



**Saugatuck Township  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 14 2023, at 6:00 p.m.  
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 Aldrich, and Trustee Marcy.

Absent:

Also Present: David Swan, Gordon Stannis, Dave Ihle, Township Manager Daniel DeFranco and Recording Secretary Morgan Arens.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Agenda:**

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

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

David Swan, Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance – gave an update on North Shore permits, thanked the Township for what it has previously done, and asked the Township to make a comment during the EGLE North Shore public hearing.

**Public Comment Closed**

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

Discussion: None

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as amended. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Presentations:** Gordon Stannis, Rotary Club & GHBGC

**New Business:**

**1. Approval of L-4029 Form**

The Township must complete and submit a Tax Rate Request form (L-4029) for Allegan County to establish millage rates for the Township's allocated operating millage and each of its extra voter approved millages. The Township can authorize millage rates not to exceed the maximum allowable millage, which is the rate approved by voters and reduced by the Headlee rollback. Staff recommends that the Township authorize the maximum allowable millage rate for its allocated operations millage and for all its extra voted millages.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize the completion and submission of the 2023 L-4029 form requesting the maximum allowable millage rates to be levied for Saugatuck Township's allocated operating millage and all extra voted millages. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

**2. Asbestos Payment**

The Township had a comprehensive survey of the Hall conducted to detail the location and amounts of any asbestos containing materials. Two areas in the Hall were confirmed as containing asbestos: (1) the vinyl tiles in the front entry and (2) 2,500 sq ft of shingles and tar on the roof. Thus far, the Township has spent \$13,749.00 on asbestos abatement.

In order for the contractor to conduct work on the roof, additional asbestos abatement was required. Cost of the additional asbestos abatement totals \$10,792. Per our contract with Carbon Six, the Township must pay the Asbestos Abatement contractor directly. Payment to Taplan Group, LLC totals \$7,542.00 and payment to Carbon Six totals \$3,250.00.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to authorize payment of \$7,542.00 to Taplan Group, LLC and payment of \$3,250.00 to Carbon Six for asbestos abatement. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **3. Budget Amendment & Final Interfund Transfer Authorization**

The 2022-2023 fiscal year ends on June 30, 2023. Attached are year-end budget amendment requests and year-end interfund transfer authorization requests for your consideration.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the requested June 2023 Budget Amendments, as submitted, and authorize the Township Treasurer and Deputy Clerk to make the requested interfund transfers. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

### **4. Final Payment to Redline Excavation**

The Township has received an Application for Payment No. 3 from Redline Excavating in the amount of \$34,694.99 for the construction of the 66<sup>th</sup> St Water Main. The pay application also includes Change Order 3, which is the final change order to balance quantities to the as-bid quantities and add hydrant markers. Note that Change Order No. 3 involves a decrease of \$17,280.28 in project cost. This is the final payment to Redline Excavating. The Township Engineer has reviewed final punch list items with Redline Excavating and is recommending that Township make full payment. The project has a warranty period of 1 year beyond the date of substantial completion, which is October 17, 2023

A **Motion** was made by Israels to approve Application for Payment No. 3 and Change Order 3 in the amount of \$34,694.99 for Redline Excavating for construction of the 66th St Water Main. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

### **5. Renewal of Health and Dental Insurance Plans**

The Township's Employee Healthcare and Dental plans are up for renewal on July 1st. The Township currently offers an HMO HSA plan with Priority Health and provides an annual HSA contribution of \$3,500 per employee.

Lighthouse Group, the Township's health insurance agent, has provided plan options for consideration. This year, Priority Health has a plan available that offers the same benefits as the Township's current healthcare plan. The plan has a deductible of \$1,500/single and \$3,000/family, after which 85% of medical costs are covered. The true-out-of-pocket maximum is \$4,000/single and \$8,000/family. To continue with the current plan design, rates are expected to increase by 9.2%, which would equate to an

additional \$379.54 in monthly premiums or \$4,554.48 annually. There are other options available to reduce costs; however, they would result in increased deductibles and coinsurance percentages.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to continue with the current plan designs and authorize the Township Manager to sign the necessary decision forms associated with renewing the Priority Health Plan, Medicare Advantage Plan, and Delta Dental Plan, as prepared by Lighthouse Group for FY 2023-2024. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **6. Renewal of Insurance Coverage**

With the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2020, it is recommended that the Township Board consider renewing the Township's property, liability, and workers compensation insurance policies. Staff worked with Buiten & Associates LLC, the Township's insurance agent, to prepare the attached renewal proposal for the Township's property & liability insurance. This proposal would keep the Township with the same insurance provider, EMC Insurance Company, and continue the current level of coverage for most items. Given the renovation, the cost to replace the building is now estimated between \$2,250,000 and \$2,500,000. To increase the replacement cost of the building to \$2,250,000 would be an additional \$922 a year. To increase the replacement cost of the building to \$2,500,000 would be an additional \$1,128 a year. Depending on the Board's decision regarding coverage for the Hall, in the insurance rate will increase by either \$1,764 or \$1,970, with the total package coming in at \$16,904.00 or \$17,110.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to continue with the current plan designs, increasing coverage of the Township Hall to \$2,500,000, and authorize the Township Manager to sign the necessary decision forms associated with renewing the EMC Insurance Company property & liability insurance policy and Accident Fund workers compensations insurance policy as prepared by Buiten & Associates LLC for FY 2023-2024. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **7. Board Compensation**

Compensation for Board members has not been reviewed for the last four years. This year, a review of Board compensation was conducted using board compensation in municipalities with similar taxable values and populations for comparison. In light of this review, the following compensations are being recommended: Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer: \$17,000 & Trustees: \$5,000.

As the Township does not hold an annual township meeting of the electors, compensation for officers must be determined by resolution of the Township Board. The Board should consider adopting a resolution to amend current Officer compensation.

A **Motion** was made by Israels to adopt Resolution 2023-12, a resolution to establish salaries for officers composing the Saugatuck Township Board. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **8. Authorization of Additional Payment to MERS**

Over the last few years, the Township has consistently worked to increase the funding ratio for its Pension Fund. Our most recent actuarial shows our Pension Program's funded ratio to be 61%. To increase the funded ratio, the Township makes an additional payment annually to its Pension Program.

This year's budget includes an additional payment of \$60,000 to MERS. The Board should consider authorizing the additional \$60,000 payment to MERS or a payment amount such that the total budget for MERS contributions (\$120,000) is not exceeded.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize an additional payment to MERS of \$60,000 or an amount not to exceed the total amount budgeted for MERS in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **9. Road Commission Bike Trail Construction**

The Allegan County Road Commission will be constructing a roundabout on Blue Star Highway at the Old Allegan intersection Spring 2024. The Township has the opportunity to request additional improvements be included in the roundabout construction. While the Township would be financially responsible for any requested improvements, pairing improvements with the roundabout construction will be more cost effective.

The Road Commission is recommending that the Township consider including (1) the re-grading of a west side section of the Blue Star Highway right-of-way, south of Old Allegan and (2) the construction of an approximately 500ft section of paved bike path. Estimated cost for the project is \$125,000.00. The re-grading and paved path would be a deviation from the current plan which shows that section of bike trail as an elevated boardwalk; a paved path would not be possible without significant re-grading. Boardwalks are much more costly than paved paths both in terms of initial construction costs and long-term maintenance. Being able to have a paved path instead of a boardwalk is a significant benefit to the project.

C2AE and the Township Engineer are actively being consulted.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the inclusion of the Blue Star and Allegan Street 10' HMA Pathway in the Allegan County Road Commission's Blue Star Roundabout Project at an approximate cost of \$125,000.00. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **10. RAP 2.0 Letter of Support for Blue Star Brewery**

The Blue Star Brewery is a development project that recently received SAU and Site Plan approvals from the Planning Commission. The project will be located on the Blue Star Highway corridor and will include the rehabbing of an older building and redevelopment of a gravel parking lot as an outdoor gathering space.

The developers of the project intend to apply to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Revitalization and Placemaking Program (RAP), an incentive program that will proactively deploy \$100 million in funding to address the COVID-19 impacts in Michigan communities through investing in projects that enable population and tax revenue growth through rehabilitation of vacant and blighted buildings and historic structures, rehabilitation and development of vacant properties, and development of permanent place-based infrastructure associated with social zones and traditional downtowns, outdoor dining, and place-based public spaces.

The Board should consider whether to provide a letter of support for the Blue Star Brewery's RAP Grant application. The Board should consider whether the Blue Star Brewery project aligns with the Township's long-term economic development goals and meets the intent of RAP.

A **Motion** was made by Israels to authorize the submission of a Letter of Support for the Blue Star Brewery's Application to the Revitalization and Placemaking Grant Program. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

#### **11. Saugatuck City Request for Contribution to 4th of July Fireworks**

Saugatuck City has requested a contribution of \$4,000 to support a firework display over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. The event was previously organized by the Rotary Club, but no organization is overseeing 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities this year. Last year, the Township authorized a contribution of \$4,000.00 to Rotary Club in support of the firework display, but expressed the need to review future firework funding requests more carefully. Saugatuck City has expressed that they will be engaging other local organizations to take over responsibility of 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks for next year. The City of Douglas will be contributing \$1,000.00 towards the 4<sup>th</sup> of July firework display.

The Township Board discussed this request at length. Marcy raised concern about the noise of fireworks, the environmental impact of the fireworks, and also mentioned that the Saugatuck Township Fire District will have an increase in staffing for that night.

Helmrich agreed that fireworks are an environment nightmare.

Israels stated that she is concerned about the issues fireworks create for those with sensory issues or PTSD.

Aldrich explained the difference in contributing last year versus this year was that last year the Township donated to Rotary Club while this year it would be to Saugatuck City. She also explained that after talk to some community members, they have expressed an opinion in not wanting the fireworks. Bigford stated that the Board appreciates the Tri-Community relationship that has been built, but there are times where the Tri-Communities can't support each other; and that this is one of those times. She reiterated that it's a tricky situation and they need to take into consideration the issues regarding the legality of donating to another municipality, environmental concerns, pets, individuals with sensory issues, veterans, individuals with PTSD, and some other groups.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to deny a contribution to Saugatuck City for the 4th of July Firework Display. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

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 past 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:** applauded staff member Morgan Arens for Township Hall moving efforts and positive attitude.
- **Israels:** agreed with Helmrich and applauded staff member Lori Babinski for her helpfulness and kindness, also gave an update on the upcoming August election.
- **Aldrich:** offered to assist in the renovation any way needed, and applauded Heavener's Property Service for their efforts installing the VanDis Bird monument.

- **Marcy:** read a letter she wrote:

“On May 11, 2023, tragedy struck our community when a devastating accident at the intersection in Saugatuck claimed the lives of two innocent women & seriously injured another. As a concerned township trustee, I am compelled to emphasize the pressing need for immediate action to address the safety issues plaguing this intersection. Despite the township not owning this intersection, it is our moral duty to advocate for the well-being of our residents and urge the city, which does own it, to expedite the resolution of these pressing concerns.

1. This tragic event has deeply affected the entire community, including the EMS and fire Department and serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for improved safety measures.
2. Originally the city manager thought it was our property/right of way, responsibility. So we immediately looked into stop gap measures like Allegan and BSH. The County informed us that it is the City's intersection, or at least where the signs are located.
3. In the spirit of collaboration the Township Manager spoke with the City Manager and offered to pay half for a flashing stop sign and a cross traffic does not stop sign.
4. I have been asked everywhere I go, church, meetings, parties, on the docks, what is being done to prevent this from recurring. Tri-community residents who've spoken to me are concerned about the well-being and safety of residents and especially tourists who are not as familiar with the area and the funky intersection. In the spirit of collaboration, I'd like to reiterate our original offer as a stop gap measure. It's worked so far for Old Allegan and BSH.

All I care about is that no one else die at that or any other intersection.”

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** Supervisor Bigford adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM

**Meeting Adjourned.**

## MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Marcy.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as amended. Supported by Israels.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize the completion and submission of the 2023 L-4029 form requesting the maximum allowable millage rates to be levied for Saugatuck Township's allocated operating millage and all extra voted millages. Supported by Israels.  
Discussion: None  
Roll Call Vote:  
Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy  
No:  
Motion Carried Unanimously
4. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to authorize payment of \$7,542.00 to Taplan Group, LLC and payment of \$3,250.00 to Carbon Six for asbestos abatement. Supported by Aldrich.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.
5. A **Motion** was made by Israels to approve Application for Payment No. 3 and Change Order 3 in the amount of \$34,694.99 for Redline Excavating for construction of the 66th St Water Main. Supported by Helmrich.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously
6. A **Motion** was made by Israels to approve Application for Payment No. 3 and Change Order 3 in the amount of \$34,694.99 for Redline Excavating for construction of the 66th St Water Main. Supported by Helmrich.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously
7. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to continue with the current plan designs and authorize the Township Manager to sign the necessary decision forms associated with renewing the Priority Health Plan, Medicare Advantage Plan, and Delta Dental Plan, as prepared by Lighthouse Group for FY 2023-2024. Supported by Israels.  
Discussion: None  
Voice Vote: 5-0.  
Motion Carried Unanimously
8. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to continue with the current plan designs, increasing coverage of the Township Hall to \$2,500,000, and authorize the Township Manager to sign the necessary decision forms associated with renewing the EMC Insurance Company property & liability insurance policy and Accident Fund workers compensations insurance policy as prepared by Buiten & Associates LLC for FY 2023-2024. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

9. A **Motion** was made by Israels to adopt Resolution 2023-12, a resolution to establish salaries for officers composing the Saugatuck Township Board. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

10. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize an additional payment to MERS of \$60,000 or an amount not to exceed the total amount budgeted for MERS in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

11. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the inclusion of the Blue Star and Allegan Street 10' HMA Pathway in the Allegan County Road Commission's Blue Star Roundabout Project at an approximate cost of \$125,000.00. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

12. A **Motion** was made by Israels to authorize the submission of a Letter of Support for the Blue Star Brewery's Application to the Revitalization and Placemaking Grant Program. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously


13. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to deny a contribution to Saugatuck City for the 4th of July Firework Display. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Respectfully,



Morgan Arens, Recording Secretary

I, Rebecca Israels, Township Clerk, certify that these minutes were approved on July 12, 2023 by the Township Board.



Rebecca Israels, Township Clerk

July 10- 2024  
Date