

**GENOA CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Meeting
December 5, 2022**

MINUTES

Supervisor Rogers called the regular meeting of the Genoa Charter Township Board to order at 6:30 pm at the Township Hall. The following members were present constituting a quorum for the transaction of business: Bill Rogers, Paulette Skolarus, Jean Ledford, Terry Croft, Jim Mortensen, Diana Lowe, and Robin Hunt. Also present were Township Manager Kelly VanMarter, Township Attorney Joe Seward and seven persons in the audience.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The call to the public was opened at 6:31 pm.

Mr. Dan Wholihan thanked the Board for holding the Township Clerk accountable. He hopes there is a good replacement in 2024.

Mr. Ben Tasich is a 25-year resident of the North Shore Subdivision. He thanked the Board for making Genoa Township one of the best ones of the county. He would like to see more affordable public transportation. LETS is a service that partners with nearby communities to provide additional transportation services and he would like to see this in Genoa Township.

He would like to see these meetings via Zoom for people who are immunocompromised.

The call to the public was closed at 6:34 pm.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Hunt asked to move agenda item #2 to the regular agenda.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Mortensen, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

1. Payment of Bills: December 5, 2022

Regular Agenda

Moved by Ledford, supported by Croft, to approve the Regular Agenda as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

2. Request to approve November 21, 2022 regular meeting minutes

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Ms. Hunt stated there is an error on Agenda Item #3. The parcel number listed as “#4711- 26-300-04” should be changed to “#4711-23-200-013”.

Moved by Hunt, seconded by Lowe to approve the November 21, 2022 regular meeting minutes as amended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Review Second Quarter Budget to Actual Report as provided by Ken Palka C.P.A.

Mr. Palka provided a summary of revenue and expenses of the Second Quarter Budget to Actual Report, noting that expenses will come within budget. There are some amendments that will need to be made and he has spoken to Ms. VanMarter about them.

4. Consideration of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget as follows:
- a. Increase General Fund 101, Department 266 – Legal Services, “General Township Legal Fees” Line Item 101-266-803-000 from \$25,000 to \$75,000.
 - b. Increase Parks and Recreation Fund 208, Department 751 – Parks and Recreation, “HAPRA” Line Item 208-751-934-007 from \$107,500 to \$120,000.

Moved by Hunt, supported by Lowe, to amend the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget for Fund 101, Department 266 – Legal Services, “General Township Legal Fees” Line Item 101-266-803-000 from \$25,000 to \$75,000. **The motion carried (Ledford - yes, Croft - yes, Hunt - yes, Lowe - yes, Mortensen - yes, Skolarus - no, and Rogers - yes).**

Moved by Hunt, supported by Lowe, to amend the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget for Fund 208, Department 751 – Parks and Recreation, “HAPRA” Line Item 208-751-934-007 from \$107,500 to \$120,000. **The motion carried unanimously.**

5. Request for approval of Resolution 221205A establishing the 2023 instructions for poverty exemption, guidelines for poverty exemption, poverty exemption application, and poverty exemption worksheet as submitted by Assessor Debra Rojewski. (roll call)

Moved by Lowe, supported by Skolarus, to approve Resolution 221205A establishing the 2023 instructions for poverty exemption, guidelines for poverty exemption, poverty exemption application, and poverty exemption worksheet as submitted by Assessor Debra Rojewski. **The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote (Ledford - yes, Croft - yes, Hunt - yes, Lowe - yes, Mortensen - yes, Skolarus - yes, and Rogers - yes).**

6. Request for approval of the 2023 Township Meeting and Holiday Schedule.
- a. Request for approval of Resolution 221205B to establish the 2023 Regular Meeting Dates for the Board of Trustees. (roll call)

- b. Request for approval of the 2023 schedule of meetings and holidays.

Moved by Lowe, supported by Skolarus, to approve Resolution 221205B to establish the 2023 Regular Meeting Dates for the Board of Trustees. **The motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote (Ledford - yes, Croft - yes, Hunt - yes, Lowe - yes, Mortensen - yes, Skolarus - yes, and Rogers - yes).**

Moved by Hunt, supported by Ledford, to approve the 2023 schedule of meetings and holidays. **The motion carried unanimously.**

7. Delivery of the first draft of the 2023/2024 Budget as required by MCL 42.24 as provided by the Township Supervisor. (packet was delivered on 12/01/22)

Mr. Rogers noted that the draft budget was delivered to all Board Members on December 1, 2022. He advised the Board to direct any questions to him.

