

Rives Township Regular Board Meeting
8682 Lansing Ave, Rives Junction MI 49277

February 6th, 2025

Board members present: Supervisor Jerald Adams, Clerk Joseph Super, Trustee Bryce Hammond, Treasurer Carol Schulz, Trustee Brandon Adams

Meeting was called to order at 6:04PM.

Approval of Agenda

The board added Parks & Rec Grant, Earned Sick Leave Pay, and Poverty Exemption to the agenda as items 6A, 6B, and 6C. Discussion of a FOIA appeal occurred, but there was confusion from board members over how the appeal process works.

Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to approve the agenda as amended. All ayes, motion carried.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 6:05PM.

- Resident discussed previous board meeting (1/15/25) and referenced unprofessional comments made by board members made to residents.
- County Commissioner discussed previous Commissioner meeting, Jackson County budget information, and the Jackson County Sheriff's department.
- Resident discussed FOIA appeals and the laws from the Freedom of Information Act about whether or not forms are required, when the board has to have the appeal, and who the appeal information is supposed to be sent to.

Public Comment ended at 6:17PM with three (3) people speaking.

Approval of January Meeting Minutes (1/9/25 & 1/15/25)

Due to Clerk Super's recording having static/noise, there were some details on the meeting minutes for January 9th, 2025, that needed to be filled in before approval. Board discussion and comparison of officials' personal notes as well as the public's notes filled in the missing parts.

(M-2025-012) Motion by Trustee Hammond, supported by Supervisor Adams, to approve the 1/9/25 regular board meeting minutes as corrected. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Discussion from Trustee Hammond regarding 1/15/25's meeting minutes due to the inconsistency in the processes/decisions from that meeting. Trustee Hammond's main concern was the public record reflecting that three (3) candidates for the FOIA Coordinator position were "thrown out" and that he cannot support approving minutes because he doesn't support the actions by other board members at said meeting.

(M-2025-013) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Supervisor Adams, to approve the 1/15/25 regular board meeting minutes. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - nay, Supervisor Adams - aye. Four (4) ayes, one (1) nay, motion carried.

Payroll & Bills

(M-2025-014) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Trustee Hammond, to approve payroll checks #32155-32180, Accounts Payable checks GEN #84378-84385 and #84388, voiding GEN #84386-84387, and approve sewer check #2235. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - nay, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

(M-2025-015) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Supervisor Adams, to approve payment to postmaster for \$14.28 to postage. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - nay, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

(M-2025-016) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to approve reimbursement in the amount of \$89.90 to Vercilla Hart for purchases at hardware store. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - nay, Supervisor Adams - aye. Four (4) ayes, one (1) nay, motion carried.

Parks and Rec Grant Opportunity

Discussion by Parks Committee member, Mary Miller, of a possible grant for \$5,000 for the Parks and Recreation Committee to use toward lighting and signage. The locations of the lighting would be at the Fire Barn on Lansing Avenue, and the signage would be for the public park on T

(M-2025-017) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Hammond, to adopt Resolution 2025-02 for the Michigan Township Participating Plan application. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Policies

Multiple policies were written and given to Township's legal representatives to review and edit. Some of the plans were required by the State of Michigan to be in compliance with various laws, while others were suggested by the Township auditors in August of 2024. The first three were presented to the board, with the following four still being reviewed by Township legal.

Conflict of Interest Policy

(M-2025-018) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to adopt Resolution 2025-03 Rives Township Conflict of Interest Policy. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Ethics Policy

(M-2025-019) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Hammond, to adopt Resolution 2025-04 Rives Township Ethics Policy. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Fraud Risk Policy

(M-2025-020) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Adams, to adopt Resolution 2025-05 Rives Township Fraud Risk. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Earned Sick Leave Pay

Discussion of Earned Sick Leave Pay which begins on February 21, 2025. Hourly employees such as deputies, collection site workers, election workers, and others, will be affected, while salaried employees will not be. Township Attorney Matt Kuschel discussed that the laws could be amended later on by the state, but that for now it would begin on 2/21/25.

Poverty Exemption

(M-2025-021) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Hammond, to adopt Resolution 2025-06 Poverty Exemption. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer

Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Communications

(M-2025-022) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Clerk Super, to change the upcoming budget meetings to February 18th for the budget workshop at 5PM at the Lansing Avenue fire barn and February 25th for the budget hearing at 5PM at the Lansing Avenue fire barn. All ayes, motion carried.

Budget adoption will be held on March 6th, 2025.

