

**Ross Township Special Board Meeting
Minutes
ROSS TOWNSHIP
KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Thursday, April 30, 202**

Attendee Name	Title	Roll Call Status
Christina Hutchings	Supervisor	Present
Mary Stage	Clerk	Present
Amanda Wiersma	Treasurer	Absent with cause
Michael Bekes	Trustee	Present
Lynn Harmon	Trustee	Absent with cause
Diana Langshaw	Trustee	Present
Todd White	Trustee	Present arrived at 6:35 pm
Rob Thall	Attorney	Present

Call to Order:

Supervisor Hutchings called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm with all rising for the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Prior to the approval to the agenda, Supervisor Hutchings changed the order of the items under new business, moving the Fire Department business prior to Murphy & Spagnuolo correspondence.

Approval of Agenda

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

Mover	Trustee Langshaw
Second	Trustee Bekes
Result	Motion Adopted: 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 3 Absent

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

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to accept the agenda with changes, supported by Clerk Stage. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Motion Adopted: 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 3 Absent

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

Citizen Comment

Was opened at 6:10 pm.

Nancy Boyd – Sherman Lake Resident Association President (SLRA). She thanked the Board for their support of the Lake SAD in pass years. The current SAD expires in 2027, and the SLRA will be looking to renew the SAD this year, but only for two (2) years, to coincide with their aeration permit from EGLE. They will be circulating the petition soon, to ensure that the Board has time to hold meetings with residents and can have the public hearing for the SAD.

Roger Schweitzer – Sherman Lake Resident. He has lived on the lake for 49 years, and gave a brief history of the lakes issues that brought residents to start the SAD in 2003. He stated that the Lake has benefitted from the SAD, and thanked the Board for their support.

Was closed at 6:14 pm.

Various Committee Updates

Fire Department – Deputy Chief, Jake Leatherman. The department had 35 calls in March, down from last year, however they are making up in April due to weather related calls. They continue with firefighters normal training and additional medical training.

They are working with Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority, (KCCDA) on new radios for the department, this will be covered later in the meeting.

They also held their annual recognition dinner, they honored milestones for a number of firefighters, including Chief Bogema's 50 anniversary with the department.

Police Department – Chief, Martin Brown. Property checks are decreasing and the boat is in the water

The department received a donation from the Gull Lake Quality Organization to support marine patrol. He is currently collecting data on the possibility of a traffic unit for Ross Township; he will bring more information to the Board at a later date.

The DNR has taken issue with the number of buoys, on the lake placed there by residents, that are not official. The DNR will be removing illegal/non-permitted buoys at the expense of the residents. Resident may remove them, themselves before the DNR does.

LifeCare Ambulance – Lori. Had 38 calls last month, 1 lights and sirens, after pickup. Staffing for day shift is 100%, for night shift it was 90%, this was due to promotions within the organization, shifts should be normal in April. Working with the Fire Department on future training schedule.

Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals – Trustee Bekes. No update.

Elections – Clerk Stage. We are set for the election on Tuesday, May 5th.

Township Sign – Supervisor Hutchings. The Township sign has not been working, it may require a new mother board, the orientation of the sign has been an issue also. We will be getting quotes for a new mother board and possible reorientation of the sign.

Old Business

Neighborhood Street Light Assessments – Rob Thall, we should have data in about two months to present to the Board.

Purchase of Fire Truck – Trustee Bekes spoke about borrowing v. outright purchase of the fire truck, and that we would be earning more on our money at this time then what we would be sending on loan interest. He also stated, while he was meeting with Treasurer Wiersma, she spoke with the bank concerning the loan and that there would be no penalty for paying the loan off early, if this is the decision of the Board.

He went into a discussion on the Fire Departments operating budget; and the percentages of monies devoted to capital investment and yearly operation of the department. Presented was how other departments split up their operating budget. Also discussed, was how we would cover the cost of a possible boat purchase; may ask residents on the lake to assist with the purchase.

Trustee Bekes thinks that we need to discuss the Fire operating budget and redo the 5 – 10-year plan and take the loan from the bank for the fire truck.

Clerk Stage spoke about the email from Jeff Rood, which he stated that he was unsure if taking the loan was the best option and there was a possible lost of money if the interest rate was 3%. Bekes stated that Treasurer Wiersma was making more then 3% interest at this time. Stage expressed that if we move forward with the loan, it should be revisited in a year to make sure that we are not losing money with the loan option.

