

RIVES TOWNSHIP REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 8, 2024
Lansing Avenue Fire Station

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Clerk Vercilla Hart, Treasurer Carol Schulz,
Trustee Bryce Hammond and Trustee Christine Beecher.
Absent: Supervisor Jerald Adams

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

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, for Vercilla Hart Township Clerk to chair the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to approve the agenda with the addition of #6a Board of Review Appointment and #13a, Parks and Recs. All ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comment began at 6:07 p.m. and ended at 6:43 p.m.

A representative of Citizens for Local Choice, George McKenzie, was pre-authorized to speak about a Green Energy ballot initiative to give “choice back to the locals” with a ballot initiative, given 550,000 statewide signatures are obtained on petitions due by mid-May to be placed on the August ballot.

County Commissioner Tony Bair reported about —

- the Flock Safety Company camera system contract is being renegotiated
- the company Veregy has a contract for \$36,657,000 to change lighting and air conditioning systems
- costs for Lifeways services, and the appropriation is about \$109 million

Nancy Smith, Constituent Services Aid for Senator Sue Shink, offered to help our township with budget requests. Senator Shink’s district covers 15 townships in Jackson County and 12 townships in Washtenaw County.

Treasurer Schulz reported her office hours are currently from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday.

Clerk Hart reported the City of Jackson raised their rates, so Rives Township rate increases need to be passed to those connected to the sewer.

Many comments and concerns regarding Ronnie Noocha’s request to allow a business of marihuana sales on Lansing Avenue opposite the Sherman Oaks Trailer Park were given. A vote by the Rives Township Board was tabled until the March 28th Regular Board Meeting.

Fire Department

Assistant Fire Chief Chris Trapp reported that the air packs should arrive in April.

The water softener replacement also included an extra water spout for water for the trucks.

The fire department has had an outside Medical Instructor since January.

Minutes

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher to approve the minutes as corrected. All ayes. Motion carried.

Hammond said the approval of EFT 244 should instead be EFT 242; he would like to add that he also suggested using other banks when the Penalties and Bank Charges were discussed in January. He would like a sentence added before the motion regarding the Sewer Charges for residents to state that April - September charges will be \$35/month, and moving forward the sewer charges will be \$45/month. With Communication about complete Decker Agency documents that are still needed by the Clerk, Hammond would like to change the word "when" to "then" Hart asked the board what they wanted to do.

Bills

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay checks 84086-84102, payroll checks 31776-31799, and EFTs 244 and 245. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to appoint Christopher Hanson to the Board of Review. All ayes. Motion carried.

Marihuana Ordinance

Ronnie Noocha, requesting a business to sell marihuana at a building he owns across the street from Sherman Oaks Trailer Park on Lansing Avenue, said he has operated a liquor store on the property for almost 19 years. He stated that the sales at his proposed business would help the township, which is "in desperate need of money." He said the number of marihuana resale licenses in the township are based on per capita. Patrons would be carded, and he sees liquor as more of a danger than marihuana. His business would accept credit cards for payment, but drug dealers get cash. Noocha said he is for allowing other marihuana retailers in the township.

Residents were concerned about: patrons developing psychosis, that it is a gateway drug when considering the popularity, there's already a major "meth" problem in this community, effects of marihuana when "high," security, lack of a township police department for enforcement, opening up marihuana sales in other commercial areas of the township.

Residents for the marihuana business said: kids will get illegal-laced marihuana elsewhere, Vaping is worse than using marihuana and marihuana is "not an issue facing our children right now," it would be better that a person use marihuana than alcohol, and a micro business would bring in a lot of revenue.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to table the vote on the marihuana retail sale request until March 28th. All ayes. Motion carried.

Master Plan Amendment

The township board's Planning Commission Liaison, Trustee Christine Beecher, read the proposed Amendment to the Master Plan: "*It is the intent of the Planning Commission to Amend Chapter 3, Page 3-2, of the Master Plan by adding a new subsection 4 to the statement of objectives for Agricultural Land Uses as follows:*

It is recognized by this plan that the preservation of agricultural land uses may include the development of solar energy systems subject to special land use and site plan approvals."

Motion by Beecher to approve the Master Plan Amendment as stated. No support. Motion failed.

IRS Reporting Notice

Clerk Hart reported an IRS notice 2 days ago regarding W2s not being submitted for 2022. She said there was also a notice when she took office in 2023 that the 2021 submission hadn't been sent. Board approval is needed to correct this.

Motion by Hart, supported by Schulz, to pay Willis and Jurasek to correct the 2022 SSA wage reporting not received by Social Security Administration. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay Vercilla Hart-Clerk to obtain all records needed for auditors for correction of 2022 SSA Wage Reporting for payroll amount of \$100.00. All ayes. Motion carried.

Sewer Rate Increase - Non-Residential

Motion by Hart, supported by Schulz, to increase the non-residential sewer rate by \$10.00 per REU per month. Schulz - yes, Beecher - yes, Hammond - yes, Hart - yes. All ayes. Motion carried.

News Media Waiver Request

Jobeth Carlson has asked for a News Media Waiver for FOIA. It is the Township Board's decision since the FOIA Coordinator has requested the Board to take action.

Motion by Hart, supported by Schulz, to deny Jobeth Carlton's News Media Waiver for all FOIAs that have been and will be requested under the News Media Waiver because the request does not primarily benefit the general public per MCL 15.234 (2). Schulz - yes, Beecher - yes, Hammond - no, Hart - yes. 3 ayes, 1 nay. Motion carried.

