

**Rives Township Special Board Meeting
8682 Lansing Ave, Rives Junction MI 49277**

January 15th, 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 5:03PM.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 5:04pm.

- Resident spoke about tension, bullying, and unprofessionalism related to former Clerk Vercilla Hart. Resident touched on the fact that the community has refused to elect Hart and that her presence back in the Township office as well as the possibility of her holding a job about record-keeping was a risk to the community as well as to the other Township employees and officials.

- Resident spoke about former Clerk Hart and that she is incapable of working together with others. Suggested that the Board should find someone who has not yet been employed within the Township or even someone from outside of the community to have someone there who can do the job within the law but not have any sort of ties to anyone in particular.

- Resident talked about records and recorded meetings.

- Resident read a portion of an email that was sent to the Board from former Treasurer Joseph Yang. The email stated that even though the clerical aspect may not be as much of an issue, the unprofessionalism of former Clerk Hart is well documented and that he had personally been subject to the harassment while serving as a Board member. Resident then added details about her own employment within the Township and agreed that she, like Yang, had been subject to abusive language, harassment, and threatening behavior from the same former Clerk.

Public Comment ended at 5:10pm with four (4) people speaking.

Discussion led by Supervisor Adams regarding Clerk Hart and her willingness to do the Freedom of Information Act Coordinator position, and said that he had no doubt she could do it correctly.

Clerk Super told the Board and public that the Board had received some emails about the position, as well as acknowledgment of former Treasurer Yang's email regarding the vacancy. Two (2) of the people who had reached out about the position were in attendance and Clerk Super asked if either was willing to give permission for their correspondence to be included in

the record of the meeting. Affirmations from those two applicants confirmed that was fine.

(M-2025-007) Motion by Clerk Super, supported by Trustee Hammond, to include the three (3) expressions of interest in the record of the meeting. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - aye, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Adams - nay, Treasurer Schulz - nay, Supervisor Adams - nay. 2 ayes, 3 nays, motion failed.

Supervisor Adams said he was concerned that there had been three (3) other people who had expressed interest, in email, to the Board in the days before the meeting. Supervisor Adams stated repeatedly that the Board did not solicit applications or expressions of interest at all, and repeatedly said that it was only because of Facebook that these people had reached out.

Clerk Super reminded Supervisor Adams that the people who had reached out had not done so on Facebook, but by emailing the Board directly, and that there should be no reason for the Board to be unwilling to receive communications from residents or people in other communities overall.

Supervisor Adams stated that because the Board did not ask for any input from the community on this decision, he did not want these other people considered for the position.

(M-2025-008) Motion by Treasurer Schulz, supported by Supervisor Adams, to remove the three (3) expressions of interest from consideration for the vacancy. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - nay, Clerk Super - nay, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. 3 ayes, 2 nays, motion carried.

(M-2025-009) Motion by Treasurer Schulz, supported by Supervisor Adams, to appoint Kendra Adams as Freedom of Information Act Coordinator. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - nay, Clerk Super - nay, Trustee Adams - abstain, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. 2 ayes, 2 nays, 1 abstain, motion failed.

(M-2025-010) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to appoint Vercilla Hart as Freedom of Information Act Coordinator. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - nay, Clerk Super - nay, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. 3 ayes, 2 nays, motion carried.

(M-2025-011) Motion by Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond - nay, Clerk Super - nay, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. 3 ayes, 2 nays, motion carried.

(M-2025-012) Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Treasurer Schulz, to accept the Resolution FOIA Coordinator 2025-01, Vercilla Hart. Roll call vote. Trustee Hammond -

nay, Clerk Super - aye, Trustee Adams - aye, Treasurer Schulz - aye, Supervisor Adams - aye. 4 ayes, 1 nay, motion carried.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 5:48PM.

- Discussion from Resident who wants meetings to be on website.
- Resident/applicant who was not considered for the FOIA vacancy spoke about the same things as the previous applicant, stating that she felt like it was unfair she never got a chance to even speak. And that being newer to the area she was shocked at the way business was conducted and how unprofessional some of the Board members had been.
- Resident read a letter that indicated that due to the Township board not taking the community seriously and addressing issues that had been arising for some time, resident was going to move forward with documentation and reporting to other agencies in an effort to increase accountability. Resident asked that the Board cooperate but also conduct an internal investigation into multiple suspected violations of various statutes, including specific parts of the Penal Code, Open Meetings Act, FOIA, and other MCLs.
- A Resident stated he was “disappointed in this entire process.”
- Resident stated that the previous resident would be “fabricating” anything that was given to any other agencies regarding the comments about accountability and various violations.
- I Applicant who was not considered for the FOIA vacancy spoke about feeling like there was no need for the Township Board to be rude, dismissive, and refuse to even allow the applicant to speak or be considered. Stated that this was not professional or conducive to a productive community and that she felt very disrespected.
- Rives Township Planning Commission member spoke up about the previous FOIA Coordinator not only reaching out the same way that the applicants who were “not considered” did, but said that there had been a precedent set by the Board that they were now contradicting.

Public Comment ended at 5:58PM with seven (7) people.

Motion by Supervisor Adams, supported by Trustee Adams, to adjourn at 6:03PM, all ayes.

Submitted by Clerk Joseph Super.