

**Unapproved Minutes of the Whitefish Township Board
Special Meeting – February 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

A. Call to order and roll call

Supervisor Lada called the meeting to order at 7PM.

Roll call: F. Lada, S. Lada, R. Miller, E. Forrester, R. Gratopp Absent: NONE

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Public Comment: None. There were approximately 25 members of the public present.

D. Old Business

Approve meeting minutes from 02/03/2022.

Forrester made a change to the minutes.

Motion by E. Forrester to approve the meeting minutes dated 02/03/2022 as amended. Second by R. Gratopp.

Roll call vote: F. Lada- Y S. Lada- Y R. Miller- Y E. Forrester- Y R. Gratopp- Y. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

E. New Business

1. Clerk Vacancy

Supervisor Lada explains there is still a vacancy for the Clerk's position. As of the last meeting, John Jasinski was voted by the board to fill the position, however, Mr. Jasinski rescinded, and since he was never sworn in to the position, it is still open.

Motion by F. Lada to withdraw the appointment of John Jasinski as Clerk and to reopen the vacancy. Second by R. Gratopp.

Roll call vote: F. Lada- Y S. Lada- Y R. Miller- Y E. Forrester- Y R. Gratopp- Y. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

2. Planning Commission Vacancies

Supervisor Lada states that John Jasinski submitted his resume which includes extensive experience.

Motion by F. Lada to accept Mr. Jasinski's resume and intent to serve on the Planning Commission and will replace the position of former PC member, David Heyboer. Second by _____

Roll call vote: F. Lada- Y S. Lada- Y R. Miller- Y E. Forrester- Y R. Gratopp- Y. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

3. Issues with EMS (EMS Coverage, EMS Inter Township Agreements, CMS Mandates, etc.)

E. Forrester asked the Board to refrain from making any motions until all of the EMS issues were completely discussed with EMS Director Gray.

EMS Coverage-

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Director Gray explained that the EMS department is very short-staffed. Though there are 17 EMS staff, most of the shifts continue to go uncovered. This results in longer wait times for patients because other EMS providers have to travel much farther to provide assistance. During this time, an emergency call came on the radio for a resident in the Township. That shift was not covered by staff, so no one took action. After a few minutes of explaining that this is what happens every time due to lack of staff coverage, a couple of staff left to respond to the call. Director Gray stated that there are several reasons for the lack of coverage, one of which is the low pay. Director Gray explained that not only the current funding the department has is affecting the shortage, but the new CMS Mandates may as well.

Gray explained her attempts to contract with other local providers, which include Bay Mills, Luce County, and Kinross. These contracts would assist the Township with service calls, and save the Township money. No response from these providers have been given yet. Gray stated those providers may require the Township's EMS staff to be fully vaccinated in order to agree to assist.

Director Gray explained that there are 17 EMS staff, 10 of which have provided proof of vaccination, 5 more will bring in the proof of their vaccination, and 2 staff indicate they will not be vaccinated based upon religious or medical grounds. Director Gray indicated that approximately \$10,000-\$30,000 in funding from CMS (Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services through the Federal government) if Whitefish Township all the EMS staff were not vaccinated.

Gray states that at this time, Firefighters are not currently required to be vaccinated. When asked, Chief Degeler stated that of the 17 Fire Department staff, approximately 4 of them will likely refuse to be vaccinated.

Discussion continued as to sources of the potential loss in funds might come from. EMS staff were invited to give comment. Some suggestions included a waiver for those who do not vaccinate. Members of the public offered solutions which included budgeting changes, and taxing campers who use the State Campgrounds in the Township.

Clerk Miller suggested that, if the majority of emergency service calls occurred during the tourist seasons, that maybe the Township should consider a Tourist Tax or request of a portion of the Tourism Taxes from whichever entity collects them.

Supervisor Lada suggested using the ARPA funds that have been allocated to the Township in the amount of approximately \$59,000 (half payments made in 2021 and 2022). This would "cover: the potential loss that Gray mentioned.

Motion by E. Forrester to table all EMS issues for the next meeting. Second by _____

Roll call vote: F. Lada- Y S. Lada- Y R. Miller- Y E. Forrester- Y R. Gratopp- Y. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

F. Sign and return minutes to Clerk

G. Adjournment

Motion by F. Lada to end the meeting at 8:54PM. All in favor. **Meeting Adjourned.**