

## **Saugatuck Township Special Board Meeting**

Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 6pm

Saugatuck Township Hall, 3461 Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck, MI 49453

### **Approved Minutes**

Supervisor Roerig called the meeting to order at 6pm

All board members are present

#### **Approval of the agenda**

Roerig said there was no reason to discuss supervisor health insurance and it will not be needed. He would like to add Treasurer health insurance. Supervisor Roerig mentioned to the public they may go into closed session, wanted to make they were aware and how it works.

#### **Public Comments**

Larry Dickie, Saugatuck – Supporting Aaron and his position. Read a letter (attached). Summary of Letter: Personal experience with Sheridan was uniformly positive. They worked well together on a committee around the fracking issue. Aaron was well informed and his work was appreciated. Asked the board work independently and not as a block support.

Jane Dickie, Saugatuck – Important to her that the board speak as to why they do what they do. Her previous concern was that decisions by the township board (previous) were made without being explained. Looking for a diverse board, feels diversity helps make the best decision. Looking for disagreements and conversations to happen at the meetings, not behind closed doors. She appreciates Aarons honesty, while she believes temperament matters, it is not everything. She asks Aaron is given the opportunity to continue to serve the community and is given a chance.

Roy McIlwaine, Saugatuck Township – (Former Trustee) Read a letter (attached). Summary of Letter: Sat on the board for (6) years and wanted to show support for both Sheridan and Lori Babinski. He wanted to recognize that they each over (15) years' experience of actual day to day workings in the township. Mr. Roerig & Mr. Wester also have experience, asked they listen to their council. He asked the board to think about their actual experiences with the two employees (Babinski & Sheridan) and not what was published in a paper. He stressed Aaron has brought the township fiscal solvency and all audits have been good. Closed by asking will the new clerk and treasurer in be in office full time and how they are being compensated.

Becky Israels, Saugatuck Township – Welcomes new board. Had a nice experience of working with Aaron. She reminds the board that they carry thru with their promise of transparency. She wants to know how the board will make choices and why those choices are made. Asked several questions as to what research was done for the decisions being made. Does the current HR policies support what is happening at the meeting this evening.

Patrick Stewart, (Fox Ridge Court) – Aaron is very helpful, knowledge and a “database” for the township. Everyone makes mistakes, everyone has changes with people they regret, its how the learn and grow from those mistakes.

Charlotte Stewart, Saugatuck Township – Has communicated with Aaron the last 4-5 years about high speed internet in the township. Aaron was always been patient and professional. Aaron has worked with the cable companies to set up high speed internet out off Old Allegan. Concerned about the transition if he does not continue in his position

Andy Diaz, Saugatuck Township – (also on Saugatuck Township Parks Commission) – Aaron is very professional and got them the information needed in a timely manner. He is asking the board not to make a decision that would divide us even more, believes Aaron is the right man for the job to segway the transition, 15 years' experience is not easy to replace.

Jim Searing, Saugatuck Township (also on Saugatuck Township Parks Commission) – Referenced a meeting he had with a group in regards to the Blue Star Trail Aaron stepped forward to make it happen, he had the courage to do so knowing he would take a lot of heat for it. Feels he is not receiving the credit he deserves.

John Adams, Fennville – President of the Friends of Blue Star Trail – Works closely with Aaron. Aaron has many attributes he (John) found from the city manager he found important in advancing major parks in the community. Aaron was willing to get involved, do the work, and has strong local & technical & people knowledge. Aarons true enthusiasm and true commitment to the community will be hard to duplicate.

Lori Babinski, Saugatuck Township – She felt there were only (2) incidents she could think of that caused Aarons job to be in question. The first was when Aaron met with the two city managers & zoning administrators and secretly recording a meeting. She (Lori) believe he did it to protect himself even though she felt it was wrong to do. While she didn't agree with it, she understands he is only human and makes mistakes. The second is when Aaron and previous supervisor got into heat discussion after hours. She has seen many heated discussions in her years there and none of those warranted someone losing their job. Aaron has a wealth of knowledge, doesn't miss meetings, and works 5 days a week here at the office for very little salary. He treats everyone fair and does not have much turnover of his employees. She believe the manager is not at fault, but the board for directing him to do so. Lori asks the board to keep Aaron he is a good person.

Sherry Mason, Plainwell (Saugatuck Township Certified Assessor of Records) – wants to go on record with the new board, and as a civil servant for over 30 years she said the people who work the daily grind are the ones who help make you, the board, look good. She hopes that the board takes this into consideration. She has worked very well with both Aaron and Laurie for 13 years now and cannot say enough about their hard work and their ethics as well as their knowledge and willingness to learn.

Donna Leonard , Saugatuck – She has known Aaron and his family a long time, and is in and out of township hall often. She has found Aaron and Laurie (and Brad) to be very proficient in their jobs. Laurie has always answered kindly, Aaron has always been friendly and helpful and knows everything she has ever asked him. She asks the board keep Aaron on. She is confused as to how everyone is training and what is going on. Overall does not agree with recall or what is going on.

