

**FIFE LAKE TOWNSHIP**

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

**Regular Meeting**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Thursday, December 21, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Supervisor Lisa Leedy called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present:**

Supervisor Lisa Leedy, Clerk Leigh Gifford, Treasurer Cathy Sorrow and Trustee Dawn Zimmerman. A quorum was established.

**Absent:**

Trustee Nicole Gibson.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Amendments to Agenda:**

- Correct date of Minutes to Approve to 11/16/23 from 11/15/23 in Consent Calendar.
- Add Minutes from 12/13/23 Board of Review Special Meeting.
- Add "Police Contract Related to Rent" to New Business.
- Add "MTA Conference" to Other Business.
- Add "Outstanding Task List" to Other Business.
- Change FLAPC Committee Vacancies to three, not two, under Old Business. There are also two applications for Weed Committee appointment.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to accept the Agenda as amended. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

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

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

No conflicts.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Interim Supervisor Leedy read the purpose of the Consent Calendar to include:

- Fife Lake Township Regular Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2023 and Special Meeting Minutes of 12/13/23.
- Correspondence
- Transfers
- Financial Report

Pull approval of 12/13/23 Minutes on Board of Review. Minutes not in packet – to be reviewed next month.

Pull Financial Reports.

Pull Time Sheets.

**Amendments to 11/16/23 Regular Meeting Minutes:**

None.

**Amendments to 12/6/23 Special Meeting Minutes:**

None.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

**Bills to be Paid:**

There were questions from the Ask Clerk Report:

- Tech Pros was for website cleanup.
- Verified Recording Secretary invoice does not charge to Zoning.
- Ricky's Heating invoice in the amount of \$834 for generator work needs to be added.
- Supply expenses from Fast Signs' 9/7/23 invoice is for Boat Wash. This was previously approved. Original payment was not received, a stop payment was made, and payment will be re-issued.
- Cintas invoice not yet received; likely because monthly FLT meeting is being held one week early. This is a recurring expense on the A/P.

Clerk Gifford noted quarterly bills with Joint Planning are now being received as the Village has an Acting Treasurer in place. Supervisor Leedy stated this process is incorrect. The Township should send its portion to the Village (the Fiduciary) up front for shared expenses and tracking. Monthly financial reports should be provided by the Village.

Ms. Leedy removed the Planning Commission bills, less insurance payment of \$1,800.

She will review this process with Ms. Emily Escajeda at H&R Block.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Leedy made a motion to pay the bills with the addition of \$834 to Ricky's Heating and removal of three bills for the Planning Commission, paying the Village the budgeted amount less the insurance Fife Lake Township already paid. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Gifford-Y, Sorrow-Y, Leedy-Y, Zimmerman-Y. 4-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

Clerk Gifford distributed Board Member Time Sheets for review. There was Board Consensus moving forward that Clerk Gifford review Time Sheets in advance and present any discrepancies or questions prior to approval. These are recurring wage expenses and should be returned to the post-audit payment process.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to return Board Member Time Sheets to the previous Post-audit Policy payment procedure. The Clerk will bring any discrepancies to the Board. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Ms. Zimmerman made a motion to approve Time Sheets as presented. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Zimmerman-Y, Sorrow-Y, Gifford-Y, Leedy-Y. 4-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

**Financial Reports:**

Supervisor Leedy clarified why the Levi Ankersen bill is still on the report. The FLT Board has provided the required Resolution regarding these ARPA funds from the County. The Township will receive \$68k reimbursement for the fire barn roof. A new garage door for the fire barn was added to utilize the entire \$75k in County-awarded ARPA funds. The County has approved the requisition.

The \$39 attorney invoice was on the Ask Clerk report. This is related to publication deadline for Phillips Street. This should come out of the General Fund as it was for posting. Clerk Gifford will advise Ms. Escajeda. There was attorney communication regarding the Board of Review Special Meeting. This is an Open Meetings Act topic.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Gifford-Y, Leedy-Y, Sorrow-Y, Zimmerman-Y. 4-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

**CITIZEN COMMENT:**

Mr. John Strobridge, 508 State Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633:

Mr. Strobridge commended the Board for 4-color brochure/newsletter. It was very impressive.

