

Village of Richland/Richland Township

Joint Meeting

7401 North 32nd Street

Richland, MI 49083

April 14, 2016

Approved as amended by council to add Richland Township Joint Minutes - JWH

Village Present:

President Greve
Clerk Holewa
Treasurer Edds
Trustee Koporetz
Trustee Gross
Trustee Smith
Trustee Prentice

Township Present:

Supervisor Harma
Clerk LaDuke
Trustee A.J. Harma
Trustee Wendzel
Trustee Byrnes
Trustee P. Foust

Absent: Village Trustees K. Foust and K. Lewis, Township Treasurer, M. Drouin

Others present:

Twp. Attorneys R. Seeber and T.S. Koches

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Harma at 7:00 pm

Supervisor Harma led the Pledge of Allegiance

It was announced by Supervisor Harma that this meeting was not a public hearing and board members would listen to citizen comments but would not answer any questions. No decisions would be made tonight.

Township Attorney Seeber explained the disincorporation process to the audience.

A petition for disincorporation was filed with the Richland Township Clerk. Per statute 15% of registered village electors' signatures are needed to file. Signatures were then certified by the Township clerk and presented to the County clerk. County clerk Snow placed the question on the ballot. If disincorporation occurs the Village becomes part of the Township. Disincorporation has never been successful in Michigan. Both Village and Township electors will vote on the disincorporation question. A 2/3 vote is needed to prevail.

Motion to approve the agenda Bynes/A. Harma– CARRIED

Motion to approve March 10, 2016 joint meeting minutes A. Harma/Byrne– CARRIED

Citizen comments:

A large number of people attended the joint meeting to express their opinions and ask questions about the disincorporation issue.

Local village businessman, Ryan Dickerson, questioned the village as to what they could present to help people decide how to vote.

Sherry Snyder thinks that the Reclaim organization has a negative effect on the community. A yes vote would mean the loss of police jobs, snow plowing of the roads and sidewalks. She supports the police.

Doug Jonas encouraged residents to look closely at the Reclaim group statements. He mentioned the loss of the speedy police response time and road plowing.

Rob Perks has initiated a complaint with the State of Michigan's Bureau of Elections against the Village of Richland for violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act. Alleging the village has used public funds to influence the outcome of the May 3rd ballot proposal.

Jamie Ricca, village police clerk, cleared up some confusion: the village has 3 full-time, 2 part-time and 3 reserve officers. Contrary to rumors a holding cell is not part of the new police office.

Rob Brinkerhoff has been a public official for 32 years. He states that there is not a specific plan and more research is needed.

? Jackson, why would we vote for it?

Howard Briggs said that he knew when he moved here that the he would be paying village and township taxes. He likes the concept of a village.

Tim VanderMeulen said that the Village Council was not necessary there would be less government and no duplication of government. He stated that the township has full-time officials and they are more efficient than the part-time village officials. No need to duplicate services.

New Business

Village trustee Koporetz asked if a permanent village committee would be formed and make calls to local businesses as per the Reclaim group's website posting. *Response – no.* She also questioned if the township saved a million dollars. *Response – no.*

Township trustee Wendzel asked if the disincorporation vote was successful would the township decide in October what if any services would remain intact for the village. *Response – yes.*

The county would be in charge of the roads.

Village trustee Prentice asked if the library would be affected. *Response – Attorney Seeber said that she not checked into that.*

The Village council had the option to form a disincorporation committee when they failed to do so the question went to the ballot for a vote.

Township trustee Byrnes asked village treasurer Edds if the township had received a list of village assets. *Response – Edds reported that the list had been sent to Township Attorney Koches. Koches said that he would forward the information to the township board.*

Village trustee Smith said that he understood that the township and village had agreed to mail a flyer to residents to inform them of the issues. *Response – Township Trustee Harma said that the township had no intent to mail a flyer. Supervisor Harma said that it was not her understanding. Village President Greve stated that we are not allowed to influence the vote with **what if** possibilities.*

Trustee Harma asked if the township had to wait until the County Commissioners resolution vote in October to do anything. Response – Attorney Seeber explained that she had not received a response from the Attorney General. The township should begin discussions as to the decisions that would need to be made regarding services between May and October. She suggested workshops.

Trustee Harma requested that the General Law Village Act be posted on the website. President Greve asked that it be posted to the village website as well.

Trustee updates:

No Trustee updates.

Citizen Comments:

Many citizens made comments on the possible outcome of the May 3rd vote regarding the disincorporation of the village. They are summarized below:

The township votes could override his village vote and rights.

If the disincorporation passes why ask the township for services that villagers are already paying for. (Special assessment districts).

Expand the police coverage.

How is police coverage outside of the village helping the village?

Township officials are doing a great job.

Love the village, how can a vote be held when there are so many unanswered questions?

The village is not determined by a government, people make the community.

A disincorporation would be history making. Got involved because of the village council's illegal actions.

Some concern over the possible deterioration of the village if the disincorporation is passed.

People urged to research on what is going on, get involved.

Many stated their support for the police department. Response time from the county is longer.

Be a part of the solution to make things better.

The issues are not about the police department, leaf pick up, etc. It is about the illegal actions of the village council – go to village meetings to learn what is going on.

Compare village costs with other communities.

Disincorporation is overkill just because some are unhappy with the village council.

Base your vote on facts.

There is a small group that complains and makes it difficult for the village council to do their job.

The school children enjoy interaction with the police. Need the police to keep the community safe.

Some residents make it difficult to serve on the village council. Thanked the council for the wonderful job they are doing.

How can the council not know that you cannot fire an elected official? Cost the village \$70,000 for their mistake.

If the disincorporation is defeated the question will be brought up again.

The Community Hall has poor acoustics she complained because she has a right to attend village meetings and be able hear what is being said.

The village clerk deserved to be fired and reprimanded. Supports a no vote.

Citizens were urged to run for elected positions on the village council if they are unhappy with current officials.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectively submitted by:

Jacqueline W. Holewa

Village of Richland Clerk

[April 14, 2016 Richland Township/Village of Richland Joint Minutes](#)