

**Ross Township
12086 M-89
Richland, MI 49083
269-731-4888**

**Regular Board Meeting
March 16, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

The Ross Township Board held its regular board meeting on **March 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.** The Township Board meeting was conducted through electronic remote access due to State Agency Rules and Orders.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Supervisor Hutchings

Roll Call was as follows:

Present: Christina Hutchings Michael Bekes Cindy Genung
Lynn Harmon Diana Langshaw Mike Sulka
Linda Walters
Absent: None
Also Present: Rob Thall – Township Attorney
Jim Lauderdale – PC Chair

A motion to approve the agenda was presented by Trustee Bekes, supported by Treasurer Genung and carried unanimously.

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Presentation by Mark Worden, Engineering and Public Relations

- The PAR fund final obligation date is by March 15, 2021. 2021 Total PAR funds available to Ross Township are \$93,273.00.
- Trustee Harmon asked how many contractors RCKC bid out to regarding road repairs. Mark Worden stated that crack fill will be bid out to 4 to 6 contractors; usually it is 3 contractors.
- A motion to approve the RCKC contract was made by Trustee Harmon, supported by Trustee Sulka and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda: All items under this section are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion with no discussion.

- A motion to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the Fire Department report was made by Trustee Harmon; supported by Supervisor Hutchings and carried unanimously.
- Chief Bogema briefed the Board on salary increases for the fire department. The new rate is \$15 per hour for the fire runs, meeting and training. There is a 10% increase in officer's pay. Three new firefighters have graduate from the Academy.
- Current Grass truck is going to be replaced with an estimate cost of \$82,000. The Big Engine truck would be replaced within the next 2-3 years.

- We now have Life Care 24/7 at the Township.

Park Committee March 2021 Report:

- The committee was delighted that the new park rules are finished and adopted.
- An “Honor all Veteran’s Day” with a food truck which was suggested by Supervisor Hutchings.
- Having a food truck on sight once every week with a special menu for the park only. The park would receive a percentage of the profit each week to put into the DNR matching fund account. *Ned’s* (local restaurant) would donate 15% of sales to the Park Committee each time they are present at park.
- Exercise equipment has been placed on the “black burner” for now.
- The committee has applied for a grant for the beach front area. It would make the beach front AAA and all age accessible.

Planning Commission February 2021 Update:

- Trustee Bekes stated that there were no changes to the proposed PC review (2020-2021) of the Master Plan.
- GL Ridge apartments had submitted their site plans to the PC board for approval.
- There has been no change to the fence ordinance.
- Trustee Sulka expressed concern regarding the ZBA interpretation because of the impact on non-lakefront homes.

Supervisor Report:

- Kalamazoo Consolidated dispatch (Jeff Troyer) would like to place an emergency tower in Ross Township. Ross would receive \$200/month land rental fee if we host a tower from KCCD.
- After the Special Board Meeting on the Gull Lake Slow, No Wake Ordinance, Supervisor Hutchings contacted the Stoneburner/Prairieville, Barry, and Richland townships asking that they contribute towards the expense, under mutual lake management.
- Buoys/Markers for Slow, No Wake Zone –
 1. Received permit from DNR to be completed for the buoys/markers. GLQA will send us a check in the amount of \$500 towards our purchase of 2 buoys. Costs for buoys, anchors and chain/mooring lines approximately \$1,500-\$1,700.
 2. A metal sign with vinyl letters with post at Prairieville Township would be around \$100-\$150 (not mandated but recommended at largest launch point).
- There will be a Statewide Tornado Drill on March 24th at 1:00 pm in which KCCDA will be participating by activating emergency warning sirens.
- Boiler/Furnace – Contractors asked to bid: Metzgers, AW Cooks, Adams Heating & Cooling, Spectrum Boiler & Mechanical, Southwest Mechanical. Bids returned were Spectrum Boiler & Mechanical and Southwest Mechanical. Supervisor Hutchings recommended SW Mechanical. Chief Bogema mentioned that Mark Newhaus has always been available for the boiler even if it was on the weekends and we should try to keep the business within the township. Trustee Harmon makes a motion to approve SW Mechanical pending proof of license supported by Trustee Bekes and carried unanimously.
- Resolution to establish Ross Township salaries - Resolutions would be voted on at the next budget meeting in which the resolution forms would be completed prior to the meeting.

Public Comment –

- **Klaus Burrstra** asked Clerk Walters if the Township is allowed to ask for proof of citizenship when registering to vote? Clerk Walters responded that she would get back to him with clarification by the following morning. He stated that he worked hard to become a citizen and had been honest when it came to voting. The Board thanked him for his honesty.
- **Connie Lavender** – She is concerned about the fence interpretation.
- **Bill Sikkema** – He recommended that the township use SWM for the township boiler. He also stated that he was opposed to a “row of trees” as a fence because it was blocking his view.
- **Stephanie Walbridge** (2084 Burlington Drive) – She is in favor of enforcement for the interpretation; it needs to be enforced. She stated that there were 27 letters received by the township in favor of the fence ruling.
- **Gladstone** (2798 Burlington Drive) – We want to state again that we love our lake views and we believe our neighbors do too. We also love our trees and value the shade they offer. But when a neighbor places a sizable wall of arborvitae down to the lake on both side of their property, creating a screen, a barrier, we feel this violates the fence ordinance and the waterway setback requirement described in ordinance 17.3. Ordinances serve to protect property owner’s rights and when there are violations those ordinances need to be enforced.
- **Ticknor** – Ask that the township enforce the ordinance. There are 2 docks on 1 property.
- **Don Lavender** – He stated that he is “confused” regarding the tree/fence ordinance and wanted clarification.

Old Business:

- Labelle Road SAD Signatures – Labelle would be discussed at a later time.
- Boiler & Furnace Maintenance Contracts – Discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Short Term Rental Ordinance – It is pending until further discussion at the next Board meeting.
- No Parking Ordinance in South Bay – It is pending until further discussion.

New Business:

- Buoys – discussed during Supervisor’s report
- Public Hearing for 2021-2022 Budget is scheduled for March 24, 2021
- New Meeting Dates for ZBA and Township Board - Trustee Langshaw makes a motion to approve the date, supported by Trustee Bekes and carried unanimously.
- Salary Resolution – Discussed during Supervisor’s Report.

Supervisor Hutchings made a motion to convene to the closed session by stating, “Move that the Board of Trustees convene in closed session under section 8(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, for the reason that the items are exempt from disclosure under State law due to the attorney-client privilege.” Trustee Bekes supported the motion and carried unanimously.

Ross Township v. Sikkema

Legal counsel from Attorney Thall regarding viewshed

Closed Session began at 7:30 p.m.

Closed Session ended at 9:35 p.m.

Township v. Sikkema – Motion made by Treasurer Genung “to direct Attorney to pursue action regarding alley as discussed.” Supported by Trustee Langshaw and carried unanimously.

Viewshed Discussion - Motion made by Clerk Walters to close the session “to allow AGS and Attorney to move forward as discussed and to refer the matter back to the PC to better address lakefront viewshed.” Supported by Trustee Harmon and motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: 9:39 adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Walters

Linda Walters
Township Clerk
March 29, 2021