**REPORTS:**

**County Commissioner, Mr. Darryl Nelson:**

Absent – No Report.

**Sheriff Department - Grand Traverse County Deputy Whetstone, Fife Lake Township Community Police Officer (CPO):**

Deputy Whetstone was unable to attend. His Citation, Accident and Arrest Statistics report was in the meeting packet.

**Ambulance/Fire/Emergency Planning – Ms. Nicole Gibson:**

Absent. Report and Minutes are in the meeting packet.

Supervisor Leedy attended the meeting as an Alternate Board Member. Their budgets were passed as presented with the exception of a change in one payroll category and position title.

**Fife Lake Village – Village President Mr. Tom Hempsted:**

Absent – No Report.

**Fife Lake Area Utility Authority (FLAUA) – Ms. Leigh Gifford:**

The FLAUA met 12/20/23 at the Fife Lake Library. Ms. Gifford noted Ms. Amanda White of the Michigan Rural Water Association was onsite to answer any questions regarding the recent rate study and increase. Only one resident was in attendance. Ms. Gifford reported the Sewer Authority had not implemented any rate increases since 2016 and should have been, including planned Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases. Based on the assessment, the current sewer rate should be \$109-120/REU per month; the Board approved an increase to \$70/REU per month.

The pond liner is required to be replaced in the coming years; its original quote was \$7 million. Grant opportunities will be explored.

**Fife Lake Chamber of Commerce – Ms. Deb McCool:**

Absent. No report.

**Fife Lake DDA – Ms. Linda Forwerck:**

Ms. Forwerck read the DDA's Annual Report aloud. A copy is available in the meeting packet. The DDA has been working with Networks NorthWest on a new Tax Increment Plan (TIF). Three DDA Members attended an annual conference in Birmingham. The next event will be in Harbor Springs in June, 2024.

Two Board Member terms are up; both may be asking to be reappointed. There is also one current vacancy. The three board seats should be posted for applications.

The annual TIF report was submitted to the State of Michigan Treasury Department and is posted on the DDA website [www.fifelakedda.org](http://www.fifelakedda.org).

The TIF capture was \$45,443.41 (\$16,817 Village and \$28,670.90 County). This past year \$10,375 went back to the Village for labor/bonds (a two-year amount due to changes in reporting dates). Total DDA expenses were \$29,355. DDA audit expense was \$1,815.

The current TIF plan expires in 2028; however, they will likely ask for another 30-year TIF plan.

The DDA is working on their annual budget covering April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, and will be submitted to the Township for approval.

They are contemplating hiring out a website service for a more professional site.

**Zoning – Ms. Lisa Leedy:**

Ms. Leedy provided her Zoning Report. She issued three Land Use Permits. There has been one Land Division; three are in process. There have been many inquiries about new home builds. She met with someone who may be interested in building a sub-division for workforce housing.

**Fife Lake Area Planning Commission (FLAPC) – Ms. Dawn Zimmerman:**

Trustee Zimmerman reported the Planning Commission meeting of December 12, 2023, was cancelled due to no quorum.

A Special Meeting was held on 12/20/23 with a Public Hearing regarding the Fife Lake Family RV Resort, LLC conditional rezoning request. The Applicant delivered a presentation. There were numerous Public Comments in person and in writing. After discussion, the Board recommended by a 3-Yes, 2-No vote that the Village Council approve the request to conditionally rezone Parcel #41-040-110-00 from R-1 Residential to C-2 Commercial as presented by the Applicant, Fife Lake Family RV Resort, LLC.

She noted the Joint Planning Commission is a seven-member Board. One position through the Village has been vacant since 10/26/23 with Ms. Leedy's resignation due to appointment as Fife Lake Township Supervisor. One seat is held by a Commissioner appointed by the Village and the Township who has not been in attendance the past three or four meetings. That term is up 12/31/23. This is to explain why there were five Board Members in attendance at the Special Meeting rather than seven.

The FLAPC Board received an email from Commissioner Sensenbaugh-Padgett at 4:00 p.m. today with notification of her resignation, effective immediately. The author copied Fife Lake Township Supervisor Leedy on the communication as well. Trustee Zimmerman read the resignation aloud.

