

GERRISH TOWNSHIP BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING WORK SESSION  
April 1, 2021

This meeting was held in person with a virtual option with Microsoft Teams.  
Meeting included both video and audio capabilities. Phone number: 269-218-1875  
Phone Conference ID: 238 148 456#

Special meeting called to order at 9:00am. Present in person: Supervisor Udy, Clerk Patchin and Trustee Oppy. Virtually Present: Treasurer Tulgetske and Trustee Newton.  
Also present: in person: Fire/EMS Chief Fisher, Police Chief Hill and 3 citizen(s)  
Virtually present: 2 citizen(s)

Public Comment: Mariah Frye presented her concerns of a Dollar General building in Gerrish Township. She requested her statement be included in the minutes (see attached.)  
George Frye shared his concerns of a Dollar General in Gerrish Township.

**Discussed:**

-Compost Site Crushed Concrete/fill sand quote

Motion by Patchin, supported by Oppy: CARRIED  
that the Board authorize S&J Excavation to provide 100 yards of fill sand, 100 yards of crushed concrete with 4" thick top layer for the Gerrish Township Compost site in the amount of \$6,000.00.

-Approval of 3.26.21 Accounts Payable

Motion by Udy, supported by Oppy: CARRIED  
that the Board approve the March 26, 2021 year end accounts payable as presented.

-Approval of year end Budget Adjustments

Motion by Patchin, supported by Udy: CARRIED  
that the Board approve the year end Budget Adjustments as presented.

-Police Monthly update

-Conditional job offer for police officer

Motion by Patchin, supported by Tulgetske: CARRIED  
that the Board authorize Chief Hill to offer a conditional offer of probationary employment to Zachary Stachurski as a Gerrish Township police officer. Offer is contingent upon successful completion of Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Certification (both written and physical), department medical screening, hearing, eye test, physical, drug test and background investigation.

**Discussed:**

Roscommon County Road Commission:

-Roger Saxton, Neil Belanger and Danielle Doebler presented the RCRC 5-year plan on the road maintenance/improvement plan for Gerrish Township. They also presented the list of roads in Gerrish Township that the RCRC would like to relinquish from their jurisdiction seeking comments and questions.

-Recess: 10:20-10:26am

-Trustee Newton left the meeting at 10:30am.

Discussed:

- Fire/EMS Monthly update
- Township Electronic sign
- Review or comments on Fire/EMS SOGs 705, 707, 804, and 1104
- Review list of SOPs to rescind from current department policy
- Fire Department facility planning discussion
- Township Electronic sign
- Property Liability Insurance Renewal
- Roscommon County Equalization Services for 2021-2022
- Hiring of part time Zoning Specialist

Motion by Udy, supported by Oppy: CARRIED  
that the Board authorize the hiring of Brenda Burkett as a part time, level 6, Zoning Specialist. Employment is contingent upon successful completion of physical, drug screen and background check. Effective April 12, 2021.

Discussed:

- Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority Articles of Incorporation
- Higgins Lake Foundation Reimbursement Grant Application

Motion by Patchin, supported by Oppy: CARRIED  
that the Board authorize Supervisor Udy to apply for a grant to the Higgins Lake Foundation on behalf of Gerrish Township and Lyon Township. The Grant application is a reimbursement grant towards the costs associated with the formation of the Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA). Reimbursement grant applied for is up to \$84,000.

Discussed:

- Land Split request Doug & Tina Green
- Roscommon County passed a Declaration of State of Emergency allowing Board members to be able to vote virtually until May 1, 2021
- ZBA filed by James Clarke
- Hiring of Seasonal Employees at GT Marina

Public Comment:

Dave Hall complimented the Board for the work on the sewer and applications of grants.

Motion by Udy, supported by Oppy: CARRIED  
that the meeting adjourns.

Meeting adjourned at 11:24am

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Kathleen Patchin, Clerk

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David Udy, Supervisor

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Approval

## Statement to Gerrish Township Board

My name is Mariah Frye, and I am grateful that Supervisor Udy has granted me some time to speak about what, in my opinion, is one of the greater threats to the Higgins Lake community in our time. I'm a Higgins Lake native- I grew up down the road, and I moved back here to take over my family's business and raise a family of my own. I am not an expert on the inner workings of township politics and zoning ordinances - though I am learning as fast as I can - but I love Higgins Lake more than almost anything, and *that*, I think, we *all* might have in common.

I'm here to talk about a dollar store that wants to open up in our township. Dollar General is conducting a widespread assault on rural America, and despite no official bid to the township for permitting yet, they are planning to build a store about a mile down the street, just past Higgins Lake Landscaping.

After learning of this plan, I hastily- perhaps too hastily- launched an online petition to stop such an endeavor. I was blown away by the massive support this petition received; within 48 hours it had over 1,300 signatures, and more continue to come.

The great news is that these people are in alignment with the mission of Gerrish Township: to promote a rural recreational environment. Indeed, the Gerrish Township Master Plan itself states: The protection of the township's *character* is very important to the residents of and visitors to Gerrish Township. I don't need to tell you that there are many other statements in the master plan that point to the preservation of the character of Gerrish township as the top priority.

Dollar General in Gerrish Township poses a major threat to the character of the community. It threatens local businesses, which serve a population of people who enjoy the look and feel of a rural recreation environment. But more importantly, it threatens to the soul of the community: research shows time and time again the damaging effects of chain dollar stores on small, rural towns, in all areas from economics to public health.

At this moment, there is tremendous public backing for the adoption of an ordinance that would protect our community from the kind of cultural degradation that Dollar General is poised to inflict on our township.

In front of you is an article from the Betsie Current newspaper, which details Dollar General's assault on Maple City, Lake Ann, and other towns near us, and how those townships have fought back and won. Perhaps the most pertinent, Almira Township held a special meeting to institute a 60-day moratorium on any commercial development to give the Planning Commission the opportunity to limit the size of commercial development pertaining to retail chains in its municipality.

Nothing less than swift, decisive action will do in our case, and I stand here ready to help. Please, let me - let all 1,300 of us who have signed the petition - help you keep Gerrish township as the rural, recreational environment that we all live here to enjoy, that I and so many have relocated to from urban centers to raise our families and recreate in. I respectfully request that my statement here be recorded in this meeting's minutes, and that this board moves to act quickly on this issue: an issue that we can *all* unite around in the spirit of protecting and preserving the character of Gerrish Township and Higgins Lake. Thank you.