This led to a motion from Trustee Bekes; that the Board decide at the next meeting what portion of the Fire Department operating budget should go to capital improvement and operation, with Treasurer Wiersma to bring the data to the meeting. Supported by Trustee Langshaw.

Clerk Stage stated that she was not comfortable voting on a motion, that required work to be done by another Board member that not present. The motion was amended.

Trustee White arrived at 6:35 pm.

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to add to the agenda of the May 19 th meeting a discussion on what percentage of the Fire Departments budget will be used for operation and capital investment, and potentially decide on those percentages, supported by Trustee Langshaw. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Trustee Langshaw
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to take advantage of the 3.7% loan from the bank for 5 years to purchase the new fire truck, with the option to revisit the loan within the next year to see if paying it off is a better, due to interest rate changes, supported by Trustee White. After a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Trustee White
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) – Rob Thall will be reviewing, if Board members have any input please send to Rob Thall.

Fire Department Radio Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Grant Approval – Deputy Chief Jake Leatherman explained that the department will be getting new radio; 30 portables, 7 mobiles for the trucks and 2 base stations. The Department is partnering with the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority (KCCDA) who will be giving a grant that will cover the major of the cost for the radios, and the Department will cover the rest. There is a MOU with KCCDA that needs to be signed, in order to get the radios on order. A check will be issued to pay for the radios, by Ross and KCCDA will give a check to reimburse a portion of the radio cost.

Motion
Clerk Stage moved to have Supervisor Hutchings to sign the MOU with KCCDA, and that a check will be issued when the radios are ready for delivery, the check that will come from KCCDA, will be deposited in the Fire Department's account, supported by Trustee Bekes. After a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Mover	Clerk Stage
Second	Trustee Bekes
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Murphy & Spagnuolo PC correspondence – Attorney Thall, at a past Board meeting the Board voted down the Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority (GLSWA) rate increase for Township residents. In the correspondence from the GLSWA Attorney, they are stating that the Township is responsible for the difference between the current rates and the increase rates. After review of the correspondence, the citation listed in the correspondence and the Township's Ordinance Attorney Thall believes that the GLSWA Attorney view is not correct and would like to respond to their correspondence, with our view.

Motion
Trustee Beles moved to have Attorney Thall to respond to the letter from Murphy & Spagnuolo PC, regarding who is responsible for the rate increase, supported by Supervisor Hutchings. After a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Supervisor Hutchings
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Yorkville Church Agreement – Clerk Stage. The Clerk stated that after reviewed the contract and the only concern that she had was that there was no mechanism to ensure that the Township was not being charged for damages or unnecessary cleaning not cause by the Township's use of the building. She is meeting with the Church Council next Wednesday, and at that meet she was going to suggest that a check list be use prior to the election set up and review again after the election, this way we would know if Ross is responsible for any damages

or carpet cleaning due to the elections. If the changes are agreed upon; she requested the Board give her permission to sign the contract.

Motion
Trustee Beles moved to give the authority to Clerk Stage sign the contract with recommended changes, supported by Supervisor Hutchings. After a roll call vote, the motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Supervisor Hutchings
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Close Session – 7:40 pm

Motion
Supervisor Hutchings moved that the Township Board convene in closed session under section 8(1)(h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from disclosure by state statute section 13(1)(g) of the Freedom of Information Act, being the letter from our attorney dated November 12, 2025 for reason that the letter is exempt from disclosure under state law as attorney-client privileged, supported by Clerk Stage, after a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mover	Supervisor Hutchings
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Returned from Close Session – 9.08 pm

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to resume open session, supported by Clerk Stage. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to appoint Supervisor Hutchings Board liaison to the Fire Department, to manage the day to day administration, supported by Trustee Langshaw. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Trustee Langshaw
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to accept Attorney Thall’s recommendation regarding the GLSWA lawsuit, supported by Clerk Stage. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Clerk Stage
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

Motion
Trustee Bekes moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Supervisor Hutchings. The motion passed.

Mover	Trustee Bekes
Second	Supervisor Hutchings
Result	Motion Adopted: 5 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstained; 2 Absent

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

No one in the audience for Second Citizen Comment.

Adjourned at 9:09pm.

A video recording of this meeting is on YouTube.

Mary Stage
Clerk Stage

May 20, 2026
Date