



**Saugatuck Township**

**Workshop Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.**

**SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP HALL  
3461 Blue Star Highway Saugatuck, MI 49453**

**1) Call to Order**

**2) Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Approval of Agenda**

**4) Public Comments**

*The Board requests that speakers respect the three-minute time limit for individual comments and the five-minute time limit for an individual speaking on behalf of a group. This is not a question-and-answer session, it is an opportunity to voice your thoughts with the Township Board.*

**5) New Business**

1) Review of proposed Township Administrative Policies

**6) Old Business**

None

**7) Reports**

None

**8) Public Comments**

**9) Adjourn**

---

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services can contact Saugatuck Township for reasonable accommodations. If you require accommodations, please contact Township Clerk as soon as practically possible prior to the meeting in writing or by calling the Township Hall at (269) 857-7721 as some accommodations may require 48-hours to provide.



**FROM:** Daniel DeFranco, Township Manager

**MEETING DATE:** December 17, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Administrative Policy Review

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Township has been working with Larry Merrill, former executive director of the Michigan Township Association, to review existing Administrative and Operational Policies and explore best practices to assist the Township in more clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of Board and Staff and ensure that the Board is governing effectively for the community. This project has been dubbed the “Governance Excellence Project.” Mr. Merrill will be present to review the draft policies developed through a series of workshops with the Township Board. This meeting is discussion only.

**BUDGET ACTION REQUIRED**

*N/A*

**COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REVIEW**

*N/A*

**LEGAL REVIEW**

*N/A*

*Sample Motion:  
Discussion Only*

*Attached:*

- 1. Draft Administrative Policies*
- 2. Draft Board and Commission Orientation Guide*

# Governance Policies Saugatuck Township

**These are Draft Policies.**

*The following draft governance policies were developed by the Consultant following discussion workshops with the Saugatuck Township Manager and Board and reflect the Consultant's understanding of their township organizational objectives. The Saugatuck Township Board and Manager should carefully consider each draft policy prior to their adoption. Some of the issues to consider are:*

- *Does this policy achieve our objectives?*
- *Is this policy appropriate to our community?*
- *Does this policy reflect our desired organizational culture?*
- *Do we accept any reasonable interpretation of this policy?*
- *Are we willing to include this policy in our monitoring and reporting process?*

*As consultant is not an attorney, Township officials should consult with the Township's attorney for legal advice regarding these draft policies, and for advice regarding policies addressing fiscal matters Township officials should also consult with the Township auditor.*

*The Board should also consider how its Governance Policies will interface with its existing personnel, financial and administrative policies, as the Governance Policies create some redundancies, similarities and contradictions.*

## **Introduction**

Saugatuck Township's governance is shaped by the Board-Manager form of government. In addition to providing fiduciary oversight, the elected Township Board provides strategic leadership informed by linkages with the community, acquired knowledge, and with a long-term perspective. The Township Manager, pursuant to MCL 41.75a, serves at the pleasure of the Township Board and performs duties lawfully directed by the Township Board, except those duties that are delegated by law to another Township official, unless consent has been granted.

The Saugatuck Township Governance Handbook is intended to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Organizational cohesiveness through clarity of roles, responsibilities, expectations and accountability;
- Efficient and knowledge-based decision-making through collaborative processes and community engagement;
- A culture of enjoyment and fulfillment through public service;
- Retention of quality staff who have valuable institutional knowledge and essential skills;
- Board governance that provides strategic oversight and leadership;
- Efficient, effective and ethical management;
- Fair, objective and constructive Board evaluation of Manager performance for accountability and trust;
- High community satisfaction with its Township government.

### *Disclaimer*

This Handbook is intended to articulate the strategic expectations of the Township Board for which it holds the Township Manager accountable, and to delegate authority to the Township Manager to oversee and direct Township operations. It replaces any prior written and oral policies, practices, or procedures about the subjects contained herein and confers authority to the Manager to adopt or modify those policies consistent with these governance policies. The Township reserves the right to revise, add to, or delete any policies or portion of this policy at any time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion, as approved by the Township Board, with or without prior notice.

### *Severability*

If one or more provisions of this Handbook are superseded by or become in conflict with a federal, state, or local law, or if a provision is determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable or void, the balance of this Handbook shall remain in effect.

*Table of Contents*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Consultant's Message</b>		2
<b>Introduction</b>		3
<b>Table of Contents</b>		4
<b>Board's Own Governance</b>	<b>100-</b>	<b>5-14</b>
Responsibilities of the Township Board as Governing Body		5
Style of Governance		6
Governance Values		7
Policy Development and Adoption Process		8
Board Member Job Description		9-10
Role of the Township Supervisor		11
Board Meetings		12-14
<b>Outcomes and Strategic Planning</b>	<b>200-</b>	<b>15-17</b>
Strategic Planning Process		15-16
Strategic Plan (Reserved)		17
<b>Fiduciary Oversight</b>	<b>300-</b>	<b>16-22</b>
Risk Exposure		18
Financial Practices		19-20
Human Resources		21
<b>Programs and Services</b>		22-23
Intergovernmental Relations		22
Township Boards and Commissions		23
<b>Delegation of Authority to the Manager and Job Description</b>	<b>400-</b>	<b>24-27</b>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>500-</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix</b>		28-34
Board Meeting Agenda Template		28
Knowledge-Based Decision Process		29
Example Board Policy Monitoring Report		30-32
Board Policy Development Template		33

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Responsibilities of the Township Board as the Township's Governing Body</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

The collective responsibility of the Saugatuck Township Board is to act in the best interests of the Township in exercising its legislative and administrative powers as provided by law.

The Board shall transact all business at legally called and noticed meetings. No Board members shall have power to act in the name of the Township outside Board meetings unless that person has been specifically designated to do so by official Board action.

The Board shall make the staff and citizens aware that only the Board, not individual members, has the right to take official action for the Township.

The Township Board accomplishes this responsibility by adopting policies to:

- Make decisions transparently, efficiently, knowledge-based, informed through public input, and respectful of diverse opinions;
- Define the strategic outcomes that the Township will achieve that are reflective of the community's values and expectations and focused on the Township's long-term challenges and aspirations;
- Ensure the Township's financial viability through effective stewardship of the Township's assets and provide financial resources to accomplish Board-directed outcomes and execution of the Board's strategic plan;
- Initiate lawsuits or other legal proceeding;
- Delegate authority to the Township Manager convenient and necessary to accomplish the Board's strategic outcomes and manage the Township's affairs;
- Systematically monitor the Township Manager's compliance with Board policies;
- Ensure that the Township's business and affairs are conducted efficiently, effectively and ethically;
- Foster an atmosphere of cooperation and open lines of communication with all governmental agencies having an interest in the Township's activities;
- Regularly monitor its performance in providing strategic leadership and oversight to the Township.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Style of Governance</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

The Township Board will govern with an emphasis on the Township's strategic direction rather than focusing on managing internal operations. The Township Board will avoid inserting its opinions and preferences into administrative matters for which the Board holds the Manager accountable, without first attempting to develop policies acceptable to the majority of the Board that are the least intrusive on the Manager's prerogatives.

