

FIFE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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

SPECIAL MEETING

APPROVED MINUTES

Thursday, October 12, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

Clerk Gifford called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Action:

Ms. Zimmerman made a motion that Clerk Gifford moderates the meeting tonight and future meetings until an Interim Township Supervisor is appointed. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Present: Clerk Leigh Gifford, Treasurer Cathy Sorrow and Trustees Dawn Zimmerman and Nicole Gibson. A quorum was established.

Absent: None.

Also Present:

Fife Lake Chamber Vice President and DDA Representative, Stan Patrick
Fife Lake Chamber of Commerce President, Debbie McCool
Grand Traverse County Commissioner, Darryl Nelson
Grand Traverse County Deputy, Chris Whetstone
Recording Secretary, Kay Held

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Trustee Gibson announced to members of the public the purpose for tonight’s Special Meeting is to clarify the process for appointing an Interim Fife Lake Township Supervisor and interview procedures for a selecting a new Zoning Administrator.

Board Action:

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to accept the Agenda as presented. Ms. Zimmerman seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

No conflict.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Clerk Gifford announced that applications/resumes were received from candidates for the Interim Township Supervisor and Zoning Administrator positions.

CITIZEN COMMENT:

None.

GUESTS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor / Zoning Administrator Interview Process Discussion:

Clerk Gifford restated the purpose for this evening’s meeting.

Clerk Gifford asked Trustee Zimmerman to refer to the Michigan Township Association handbook detailing the selection process.

County Commissioner Nelson was recognized by the Board and asked to provide the information he confirmed regarding the process. State law requires that an Interim Supervisor be appointed within 45 days of the resignation effective date. If that does not happen within that time period, State law takes effect. The Democratic and Republican parties may then each put forth an individual for a Special Election.

He continued, it is ideal if Board Trustees initially appoint an individual on an interim basis. Election costs to Fife Lake are approximately \$10,000 to run an election.

Township Deputy Supervisor Jeff Berthiaume inquired whether an Independent candidate can be put forth. Mr. Nelson replied no, and provided an explanation based on percentage of votes in the last election. The Democratic and Republican parties are the only parties eligible to put forth candidates. This State law is in place in the event there was a stalemate or an entire Board was to resign; citizens are assured their Township government be intact.

Mr. Roger Gibson asked who the County Election Commissioners are. Mr. Nelson agreed with Clerk Gifford that it is likely comprised of the County Clerk, Treasurer and Supervisor.

Trustee Zimmerman verified the information Commissioner Nelson provided aligned with what is presented in the Michigan Township Association (MTA) and read aloud MTA Authorities and Responsibilities book under Michigan Election Law (MCL) 168.370.

This information detailed MTA procedures for filling a vacancy including appointment by the Township Board, scenarios which call for a Special Election through the County Clerk and submission of nominees by political parties, and the nature of the interim role through to the next regular election. Special circumstances were also cited when a vacancy becomes available and how it is filled or when there is the loss of a quorum. Information can be found in its entirety under MCL 168.370.

This process is only for the Supervisor position; not the Zoning Administrator position.

Clerk Gifford confirmed the postings were made as previously determined. They were posted/published in the Traverse City Record Eagle, MTA website, Fife Lake Township website and Fife Lake Township building billboard.

Two applications/resumes were received for the Township Supervisor position, and three applications/resumes were received for the Township Zoning Administrator position.

Board Members discussed setting up a Special Meeting to conduct formal interviews for each position or for both positions.

Trustee Gibson shared her concerns that with a four-person Board, there is an increased chance for a tie vote. She understands the expense of an election and does not want to spend taxpayer monies unnecessarily. However, taxpayers voted for a specific candidate, Gerianne Street, as Township Supervisor. Therefore, they should have their input or vote on who should replace her. It is up to the Township as a whole, not just the four-person Board.

Trustee Zimmerman recognized Commissioner Nelson, asking him how often a Board's authority to appoint is removed. He gave examples where a Supervisor resigned and an Interim Supervisor was appointed by the Board and subsequently ran for election. Another Township went through the same process. He stated that statutorily, the Board can appoint an Interim Supervisor and is legally allowed to do so.

Candidates for each position were announced:

Interim Fife Lake Township Supervisor:

Mr. David McGough

Ms. Lisa Leedy

Fife Lake Township Zoning Administrator:

Mr. Casey Guthrie

Mr. Marvin Radtke, Jr./MR Consulting

Mr. Cal Benke

Trustee Zimmerman restated where the positions have been posted including beyond what is required. She believes the Board must consider credentials and experience of the candidates. Qualified people have applied.

Board Members agreed to conduct interviews at two separate Special Meetings; one for Interim Supervisor and one for Zoning Administrator.

The Board discussed prospective dates for interviews. The meeting for interviews for Interim Township Supervisor will be Tuesday, October 17 or Thursday, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. Interviews will be at 6:45 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. Applicant McGough was present at this evening's meeting and is available either date; he asked for the 6:45 interview time. Clerk Gifford will contact Ms. Leedy to arrange scheduling.

It was agreed that Board Members will arrive with their own interview questions, the same questions will be asked of each candidate.

Potential dates for Zoning Administrator are Thursday, November 2 or Thursday, November 9 at a Special Meeting to begin at 6:30 p.m. Interviews will be at 6:45 p.m., 7:15 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. Clerk Gifford will contact all candidates to schedule interviews.

CITIZEN COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action:

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Zimmerman seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary
