

Unapproved Minutes of the Whitefish Township Board Annual Meeting – June 30th, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Supervisor Forrester called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Edson Forrester, Earl Skeans, Glenn Gommery, Katie Becker, Kim Bean

Townsppeople: 32

A. Call to Order/ Roll call

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Approve Annual Minutes – June 30,2022 Motion by Linda Ferguson, second by Debbie - Motion Carried

D. Status of Township - Supervisor Forrester shared that we had a hard time keeping employees and that there is a large learning curve. He stated the current clerk and treasurer are work very diligently to correct these errors. According to our 2022 audit, our township is sitting in a good financial position. Our assets sit at roughly \$2 million, unrestricted funds are \$539,873.00. We were cited by the auditing firm on 3 things – Supervisor and spouse acting as deputies for each other, not completing bank statements timely(this will also show on our 2023 audit as it was an issue then, Clerk Becker has us caught up currently), and not filing taxes timely. The supervisor shared his concerns about the future of our EMS. He stated that the EMS funding will probably be a 2024 ballot item. The township will be responsible for an EMS township survey and a study. Election Laws have also changed a lot and will be requiring 10 + days of in person poll style voting. We will need many election workers and this will be a large expense for our township with no additional government funding. In the last 2 years, we have had high legal costs due to the STR Ordinance concerns. The goal of our board is to avoid involvement in legal disputes. We will stand our ground on current issues. Our township is forced to move towards a more technological environment. This will come at a large cost to our township. We are preparing to be a more transparent office. There is a lot more to this job then people really realize

E. Public Comment: Bill Magnum shared we should not read names of audience members even if it is listed in the meeting minutes, Bridget Nodruft shared the Michigan Statues asking the supervisor to continue as moderator. She also requested each salary resolution be read, the Clerk did so. The clarification was made on the current salary of each office (Clerk, Treasurer and Supervisor \$16,00.00, trustees \$200.00 per meeting). Bridget asked Clerk Becker many questions stating a public office cannot be conducted remotely, stating that a deputy shall be appointed (Clerk Becker noted that she was brand new to this township and asked repeatedly in the meeting for any leads on a deputy to which no one responded), asking about the Treasurer being sworn in – Clerk Becker offered to show Mrs. Nordruft the Oath book to which she declined - , asked that the clerk keep the records in the office under lock and key, asked for a proper facility to view the records in, stated the clerk (each office) needs to be open and available for 4 hours a day (Supervisor Forrester said the website will make those records available and suffice) . Bill Magnum came up to say that the office could be open regardless of what officer was there – not just the clerk. Supervisor Forrester did state we are trying to come current with records but past records will be determined at a later date. Clerk Becker shared the website will be managed allowing us to share documents with them and they'll be uploaded. She also stated that no remote work should be allowed as the pandemic has been declared over. Bill Magnum asked if we are notaries, Gomery is and Clerk and Treasurer are working towards that. He also shared salaries within the local area. Asked if we had thought about getting an office manager instead of raising our salaries. Also clarified that to vote you must be qualified to vote. Edson cleared up the confusion. Debbie Skeans spoke about raises and her