Supervisor Leedy stated the FLAPC approval granted on 12/20/23 is a first step in the process. It will go before the Village next. Communication should be directed to the Village Board. They will need to conduct a Public Hearing and follow a process before any approval is made.

**Civic Center South – Ms. Gerianne Street and Mr. Terry Street:**

No Report. Ms. Leedy stated there has been no quorum the last three meetings. Civic Center Chair Charlie Jetter asked her to contact the Township members, Ms. Gerianne Street and Mr. Terry Street. She spoke with Ms. Street on 12/16/23, who stated her intentions to resign. Mr. Street's term has expired. Ms. Street stated both vacancies should be posted. Ms. Leedy is awaiting written resignation from Ms. Street.

**Cemetery Report – Sexton Lisa Plamondon / Cathy Sorrow:**

The Cemetery report is in the meeting packet.

Ms. Sorrow also reported that she, Sexton Plamondon and Supervisor Leedy met with Ms. Yvonna Downey to discuss her concerns brought up at last month's meeting. They agreed to reconvene in the spring to discuss what is allowable at gravesites based on the Ordinance. The Cemetery will provide additional signage and increased communication to make it known what is allowed in the Ordinance and how it will be enforced. She added the Ordinance has not been changed; however, it has been enforced differently by various employees through the years. They realize this is an emotional area and the care and safety for all in the cemeteries is important. Suggestions for cemetery improvements are welcomed; individuals may contact Ms. Sorrow or Sexton Plamondon.

Ms. Leedy added she walked through Walton Cemetery and saw differences in how gravesites were adorned. The group spoke about equitably enforcing the Ordinance, improving communication, and being proactive in this matter.

Ms. Zimmerman noted in addition to Ms. Downey, there have been other complaints in the past. Because members of the Board change over time, she suggested concerns be documented in the employee file in the event they need to be referenced in the future. Ms. Leedy added how situations are resolved should also be included. The Sexton has created a form for improved tracking of records. This will be added to the Township website for members of the public to provide grave information and serve as an additional method of communication.

**Lakeshore Drive – Ms. Lisa Leedy:**

Ms. Leedy reported she received an email from Mr. Wayne Schoonover, Highway Engineer for Grand Traverse County, who stated the County will continue working on surveying over the winter. This will be revisited as they plan the next year's project schedule. Ms. Leedy will continue to follow-up on the status of Lakeshore Drive.

**Policy – Ms. Lisa Leedy:**

Minutes from the Policy Committee are in the Consent Agenda.

Two meetings have been held. Current policies were identified, and they are working on a Key Policy. Draft policies will be presented for review at the January meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Audit Presentation Date is January 25, 2024:**

Supervisor Leedy has asked the Auditor to deliver a presentation at the FLT January 25, 2024, Regular Meeting.

**Garage Door Replacement (1 door):**

Supervisor Leedy reported the Township had additional remaining County ARPA funds available. Total approved ARPA monies granted from the County are \$75k. The fire barn roof totaled approximately \$68.4k. The fire barn doors need to be replaced. Ms. Leedy included a garage door in the requisition for these funds to take advantage of the full amount awarded. She asked for permission to solicit bids for one door.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to authorize Ms. Leedy to solicit sealed bids for one garage door, including installation, for the fire barn. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

**Review of EMS Agreement:**

A copy of the current Emergency Medical Services agreement is in the meeting packet. Supervisor Leedy reported that several individuals have stated they have been invoiced for ambulance transport after their insurance was billed.

The impression from the current agreement is that the millage covered the difference and would pursue the insurance company. Review of the billing agreement states the hospital will bill only insurance, not the patient. She will schedule a meeting with the hospital and EMS Director Mike Berendsohn to review.

**Police Contract Related to Rent:**

Supervisor Leedy stated the Township charges rents for each entity in the building for the facility, heating/cooling, utilities, internet, phone, etc. This is an internal accounting transaction. Funding for police and emergency response services includes operating and capital expenses; the Township can recoup some costs. There is a \$300k fund balance; \$118k/year was collected. The contract is approximately \$92k/year. Ms. Leedy provided the Board with the millage language. There was Board discussion to determine an annual flat fee for partial expenses.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion apply \$12k in rent to the Police Fund and transfer it to the General Fund for the current budget year and in future budget years.

Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Zimmerman-Y, Leedy-Y, Sorrow-Y, Gifford-Y. 4-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

Supervisor Leedy presented to the Board the potential of utilizing a portion of Police Fund monies to create an Ordinance Enforcement Officer position and combine it with the Zoning Administrator role. Ordinance enforcement is an important and time consuming function but necessary. The CPO is involved in enforcement. An Ordinance would need to be created to establish the Enforcement role. This would allow the Township to offer a more competitive wage while also offering citizens more services. There may be approximately \$30k available from the Police Fund and a portion from Marijuana. Establishing and executing this would be a process; however, she is seeking Board input before researching it further.

There was Board consensus for Ms. Leedy to conduct further research.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Zoning:**

Ms. Leedy reported marijuana license renewals need to be processed. It is unclear whether that task was included under the recent authorization of her function as interim Zoning Administrator. Trustee Zimmerman noted the Ordinance states the Clerk is responsible for licensing. There was Board discussion regarding the process and consensus for the interim Zoning Administrator to prepare applications and renewals, the Clerk to proof and the Board to approve.

Authorization to process marihuana license renewals:

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to authorize interim Zoning Administrator Leedy to process marihuana license renewal applications and forward them to the Clerk for review prior to final Board approval. Ms. Zimmerman seconded the motion.

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

Zoning Wages for Interim Role:

Ms. Leedy stated she put her Zoning hours on her Time Sheet at the same rate as the prior Zoning Administrator.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to approve interim Zoning Administrator wages for Ms. Leedy at \$719/month, pro-rated to October 26, 2023. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Zimmerman-Y, Sorrow-Y, Gifford-Y. 3-Yes, 0-No. Motion carried.

Ms. Leedy abstained from the vote.

**Committees seeking members/appointments:**

Appointment to FLAUA to fill vacancy until 12/31/24:

Supervisor Leedy reported there were two applications to fill the Township Representative vacancy on the Fife Lake Area Utility Authority Board. Candidates are Ms. Pam Lawrence and Mr. Shane Lewis. Ms. Leedy made a recommendation to appoint Mr. Shane Lewis. There was Board discussion regarding the applicants.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to appoint Mr. Shane Lewis to the Fife Lake Area Utility Authority representing Fife Lake Township. The term ends 12/31/24. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

Status update on Joint Oak Wilt Committee with FLV:

It is unknown whether the Village established the Oak Wilt Committee, which is intended to be a joint committee with the Township. Supervisor Leedy postponed this item.

Accept Resignation of Gerianne and Terry Street from Civic Center South:

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to accept the resignations of Ms. Gerianne Street and Mr. Terry Street from the Civic Center South Board. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

Accept Resignation of Jayme Werner from Board of Review Due to Appointment as Township Deputy Supervisor:

Ms. Leedy has appointed Ms. Jayme Werner as Township Deputy Supervisor. Remaining on the Board of Review could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to accept the resignation of Ms. Jayme Werner from the Board of Review. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

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

FLAPC Terms Ending:

Ms. Leedy identified FLAPC terms that will be coming to an end.

- Two FLAPC terms are ending 12/31/26 (one of two seats is a joint appointment with FLV)
- Tom Rookus' term ends 12/31/23
- Dawn Zimmerman's term ends 12/31/26

- There is one partial term ending 12/31/24

**Board Action:**

Ms. Gifford made a motion to reappoint Ms. Dawn Zimmerman as the Township Representative on the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission, term ending 12/31/26. Ms. Sorrow seconded the motion.

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

Ms. Zimmerman abstained from voting.

**FLAPC Board Vacancies:**

Supervisor Leedy stated there is a joint position open with the Village through 12/31/26 and a vacancy to fill the remaining term vacated by Ms. Sensenbaugh-Padgett through 12/31/24. Mr. Rookus has not responded whether he is interested in reappointment.

Ms. Leedy will post for these vacancies.

