

Rives Township Regular Board Meeting
Lansing Ave. Fire Station
June 8, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Supervisor Jerald Adams, Trustee Bryce Hammond, and Trustee Christine Beecher.
Township Attorney Fred Lucas. FOIA Coordinator JoBeth Carlton.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Hammond, supported by Beecher to amend the Agenda to add item #3a Treasurer. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment #1

- Alex Silvestri - the township board needs to vote on the Clerk's appointment and not rely on a committee chosen by the township board.
- JoBeth Carlton - if a committee is appointed to screen Clerk candidates, appoint committee members that understand the Clerk's job well.
- Stacy Stoner - FOIA appeal due to:
 - May 4, 2017 Closed Session Meeting Minutes should be available due to a public comment by Treasurer Teske opening some portions at the April 18, 2023 meeting;
 - 2017 bank statement/investment fund is required to be available by "Records Retention and Disposal Schedule" and request was for copy showing evidence of deposit.
 - Legal bills pertaining to bond claim were not given showing entire statement.

Public Comment #1 closed at 6:15 p.m.

Supervisor Adams read the resignation letter of Treasurer Janina Teske, effective on June 10, 2023.

Motion by Hammond, supported by Beecher, to approve resignation of Treasurer Janina Teske. Roll call. All ayes. Motion carried.

Supervisor Adams reported the Rives Township check for the new Fire Truck was written based on 50% of the amount, and Rives' portion should have been based on 57.5% of the \$573,780.00 total due.

Motion by Adams, supported by Beecher to approve a check for \$329,923.50 for the new Fire Truck. All ayes. Motion carried.

The ARPA fund amount will also be corrected.

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FOIA Coordinator Report

- When applying for the FOIA Coordinator position, Carlton reported she shouldn't have been required by Deputy Treasurer Oxbrough to submit 3 references, because that wasn't part of the original motion made by the township board.
- FOIA index logs are in need of updating.
- Carlton has consistently been denied access to the township office to complete FOIA requests. Adams told her he glances over long emails and said phone calls are better.
- Carlton reported unsecured mail in the township office, and the Deputy Treasurer did not email her the documents requested. Attempts to complete Stacy Stoner's FOIA are being blocked. Also, FOIA requests in the mail have been opened by someone else at the office.
- No board member should have to FOIA a single document.
- The cleaning person has a key to the township office and is also doing some filing that hasn't been authorized.
- Carlton asked for "suspension of document destruction" and steps need to be taken to preserve and digitize records.

Adams stated he has one key to the township office. He will check with former Clerk McCord and Treasurer Teske about obtaining keys from the safe. The Treasurer has the combination.

Attorney Lucas said the Clerk or Treasurer should be present when Carlton needs to complete FOIA requests. The township should digitize records. Government documents should be accessible, but fees should continue to be charged for time spent fulfilling FOIA requests. Stoner agreed to give the board 1 week to fulfill her FOIA request before taking action.

Trustee Hammond asked that only Attorney Lucas represent Rives Township starting today. Attorney Lucas told Trustees Beecher and Hammond to call him with questions.

Attorney Lucas suggested re-opening applications for Clerk and a committee should be formed of people that know what the job entails and not people with a "dog in the fight." Committee members should not be pressured by anyone, and the township board would make the final decision. Supervisor Adams agreed to this process.

Motion by Beecher, supported by Hammond, to appoint Vercilla Hart as Clerk. Roll call. All ayes. Motion carried.

The new Clerk will be sworn into office immediately following tonight's meeting.

Motion by Adams, supported by Beecher, to appoint Joseph Yang as Treasurer. All ayes. Motion carried.

The new Treasurer will be sworn into office by the Supervisor on June 10th.

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Fire Department

Fire Chief Bryon Deraedt inspected the new fire truck to be shipped and is very pleased.

Continuing Business

Trustee Hammond asked for monthly township board meetings. That will be decided at another meeting.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be on Thursday, July 20th, at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Hammond to immediately rescind the Treasurer's bond.

- **Motion rescinded by Hammond to allow Attorney Lucas to investigate making a claim on the Treasurer's bond. All ayes. Motion carried.**

Motion by Hammond for the board to have an investigation of the Treasurer by the Michigan State Police.

- **Motion amended by Hammond and supported by Beecher, for the board to contact the Michigan State Police, without including the township's attorney, for an investigation of the Treasurer. Roll call. Beecher - yes, Hammond - yes, Adams - no. 2 - yes, 1 -no. Motion carried.**

Motion by Hammond, supported by Beecher, that Vercilla Hart has the responsibility to have locks changed to everything needed. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hammond, supported by Beecher, to contact Rick Baldwin to manage the dump site, and open it immediately, conditional on his acceptance of the position. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hammond to have a bi-yearly review of all hourly-rate employees.

- **Motion amended by Hammond and supported by Beecher to have a yearly performance review of staff and management to evaluate their performance. All ayes. Motion carried.**

Adams reported a tire collection is scheduled for Saturday, June 17th, at the Collection Site. No tires from a business and no trailers loaded with tires from farms will be allowed. Rives will have 3 workers and Tompkins will have 3 workers that day. Adams will put a lock on the trailer that is to hold the tires so that no one can fill the trailer before the Collection Site opens at 9:00 a.m. Webmaster Charlie Westra will update the township website with information about the tire collection.

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Public Comment #2

Public Comment opened at 8:07 p.m.

- Vercilla Hart promised the residents will have packets that show the bills being presented for payment.
- Joseph Yang said he looks forward to serving the community as Treasurer.
- Carol Schulz requested the township board have some internal control procedures.
- Rita McGonegal stated that she cleaned the township office from August 2021 to June 2022, and is concerned the current cleaning lady now has a desk and doesn't know why she is also filing the township's paperwork.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by Vercilla Hart, Clerk.