

Posted 11.20.23 Draft Minutes of November 13, 2023
Regular Rescheduled St. James Board Meeting
St. James Township Hall | 37735 Michigan Ave | Beaver Island, MI | 5:30 pm

Present:

McDonough, Fingerroot, Welke, Cole, Gillespie

Absent:

None.

General

Supervisor Welke called to order a regular meeting of the St. James Township Board at 5:30 pm on November 13, 2023.

Supervisor requested an addition to the agenda to allow discussion of the Merit visit that happened earlier in the day, as well as noting that Don Tritsch would share input regarding agenda item 3 under the Public Works, Health, and Safety section.

Moved by Gillespie, supported by Cole to approve the meeting minutes from the October 11, 2023 meeting.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Finance and Administration

Supervisor Welke noted two special payments: A repaired pump for the Township Sewer at a cost of \$3,985 and two new motors for the Municipal Marinas at a cost of \$928.80 each. Also mentioned was the process of creating a budget for the Restricted Funds account to help keep the monies separate from the General Fund.

Moved by Fingerroot, supported by Gillespie to approve the Payments request as presented.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Craig Peirano was sworn in as Deputy Supervisor, with support from the whole Board.

Moved by Welke, supported by Fingerroot to approve the budget for the Deputy Supervisor to move from \$1,400 to \$1,900, with the Deputy Supervisor earning \$15.00/hour.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Moved by McDonough, supported by Cole to post two vacant board positions: Board of Review Alternate and Library Board.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Moved by Welke, supported by Gillespie to approve the revised lease contract with Verizon for their equipment to be placed on the township's Donegal Bay Tower. The terms are: Updated lease begins 9/1/24, it will expire 8/31/2059; Lease is \$1,590/month with a 2% annual increase.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Starting with the December 13 Board Meeting, all township meetings will take place at the Printshop Museum Conference Room until the spring.

Public Works, Health, and Safety

Merit visited the island to view possible sites to bring fiber to the island. They are initially focusing on bringing fiber to the school, and improving internet there. Efforts will be combined with that of the Peninsula Fiber Network. An area at the north end of the island, within township property, adjacent to and east of the west property line, along the aerial power line, was noted to be a good spot to start by the Merit engineers. However, PFN engineers will need to come and view the area before starting any design plans.

The Pocket Gardens will be decorated for the holidays again this year. Community members who register will be asked to pay a \$20 fee to cover the cost of decorations. A volunteer will act as the Decorations Manager for the project. Donations can also be made to help cover costs. All denominations are welcome to participate.

Moved by Cole, supported by Fingerroot to authorize the Joint Planning Commission to issue a Request for Proposal to select a consultant to update zoning ordinances for both St. James and Peaine Townships, with the work to be performed in FY24/25.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Moved by Welke, supported by Cole to authorize payments of stipends to St. James Planning Commission members working on the preparation and issuance of the RFP for selecting a consultant to update the island's zoning ordinances. A \$1,500 budget would be established with payments at \$15/hour.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Ordinance No. 3 of 2023 to rescind St James Township Ordinance 3 of 2020 to return the St James Township Planning Commission to from seven to five members. Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Gillespie, Cole, Welke, Fingerroot, McDonough

Nays: None.

Discussion was had regarding the Font Lake West Park, owned by St James Township. The Board expressed interest in trying to turn it into a public access for fishing, and Don Tritsch shared his evaluation of the area for a possible fishing pier, but noted it did not seem like an ideal spot to fish. The Board discussed other possible locations for a public fishing pier, with no decisions made. The topic will be passed on to the Public Works, Health, and Safety Committee for discussion.

Cynthia Pryor presented an end of season report from the Township Campground, with some recommendations from Tony Miller who was the volunteer host. The 2023 season (May 25-October 31) was successful with 758 total campers. The host recommended shortening the season for 2024 as well as lower the out of season rates due to the weather and lack of host, showers, and electricity. Also suggested were signs to limit traffic issues and more information be made readily available to campers. Cynthia

shared that the Reservation Fee increased from \$2.00 to \$3.50 (which is paid by those making the reservations) and supported Tony's recommendations for improvements.

Moved by Welke, supported by McDonough to approve a \$400 stipend be paid to Tony Miller as a thank you for hosting the Campground.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Moved by McDonough, supported by Cole to decrease the camping rate to \$10/night for out of season campers, effective immediately.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Marlene Wiser attended the meeting via phone to present the end of season report for the Marinas. A total of 1,136 boats utilized the marinas in the 2023 season, bringing in a revenue of \$298,419.39. In 2022, the total number of boats was higher, but the revenue was lower. This is due, in part, to a higher number of large boats and the amount of fuel purchased. Improvements made to both marinas have been noted and appreciated by boaters, both seasonal and transient. Marlene recommended improvements for 2024 including: repair of floating docks and finger piers at the north marina, building repairs and updates at the south marina, and a couple other amenities for boaters.

Moved by Welke, supported by Gillespie to increase the 2024 sewer rate 50 cents above the 2023 rate to a new total of \$44.00/REU, effective January 1, 2024. This increase is to contribute to the proposed costs to maintain and repair the sewer.

Motion Carried-Unanimous

Public Comment

None.

Moved by McDonough, supported by Gillespie to adjourn at 6:50 pm.

Submitted by:

Tessa Jones, Deputy Clerk
St. James Township
COUNTY OF CHARLEVOIX