

**FIFE LAKE TOWNSHIP**

Fife Lake Township Hall, 134 Morgan Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633  
231-879-3963 Phone / 231-879-3146 Fax

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING BETWEEN FIFE LAKE TOWNSHIP AND SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP**

**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**AMENDED**

**Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Fife Lake Township Supervisor Gerianne Street called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**FIFE LAKE TOWNSHIP ROLL CALL:** Fife Lake Township Supervisor Street called Roll at 7:03 p.m.

**Present:**

Fife Lake Township Supervisor Gerianne Street  
Clerk Leigh Gifford  
Treasurer Cathy Sorrow  
Trustee Dawn Zimmerman  
Trustee Nicole Gibson

**Absent:** None.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Springfield Township Supervisor Tom Gonyer called the Springfield Township Board to order at 7:05 p.m.

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP ROLL CALL:** Springfield Township Secretary Sandi Parker called Roll.

**Present:**

Springfield Township Supervisor Tom Gonyer  
Secretary Sandi Parker  
Jeremy Birgy  
Jessica Marvin

**Absent:** Charlie Jones.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Fred Joles, Representative, Fife Lake Committee.

**Springfield Township Supervisor Tom Gonyer called for a recess of the Special Meeting to begin the Public Hearing on the Special Assessment District at 7:05 p.m.**

Mr. Gonyer spoke briefly about the Assessment. The current Assessment is for a five-year period; the proposed one would be for 10 years. In the fifteen years working with Savin Lake and Pond, the maximum costs have never been exceeded. This is in place to protect property owners.

He reported there are 38 parcels in Springfield Township that currently have deeded lake access and 146 parcels in Fife Lake Township.

Mr. Fred Joles stated one of the Springfield parcels will be removed as the individual went to Circuit Court and had deeded access removed from his deed. This is the property made up of a six-way split; it is now a five-way split. There are two parcels in Fife Lake Township to be added to the Assessment. These are two properties next to the public beach.

The weed abatement material, ProcellaCOR, is modified to go after Eurasian Milfoil. It is a well-known, widely used product. It is a fast and long acting treatment for Milfoil and other aquatic weeds.

He reported the current health of the lake is good. Of 677 acres, 27.5 acres (or 4.5%) of Milfoil were abated.

Mr. Mark McKacken, Springfield Twp., MI

Mr. McKacken stated he has been on the lake since 1978 and hasn't seen the lake look better than this summer. He has fished and swam it.

Mr. Fred Joles, Fife Lake, MI

Mr. Joles relayed a story about a storm that turned up Milfoil stuck to mud that had been on the bottom of the lake; he spoke to the property owner and suggested they remove it to avoid new growth. It appears they did do that.

Mr. Glenn Stein, 315 Pierce Street, Fife Lake, MI

Mr. Stein stated he owns Lot 107 and the east half of Lot 106 (11580 Lake Shore Drive) and has deeded access through Lot 82. He does not believe it is proper that he is assessed the same amount that businesses with multiple lots are assessed.

Mr. Joles responded when the Special Assessment District was originally formed, it was discussed extensively and commercial lots would be assessed twice the amount of the single unit and half-lots and non-billable half price.

Mr. Stein asked if the whole Township could be assessed as everybody benefits from the lake. Mr. Joles stated during those early discussions he received comments from residents living away from the lake they did not want to pay taxes on a lake they did not live on.

Mr. Tom Gray interjected they would never have the vote for that. A petition was signed by residents asking for a Special Assessment. Mr. Joles said this is Public Act 188 of 1954.

Ms. Lori Ann Rognlie, 11957 Evergreen Street, Fife Lake, MI

Ms. Rognlie believes there should be a correction made to the Assessment on Page 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> to last paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, lines 4-6. She believes this excludes lakefront property owners as they are not notified of the annual August meeting where amounts to be assessed and the assessment roll are reviewed.

Mr. Joles replied that it is the law to hold this meeting to put a dollar value to December's taxes on the amount that is to be assessed. She would like lakefront owners to be notified each year of this function. She would also like to see a report on how these funds are managed, an analysis of the lake before and after treatment, total cost for each year, and an analysis of the planned use of surplus funds. She provided the Board with a detailed outline of her request. Additionally, she does not believe sending out notifications should total \$3,000 in administrative costs. With today's technology, the rolls should have contact information. She inquired if there were expenses other than notifications.