A representative from Region II planning was present and discussed zoning and fencing situations and related laws. Rives Township Ordinance 17 was discussed and Planning Commission Chairman, along with Trustee Adams, asked that the representative from Region II questions related to upcoming meetings and timeframes for getting information. There was also discussion of the ordinance that related back to an issue from 2023 in Rives Township relating to chickens and acreage. Supervisor Adams asked that the cost of Region II help by invoicing the Township before the end of the fiscal year in order to balance out the cost between two fiscal years.

(M-2025-023) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Hammond, to have Region II assist the Planning Commission with working through chapter 17 (Zoning) of the ordinances. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Board of Review meeting dates were announced. The meetings will be held at the fire station #1, on Main Street. The dates for the meetings will be:

- March 10th, 2025, from 1PM - 4PM, with an hour lunch.
- March 11th, 2PM - 5PM and 6PM - 9PM.

The meetings are by appointment only, with walk-ins being heard “as time permits”. Appeals in writing are allowed as long as they are received by the Township office by March 10th, 2025. (348 E. Main St., Rives Junction MI 49277.)

Discussion of a recent event regarding board members/persons removing items from a locking office that is utilized mostly by the Township Assessor and then changing the locks so that the Clerk could not access the only locking office, where some of the Clerk records regarding elections are held. Supervisor Adams acknowledged that he did not physically move anything, was unaware of a second door lock being changed (for the server closet), and that it was a big miscommunication. There was discussion with the Michigan Township Association about having a master key set that Supervisor Adams would keep at his personal residence.

The Assessor was named as the person who wanted to change locks, which Treasurer Schulz claimed was due to the Assessor having personal distrust in Clerk Super. Treasurer Schulz stated that other residents did not trust the Clerk either, and then made claims that the Clerk had previously asked for access to the Township safe and other things. Clerk Super clarified that he had simply asked who has access to certain things (such as the safe) and not that *he* wanted access but was doing his due diligence in knowing who is accessing what.

Trustee Hammond asked repeatedly for specific details regarding the “miscommunication” where the Clerk’s records were moved and left unsecured, including who had physically changed locks without any board approval and why. None of the other board members were able to specify which person/entity did the physical changing of two interior locks.

More discussion between Treasurer Schulz and Clerk Super regarding his inaccessibility to certain aspects of software, including Quickbooks. Treasurer Schulz stated that the Clerk did not need the access he was asking for, but the Clerk stated that he can’t even get a digital list of sewer accounts and had to handwrite each address down before he was able to even start working on sewer bills for the quarter. There was a remark made about how Clerk Super had wanted the FOIA Coordinator to have access to multiple things, and Clerk Super clarified that he was trying

to facilitate access and make it easier for everyone involved.

Further discussion was about remodeling the open floorplan of the office and that former board members had looked at bids before about adding walls/doors. Clerk Super stated that he is hoping this was just a big miscommunication and stated that he didn't want this to come up again, and Supervisor Adams admitted that the Clerk should've known in advance.

(M-2025-024) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to have a master ring of keys be assembled, with descriptions of the keys, within the next 30 days to be held in the Supervisor's possession. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Discussion of the time frame for things like payroll, which included the various schedules of meetings, collection site workers who get paid biweekly, and the possible violations of running payroll too late. Deputy Clerk discussed making a policy, which the Township attorney agreed (separately) would be the best practices. A W-2 that was improperly recorded in the Township software as a non-taxable should've been taxed, and that there would likely need to be a corrected W-2 due to the previous recordings being improper regarding payroll. Clerk Super confirmed that the W-2s, 1099s, unemployment, and sewer bills had all been distributed.

(M-2025-025) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Trustee Hammond, to approve payment of multiple invoices totalling \$2,355.00 for ElectionSource. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

(M-2025-026) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Supervisor Adams, to approve BS&A Training for Clerk Super on February 27th, 2025. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

(M-2025-027) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Adams, to get meeting agendas and any available meeting documents out to board members three (3) days (/72 hours) before meetings. Roll call vote. Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Hammond - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 8:34PM.

- Resident discussed gravel pits and that they are not needed or necessary in Rives Township, and hoped the Region II representative would keep that in mind.

- Resident asked for set office hours for the Clerk. The Clerk did respond by giving out his Township-specific (but not Township-funded) cell phone number and made sure that the public was aware that his information was also on the website, on the front page.

- Resident discussed the Rives Township Master Plan was in need of updating because it had been five (5) years since the last update. Wanted to make sure there were graphs and charts in the next update.

Public Comment ended at 8:36PM with three (3) people.

Motion by Trustee Adams, supported by Trustee Hammond, to adjourn at 8:37PM, all ayes.

Submitted by Clerk Joseph Super