Commissioner Mortensen would like to have assumptions and detailed reasons provided for large changes in specific line items. Supervisor Rogers advised this request can be accommodated.

8. Presentation by the Township Clerk in regard to documents handed out at the last meeting

Ms. Skolarus stated that she has been falsely accused of wrongdoing and has the right to defend herself and clear her name. She stated that Mr. Palka has stated that the Clerk and the Supervisor were paid in advance; however, when she asked him for proof of this, he was not able to provide it. She questioned why a forensic audit was not done to find her innocent.

She requested to show invoices from the Township Attorney; however, Mr. Seward stated they cannot be displayed in public as it is confidential. It would be the Board's decision to waive the attorney client privilege.

She provided to the Board general ledger documents from 1984 to 2002, which shows that the Supervisor, the Treasurer, and the Clerk were not paid in advance and were not overpaid. In 2003, the check dates changed from the first of the month to the last day of the previous month, and this continued through 2016. She showed the budget report from 2017, where she only received 11 payments as she was not paid in March. She provided documentation showing that on August 31, 2016, there were extra payments to the Treasurer and the Assessor and then the payments were reversed. There is also a payment to the Supervisor on this day, but it was not reversed, a check was voided on November 1. She showed documents where a payment to the Supervisor was missed in September of 2016; however, there were two payments made on the pay ending in November, so he did not get a duplicate payment.

She continued by noting that she has been relieved of all her statutory duties and removed from committees. She is not invited to any meetings and is not allowed to talk to any Township Staff without another person present. She has been asked to do all of her communicating through email. She has been the Clerk for 36 years and has brought in a lot of money to the Township. She has been treated badly by Township Staff for the past five years.

She was not aware that she was not allowed to represent herself in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals as a resident of the Township.

She responded to each of the items in the censure that she stated are incorrect.

She would like Ken Palka to review what she has prepared.

After the presentation was complete, Ms. Hunt expressed regret that it has come to this. She stated she did not want to debate the issue but questioned if Ms. Skolarus states she wasn't paid in advance, why did she apply her raises in advance. Ms. Skolarus stated she was never paid in advance.

Ms. Skolarus reiterated that she is not allowed to speak to employees without someone else present. Mr. Rogers stated that two employees requested to be removed from her supervision because of the way they were treated so those employees were moved.

Ms. Skolarus stated she has been the duly elected Clerk for 35 years and would like her duties to be reinstated. She requested to have the censure resolution reversed and asked to play a 45-minute audio recording between her and Mr. Archinal and Ms. Hunt at the next meeting.

Correspondence

Ms. VanMarter provided a revised list of possible restrictions associated with the Settlement Agreement with Mr. Lalewicz. Supervisor Rogers stated if the Board agrees with these changes, he will present the conditions to Mr. Lalewicz and then he would file a motion with the court to open the settlement. The Board requested Supervisor Rogers provide additional information on the property; however, he can show Ms. Lalewicz the draft conditions.

A letter was received from Comcast noting that prices for certain services and fees will be increased effective December 18, 2022.

Member Discussion

Ms. Skolarus requested that the Board rescind the censure resolution. As the Clerk of the Township, she should be able to speak with anyone in the office and she is not able to do that now. She would like the removal of her duties to be reviewed. There are legal duties that she should be doing.

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Ms. VanMarter stated the contractor will start working on the parking lot lighting on December 12. There may be a long lead time for the actual lights, but the base work can begin.

She and Ms. Ruthig spoke with SEMCOG regarding grants. There is a Spark Grant available; however, there is not enough time to submit it this round; however, she will continue to investigate other grants.

Adjournment

Moved by Ledford, supported by Mortensen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Thomas
Recording Secretary

Approved:

Paulette Skolarus, Clerk
Genoa Charter Township

Bill Rogers, Supervisor
Genoa Charter Township