Because policies of the Township Board should reflect the broadest possible community perspectives and values, the Board will make reasonable effort to accommodate all reasonable perspectives in its decisions.

The Township Board, not the staff, is responsible for its own governance excellence. Consequently, it is the Board's responsibility, rather than the Manager's, to set its own agenda. The Board is responsible for its own discipline to avoid acting as a management committee and for prioritizing Board meeting time to address issues that are most important to the community.

Prior to their first Board meeting the Township Supervisor and Manager will offer new Board members an orientation to Saugatuck Township and serving on the Township Board.

At its first meeting following the beginning of the Township's fiscal year, the Township Board shall plan its governance activities for the fiscal year, including:

- Schedule of regular meetings to be held no less often than monthly;
- In-house professional development (training) topics and tentative meeting dates;
- Comprehensive review of the Township Strategic Plan.

The Board will evaluate itself prior to the conclusion of each meeting to determine:

- Issues discussed were worthy of the Board's time and attention;
- Discussions were focused on the agenda items and were efficiently processed;
- All points of view were given an opportunity to be expressed;
- Could any aspect of the meeting be handled better.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------



## Saugatuck Township Governance Policies

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Governance Values</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

The Township Board adds value to Saugatuck Township's programs and services through its strategic leadership, rather than by interjecting in and interfering with management and operations. Strategic leadership as exercised by the Township Board is characterized by:

- Forward perspective rather than acting in hindsight;
- Focus on mission rather than programs and services;
- Consideration for what the Saugatuck Township community values and expects;
- Board expectations expressly stated in policies that identify what success looks like, prevent undesirable outcomes, provide resources to achieve success, evaluates results and policy compliance, and enable the Board to govern with integrity and effectiveness;
- Timely and nimble response to a fluid, dynamic, rapidly changing environment.

Saugatuck Township's governance will be visionary, relevant, knowledgeable and informed by the Township's stakeholders.

- The Board shall conduct its business in a manner that is open, inclusive to all Board members and its governance outcomes disseminated and open to community scrutiny.
- The Board will regularly dialogue in a collaborative, collegial and knowledge-based manner on Saugatuck Township's strategic issues and the Township's political, legal, social, economic, demographic and physical environment.
- The Board shall actively solicit input from affected stakeholders and the broader Township community in developing its policies and strategies.
- The Board will ensure the Township has effective and ethical staff leadership through hiring a professional and competent Manager and by effectively and systematically monitoring compliance with Board policies.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	<b>Title: Policy Development and Adoption Process</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

The Board will act through policies on matters that adopt, modify or repeal

- the Township Strategic Plan;
- delegated authority, limitations or expectations on staff; and
- the process by which the Board conducts business.

Any Board member, as well as the Township Manager, can initiate a new policy for the Board's consideration, an amendment to an existing policy, or the repeal of an existing policy through the following procedure:

1. The Board member or Manager will draft a proposed policy, amendment or policy repeal on a Board Policy Template and present it to the Township Supervisor at least ten days prior to the next Board meeting.
2. The Supervisor may discuss the draft with the Board member initiating the proposal to perfect ambiguities and resolve inconsistencies or other perceived problems with the draft policy. The initiating Board member can accept or reject the Supervisor's suggested changes.
3. The draft policy will be placed on the proposed agenda of the next Board meeting.
4. Discussions regarding the policy's content is out of order until these questions of appropriateness are settled:
  - a. Is the issue operational?
  - b. Why does the Board need to engage on the issue?
  - c. Does a Board majority wish to proceed?
  - d. What is the current policy? Why isn't the current policy sufficient?
  - e. What is the broadest way to address this issue in a way that any reasonable interpretation by the Manager would be acceptable?
5. After the questions of appropriateness have been discussed, the Board may take up the proposal or table it indefinitely.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Board Member Job Description</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

Board Member Expectations:

- Duly elected or appointed pursuant to law;
- Be an active, contributing member of the Board;
- Communicate to the Board community perspectives on governance issues affecting the Township;
- Communicate to the Manager community perspectives on operational issues affecting the Township;
- Focus and steer discussion to future strategic matters and Board policies;
- Demonstrate high ethical and moral standards in performance of official duties;
- Take no action that will compromise the Board or the Township staff and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
- Accept criticism offered constructively and respectfully;
- Subordinate self-interest for the good of the Township;
- Not use township resources for personal benefit;
- Willingness to support consensus-driven decisions that are in the best interest of the Township;
- Ability to openly express opinions respectfully, without rancor or breaching decorum;
- Devote sufficient time to study issues, review financial and other reports, receive public input and attend meetings.;
- Become informed about current Township government issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the Michigan Townships Association;
- Avoid taking actions or making statements that imply or insinuate the Board member is giving directions or orders to the Manager or their subordinates.

Responsibilities:

- Vote on all motions presented to the Board unless there is a conflict of interest;
- Be familiar with state and federal laws impacting Township Board decisions;
- Possess knowledge of Township financial systems and best practices and understand financial performance indicators to competently perform fiduciary duties;
- Attend and participate in Board meetings;
- Study background information provided in advance of all meetings;
- Be familiar with Township policies and procedures;
- Assure the Township has a strategic vision and complies with policies;
- Assure Township has in place appropriate internal controls;
- Assure the Township has sufficient resources to achieve Board-determined outcomes.

Board members may be contacted for discussion of Township business, suggestions for improvements, or other concerns. The Board member may listen but shall not make a commitment on behalf of the Board. The individual Board member does not and cannot speak for the Board.

If a specific complaint needs attention, the Board member shall explain the Township's procedures for handling complaints or may refer the complainant to the Manager. The Board member also shall inform the complainant of the process for bringing items to the Board through the public comment portion of the Board meeting.

Board members with knowledge of any Board, Committee or Official behavior, conduct, actions or decisions that are or appear to be contrary to law should bring the allegation to the attention of the Township attorney or an appropriate county or state official. Allegations of Board policy violations should be brought to the attention of the manager, supervisor, township attorney or to the Board as appropriate to the nature of the alleged violation. In most circumstances correction of inadvertent violations of Board policies can be rectified by the official who allegedly violated policy, or the matter should be addressed by the full board.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Role of the Township Supervisor</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

**Supervisor Job Description**

In addition to the authority and responsibilities provided in state law:

- Ensures the Township Board exercises its authority and responsibilities with integrity, adherence to laws and adopted Board policies;
- Speaks on behalf of the Board on the Township's strategic direction and Board policies;
- Using a "reasonable person" standard, interprets Board policies for others when questions arise between Board meeting;
- Proposes meeting agendas to the Board;
- Chairs meetings of the Board such that:
  - Members of the public feel welcomed and their input valued;
  - The Manager is given the opportunity to provide input and respond to the viewpoints and perspectives expressed by the Board;
  - Comments and discussions are efficiently focused on the agenda topic;
  - Decisions at a minimum reflect the will of the majority, but ideally reflect a consensus of the Board members that all members can support.

The Supervisor shall not make decisions that are not authorized by the policies of the Board of Directors and has no authority to supervise or direct the Manager except on matters involving the Board's Own Governance policies.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Board Meetings</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Board's Own Governance

The powers of the Township Board shall be exercised at properly called meetings of the Township Board.

Board meetings shall be conducted consistent with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except as modified by the Board's Governance Policies.

The Board will try to reach decisions by consensus that accommodate as many perspectives as possible, but in order to resolve complex issues that defy achieving a consensus may act on the will of the Board according to law.

The Township Board shall determine the level of information provided by staff to the Board.

**Board Meeting Agenda**

The Board shall meet no less often than monthly.

Each Board member shall receive a proposed agenda at least five days prior to each regularly scheduled meeting, along with appropriate background information. The Supervisor shall compile the proposed agenda with the cooperation of other officials and assisted by the Manager. Additional routine business may be placed on the consent agenda by unanimous consent or added under new business by approval of a majority of the Board members present and voting.

Proposed ordinances that were previously reviewed and recommended by the Township attorney shall be included on the proposed agenda. Other proposed ordinances may be placed on the agenda at the discretion of the Supervisor or a majority of the Township Board present and voting.

Initiation, deliberation and adoption of Board actions

Board members may initiate Board consideration, deliberation and adoption of new and revised Township policies in accordance with provision of the Board's Governance Policy titled Board Policy Development and Adoption Process.

Customary Order of Business

The order of business at a regular meeting of the Board shall be:

- I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll call
- III. Reports
  - Board-directed follow-up on issues
  - Other reports not provided in writing
  - Board member comments
- IV. Brief community comments (maximum 3 minutes)
- V. Agenda approval
  - Consent agenda approval
  - Fiduciary oversight

Policy development, evaluation, and actions  
 Legislative actions (ordinances)  
 Strategic discussions and actions  
 Professional development  
 Other unfinished business  
 Other new business

- VI. Comments and questions from staff, or Board
- VII. Future topics
- VIII. Adjournment

#### Consent Agenda

To expedite the transaction of routine and noncontroversial items of business, the Board may act on such items by adoption of the consent agenda. The Supervisor shall exercise discretion in placing items on the consent agenda that are anticipated to not require Board discussion or debate unless a Board member requests removal of one or more consent agenda items. Removed consent agenda items shall be placed elsewhere on the proposed agenda prior to the Board's approval of the agenda and be subject to Board consideration and action. The following items, as well as others, may be placed on the consent agenda:

- approval of prior meeting(s) minutes
- routine administrative matters requiring Board action
- purchases of goods, services and supplies requiring Board approval
- contract modifications
- budget amendments

#### Public Participation on Agenda Items

Persons may speak for up to three minutes on an agenda item for up to three minutes when recognized by the Supervisor, after the Board's discussion and prior to a vote being taken. An extension of time may be granted by the Supervisor if the extension will not interfere with the conduct of Board business or with other persons who also wish to address the Board.

Each person wishing to address the Board shall be asked to identify themselves and their address. Persons representing an organization or group shall indicate whether their comments represent the official view of the organization or group. Persons addressing the Board shall observe rules of common courtesy and decorum.

Questions to the Board may be responded to by the Supervisor. The Supervisor has sole authority to speak on behalf of the Board. Board members may question speakers but should refrain from answering questions unless directly posed to themselves. In general, questions and concerns regarding policy or strategic issues will be referred to the Supervisor and, if appropriate, designated as a future agenda item. Matters related to operations will be referred to the Manager for investigation, study, and response.

#### Public Access to Board Meetings

The news media will be informed at the beginning of the calendar or fiscal year as to the dates and times of all regular Board meetings, and within three days of any change in the Board meeting schedule. Regular Board meetings will be videotaped and made available for public

viewing. News media equipment and private recording devices shall not disrupt or influence proceedings.

Moderator in the Supervisor's Absence

In the Supervisor's absence the Clerk shall moderate Township Board meetings.

Cancelling a Board Meeting

In the event of a compelling reason such as a weather emergency, a meeting may be cancelled by the Supervisor or by three Board members. The absence of a quorum cancels a scheduled Board meeting.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------



## Saugatuck Township Governance Policies

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Strategic Planning Process</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Outcomes and Strategic Planning

The Saugatuck Board leads the Township through the development, adoption and continual updating of a strategic plan to allow for thoughtful determination of direction and clarity as to what would constitute Township success; thinking strategically about the changing environment and how the Township will respond to evolving influences, factors and issues.

### *Desired Outcomes*

- Richer use of leadership, talents and insights of all Board members;
- Explicit linkages established between the values and expectations of the community, the Board’s strategic vision, and staff decisions regarding programs, services and administration;
- Empowerment of the Board to determine the Township’s strategic direction;
- Effective and nimble anticipation of and response to ever-evolving challenges and opportunities confronting the Township and its inhabitants;
- Future projects and priorities effectively anticipated for inclusion in operational plans and budget projections;
- Accountability of the Board to the Township residents;
- Accountability of the Manager to the Township Board for strategic outcomes.

### *Components*

- Environmental scanning of the Township’s political, legal, social, economic, demographic and physical environments;
- Community values, needs, wants and expectations;
- The Township’s vision, mission and values;
- Review adequacy of the Township’ capacities, competencies and infrastructure efficiency and efficacy;
- Long-term (3-5 year) SMART goals that are:
  - a) Strategic
  - b) Measurable
  - c) Attainable
  - d) Realistic
  - e) Timely;
    - Adjusted annually for changes in environment;
    - Connect to operational action plan and budget;
    - Improve the governance process.
- Financial structure—revenue sources and reliance on various sources, allocation and budget; multi-year cost projections;
- Information and knowledge structure—ensure that individuals have the knowledge they require to make sound decisions and effectively execute work;
- Operational planning and budgeting—ensure budget and action plans are driven by strategic consideration
- New program and service development—create a mechanism to respond to community

needs, encourage innovation, measure progress; facilitate introduction of new programs in services in a logical, rational manner.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Strategic Plan</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Outcomes and Strategic Planning

*Reserved for the Township Board's Strategic Plan*

The Township Board shall comprehensively review the Strategic Plan in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ annually. The Township Manager shall provide an update on key performance indicators.

*Components*

- Environmental scanning of the Township's political, legal, social, economic, demographic and physical environments
- Community values, needs, wants and expectations
- The Township's future vision
- Mission statement
- Township core values
- Adequacy of the Township' capacities, competencies and infrastructure efficiency and efficacy
- Long-term (3-5 year) SMART goals that
  - a) Annually plan and adjust for changes in environment;
  - b) Connect to operational action plan with key performance indicators and budget;
  - c) Improve the township's governance process

The Township Manager shall develop an operational action plan consistent with the Board-adopted Strategic Plan that includes the following components:

- Financial structure—revenue sources and reliance on various sources, allocation and budget; multi-year cost projections;
- Information and knowledge structure—ensure that individuals have the knowledge they require to make sound decisions and effectively execute work;
- Operational planning and budgeting—ensure budget and action plans are driven by strategic considerations;
- New program and service development—create a mechanism to respond to community needs, encourage innovation, measure progress; facilitate introduction of new programs in services in a logical, rational manner;
- Objectives related to the goals and systematic reports on progress toward key performance indicators.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Risk Exposure</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Fiduciary Oversight

The Manager shall:

- Comply with all federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.
- Exercise due diligence in conducting the Township's affairs and shall not expose the Township to undue risk to its financial position, reputation or loss of its tangible assets.
- Use a reasonable person standard in making decisions involving some degree of uncertainty or risk.
- Operate with adequate insurance to protect the Township against general liability exposures as well as protection for public officials and employees in the performance of their official duties;
- Protect information that would expose the Township to third party claims;
- Initiate legal action to protect the Township's interests when there are extenuating circumstances that cannot wait until a special or regular meeting of the Township Board;
- Have policies for document retention and whistleblower protection;
- Not allow a public official or employee who in good faith reports a violation of law, regulations, bylaws or policies to experience harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence;
- Administer and disseminate written financial, administrative and personnel procedures consistent with Board governance policies.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township**  
**Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Financial Practices</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Fiduciary Oversight

**Budget Development and Administration**

The recommended annual General Appropriations Act will include recommendations to achieve the Board's Strategic Plan, comply with Board policies, and have an anticipated year-end unassigned fund balance sufficient to avoid short-term cash flow borrowing and to allow the Township to realize its long-term strategic goals.

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the Board's strategic plan or risk the Township's financial position.

The proposed annual budget and periodic amendments shall include credible revenue and expense projections and underlying planning assumptions.

The General Appropriations Act shall include sufficient amounts as determined by the Board for the cost of governance in the Township Board Activity.

**Cash Balances**

The Manager shall monitor cash flows to ensure there is sufficient liquidity of cash balances to meet current obligations.

**Expenditures**

The Manager is authorized to incur obligations against appropriations as necessary and convenient to carrying out the Township's programs and services consistent with the Board's Strategic Plan and Policies, provided resources are utilized efficiently and consistent with generally accepted management practices and Board policies.

Township expenditures shall be consistent with the General Appropriations Act, except in an emergency situation endangering the public peace, health, safety or general welfare of the Township or when normal Township operations would be severely hampered by delay. Expenditures shall be incurred in a manner and process that assures an appropriate cost for value received. Township Board members may submit a request for discretionary expenditures for equipment, training, supplies, etc. to the Township Supervisor, who will review and approve the request based on Board policy and appropriation balance. If approved, the Manager will effectuate the expenditure. If the requested expenditure is not approved, the Board member who made the request can request the Board to remedy the deficiency through budget amendment or by policy, as appropriate.

**Compensation**

The Manager shall recommend to the Township Board compensation at levels appropriate to attract and retain a qualified workforce and consistent with the skills, education and experience required for each position. Recommended employee benefits shall not create obligations to

personnel over a longer term than revenues can be safely projected and that are not subject to adjustment due to losses in revenue or unpredictable cost, or that create unfair situations or material unfunded liabilities.

**Internal Controls**

The Manager shall maintain a system of internal financial controls regarding purchasing and other financial processes delegated to the Manager that are consistent with the recommendations of the Township's auditor.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Human Resources</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Fiduciary Oversight

The Township Board collectively, as well as individual Board members will not compromise the Board’s ability to hold the Manager accountable by attempting to exercise authority over the Township staff that is provided in these policies to the Manager.

The Manager shall:

1. Maintain an “at will” employment relationship between the Township and all employees;
2. Not employ persons who reside in the household or who are immediate family members of Board members or employees;
3. Align the Township’s staffing, compensation and benefits with the adopted annual budget;
4. Annually conduct a written evaluation of employees;
5. Prohibit conflicts of interest by employees;
6. Take reasonable steps to prevent, and take appropriate disciplinary measures in the event of employee misconduct that:
  - Exposes the Township to unnecessary risk of lawsuit;
  - Is unprofessional;
  - Is demeaning or disrespectful to other employees or the public;
  - Compromises the safety of other employees or the public;
  - Could be construed as sexual harassment;
  - Misuses, abuses, wastes or destroys Township property or personnel resources;
7. Discipline employees in a manner commensurate with the nature of the offense;
8. Respond promptly and fairly to an employee’s problem or concern;
9. Implement written personnel procedures consistent with Board policy;
10. The Manager shall not allow employees to:
  - a. Accept gifts intended to or giving the appearance to influence a decision. Employees may accept modest courtesies or nominal gifts, openly given and accepted, where such a courtesy or gift does not appear to be made for the purpose of influencing a decision, such as event door prizes awarded through a blind draw. Employees shall not solicit gifts or favors for personal use;
  - b. Use Township time, materials, information or other assets in connection with outside employment or activities.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

## Saugatuck Township Governance Policies

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Intergovernmental Relations</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Programs and Services

Saugatuck Township, as the community's original governmental entity, recognizes the importance of intergovernmental cooperation with the Cities of Douglas and Saugatuck, Allegan County and other entities sharing responsibility for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

Saugatuck Township will collaborate with other governmental entities for public safety, infrastructure, leisure and enrichment, and other governmental services. The Township expects that entities with which the Township collaborates will provide superior service coordination, responsiveness, economies of scale and other advantages to Saugatuck Township.

Saugatuck Township also expects that the governing bodies overseeing intergovernmental services to be:

- Transparent in its deliberations and decision-making process;
- Responsive to issues, concerns and expectations raised by Saugatuck Township or its designated representatives;
- Provide services and allocate costs and governing board representation fairly and equitably while serving the best interests of the greater Saugatuck community;
- Include on its governing bodies elected officials;
- Employ, direct and monitor executive staff leadership and management.

Saugatuck Township expects the following from its designated representative to intergovernmental boards and liaisons to other governmental entities:

- Communicate the township's perspectives to the governing board and/or its executive staff;
- Regularly inform the Saugatuck Township Board and/or Manager of the entity's significant developments, plans, issues or concerns;
- Seek guidance from the Township on matters where the Township's objectives or expectations are not clear;
- Represent the township professionally and effectively and maintain collaborative relationships with the entity's executive staff and other governing body members;
- Develop knowledge about the entity's operations, governance and legal requirements.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------



**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Township Boards and Commissions</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Programs and Services

The Township Board will appoint to the township’s boards and commissions individuals who demonstrate essential intellectual, behavioral, collaborative and emotional competencies to perform the duties of these positions. The township will consider all applicants on an equal opportunity basis.

Applicants will complete an application with questions regarding the applicant’s interest, knowledge, background and experience.

Applicants will provide identification information required for a background check.

At the conclusion of their term, members may request reappointment by completing an application of appointment. The township shall also invite others to apply for the impending vacancy. In addition to the information provided on the application, the Township shall also consider attendance and participation demonstrated by persons desiring to be reappointed as well as perceptions of applicants offered by colleagues and the public.

The Township expects the following from the members of its boards and commissions:

Adherence to the [Township’s Core Values](#);

Participate in an orientation prior to beginning service and pursue continuing education opportunities;

Adhere to all laws and regulations;

Avoid actions and decisions that unnecessarily expose the Township to undue risk such as lawsuits;

Conduct business at duly called meetings that are well managed and welcoming to the public;

Respect and be civil to other board members, Township staff, the public and others appearing before the board or commission.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

## Saugatuck Township Governance Policies

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Job Description</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Delegation of Authority to Manager

### General Delegation

The Township Board exercises direction and oversight of the Township's affairs by delegating authority to the Manager necessary and convenient to efficiently administer and manage the Township's programs and services and through effectively monitoring the Manager's compliance with Board policies. Authority is delegated through written Board policies adopted at duly convened meetings of the Township Board, and only such policies are binding on the Manager.

The Board shall establish through written policies the parameters for the Manager to work within, and then shall systematically monitor compliance. The Manager may make any reasonable interpretation of Board policies. If the Board is of the position that the interpretation is reasonable but results in an outcome that differs from the Board's expectations, the Board will reexamine the policy in question and adjust accordingly. Provided that the Manager uses *any reasonable interpretation* of the Board's policies, the Manager is authorized to establish all further policies, make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices and develop all activities consistent with that reasonable interpretation.

The Township Board shall not allow the preferences and opinions of individual Board members to interfere with the Manager's duty to manage Saugatuck Township's business and affairs and which would compromise the Board's ability to hold the Manager accountable for the Township's operational performance.

To avoid inappropriately inserting Board members into matters that are purely operational, the Board shall not allow Board members to approve a Manager's proposal to the Board contingent on prior review or approval of an operational plan. The Board may adopt policies establishing expected outcomes, timetables, conditions and constraints regarding the Township's business and affairs.

Individual Board officers are not authorized to give directions or binding instructions to the Manager except when the Board has explicitly empowered such authority to a Board member. The Supervisor is authorized to give directions or binding instructions to the Manager on matters related to supporting the Township Board in its governance function.

Board members may request information or assistance from the staff without Board authorization; however, the Manager can refuse such requests if the Manager is of the opinion that the request is excessive or disruptive.

### Manager's Job Description

#### Overview

Serving as the Township's chief administrative officer at the pleasure of the Township Board, the Manager provides policy guidance and recommendations to the Township Board. Consistent with the Township Board's adopted strategic goals and policies, the Manager organizes and supervises Township operations, including tasks delegated by law to another Township official with their consent.

### **Township Board Support**

Attends all Township Board meetings, participates in discussions without a vote, provides reports, information and recommendations to assist the Township Board in the performance of its duties; keeps the Board timely informed of developments and issues that are reasonably anticipated to rise to a matter of community interest or concern.

Drafts Board policies and other proposed Board actions as requested by the Board. Assists the Township Supervisor in developing a proposed budget. Provides the Board with clerical and logistical support for its efficient and effective conduct of its governance role. Arranges for appropriate meeting facilities, supplies and room set-up.

Timely informs the Township Board when the Board, any of its members, or the Manager is out of compliance with legal requirements or the Board's policies.

Provides the Board with information regarding relevant trends impacting local government and Saugatuck Township specifically and ensures that the Board is aware of incidental information it desires including anticipated media coverage, threatened or pending lawsuits, financial standing, and material internal changes.

Posts notices of Township Board meetings and provides notices of special meetings to Township Board members as required by law.

Advertises vacancies on Township Boards and commissions, accepts and screens applicants, and provides information for the Board and/or Supervisor to assist their selection process.

### **Professionalism and Leadership**

The Manager is expected to perform their duties in accordance with generally accepted ethics and principles expounded by the International City/County Management Association and demonstrate leadership in their behavior, intellect, emotional and collaborative competencies.

### **General administration**

Oversees the following Township functions:

- Township ordinance and law enforcement;
- Public utilities, improvements, infrastructure, services, works, property and undertakings and serves as liaison to staff providing services through intergovernmental contracts to the Township;
- Informs Township representatives on intergovernmental Boards of matters appropriate to the governing Board on which they serve;
- Oversees the Township Assessor, Administrative Services Coordinator and Finance Coordinator for compliance with township policies and procedures and performance of their duties with the consent of Township officials delegating their statutory authorities;
- Assures compliance with terms, conditions and obligations of participating parties to contracts, intergovernmental agreements, franchises, memoranda of understanding, and other agreements to which the Township is a party;
- Administers and disseminates written administrative procedures consistent with Board

governance policies.

### **Personnel**

Recruits, selects, trains, supervises, evaluates, disciplines and terminates the Township's staff consistent with Board policies. This authority does not limit the ability of the Township Clerk and Treasurer to designate deputies to perform their statutory duties in their absences.

Assigns to the Township staff roles, responsibilities, and tasks; monitors their success and compliance with the Manager's directives.

Ensures that Township employees interact with the public professionally, fairly and with respect. The Manager shall treat employees and volunteers fairly and with respect for their dignity.

Employees and volunteers shall not be subjected to work conditions or environments that are unhealthy or unsafe.

Employees and volunteers shall be given clear instructions and directions as to their roles, responsibilities and the manner with which the Manager requires tasks to be executed to achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

The Manager shall maintain written procedure manuals with sufficient detail that staff are aware of their administrative, financial and personnel obligations to the Township, particularly those that can result in disciplinary action.

The Manager shall maintain an emergency operations plan to prepare staff for situations that could compromise the Township's ability to serve the community or that pose safety or health risks such as fire, storms, personal threats, etc.

### **Finances**

Develops annual general appropriations act and subsequent amendments for the Board's review and approval.

Serves as Township purchasing agent.

Disposes of Township property authorized to be sold by the Township Board.

With the consent of the elected officials with statutory responsibilities, supervises the financial coordinator's recording and reporting of financial transactions and general financial condition, as well as compliance with other township policies and procedures.

Monitors Township financial reports and prepares a dashboard for the Township Board indicating the current Township financial position as well as trends and developments that could impact on the Township's future financial position including its ability to meet current and anticipated obligations, respond to community service needs, compromise the Township's ability to service existing debt, or that could create new or additional unfunded debt obligations.

### **Township Spokesperson**

Disseminates public information via various mediums.

Responds to inquiries from the media or refers the contact to other appropriate officials.  
Speaks on behalf of the Township to the public, media and other governmental entities except when the Township Board has appointed another person to serve on an intergovernmental governing Board.

Monitoring Method:	Frequency:
--------------------	------------

**Saugatuck Township  
Governance Policies**

Policy Number:	Title: <b>Policy Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
Date Adopted:	Category: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Township Board shall monitor the Manager's compliance with Board policies, which shall be the exclusive means by which the Board evaluates the performance of the Manager. If a majority of the Board indicates that it does not find the Manager in compliance with a policy, the Board will discuss with the Manager and determine an appropriate course of action.

The Manager shall have the exclusive authority to interpret the Board's policies, using the *reasonable person* standard. The Township Board shall accept any reasonable interpretation by the Manager of its written policies. The Board may subsequently modify any policy that a reasonable interpretation produces an outcome to which it disagrees.

If the Board does not accept as reasonable the Manager's interpretation of a Board policy, the Board shall determine an appropriate course of action.

Annually the Board will evaluate the Manager through review of the policy monitoring reports for the prior twelve months to determine if the overall policy compliance is consistent with the Board's expectations for its Manager's performance.

The Board will also evaluate its own compliance with the Board's Own Governance policies.

Policy Area	Monitoring Report Responsibility	Month When Evaluated
<b>Board's Own Governance</b>		
Responsibilities of the Township Board as Governing Body		
Style of Governance		
Governance Values		
Policy Development and Adoption Process		
Board Member Job Description		
Role of the Township Supervisor		
Board Meetings		
<b>Outcomes and Strategic Planning</b>		
Strategic Planning Process		
Strategic Plan (Reserved)		
<b>Fiduciary Oversight</b>		
Risk Exposure		
Financial Requirements		
Human Resources		
Delegation of Authority to the Manager and Job Description		
Monitoring and Evaluation		

**Township Board Guidance Document**  
**Saugatuck Township**  
Meeting Agenda Template

- I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll call
- III. Reports
  - Board directed follow-up on issues discussed at a prior meeting
  - Other reports not provided in writing
  - Board member brief comments (maximum 3 minutes)
- IV. Brief community comments (maximum 3 minutes) on non-agenda matters
- V. Agenda approval
  - Consent agenda approval
  - Fiduciary oversight
  - Policy development, monitoring, and actions
  - Legislative actions (ordinances)
  - Strategic discussions and actions
  - Other unfinished business
  - Other new business
- IX. Comments and questions from staff, or Board members
- X. Future topics
- XI. Board meeting evaluations
- XII. Adjournment

***Township Board Guidance Document***  
**Strategic Discussion Process and Knowledge-Based Decisions**

*Suspend the Rules to have a motion prior to discussion (called a committee of the whole, workshop, etc.)*

1. Identify the Strategic Question
2. Prepare Background Materials
3. Inform the Issue

*What don't we know about the issue that we wished we knew?*

4. Identify Choices
5. Analyze the Choices
6. Determine Areas of Consensus
7. Identify Actions, Intent and Accountability
8. Craft a Motion
9. Deliberate on the Motion



**Township Board Guidance Document**  
**Saugatuck Township**  
**Example Board Policy Monitoring Report**

- **### Policy:** Risk Management

*Submitted July 10, 2024*

*Date Due: July 30, 2024*

- I hereby present my monitoring report on your Risk Management Policy according to the schedule established in policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true and represents compliance with a reasonable interpretation of all aspects of the policy unless specifically stated otherwise:

Signed:

Manager

Date: Juni 27, 2024

Method: Internal	Annual—January 31	August Township Board Meeting
------------------	-------------------	-------------------------------

- **Comply with all federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.**

MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*The Township must comply with any federal or state laws and regulations as well as with its own ordinances pertaining to Township governance or operations. The Manager is to make reasonable efforts to be aware of legal requirements and ensure Township compliance.*

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*The Manager is not aware of any instances of noncompliance with federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances. The Manager has consulted with the Township attorney on XX occasions and has implemented the attorney’s recommendations.*

*The Township was informed by the state department of treasury that local governments must comply with a new directive. The Township has implemented the procedures necessary for compliance.*

DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

- **Exercise due diligence in conducting the Township’s affairs and shall not expose the Township to undue risk to its financial position, reputation or loss of its tangible assets.**

MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*Given limitations due to its small staff size, the Township will segregate duties and provide oversight to avoid financial loss or mistakes, shall keep current financial records and pay bills on time.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*The Manager was made aware of a situation where the Township's internal controls might have missed a potential loss of assets. After consulting with the Township auditor, the situation was corrected. Operations are consistent with all other indices of due diligence and risk avoidance.*

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

- **Use a reasonable person standard in making decisions involving some degree of uncertainty or risk.**

## MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*The Manager interprets this policy to mean that the actions taken by the Manager are consistent with generally accepted management practices and are aligned with what other local government Managers would do in a similar situation.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*The Manager has not been made aware that any person has raised a question of the reasonableness of any of the Manager's decisions regarding situations of uncertainty or risk.*

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

- **Operate with adequate insurance to protect the Township against general liability exposures as well as protection against officer and employee misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance related to custody of financial assets.**

## MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*I interpret this policy to mean that the Township has coverages and limits consistent with those recommended by the Township's insurance carrier. The Township carries maximum coverage of general liability insurance \$XXX per occurrence with the total coverage of \$XXXXX; the Township carries public official liability insurance coverage for \$XXXX.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.

- **Protect information that would expose the Township to third party claims.**

## MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*The Township protects personal information.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*The Township redacted personal information at the direction of the Township attorney from a FOIA request.*

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

- **Initiate legal action to protect the Township's interests when there are extenuating circumstances that cannot wait until a special or regular meeting of the Township Board.**

## MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*When there is a compelling need, the Manager may contact the Township attorney to address a time-sensitive legal matter between Board meetings.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*No such legal action has been initiated.*

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

- **Have a document retention policy.**

## MANAGER INTERPRETATION:

*The Township has a schedule for disposal of public documents.*

## COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE FOLLOWING BENCHMARKS OR INDICES:

*The Township uses the record retention schedule developed by the Michigan Townships Association.*

## DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE:

*Based on my interpretation of the above Risk Management Policy, I declare the Township is following the policy.*

***Township Board Guidance Document***  
**Saugatuck Township Board Policy Development Template**

- New Policy                       Existing Policy Amendment     Existing Policy

Repeal Existing Policy Number and Name:

Why isn't the current policy sufficient?

Is the issue operational? Yes                      No

Why does the Board need to engage on the issue?

What is the broadest way to address this issue in a way that any reasonable interpretation by the Manager would be acceptable?

# Saugatuck Township Boards and Commissions

*Board of Review*

*Construction Board of Appeals*

*Planning Commission*

*Zoning Board of Review*

and

# Intergovernmental Representation

*District Library Board*

*Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority Board*

*Fire District Board*

*Community Recreation Board*

## *Appointment Process Duties, Responsibilities and Expectations*



# Saugatuck Township

New Appointee Orientation

**A welcoming, nature rich community where people thrive  
and are inspired to create a bright future for all**

## **Appointment Process**

All applicants for appointment to a Saugatuck Township Board or commission will complete a written application to assist the township in evaluating a candidate's suitability for the position. The application form will seek insights as to the applicant's motivation to serve, attributes, their understanding of the township and its issues, professional and volunteer service experience, and information necessary to complete a background check.

## **New Member Orientation Plan**

Saugatuck Township expects its volunteer board and commission members to know their jobs and to perform their duties in a manner that instills confidence and respect for the Township, the board or commission, and the individual board members. To assist new members in meeting these expectations, every new member must attend an orientation before their first meeting. The orientation will be conducted by the Township Manager, Township Supervisor and the Chairperson of the new member's board or commission.

At this meeting, the presenters will cover the following information, some of which is summarized in document:

- Statutory duties and responsibilities
- Bylaws and/or rules of procedure
- Public official appropriate conduct
- Current strategic plan elements related to your board's or commission's role.
- Current projects, issues, pending business.
- Questions

## **Duties, Responsibilities and Expectations**

Welcome to the Saugatuck Township government team! Thank you for your willingness to serve your community on one of our Township boards and commissions. Township boards and commissions deal with different subject matter and are subject to different rules, requirements and decision-making processes, but regardless as to which of these bodies you serve, we hope you agree with the many people who find local government service to be among the most rewarding of all volunteer opportunities available. Issues and decisions that local government board members and commissioners face are routinely challenging and impactful on affected individuals as well as the community. You'll have the "inside scoop" on important developments and serve with others who share your concern and passion for the greater good of the Saugatuck Township and our neighboring communities.

The manner in which board members and commissioners handle their duties and the performance of the body on which they serve is scrutinized and evaluated constantly by the public in general and particularly the stakeholders of the decisions made. Your actions and those of the colleagues with whom you serve can affect how people judge their local government and democracy itself. For people who want to make a positive impact on their communities, few activities top local government public service! [Role of Township Boards and Commissions](#)

Saugatuck Township has three boards and one commission appointed by the Township Board:

- [Board of Review](#)
- [Construction Board of Appeals](#)
- [Planning Commission](#)
- [Zoning Board of Appeals](#)

The Township Board also appoints representatives to four external boards:

- District Library Board
- Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority Board
- Fire District Board
- Community Recreation Board

The Township also has an elected Park Commission that has broad discretion and a higher level of autonomy granted by the state [enabling legislation](#), and for which the Township Board's oversight is limited. The Park Commission has its own bylaws that govern much of the subject matter addressed in this orientation guide; however, the Township Board supports the Park Commission in its efforts to govern and manage Saugatuck Township's parks and recreation programs consistent with good governance principles and delivery of quality parks and recreation programs. The Township Board supports the coordination of strategic goals developed by both bodies and provides administrative support to the Park Commission through the Township Manager on a time-available basis. The township also underwrites some Park Commission overhead expenses such as inclusion on the township's insurance policies.

The boards and commission to which the Township Board makes appointments are created pursuant to the statutes of the State of Michigan, and a hyperlink to each entity's enabling legislation is embedded above. Because each of these bodies are created by state law, they have to comply with detailed and often complex statutory requirements and legal precedents. All of them must comply with the [Michigan Open Meetings Act](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act](#). The

Township Board and its members should not interfere with or attempt to influence the deliberations or decisions of these boards and commissions, but the Township Board has adopted township policies that express expectations for board members and commissioners. Ensuring that board members and commissioners act in the public interest and conduct their affairs appropriately can impact whether the Township Board reappoints members and, in some cases, potentially result in removal for cause.

The following is a summary of the respective roles and responsibilities of these public bodies: *Boards of Review* are created by the Michigan Property Tax Act, MCL (Michigan Compiled Law) 211.28f, to examine and review the property tax assessment roll prepared by the township assessor. The board can make changes to the assessment roll on its own motion or on sufficient cause being shown by a person when presented, to make the roll compliant with the Property Tax Act. The Board of Review's discretion is subject to legal statutes, legal precedents and State Tax Commission directives, so bi-annual training is necessary to ensure the Board of Review decisions are consistent with legal requirements.

*Construction Boards of Appeals* are created by MCL 125.1514, the Michigan Single State Construction Code Act and is required in a governmental entity enforcing the Act. They hear appeals when an enforcing agency refuses to grant an application for a building permit or any other decision pursuant or related to this act.

*The Planning Commission* is created pursuant to MCL 125.3815, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The Planning Commission adopts its own bylaws for transacting business. A Planning Commission makes and approves a master plan as a guide for the township's development unless the Township Board has asserted the right to approve or reject the master plan. The Planning Commission also makes recommendations to the Township Board for zoning ordinance text amendments to the township zoning ordinance, amendments to the zoning map, and makes criteria-based recommendations to the Township Board for site plans, special land uses, planned unit developments and condominiums. Planning Commissioners are expected to be familiar with the main provisions of the township master plan and zoning ordinance and be familiar with land use laws and principles. Given the complexity and ever-changing nature of land use principles and laws, Planning Commission members are highly encouraged to complete the Master Planner Course offered by Michigan State University Extension and other programs offered by the Michigan Association of Planning.



*The Zoning Board of Appeals* is also created in the Michigan Planning Act, section MCL125.3601. The Zoning Board of Appeals is a quasi-judicial body that decides questions regarding zoning ordinance administration, zoning map interpretation, and may issue ordinance variances when certain conditions are met.

### **The roles and responsibilities of board and commission members**

Civility and collegiality among board and commission members is expected, but differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out, value them, and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can improve the group's decision. With a wider range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon a more optimal resolution.

Individual members of Township boards and commissions possess no governing, administrative or enforcement authority by themselves, except as expressly authorized in writing through board policy or bylaws adopted by the board or commission. Such individual authority is generally limited to the authority of the board or commission chair to organize and administer duly called meetings of the public body. Individual board or commission members should not represent to others that they speak on behalf of the public body, except for the board or commission chair or the Township Manager.

All Saugatuck Township boards and commissions are expected to be transparent in their deliberations and decisions. Not only is transparency required by Michigan's Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act, but transparency is also a local community value and expectation as well. Deliberating in public can be uncomfortable at times, especially when there is strong public opinion and sentiment on one side or the other of an issue facing your board or commission. Public input is valued and important to the decision-making process, as is the public's understanding of the facts, conclusions and principles on which decisions are made.