Mr. Joles replied there are other expenses; \$1,500 for the Milfoil permit plus cost of publications. Ms. Rognlie requested a report with a breakdown of these costs each year in the Annual Minutes.

Ms. Joy Stevens, 10068 Coster Road, Fife Lake, MI

Ms. Stevens expressed concerns about the \$3,000 administrative fees. In her experience working with Assessments, permit fees were included in the annual total amount (approximately \$30,000 in this instance). If the permit fees are part of the \$3,000 allocation, that explains why the administrative cost may be so high.

Mr. Joles replied Springfield Township pays 20% with Fife Lake Township paying 80%.

This is based on the location of the property owners. Mr. Tom Broering interjected if they did not treat annually but rather every two or three years, the administrative costs would be astronomical. Mr. Joles stated when the Fife Lake Property Owners Association did this work on a volunteer basis through donations, one year alone the cost was \$74,000.

Fife Lake Township Supervisor Gerianne Street stated in 2006 the cost was \$70,205. The current lower amount is because they are staying on top of the problem.

Ms. Laura Brandt, 11463 Lake Shore Drive, Fife Lake, MI

Ms. Brandt inquired whether the 10-year contract has been negotiated yet. Mr. Joles stated that is what we are currently doing. He stated the dollar figures in the Public Hearing Notice will not be exceeded annually and displayed the information.

Mr. Douglas Brandt, 11463 Lake Shore Drive, Fife Lake, MI

Theirs is an heirloom property of his wife's grandfather purchased in 1931. He inquired whether there are any alternatives to the herbicide being used. He read Houghton Lake had a process utilizing beetles. Mr. Joles responded they were \$1.00 per bug and had to be placed on each plant individually. Mr. Brandt asked that the Townships continually consider the safest means possible to treat the Milfoil. Mr. Brandt's second inquiry was why is nothing being done to stop invasive species from coming in. He doesn't see anyone washing their boats and motors as they are coming and going.

Mr. Joles puts the blame on the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Brandt would like to see local officials go to the Sheriff's Department and ask them to follow the rule of law. In the past Mr. Joles has spoken with law enforcement and was told there was nothing they could do. He asked the DNR to install wash stations, and they would not accept liability for injuries; i.e., falls during cold weather. The DNR owns the boat launch. Mr. Brandt asked "why don't we do it," stating if we do nothing to stop invasive species we don't know what the next one will be. And there will be a next one.

Mr. Ron Broering, Fife Lake, MI:

Mr. Broering stated if the Village or Township installed a wash station, it would have to be manned 24/7 to enforce the rules. Boats come in after dark and before dawn. It would be a horrendous expense. Additionally, beetles are not economically feasible nor can you harvest the Milfoil. Mr. Joles confirmed the Milfoil cannot be harvested because every piece that breaks off can spread. Mr. Broering stated the only feasible option is the chemical application.

Mr. Joles reiterated the annual costs listed in the proposed Assessment will not be exceeded. Based on the figures listed, it is a 3% increase each year.

Mr. Mark McKacken, Springfield Twp., MI

Mr. McKacken asked Mr. Joles to describe the process for seeking out vendors to provide the service; specifically how many vendors were pursued, what was the quote process, and how was the decision made to select the vendor they chose.

Mr. Joles replied some time ago when he was appointed Supervisor, a firm that was being utilized was using a chemical that increased weed growth instead of eradicating them. At that time, you couldn't get a permit until the lake had a minimum of 30% of weed coverage. With that company the lake went from 20% to 32% weed coverage. This represented 50 to 248 acres in one growth season. That company was terminated for failure to perform their contract.

He stated there are several companies today that provide the service we are seeking. The owner of the selected provider, Savin Lake and Pond initially paid monies out of his own pocket to make Fife Lake work. This was quite some time ago. Mr. Broering interjected they have been doing a very good job.

Mr. McKacken asked again how many bids we procure. Mr. Joles stated to his knowledge, after the initial five-year bid contract with Savin, we don't interview/put out a Request for Quote as long as they are doing a good job. They are out of Hale, Michigan.

