

Blendon Township  
Special Board Meeting Minutes  
March 15, 2019

1. **The meeting was called to order** at 1:05 pm by Township Supervisor, Bill Vanden Berg.
2. **Invocation** was given by Supervisor Bill Vanden Berg.
3. **The Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by all in attendance.
4. **Roll Call:** PRESENT: Bill Vanden Berg, Supervisor  
Robin Overway, Clerk  
Phil DeLange, Trustee  
Jim Vander Veen, Trustee  
ABSENT: Greg Golembiewski, Treasurer  
ATTENDING: Kurt Gernaat, Fire Chief
5. **Motion to approve the agenda** with the movement of item #8 to item #6 was made by Jim Vander Veen, Support by Robin Overway.

Motion Carried

**6. Appointment of Deputy Supervisor:**

- Supervisor Vander Berg announced the appointment of Bernadette Schaffer as the new Deputy Supervisor and handed out her bio to the board.
- Trustee Jim Vander Veen stated that he had some questions for Supervisor Vanden Berg that he wanted on the record:
  - Jim: Are you dead?
    - Bill: No
  - Jim: Do you have any disabilities that prevent you from carrying out your role as the supervisor?
    - Bill: I am moving slower since my heart attack, but no.
  - Jim: Are you sick?
    - Bill: No
  - Jim: Are you taking an extended absence from your role as Supervisor?
    - Bill: No
- Trustee Vander Veen stated: Per Michigan Compiled Law Section 41.61 (2). "In case of the absence, sickness, death or other disability of the supervisor, the deputy shall possess the powers and perform the duties of the supervisor, except the deputy shall not have a vote on the township board." "...with the approval of the supervisor, the deputy may assist the supervisor in the performance of the supervisor's duties at any additional times agreed upon between the township board and the supervisor..."
- Trustee Vander Veen also stated for the record that by his own admittance, Supervisor Vanden Berg is not dead, ill, going to have an extended absence, and does not have any disabilities; so, there is no need for a deputy supervisor. The board would be willing to talk at a future meeting what the roll of a deputy supervisor may or may not be. At this time there is nothing for Bernadette to do because she can not legally perform any of the supervisor's responsibilities without prior board approval, per MCL 41.61 (2).

- Supervisor Vanden Berg stated that he wanted Bernadette to work with Kurt Gernaat to help make the office function better and run more efficiently. He feels that is beneficial to have an outside source evaluate the office and provide accountability to the staff and Kurt.
  - Supervisor Vanden Berg also stated that he feels the Mrs. Schaffer can teach Kurt Gernaat many things about running a successful office. Since she has a degree in finance and management; she is better equipped to handle the workings of the office and can 'groom' Kurt for his future role in the township.
- Trustee Phil DeLange stated that he had a discussion with Bill Vanden Berg earlier, where he encouraged Bill to 'hang in there' as the supervisor until the end of his term. Explaining that he should give Kurt Gernaat more responsibilities, to help Bill out, and work together with Kurt.
  - Trustee DeLange is very disappointed that Supervisor Vanden Berg decided to go ahead and appoint a deputy supervisor. He feels that this was a very unnecessary and ill-advised decision; almost underhanded.
- Clerk Robin Overway stated that she supported Trustee DeLange's opinion. She feels that Kurt Gernaat is already doing all of the duties of a manager and doing them well.
  - She also agreed that Supervisor Vanden Berg's actions appear very underhanded.
- Trustee Vander Veen stated that he is vehemently against the appointment of a deputy supervisor.
  - He has 100% faith in Kurt's efforts and ability as a manager. Kurt has a stellar record of managing the fire department for many years. He has a lot of respect and many great relationships with the 'outside world' and the staff in the township office respects, supports and relies on Kurt daily.
- Trustee Vander Veen also stated, for the record, that he wants it clear that a deputy supervisor would have no role in the office or with the office staff.
- Bernadette Schaffer asked the Board if she was able to come in and work with just Bill?
  - The Board stated that she could come in but she legally could not work on anything that has to do with Bill's role and duties as the supervisor until it is able to be discussed and voted on by the Board.
- Trustee Phil DeLange read MCL Section 41.61 (2) to make sure all in attendance were clear on the law.

## 7. Resolution #2019-03.1:

- ***Motion to reconsider the township board's previous action of rejecting the Compensation Commissions Resolution #2019-03.1 was made by Robin Overway and supported by Jim Vander Veen.***
  - Roll Call pertaining to the motion to reconsider:
    - Yay: Bill Vanden Berg, Robin Overway, Phil DeLange
    - No: Jim Vander Veen
- Trustee Vander Veen stated that the understanding is that instead of taking the resolution as a whole, the board is able to vote on each office individually.
  - All agreed.
- Kurt Gernaat stated, for the record, according to township attorney, Jim Scales, changing the trustee pay from the current salary to a per diem would lower the trustee's pay mid-term which is unconstitutional.

- Trustee Vander Veen reminded the board before the voting that a 2-2 tie in the vote means that it automatically fails per Robert's Rules.
  - A roll call was taken by the board on the salaries of the officers:
    - The Office of **Supervisor**:
      - Yay: Bill Vanden Berg
      - No: Jim Vander Veen, Robin Overway, Phil DeLange
    - The Office of **Clerk**:
      - Yay: Bill Vanden Berg, Jim Vander Veen, Phil DeLange, Robin Overway
      - No: None
    - The Office of **Treasurer**:
      - Yay: Bill Vanden Berg, Jim Vander Veen, Phil DeLange, Robin Overway
      - No: None
    - The Office of **Trustee**:
      - Yay: None
      - No: Bill Vanden Berg, Jim Vander Veen, Phil DeLange, Robin Overway

## 8. 2019-2020 Budget:

- ***Motion to open the 2019-2020 Budget for discussion was made by Jim Vander Veen and supported by Robin Overway.***

Motion Carried
- Discussion was had by the board on the changes that were made to the draft of the budget.
  - Kurt Gernaat highlighted the main areas that were updated and 'cleaned up' since the last meeting:
    - Additional revenue
    - Removal of all Capital Outlay projects from the department budgets and added to a 'wish list' where they can be prioritized by the board, to be done when funds are available.
- Supervisor Vanden Berg wanted it recorded that he is uncomfortable with the amount of \$503,000, that was provided by the State, that is listed under Revenue Sharing. He does not like that it is a projection and wants a guaranteed number. He would like a letter from the State guaranteeing that Blendon Township will receive exactly the amount that they projected.
  - Trustee Jim Vander Veen explained that, like in all budgets, the numbers are a projection – an estimate, made based on many different factors. The amount listed is currently in the State Budget to be paid out to Blendon Township. However, the State can not give any more of a guarantee than Supervisor Vanden Berg can guarantee the revenue that the township will make from things like cemetery lots, building permits, rentals etc. and those estimated amounts are also being used in the budget.
- The Board continued with the discussion and prioritizing of the items currently listed under Capital Outlay, approving specific dollar amounts for each project – expenditure.
- ***Motion to present the 2019-2020 Budget to the public at the public hearing that will be held on Monday, March 18, 2019 was made by Phil DeLange and supported by Jim Vander Veen.***

- Yay: *Jim Vander Veen, Phil De Lange, Robin Overway*
- No: *Bill Vanden Berg*

9. ***With no further business before the Board*** a motion was made by *Robin Overway*, supported by *Phil De Lange* to adjourn at 2:40 pm.

Motion Carried

Recorded by Tina Vander Schuur  
Submitted by Robin Overway, Township Clerk

DRAFT