absent with cause
Lynn Harmon	Trustee	Present
Diana Langshaw	Trustee	Present
Todd White	Trustee	Present
Rob Thall	Attorney	Not Present

Many residents in attendance.

Call to Order:

Supervisor Hutchings called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm with all rising for the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Approval of Agenda

Motion
Trustee Langshaw moved to accept the agenda, supported by Trustee Harmon the motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
Second	Trustee Harmon
Result	Motion Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

Consent Agenda

Clerk Stage mentioned that there were changes made to the minutes.

Motion
Trustee Harmon moved to accept the consent agenda, supported by Clerk Stage the motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
Second	Trustee Harmon
Result	Motion Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

Presenting New Sewer Rates April 1, 2025 by John Crumb, Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority (GLSWA)

John Crumb explained that the rise in rates is due to the rise in treatment charges, and the increase in charges from City of Kalamazoo Water & Sewer, because they must transport the sewer to a landfill in the Detroit area. John also spoke of the need to have cash on hand to deal with aging infrastructure.

Ross' Board members asked several questions:

How many employees does GLSWA have – 10,

What is the Sewer Backup Insurance listed on your budget sheet – a CD savings account for emergencies, it has approximately \$150,000.00 in the account.

The rise in rate over the last several years is incredible, can GLSWA manage their expenses better? – GLSWA is working on this issue.

Has GLSWA reached out to Christine Russell about her situation – John could not talk about her situation.

Trustee Harmon explained that Ross Township does not set the rate increase for GLSWA, the GLSWA Board votes on if there should be an increase, and what the increase should be, Ross is only 1 vote of a 5-member Board. The vote tonight is whether all residents of Ross Township will pay the increase whether they have sewer or not, or will just those on the service pay the increase.

Motion	
Clerk Stage moved to postpone the vote on the Rate Resolution until after citizen comment, supported by Treasurer Wiersma the motion passed.	

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Treasurer Wiersma
Result	Motion Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

Citizen Comment

Supervisor Hutchings opened citizen comment at 6:36 pm.

Darrell Junkins – Our rate used to be \$65.00 a quarter now it is \$180.00, there must be a way to manage costs better.

Kevin Miller – Since John Crumb became the manager at GLSWA it has been a mess, spending money on water studies, spending money on consultants, he has no trust in GLSWA. Does not want to ask his neighbors to pay for the sewer increase.

Betsi English – She has lived here for 40 years. She has attended meetings across the street. She suggested an audit be done on the financials. She also asked what is the plan to replace the infrastructure, there does not seem to be one.

Frank Guarisco – There should be an annual audit done on the GLSWA financials. The Director should be replaced every 4-year, new blood looks at issues differently, and with fresh eyes.

Ian Launius – 29% of GLSWA budget is treatment charges, that seems to be high & 1/3 of the budget is wage related. He also had pipes fail in front of his home, and is not satisfied with the way GLSWA handled the issue.

Cheryl Duffy-Geiger – Cheryl mentioned she was a CFO, and offered her services to assist in setting up the GLSWA budget.

Rodney Weir – Has lived in Ross since 2019, and was not on sewer, but he has gone from no sewer to hook up fees, a SAD and now \$180.00 quarterly bill, he cannot make sense of it all.

Donna Beatty – GLSWA budget overages, and shortfalls in service; there are more questions about the budget than answers.

Bonnie Sawusch – There are serious issues at GLSWA. Their capital expenditures do not address the infrastructure issues. They took up a perfectly good driveway, which was in better condition than my road, and are replacing, it why? GLSWA needs to be more transparent!

Tammy Woodhams – Concerned about the rate increase, people living on fixed incomes, like my mother, cannot afford these increases. How come Ross only gets 1 vote at the Authority, should the votes be weighted based on customers?

Supervisor Hutchings closed citizen comment at 7:00 pm.

Sanitary Sewer Charges – Clerk Stage explained that a Nay vote means that all residents will pay the increase, Aye vote means only residents on the service will pay the increase.

Resolution
Trustee Langshaw resolved to accept the Sanitary Sewer Charges, supported by Trustee Harmon, after a roll call vote, the resolution passed.

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
Second	Trustee Harmon
Result	Resolution Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye With Protest
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

New Business:

Budget Workshop – Trustee Harmon first explained to residents how the budget process works. The Board then reviewed the 2024.2025 budget and adjusted.

Resolution
Treasurer Wiersma resolved to accept the 2024.2025 budget with adjustments, supported by Supervisor Hutchings, after a roll call vote, the resolution passed.

Mover	Treasurer Wiersma
Second	Supervisor Hutchings
Result	Resolution Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

Board then discussed the 2025.2026 budget, there were small changes made to the budget. Clerk Stage will confirm with Rob Thall that the public hearing has been sent to the papers.

Supervisor Hutchings opened second citizen comment at 7:49 pm.

Randy Thompson – Introduced himself, he will be our new Road Commission liaison. Board welcomed him aboard.

Supervisor Hutchings closed second citizen comment at 7:51 pm

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

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Treasurer Wiersma
Result	Motion Adopted: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 1 Absent

Name	Vote	Name	Vote
Supervisor Hutchings	Aye	Trustee Bekes	Absent
Clerk Stage	Aye	Trustee Harmon	Aye
Treasurer Wiersma	Aye	Trustee Langshaw	Aye
		Trustee White	Aye

Supervisor Hutchings adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm.