



**Saugatuck Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Saugatuck Township Hall
Meeting held in person & via Zoom**

Call to Order: Supervisor Bigford called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Supervisor Bigford, Clerk Israels, Treasurer Helmrich, Trustee Marcy, and Trustee Aldrich.

Absent:

Also Present: Township Manager Daniel DeFranco, Recording Secretary Morgan Arens, Becky Carten-Crandell, Lori Babinski, Ken Butler, Elliott Sturm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda:

Supervisor Bigford introduced the agenda.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Public Comment: None. **Public Comment Closed**

Approval of Consent Agenda: Supervisor Bigford introduced the consent agenda.

1. Bills & Review of Invoices
 - a. Total Bills and Payroll: \$177,127.87
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. August 13, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes
 - b. August 14, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
 - c. August 28, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes
3. Disbursements
 - a. \$674,713.67
 - b. \$644,036.51
4. Reports
 - a. Road Commission
 - b. Fire Board
 - c. Parks Commission
 - d. Emergency Services Committee
 - e. Interurban Board
 - f. Harbor Authority
 - g. KLSWA Commission
5. Correspondence: N/A
6. Operations
 - a. West Shore Inspections, LLC Contract Renewal
 - b. TAP Letter of Support

- c. Demolition Bid
- d. Trail Repair Payment 1

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as presented. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Presentations: None.

New Business:

1. Commission and Board Appointments

a. Community Recreation Board

The Township had one appointment to make to the Community Recreation Advisory Board for a full two-year term expiring on June 30, 2026. Jessica Ruthsatz, the current Township Representative, requested not to have her term renewed. At the time, no other applicants had been received.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to table the appointment to the Community Recreation Advisory Board until the October Regular Board Meeting. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

b. Interurban Authority Board

The Township had one appointment to make to the Interurban Authority Board for a full four-year term from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2028. Lori Babinski, one of the current Township Representatives, requested to have her term renewed. The Board reviewed the applicants' materials and posed questions if any were present. Since Babinski was in attendance, the Board asked her about her previous experience on the Board and her reasons for wanting to continue. Becky Carten-Crandell, the Director of the Interurban Transit Authority, also spoke in favor of Babinski's reappointment.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich the appointment of Lori Babinski to the Interurban Authority Board for a four-year term set to expire on September 30, 2028. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. Resolution of Support for TAP Grant Application to extend the Blue Star Trail

The Tri-Community made significant progress on completing its section of the Blue Star Trail, a non-motorized paved path that will connect Saugatuck to South Haven. The northern portion is set for completion in spring 2025. Planning for the southern extension, from Wiley Road in Douglas to M-89 at the Township's southern border, has begun in collaboration with Douglas and the Allegan County Road Commission.

To help fund this extension, Saugatuck Township, in partnership with Douglas and the Allegan County Road Commission, intends to apply for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant, with the Allegan County Road Commission serving as the lead applicant. The Board was advised to consider adopting a resolution of support for the TAP Grant application.

A **Motion** was made by Israels to adopt Resolution 2024-22, a resolution of support for the Transport Alternatives Program grant application for the Blue Star Highway Trail extension. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. Utilities Services Contact Negotiations Proposal

The Township, along with the Cities of Saugatuck, Douglas, and KLSWA, had previously engaged Andy Campbell of Baker Tilly for assistance with water and sewer contract negotiations. Since Campbell transitioned to a new role at Bendzinski & Co. Municipal Financial Advisors, Baker Tilly agreed to terminate the contract at no cost to the municipalities.

The Board considered a proposal from Bendzinski & Co. to reengage Campbell for ongoing support with the negotiations, at a cost of \$13,500, which was already accounted for in the budget under the previous agreement. The Board discussed their past experiences working with Campbell, reviewed the history of the previous contract, and evaluated plans for the new agreement.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve proposal from Bendzinski & Co. Municipal Financial Advisors at a cost of \$13,500 to provide support with water and sewer contract negotiations. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

4. Zoning Amendment to Abolish the Critical Dune Area Overlay District

The Board considered adopting Ordinance No. 2024-02, which would abolish the Critical Dune Area Overlay District. During the Zoning Ordinance Update, the Planning Commission reviewed the existing overlay and, at their August meeting, recommended its removal. Key reasons for the recommendation included:

1. EGLE currently regulates the Critical Dune Area.
2. Local governments can regulate the area, but their regulations cannot be more or less restrictive than state regulations.
3. Local regulation would require the Township to hire specialized staff, duplicating services already provided by the state.
4. Most Township land in the Critical Dune Area is under a consent judgment that limits Township enforcement of the overlay.