Tony Schippa, Saugatuck Township – Thank you to the board for taking the time and effort to run as well as future work. He commends those who speak for Aaron, but he feels the person who is responsible for Aaron being put in this position(job on the line), is Aaron himself. He (Tony) witnessed things that were not very nice. He suggested Aaron writes a letter of resignation versus being fired as it would be better for his future job search.

### **Correspondence**

None

### **Unfinished Business**

None

## New Business

### A. Transition of Board Members – Compensation

*This is actually meant to focus on Former Board Members compensation as employees.*

Helmrich asked when previous board members stopped their pay. Roerig stated the County Board of Election law states once vote is certified (last Wednesday at 2pm) their job is over. Laurie loss \$10,937 as elected official, and Brad \$10,428 disappeared. Jon is being paid immediately, the Clerk position dollar amount is going into the bank. There is an addition to this: Lori is an employee of the township as is Aaron. Lori is an employee and has not stopped, she only lost her elected official status. Helmrich wanted to know when he becomes an employee not just an elected official. Wester stated he will take no administrative salary or the health care package (he is only taking the voted in salary of \$10,937) as the clerk and appoints Lori Babinski as the deputy Clerk. The board will need to move Lori from the Treasurer Admin role & salary to the Clerk Admin role & salary. Abby asked if Bill appoints Lori does the board get any say. Roerig said the deputy Clerk position is appointed by the elected clerk during their time in office. The board will then vote on compensation, and approve the hiring. Further discussion among the board will happen in close session. Helmrich noted he would like to do all the administrative as well as the elected official.

### B. Supervisor Health Benefits

Not Necessary

### C. Board Appointments

Helmrich would like to service the township on the Planning Commission. Stacy asked to do the Fire Board and Abby asked to do the Road Commission. Roerig is resigning from the fire board and nominates Stacy Aldrich as the representative of the Fire Township Board, as well as an alternate on the board of appeals. Wester Seconds. No Discussion. Roll Call Vote: All voted yes. Roerig nominates Helmrich to be the board for Planning Commission. Discussion: Roerig mentioned that Helmrich resigned from the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance Board. Aldrich second. Roll Call – All Yes. Roerig nominated Bigford to be the Road Committee. Helmrich second. No Discussion. Roll Call Vote – All Yes.

### D. MTA Membership & Training

Abby asked it added to the agenda. She has been active in pursuing MTA support and training. Has some information she gathered. Asked we pay to become members, they provide training and other supportive needs that would be beneficial to the new board. Unlimited phone support would be provided. Advocate for local governments. Training coming up this December. \$5174.04 a year (based on taxable value). Roerig asked if it's worth spending that much per year. Abby states it can save us in legal fee's with their guidance and advice. It also provides 45% less on training and material, unlimited phone support and is a great resource for board members. Wester asked if we can do training without being a member, and yes you can. The Township is 1 of 10 who are not members, the other 99% of townships are. Roerig suggests the training happen, but further discussion and time perhaps be put off. Abby thinks we should go forward with it now and wants that help and advice during the transition. Helmrich makes the motion that the Township rejoin the Michigan Township Association ASAP. Stacey second. Motion passes 4-0. Wester voted no.

E. Staffing Analysis. Record number of voters, and they ran on change. There were many reasons why people wanted this, not just a few. Helmrich wants to a comprehensive study on how township government is organized. Who is full time/part time/volunteers. Sometimes an opportunity comes along to bring in fresh air, fresh ideas, etc. He wants to see the whole staff analyses. There might be new ways to do things, just because you've done it a long time doesn't mean there isn't more to learn. Roerig – What exactly do you want to analyze. Helmrich – how the office and employees work.

Wants to see how it was done in other townships. Roerig & Wester asks Helmrich put together a proposal and come back to them in December meeting.

F. Aaron Sheridan requested the board go into closed session within the agreement of the two employees that are being discussed. Roerig moves the go into closed session. Wester seconds. Roll Call – All Yes (7p)

(8:07p) Motion to come out of a closed door session by Helmrich. Bigford second. No discussion. Roll Call Vote – All Yes.

Abby motioned to accept Aaron Sheridan's resignation effective November 16<sup>th</sup>, he will receive full compensation thru 12/31 and available for consultation during that time period (Nov 17<sup>th</sup>-Dec 31). Aldrich – Second. No further discussion. Public meeting Friday 11/16 at 3pm to accept the written terms of the resignation. Roll Call Vote – All Yes.

### **Public Comments**

Tammy Jacobi – Douglas. Medical Marijuana businesses as brought up 11/7/18 meeting as well as in a letter. She wants to encourage the Planning Commission to go back on the issue. Quick Update – 12,000 voted yes and 769 said no. Time to talk and listen to the public about marijuana. There are opportunities that should not be overlooked.

### **Board Discussion**

Aldrich – People contacting her about sand mining operation neglecting rules. Would like to address it. Roerig has contacted a few residents to create a citizens group. The sand mining manager and group will meet to discuss issues. The manager will do what's needed to address concerns.

Adjourn at 8:11pm

Elizabeth Holley, Recording Secretary