Mr. Shane Lewis interjected that he thinks there is a lot to be said for staying with someone when what they are doing works, particularly after having the bad experience with the other company.

Mr. Gray stated Savin has done such a good job with the lake, they know exactly where and what to look for. Mr. Joles reiterated we have a good working relationship with Savin and they are conscientious about the appropriate level of chemicals to use.

Ms. Lisa Leedy, 125 Morgan Street, Fife Lake, MI

Ms. Leedy thanked the Lake Committee and everyone on the Township Boards for their work. She stated the permit fee is \$800. If we are paying \$1,500, there must be some administrative fees attached. She stated the DNR writes grants for themselves for lake washes and she knows of several that have been put in. She suggested revisiting that topic. She will provide Supervisor Street a list of locations.

She read aloud a letter stating her concerns and provided the Boards with a copy. She believes there is an inequitable distribution of costs among those with lake access. Seven parcels with lakefront access are not included in the notice showing parcel numbers to be included in the distribution. South Town property owners who benefit from shared lake access are not listed as contributors. The Village and Townships own multiple accesses but do not contribute.

She agrees with other members of the public there is a lack of reporting on the status of the lake. Additionally, the Public Notice referenced an attached map; however, none was attached. There are no written updates on treatment to indicate the success of or need for the program.

Ms. Leedy offered possible solutions including using the benefit rate to include all property owners who have lake access. For the Village and Townships, each parcel should be assigned a benefit rate to contribute to the cost or find it in a more significant capacity from the tax dollars already collected from the General Fund.

Public parcels with boat accommodations should be rated the same as commercial parcels. The South Town access should be assigned a benefit rate of a quarter or half benefit per participating parcel. Missing parcels should be included to further spread the costs.

Reports should be included with the Public Notice so that paying residents are aware of the need or success. Additionally, add the clause back in to indicate how excess funds are managed. Ms. Rognlie interjected regarding the clause Ms. Leedy referenced, the Statute line number 41.732 of the Public Act. If the Statute (Public Act 188 of 1954) states it is over 5%, it should be rolled over back to the land owners. In turn, this amount should reduce the next year's tax. She believes the \$3,000 administrative amount is not meant to be used for salaries. She would like this part of the Statute inserted into the Resolution.

Ms. Leedy asked Supervisor Street if someone would please follow-up on identifying the parcel numbers she referenced in her letter/comment. Ms. Street will contact the Assessor.

Mr. Broering stated administrative fees would increase through the process of refunding any excess each year. It isn't as though there is a large lump sum of cash; if the cost is significantly reduced, the Assessment will be as well. He doesn't see a more economical method.

Ms. Brandt stated residents aren't necessarily asking for a \$10 refund, they want it stated in the Resolution how any excess funds are being handled.

Mr. Marv Radtke, Jr., 3855 Mason Road, Grawn, MI

Mr. Radtke thanked Members for serving on their Boards. He is here as a Michigan Township Association District 8 Representative. He represents the Townships in Grand Traverse, Benzie, Leelanau and Manistee. He understands the Special District Assessment is between the Township and the residents. He is available to offer his expertise as they go through the process to keep any type of mitigation to a minimum and to assure the verbiage of the Assessment lines up with what is actually provided and accounted for. He has worked with Special Assessments since 1992.

If there are any parcels added to the list, it means it is for Public Hearing and it has to be redone. The law states that if there is more than 5% remaining after paying all bills after the first year of treatment, it has to be given back to the residents. If you don't have the ability or don't do it and it is challenged, the process must be started over. He provided a packet of information to the Board. Parcels can be removed without holding another Public Hearing.

Mr. Joles stated the purpose of this meeting is for addition and subtraction of parcels. Mr. Radtke confirmed the first Public Hearing is to establish whether or not to proceed with the Special Assessment. The second Public Hearing is when the Supervisor prepares the Roll and the benefit piece for all.

Ms. Mary Schrader, 10501 Grand Kal, Fife Lake, MI

Ms. Schrader stated we never had any problems before DNR put the landing in. Why not just tell them to take it out.

**Fife Lake Township Supervisor Gerianne Street closed the Public Hearing session at 7:52 p.m.**

**Springfield Township Supervisor Tom Gonyer reconvened the Special Meeting at 7:52.30 p.m.**

Springfield Township Supervisor Gonyer asked for a motion to restate to the Weed Abatement Special Assessment District Resolution.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Parker made a motion to restate the Weed Abatement Special Assessment District Resolution. Mr. Birgy seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

**Board Action:**

Mr. Birgy made a motion to remove the Parcel #012-018-013-14 (7955 Longview Drive) from the Special Assessment. Ms. Marvin seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Fife Lake Township Supervisor Gerianne Street then began with additions to their Special Assessment Roll.

There was input from Ms. Leedy about specific parcels she previously mentioned and believes they are not included on the Roll. There was Board discussion to clarify specific parcels with plans to verify with the Assessor. There was joint Board discussion about the second Public Hearing which will be held at the August, 2022, Fife Lake Township Regular monthly meeting (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the Month). Ms. Marvin of Springfield Township made the suggestion that parcel owners being added to the Roll today be sent a courtesy letter notifying them of such.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Street made a motion to proceed with the Special Assessment Roll with the addition of Parcel #41-070-077-01 and Parcel #41-070-077-02. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Gibson-Y, Sorrow-Y, Street-Y, Zimmerman-Y, Gifford-Y. 5-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

There will be additional parcels to include. Parcel numbers were not available at this time.

Ms. Street will post notification of the next Public Hearing on the FLT website and create a Facebook page. She will attempt to have a report prepared; she is not able to develop something herself on the health of the lake but will look into it.

The first assessment will be effective December of 2022.

**CITIZEN COMMENT:**

Ms. Marylou Bridson, 632 State Street, Fife Lake, MI

She is here to observe. She did not know the South Town people do not pay for spraying the lake and is curious why. As far as she is concerned, anyone with a dock should be contributing. She is not in agreement with \$343,000 in ten years. She fishes and believes it has killed the fish as they have no weeds to hide in. She asked why her taxpayer monies should be used to pay to kill the fish habitats and why South Town is not paying. Supervisor Street invited her to come into the office to speak with her about some ideas she has shared with residents to improve fishing. Ms. Street confirmed the treatment for the Milfoil does not kill the fish.

Mr. Gray interjected MDOT owns along the railroad and they refuse any Special Assessment. South Town has an arrangement with MDOT.

Ms. Leedy stated it is worth revisiting MDOT and South Town property owner situation. There are new people and new positions in the community. She believes if the expense was shared, property owners may feel more comfortable. Ms. Leedy offered to make a connection with MDOT for Ms. Street. Ms. Street will take it under advisement.

Mr. Marv Radtke, 3855 Mason Road, Grawn, MI

Mr. Radtke encouraged everyone to read the two-page Public Act 162 of 1962, which is the Notice of Special Assessment Hearings. This is outside of Public Act 188 of 1954 and the Open Meetings Act. Statutes of all must be complied with. He is in support of eradicating invasive species. At the same time, he wants to make sure there are no missteps. He suggested additional Public Hearings before the August, 2022 Public Hearing to afford those who have been added but not notified the opportunity to speak. Ms. Street may contact the parties in person, in addition to the correspondence.

Denny Meyer, 11765 Lake Shore Drive, Fife Lake, MI

Mr. Meyer stated he has been a resident here for 57 years and has lived through good and bad fishing, clean and dirty water. This is the clearest the lake has ever been. Fishing suffered a bit but it is clear. It is the most pristine lake in the area. There are plenty of fish in the lake. The addition of a boat livery has provided uncontrolled boat access.

The work that has been done in the last 20 years by a lot of people prior to the creation of a Special Assessment Roll needs to be commended for what they have done and continue to do. He believes Savin does a great job in managing the Milfoil. You get what you pay for.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Springfield Township adjourned their meeting.

Fife Lake Township:

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Zimmerman seconded the motion.  
ROLL CALL VOTE: Gibson-Y, Zimmerman-Y, Street-Y, Gifford-Y, Sorrow-Y. 5-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

**Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary, Fife Lake Township**