

Rives Township Board Meeting Minutes
8682 Lansing Ave, Rives Junction Michigan 49277

January 9, 2025

Board Members Present: Supervisor Jerry Adams, Clerk Joseph Super, Trustee Bryce Hammond, Trustee Brandon Adams, Treasurer Carol Schulz.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm.

Approval of Agenda / Agenda Changes

Resident spoke out of turn and claimed that because the agenda that the Clerk had for the public did not include items that were added after the draft was already available the board was unable to proceed without violating the Open Meetings Act. Clerk Super, and residents, reminded the speaker that there is nothing specific about agendas whatsoever in the Open Meetings Act, and also confirmed that a meeting can be held without any agenda whatsoever even though that would not be “best practices” to do so.

Two additions by Clerk Super. “Discuss Policies and Procedures” was added. “Resolutions 2024-14 and 2024-20” added.

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

Public Comment

Public Comment began at 6:03PM.

- Resident made a statement that public comments should be unrestricted and those speaking can say whatever they want without restriction, and suggested that the board does what other communities do and includes time in the meetings to respond to public comments.
- Resident stated they went to Township office days before meeting in the late evening and spoke to Clerk Super. Wanted clarification on when meeting minutes would become available. Also questioned the validity of a previous resolution (FOIA Coordinator, from December 18th’s special meeting, due to it not being signed promptly by the Supervisor.)
- Resident requested that the board work together and stop infighting.
- Resident shared how to find information about the Open Meetings Act to avoid disruption in meetings over things that were not included in those laws at all, discussed resolutions that took days or weeks to sign previously and that the other residents who had an issue with a recent

resolution should keep in mind that this seems to be a comment occurrence, and resident agreed with a previous speaker about allowing people the opportunity to speak uninterrupted as well as the suggestion of the board setting aside time in every meeting to address questions from public comments.

Public Comment ended at 6:10PM, with four (4) people speaking in total.

Approval of 12/5/24 Minutes

(M-2025-001) **Motion by Trustee Hammond, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to approve 12/5/24 meeting minutes as changed** (to name of company incorrectly stated by Treasurer Schulz as “VCRight” with correct company name of “VC3” added, additional typo fixed from plural to singular.) **All ayes, motion carried.**

Approval of 12/18/24 Minutes

Treasurer Schulz addressed concerns about wording in a motion about ease of onboarding with the new Freedom of Information Act Coordinator, with Supervisor Adams and Clerk Super clarifying that this was the actual verbiage and that the motion is written verbatim. Treasurer Schulz requested it be changed anyway, and Clerk Super stated that he cannot change language that was actually said and that this was discussed in depth at the time.

(M-2025-002) **Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Trustee Hammond, to approve 12/18/24 meeting minutes as amended. All ayes, motion carried.**

Policies and Procedures

Discussion about organization of Policies and Procedures including serializing motions and resolutions approved at meetings. Motions will get a unique number starting with M-YYYY-##.

Resolutions 2024-14 & 2024-20

Clerk Super discussed resolution 2024- 14 in relation to establishing salary for Trustees, adding that he was not present when the resolution passed and yet the details within were presenting payroll difficulties. The Board discussed the meeting minutes from August 22nd of 2024 when said motion was made and voted on. Clerk Super pointed out that not only was the motion made and supported by different individuals than what was listed on the resolution, but also that the roll call vote was not properly recorded on the resolution and the total number of votes for approving and abstaining were also incorrect. Clerk Super confirmed this through audio recordings of the meeting matching the meeting minutes but not matching the resolution itself.

Treasurer Schulz said that this was possibly just a clerical error and it should be adjusted by the board at this time, while Clerk Super reminded the board that changing the details on the resolution would be illegal. Clerk Super suggested a few solutions including having a new resolution drafted and voted on, but reminded the board that he would need written confirmation from both trustees in advance if the new resolution were to take effect during this term, as the decrease in salary is against state laws without that written confirmation from both trustees in advance. Otherwise the resolution would not be valid until the start of the next term.