experience as supervisors wife. She proposed we go to \$25,000.00 instead of proposed. Also shared her concern for EMS as well as large cost for elections. Mike Cook shared his desire to see a raise for our township officials. Ashley (no last name) shared her desire to see salary raises. She also shared we should not expect our officials to be available all hours of the day and night via text or phone call. Supervisor Forrester shared we still need Election workers and that our community needs to step-up and fill these slots. Brian Watcher shared how the clerk and treasurer brought families into our town and they deserve the raise as we are trying to maintain a family and life in this township. He stated we deserve \$50,000.00 a year. Mr. Beamer Shared he is an outsider but owns a business and his wages have risen 66% in the last 2 years. He thinks we need qualified people in the office and we should probably make more as things will be coming down the pipe. Paul Quinn shared that if we do not increase wages for the talented people in these positions, we will be in the same boat paying fines and fees for delinquent taxes and there would be a takeover from the county. He does not want to see us loose control. Bridget spoke again with her motions for raises and clarified how a county takeover would happen. She also shared she knows there is a lot to learn. **Motion made by Bridget Nordruff on Resolution 05182023B Clerk to modify the current motion from \$31,200.00 to \$25,000.00, seconded by Karen Bender.** Debbie Skeans Clarified that the \$25,000.00 is because we are untrained. She would like to see the \$31,200.00 next year. Julie Forrester shared they need to be paid it now. Larry Gussman asked that if we don't go with the higher wage, what keeps them from walking? Bridget shared she was a nurse and she never got a \$9,000.00 in one year. Deanna Hall asked how many hours we work per week. Clerk Becker shared 30-35 hours a week. Deanna Hall shared \$20.00 an hour is far too low. Mike Silverman said we need to remember the mess that was inherited and how we are trying to move out of this era. He also said pay them what's proposed so we do not lose who is in our office. Ashley also shared working remotely does not ensure less work, you are required to be available more. By working remote, we are able to give more access to the community. Supervisor Forrester said we were fined for not meeting our statutory responsibilities and we need to keep that in mind. Paul Quinn shared that not only in Election season but Tax season we are required to do so much. Clerk Becker shared that she knows no one, is new here and pleaded for help in finding a deputy. Deanna Hall asked what a deputies responsibility are. Karen Bender clarified. Brian (no last name) asked can we afford this? Supervisor Forrester said it is included into the budget. Brian again shared we need to invest in people here. **VOTE YES - 3, NO - 20 MOTION FAILED.** Bridget asked for clarification if this fails, does she automatically get the proposed \$31,200.00 salary, Edson said yes since this motion failed, Clerk Office is entitled to this pay. **Renee Grey made a Motion to adopt Resolution 05182023B in salary amount of \$31,200.00 second by Debbie Skeans/ Wednesday Skeans. VOTE YES – 22, NO – 2. MOTION CARRIED.** Renee Grey made a motion to adopt resolution 05182023C in salary amount of \$31,200.00 second by Joanne Cook. **VOTE YES – 25, NO – 2. MOTION CARRIED.** Renee Grey made a motion to amend 05182023A, salary of the supervisor from the proposed \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00, second by Wednesday Skeans. **VOTE YES – 24, NO 1.** Renee Grey made a motion to amend 051820236D from proposed \$200.00 per meeting to \$225.00 per meeting. **Second by Debbie Skeans. VOTE YES – 20, NO – 5. MOTION CARRIED.** Supervisor Forrester asked if anyone in the body had a question, concern , discrepancy, or complaint about how the board was ran. Bridget spoke up asking to make a motion to raise the Zoning Admin or Enforcement Officers pay. Supervisor Forrester said we gave him more hours in his budget line. The board can set hourly wages for employees, the board already modified the budget. Bridget stated 41.8 section 4 states that we can do lawful business by a majority vote. If we have a majority vote, we have to vote. She said all lawful business should be handled here, then clarified the law does not say all. Bill Magnum stated that the board handles all but Officials salaries. Bridget said if I make a motion, the board

does not have to act. Bridget also spoke heavily towards the STR debate in our township. She claims 85% of the people at the Planning Commission were against STR's. She claims the board is trying to deny the public's wishes by not taking this topic to a special election. She wants the people to vote if the STR's should be allowed in Residential areas. Supervisor Forrester said the Moratorium is in place and is being enforced. He also said we cannot go either way (favor or in denial) since we do not have a document to take to a judge to back a claim that someone is violating an ordinance as currently, we have none. She claims in the ordinance we can take them to the magistrate. She said we should be able to take them either way to the magistrate. Supervisor Forrester said there is not an STR document we are honoring so we cannot enforce it either way. Bill Magnum stated some STR's are doing the right thing but a lot are not. Clerk Becker asked how many complaints or police reports have been filed? Bridget Nodruft and Bill Magnum both kept stating "a lot", no number could be given. Clerk Becker stated she had asked Ms. Nodruft for proof of complaints in the past. Supervisor Forrester stated the townspeople can start a petition to have put on the ballot. Bridget asked if we can petition now or have to wait for it to be passed. Supervisor Forrester stated the petition will go the secretary of state, not this board. We will not be having a special election; we can add to the first election ballot. He stated he would be pleased to have the citizens make the choice, not the 5 of us. Renee Grey spoke to speak sharing she does not want to see any more control taken from our township. She stated again that we are in no position to take on anymore regulation. We do not have an enforcement officer, no valid complaints. She shared in her experience; it is no different then living next to "weekend warrior" neighbors. She would like to see all STR wording removed from the proposed ordinance. She did say we will need to give EMS money from our fund balances. Per Michigan state law, we need to be staffed 24/7 with our EMS dept. Supervisor Forrester gave his opinion on Land Divisions and Land Development. Renee Grey shared again that Fire and EMS is a huge issue. Supervisor Forrester stated that subdivisions should have their own administrative rules to restrict some of the uses the public is opposed to. Beach access should be private. Mike Cook asked if we were still sending the STR Ordinance back to the planning Commission? He also suggested we put a cap on residential STR's.

Adjournment: Motion by Brian Wachter, Second by Debbie Skeans