Collection Site Manager

Motion by Hart, supported by Schulz, to appoint Richard Baldwin to Collection Site Manager effective immediately, with the current salary and wage. All ayes. Motion carried.

Fiber Optic

Motion by Hart, supported by Schulz, to approve Midwest Permit application with conditions of a \$25,000.00 bond. All ayes. Motion carried.

The company will be installing for Frontier. Hart read the list of roads affected in Rives Township.

Parks and Recreation

The township board gave approve to mail a survey to 1,600 residents. The survey would not be on the website due to some residents not using the website. Schulz reported a resident had a concern about Parks and Recs not posting a notice of their meeting last Saturday.

Hart said Hammond needs to be emailing meeting postings and agendas for Parks and Recs to her - she hasn't received any. Beecher said the meetings are in a public building of the township, and the OMA laws need to be followed.

Schulz did offer to mail the survey with the tax bills at the end of July, but the township board approved the survey to be mailed before that time and will need to look through the survey and make changes as needed. Hart and Beecher would like to have new park equipment instead of used. A CIP plan is still needed from Parks and Recs.

Hammond will be responsible to do a data sheet with results from the survey. Surveys must be mailed back to or dropped off at the Rives Township Office.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to appropriate to Parks and Recs up to \$3,000.00 for postage, envelopes, paper and printing to mail the Rives Parks Survey 2024 to the residents of Rives Township. All ayes. Motion carried.

Township Board Meeting Dates

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to cancel the March 7, 2024, board meeting and to have the Budget Workshop meeting on March 20, 2024, and Budget Hearing following a Board meeting on March 28th - all at 6 p.m. at the Lansing Ave Fire Station. All ayes. Motion carried.

Fire Department Purchase and prepay request by Tompkins Clerk during the meeting by text message to Rives Clerk for approval.

Motion by Hart supported by Beecher to approve the Fire Department hoses as presented to Tompkins Township Board for the amount of \$5,376.02 and prepay. All ayes. Motion carried.

Communication

Hammond would like to see all staff, including Collection Site workers and the FOIA Coordinator, to sign the Codes of Ethics statement. Hart said this isn't needed, since the other staff are at-will employees.

Hammond said the Michigan Townships Association has a FOIA webcast on February 14.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, for Stacy Stoner to attend, if possible, the MTA FOIA Coordinator education for \$25.00. All ayes. Motion carried.

Schulz gave current office hours for the Treasurer - February 14th will be all day, as well as February 29th. Thursday will be from 2 p.m.-6 p.m. These will be posted on the website.

Supervisor Adams hasn't called former Treasurer Yang about payment of fees/penalties incurred during his time in office.

Motion by Hammond, supported by Schulz, to have the Supervisor contact former Treasurer Yang for bank charges and penalties for \$852.00 and ask for reimbursement. All ayes. Motion carried.

Hart said several invoices need board approval.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay \$17,496.00 for renewal of the insurance package from Decker Agency from 1/1/2024 to 1/1/2025. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay Fahey, Schulz, Burzych and Rhodes for a Total of \$4,054.00. All ayes. Motion carried.

Hart said the legal bill expenditures need better control.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, for the Supervisor who is legal of the Township to consult with and get approval in writing from the Clerk or Treasurer prior to contacting or authorizing contact to township legal services. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to pay Bruce Crandall softener instead of Rande's Water Softener to install a new water softener with a 5-year warranty at the Fire Station #1 for a total of \$1,750.00. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to pay Miss Dig 811 for annual membership of \$1,030.14. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay BS&A annual service for February 1, 2024, through February 1, 2025, for the amount of \$1,612.00. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, to pay Charlie Westra for website maintenance and support for the amount of \$1,050.00 and the next billing will be January 2025. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to reimburse Vercilla Hart for amount of \$1,354.03 - break down is stamps for elections \$824.00, envelopes \$18.00, and \$140.03 for Office Depot for W-2 and 1099 forms and MTA \$372.00 Planning Commission books. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Beecher, for the Supervisor to get approval by the Clerk or Treasurer in writing prior to having authorization of spending up to \$10,000.00 as previous motion stated for emergency. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to amend the purchase of postage stamps from purchasing only from the Rives Post Office. Going forward, no limitation of place of purchase of stamps. All ayes. Motion carried.

Hart reported that due to her work hours at the township office, sometimes she needs stamps after the post office in Rives has closed.

Motion by Hart, supported by Hammond, to get 3 bids for every contractor with liability insurance prior to authorization. All ayes. Motion carried.

Schulz said this is standard practice.

Hart spoke with Hammond: Bryce, you still have not given me an updated version of your altered documents that you handed to this Board.

This is the conversation:

Hart - So Bryce, what are you doing with my altered documents?

Hammond - I'll get 'em for you. You're pretty good at things today.

Hart - So you're going to give me my altered documents?

Hammond - All they are is just—I think Jobeth didn't want to see that they came from her computer, that's all it was.

Hart - So I need those.

Hammond - Okay, I'll get 'em for you.

Hart - So you'll get those for me and I'll have those? Okay.

*Boxed area deleted upon board approval- May 9, 2024 meeting.

Public Comment

Public Comment began at 8:59 p.m. and ended at 9:04 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Vercilla Hart, Rives Township Clerk