Supervisor Adams told the Clerk to reach out to legal representation to get clarification on what to do, and stated that they had already spent too much time talking about it.

The second resolution was not presented even though it was a similar situation of improper record-keeping and vote tallying.

Approval of Payroll

(M-2025-003) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Trustee Hammond, to approve payroll checks #32132 through #32145, #32147 through #32154, approve accounts payable #84350 through #84376, and #2231 through #2234, and void #32146. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye.

(M-2025-004) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Bryce Hammond, for Clerk to attend MTA training webinar on 1/22/25 at the cost of \$25. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Brandon Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye.

Communications

Fire and Rescue brought multiple issues to the attention of the board. First, the need four new tires on Station #1 Emergency Vehicle.

(M-2025-005) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to approve \$4406.33 for Cutting Edge Garage Solutions for the Meeting Room in Station #1. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Brandon Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Trustee Hammond discussed a motion made in the 12/5/24 meeting regarding legal representation and the lack of clarity in said motion, and lack of clarity for the Trustees. Supervisor Adams stated that no Trustee should be contacting the lawyer at any time.

(M-2025-006) Motion by Treasurer Schulz, supported by Clerk Super, to close the Sewer Savings Account and do all sewer business out of the Sewer Checking Account. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. All ayes, motion carried.

Discussion of legal representation came up again, and some board members were unaware of what the Township attorneys charge per hour. Clerk Super, and two residents, clarified the actual hourly cost, hundreds less than a board member had stated right before.

Supervisor Adams informed Clerk Super that despite having his permission to contact the legal representation before the meeting regarding other issues that had come up, Adams was upset that there was a written opinion made on an unknown (to the public) issue and then said that the board should avoid written opinions because then there is an obligation to follow that written opinion. Supervisor Adams said the board should avoid that type of correspondence at all costs.

Trustee Hammond discussed the lack of security cameras at the fire stations, and is still gathering more information.

Discussion of the problems in the Township and waterways related to the beaver population. Supervisor Adams asked that the community makes note of any waterways that seem to have beaver dams built or being built in an effort to control the situation as quickly as possible, due to it causing backups and flooding.

Supervisor Adams read a “mission statement” that was well-received.

Public Comment

- Resident requested to be appointed as an unpaid, unofficial Grant Writer for the Parks Committee. The board decided a motion was unnecessary, but approved of the resident having that title.
- Resident asked the board to check into the personal finances of a board member while simultaneously requesting that the Trustees “do their jobs” and check the insurance policies. This comment caused an instant reaction from others in the room. Clerk Super did respond to some implications/questions by letting the residents know that he has been unable to get fully onboarded and that he still does not have proper access to Quickbooks, then suggested the resident speak to the IT Admin directly about that issue.
- Resident asked for clarification regarding Trustee pay.
- Resident told the board that her property had been wrongfully charged on the sewer assessment for many years, possibly since 2008, after finding meeting minutes from over a decade ago that

showed a Resolution to remove the parcel from the assessment. Resident stated it was when the Supervisor was Gerald Surbrook and that Supervisor Adams was on the board during this removal of said parcel, and that she would be happy to provide the information to the Township so that this can be fixed. Resident asked the board to double check that others had not had the same wrongful charging and that the fines and penalties can pile up high and some people may have had those types of penalties for no reason, or that the opposite may be true.

- Resident discussed that other people in attendance had spoken about allowing others to speak, not interrupting, and freedom of speech in general yet were interrupting others through the evening and making rude remarks. Resident reminded the board that previous Clerk had more help than the current one, but that even without having other public officials by his side he was still doing well. As Resident spoke, others in the public began interrupting and Supervisor Adams stopped Resident from finishing public comment time allotted by motioning to adjourn in that 3-minute time frame.

Public comment was abruptly ended at 7:49PM with five (5) people speaking officially, but others also speaking out of turn.

Meeting was abruptly motioned to adjourn by Treasurer Schulz, supported by Trustee Adams, at 7:49PM with all ayes.

Submitted by Clerk Joseph Super.