While the public and their input is welcome, the value of public input to decisions are the facts, insights and knowledge provided at public meetings that inform the board on factors that are lawfully relevant. Opinions and preferences that are not related to factors that the board or commission should lawfully consider should not influence a decision, even when forcefully defensible decisions. expressed and regardless of the number of people holding to those opinions and preferences. It may be uncomfortable to support a decision in the face of public opposition, but the duty of board and commission members is to adhere to due process and to comply with applicable statutes and legal precedence. Boards and commissions should seek the advice of the Township Attorney, through the Township Manager, for advice and assistance in rendering legally

defensible decisions.

A fundamental role of Township boards and commissions is to provide due process to persons impacted by township ordinances, regulations or property valuations. Procedural due process are legal requirements that protect individual rights. Board and commission members should avoid creating an impression that they have pre-judged a proposal or taken a position prior to all affected parties being heard.

Board and commission members should refrain from participating in a decision when they have a financial interest in the outcome or when their personal circumstance is such that there could be an impression of favoritism or bias. Board and commission members should make such conflicts known to the board or commission chair and the Township Manager as soon as the conflict is known. Abstention is appropriate when such conflicts exist and include recusal from all participation and communication with other members on the matter.

### **Expectations**

The Township expects the following from the members of its boards and commissions:

- Adherence to the [Township's Core Values](#);

- Participate in an orientation prior to beginning service and pursue continuing education opportunities.

- Adhere to all laws and regulations.

- Avoid actions and decisions that unnecessarily expose the Township to undue risk such as lawsuits.

- Conduct business at duly called meetings that are well managed and welcoming to the public.

- Respect and civility to other board members, township staff, the public and others appearing before the board or commission.

Board and commission chairs are expected to understand the principles of managing a public meeting, including welcoming the public, conducting hearings, managing public comment, appropriately maintaining order and civility, and ensuring decisions are reached democratically and reflect the will of the members present.

## Keys to Great Board and Commission Meetings

### Why Meetings Fail

- Commission/board charge not understood.
- Purpose of meeting unclear.
- Meeting hijacked by narrow or personal issue.
- Long agendas
- Items frequently tabled.
- Public dissatisfaction
- Focus on inconsequential details.
- “Group think: (pressure for all to agree; absent of individual and independent thought)

### Why Meetings Succeed

- Appropriately structured
- Community involvement
- Everyone has ownership for outcomes.
- Structure accordingly:
  - Committee of the whole (informal discussion)
  - Public hearing (formal input)
  - Formal (parliamentary rules in effect)
- Meeting logistics
  - Location, access
  - Seating and presentation arrangements
  - Audience
  - Audio
  - Amenities
- Schedule and call
  - Public and member notices
  - Who needs to attend.
  - Tentative agenda
  - Background information
- Welcome and manage public participation.

### Appropriate Meeting Procedures

- Accomplish the objectives for which the group is organized (a tool for making decisions).
- Ensure justice and equality for all (allows for all to express ideas).
- Consideration of one subject at a time (focuses discussion).

- Maintain order (saves time)
- Fair
- Efficient
- Clarity as to process and outcome.
- Knowledge-based
- Promote civility.

Saugatuck Township boards and commissions should conduct their meetings consistent with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for efficiency and to ensure that decisions adhere to democratic principles. *Robert's* provides simplified procedures for smaller deliberative bodies:

- Generally understood to be twelve or less members.
- Motions need not be seconded.
- No limit to the number of times a person can speak to a debatable motion (except an appeal to a decision of the chair).
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.

### **External Boards and Commissions**

By law, custom, history and geography, Saugatuck Township cooperates with other governmental entities in the delivery of road maintenance and improvements, fire protection, water and sewer, the library, and community recreation. While roads are under the jurisdiction of the Allegan County Road Commission, governance of other joint services are provided for in joint agreements by boards and commissions comprising one or more representatives from Saugatuck Township, who are appointed by the Township Board to represent the township in discussions and decisions not covered in the interlocal agreements.

Saugatuck Township expects its appointed representatives to these external boards and commissions to understand how joint services impact Saugatuck Township and convey the township's best interests in discussions and deliberations. Township representatives are also expected to keep the Township Manager and Board informally apprised of emerging issues and to be aware of and responsive to township leaders' perspectives. Township representatives should be in regular written contact with township leaders on routine matters and report to the Township Board in person on major issues.

Saugatuck Township's representatives are expected to develop knowledge regarding the services provided by the entity and contribute to the entity's success. The township also expects its representative to regularly attend meetings of the public body on which they serve and to engage with other officials civilly and collaboratively. Representatives are expected to insist that the intergovernmental entity is transparent to member entities and to the public. Saugatuck Township also acknowledges that its representatives have a fiduciary duty to act in the joint

entity's best interests and to consider what is in the best interests of the greater Saugatuck community.

### **Reappointment**

As members of Township boards and commissions become more experienced, their understanding of their roles and responsibilities is expected to expand. While new members will look to more experienced members for information, guidance and leadership, every member is expected to cultivate a greater awareness and understanding of their job and, in turn, develop and contribute their knowledge and leadership to others.

Township officials may be appointed to a board or commission for a term running concurrent to their term as a Township Board member, while other Township board and commission members are appointed for a specific term that is provided for in state law or by the Township Board. When a township appointee's term approaches its end, the appointee will be asked if the appointee wishes to be reappointed. This inquiry should not be considered an indication that the appointee will, in fact, be reappointed. Rather, this inquiry sets in motion a process by which the Township Board, assisted by the Manager, will consider the appointee's performance and contributions. The township may also solicit interest in being appointed from other eligible township residents and consider qualifications and attributes of other applicants.

Before making a decision regarding a reappointment, the Township Board will consider a number of factors and may solicit the perspectives of other persons who serve on, assist or have had business before the board or commission. Factors that may be considered include:

- Demonstrated understanding of and compliance with applicable legal requirements, township policies and best practices recommended by subject-matter experts.
- Understanding group decision-making principles, public meeting participation and management.
- Meeting attendance and contributions to decisions.
- Professional behavior and conduct.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Support for consensus-driven decisions.
- Authentic engagement with the public.
- Continuing education activities.

# **NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING**

Saugatuck Township Board

3461 Blue Star Hwy

Saugatuck, MI 49453

(269) 857-7721

The Saugatuck Township Board  
will hold a special meeting on:

**Tuesday December 17, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.**

The purpose of this Special Meeting is a workshop for the Township Board. The Saugatuck Township Board has called a Special Meeting for organizational discussions only, no action will be taken at this time.

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, MCL 41.72a(2) and (3), and the Americans With Disabilities Act. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Saugatuck Township Board by writing or calling Bill Wester, Township Clerk, (269) 857-7721.

Posted on December 13, 2024

Cindy Osman, Clerk