Abolishing the overlay does not eliminate Critical Dune regulations but clarifies that responsibility lies with the state. The Board reviewed the Planning Commission's recommendation.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-02, an ordinance to abolish the critical dune area overlay district by repealing Zoning Ordinance Section 5.20, amending Zoning Table 2.20 B and subsection 7.120 B.1, and amending the Saugatuck Township Zoning Map. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

5. Landfill Due Diligence Agreement

The Board considered an agreement with the City of Saugatuck, allowing the Township to conduct due diligence on a former landfill property located on 134th Ave. This investigation would determine the long-term liability and recreational potential of the site, aiding both the Township and City in deciding whether to convey or lease the property to the Township for recreational development.

The property, once used as a landfill, consists of two parcels totaling 34 acres. One parcel is co-owned by the City and Township, while the other is solely owned by the City of Saugatuck.

The Parks Commission recommended submitting the agreement to the Saugatuck City Council for review. The Township would be responsible for the costs of the due diligence investigation. While the agreement does not commit the Township to purchasing the property, it indicates both parties' openness to conveying or leasing the property to the Township for recreational use at a nominal fee.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to accept the terms of the Development Due Diligence Agreement, send the agreement to Saugatuck City Council for review, and, if terms are mutually acceptable, work with the Parks Commission and Township Engineer to determine liability of site and recreational potential. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

6. Wildlife Management Committee

Saugatuck Township has been invited to join a Tri-Community Wildlife Management Committee with the Cities of Douglas and Saugatuck. The Committee aims to develop effective wildlife management strategies, particularly for the local deer population.

The proposed by-laws outline the Committee's structure and functions as follows:

- Purpose: To manage deer and other wildlife populations within the tri-community area and recommend potential culling during hunting seasons.
- Membership: Includes representatives from each community and citizen members with relevant expertise.
- Meetings: Regular and special meetings to address wildlife management issues.
- Responsibilities: Evaluating wildlife populations, developing management strategies, and making recommendations to the respective councils and boards.
- Powers: Requesting data, collaborating with wildlife authorities, and making recommendations.

If the Township is interested in participating, a Board member should be appointed as a Township Representative, and staff should identify a resident with relevant experience to join. The Committee currently lacks a sunset date, and the Board should either propose one or ensure it is included in the Committee's by-laws.

During discussions, Tony Schippa's qualifications and experience in wildlife management were reviewed. Additionally, Aldrich expressed interest in serving as the Township's representative on the Committee.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich Move to partner with the City of the Village of Douglas and the City of Saugatuck in the creation of a Tri-Community Wildlife Management Committee and appoint Tony Schippa and Stacey Aldrich to serve as Township Representatives. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

Old Business: None.

Reports: Supervisor Bigford opened the floor for reports.

Treasurer's Report

Helmrich gave an update on the Township finances; the report is on file.

Planning Commission

Helmrich gave an update on the August Planning Commission Meeting; the report is on file.

Manager's Report

Township Manager DeFranco gave an update on the Township projects; the report is on file.

Open Board Report:

- Helmrich provided an update on the Saugatuck-Douglas Democrat Club.
- Israels delivered an update on the upcoming election.
- Aldrich presented a verbal report on the Fireboard's activities.

Public Comment:

- Tony Schippa provided a brief emergency board report and an update on the new LifeEMS contract, detailing its current status and performance.

Public Comment Closed

Adjournment: Supervisor Bigford adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM

MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Israels.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as presented. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to table the appointment to the Community Recreation Advisory Board until the October Regular Board Meeting. Supported by Israels.
Discussion: None.
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously.
4. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich the appointment of Lori Babinski to the Interurban Authority Board for a four-year term set to expire on September 30, 2028. Supported by Israels.
Discussion: None.
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously.
5. A **Motion** was made by Israels to adopt Resolution 2024-22, a resolution of support for the Transport Alternatives Program grant application for the Blue Star Highway Trail extension. Supported by Helmrich.
Discussion:
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
6. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve proposal from Bendzinski & Co. Municipal Financial Advisors at a cost of \$13,500 to provide support with water and sewer contract negotiations. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously
7. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-02, an ordinance to abolish the critical dune area overlay district by repealing Zoning Ordinance Section 5.20, amending Zoning Table 2.20 B and subsection 7.120 B.1, and amending the Saugatuck Township Zoning Map. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously
8. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to accept the terms of the Development Due Diligence Agreement, send the agreement to Saugatuck City Council for review, and, if terms are mutually acceptable, work with the Parks Commission and Township Engineer to determine liability of site and recreational potential. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

9. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich Move to partner with the City of the Village of Douglas and the City of Saugatuck in the creation of a Tri-Community Wildlife Management Committee and appoint Tony Schippa and Stacey Aldrich to serve as Township Representatives. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

Respectfully,

Morgan Coulston, Recording Secretary

I, Rebecca Israels, Township Clerk, certify that these minutes were approved on October 9, 2024 by the Township Board.

Rebecca Israels, Township Clerk

Date