**ZBA Vacancies:**

Supervisor Leedy stated there are two Zoning Board of Appeals terms ending on 12/31/26. One is Mr. Shane Lewis who indicated he will not be reapplying. The other is Ms. Jayme Werner, which would be a conflict as new Deputy Township Supervisor.

Ms. Leedy will post for these vacancies.

**Weed Committee:**

Supervisor Leedy has an application from Mr. Dar Zimmerman for the Weed Committee.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Sorrow made a motion to appoint Mr. Dar Zimmerman to the Weed Committee. Ms. Gifford seconded the motion.

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

Ms. Zimmerman abstained from voting.

**Lake and Access Committee:**

Supervisor Leedy stated Mr. Mark Kaiser has applied to the Lake and Access Committee. Another individual has expressed interest; however, no application has been submitted yet.

No appointments will be made until there are several applicants.

**Grant for Lake Study:**

Ms. Leedy stated this grant application is due mid-January. She is working on completing it.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**MTA Conference:**

Clerk Gifford stated the annual MTA Conference will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort in April, 2024. Payment must be made by the end of January to take advantage of the early discount rate. Ms. Sorrow, Ms. Leedy, Ms. Gifford and Ms. Zimmerman would like to attend. Clerk Gifford will check with Ms. Gibson if she would like to attend. This item will be added to the January Agenda to authorize attendance/payment.

Ms. Leedy stated she co-presented an education session to the MTA Board last month entitled "The True Costs of Development for a Community." It went very well.

**Outstanding Task List**

The Outstanding Task List was reviewed. New tasks were added throughout the meeting and completed items removed.

The Township was approved for livestreaming on YouTube; Ms. Leedy will set up the YouTube channel.

**CITIZEN COMMENT:**

**Ms. Mary Ellen Dilley, 8611 East Sparling Road, Fife Lake, MI 49633**

Ms. Dilley would like to know what the Township rules are about Board Members participating by Zoom. When Ms. Zimmerman is gone for three months in the winter, there is a big hole on the Board. The Road Commission allows their absent Board Members participate and vote remotely.

Supervisor Leedy noted the Road Commissioners are appointed and the Township Board Members are elected. With the new YouTube streaming, Ms. Zimmerman will be able to observe meetings and will continue to receive her meeting packet.

**Mr. Jeff Berthiaume, 8945 Wil-Pet Drive, Fife Lake, MI 49633:**

Mr. Berthiaume stated his wife, who is an alternate on the Board of Review, did not make the recent Special Meeting as she was not aware of it. This is not a regularly scheduled meeting; even when it is physically posted, it is easy to miss. He asked if alternates could be personally notified when meetings are scheduled.

He also stated regarding the transfer of Police Funds, for accounting methods the Board may only be able to use a percent of funds and not a flat rate. He also noted monies for an Ordinance Enforcement Officer will eventually be exhausted and asked how it would be funded then.

Supervisor Leedy responded that notification of the BOR meeting was a problem; she is working on a digital meeting calendar.

**BOARD MEMBER UPDATES/COMMENTS:**

Clerk Gifford reported the election tabulator and supplies are on order.

Trustee Zimmerman stated she will need an Absentee Voter Ballot. Clerk Gifford replied if she is marked as a permanent Absentee Ballot voter, she will receive a ballot, not an application. Ms. Zimmerman will provide her a forwarding address for Florida.

Supervisor Leedy noted she has been attending Supervisors' meetings and attended the MTA meeting presentation from the airport regarding their planned expansion. This was helpful from a Zoning perspective. At the Supervisors' meeting, there was conversation about communication difficulties many communities have been having with the Road Commission. People are encouraged this will improve.

She met with Mr. Chris Forsythe regarding Epic GT. There will be capacity to add Fife Lake Township to the system September, 2024. They are evaluating the User Experience portion of the system. The Home Builders Association will be a test case; Ms. Leedy has invited the HBA to visit the Township regarding the use of Epic GT.

Recording Secretary Held inquired about the February and August primaries to confirm Election Inspectors are needed for those dates. Clerk Gifford replied yes, and election workers are also needed to cover the nine-day early voting period for both primaries.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Board Action:**

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary**