

**PROPOSED
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
ROCK RIVER TOWNSHIP
APRIL 16TH, 2024**

Meeting called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Strand, Rowan Bunce, Trevor Case, Annie Dunn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Teri Grout

GUESTS: Scott Bunce, Heidi Swajanen, Dan Rushford, Olivia Kingery, Brice Burge, Sarah Witmer, Cindy Kallio, Vince Grout, Jack & Bonnie Hakkola, Jim and Tara Rondeau, Kathy LaRock, Sandra Girard, Mick & Dawn Rondeau, Eric Artress, Ron LeJeune, Jon Rondeau, Cora Fisher, Tymber Fisher

Motion to appoint Bunce as interim supervisor for today's meeting, by Case, Dunn, seconds. MC

PUBLIC COMMENT:

MINUTES: Motion to approve March board minutes by Strand, seconded by Case. MCU

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT:

PAY BILLS: Motion to pay bills (\$10972.46) with debits/checks #18518- by 18540, by Case seconded by Strand. MCU

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Report

PLANNING COMMISSION: 1.) April 2 Work Session Report - May 13th Meeting

ASSESSOR REPORT:

FIRE DEPT: 2 calls, lift assist, mutual aid fire call with mathias twp.

CEMETERY REPORT: Report

LIBRARY: Report

SKI HILL:

CORRESPONDENCE: LeJeune Letter

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: 1.) Short Term Rental Ordinance Zoning Language

NEW BUSINESS: 1.) Patrolling Concerns by MSP on ET Road

2.) Pine Grove Limited Right of Burial Agreement - Motion to accept and implement new Right of Burial agreement by Case seconded by Strand. MC

3.) Interim FOIA Coordinator motion to appoint Teri Grout as interim FOIA Coordinator by Case seconded by Dunn. MC

4.) Resignations:

Motion to accept resignation of Maria Strand effective by Tuesday April 16th, by Bunce Seconded Annie

Roll Call Vote: Maria Strand Recuse - Annie Dunn Aye - Trevor Case Aye - Rowan Bunce Aye

Absent : Teri Grout

Recused : Maria Strand

Letter of Resignation Attached

April 16, 2024

To the Rock River Township board members and community members,

Today, I regretfully must inform you that I am resigning from the Rock River Township Clerk position. I had much pride in serving the community but now I must step back and take care of my family and keep them from what I am seeing become a normal behavior towards public servants, when I know this behavior is not reasonable or healthy for anyone.

Years ago, when I moved to this township, it was a quiet, beautiful place that I was looking forward to putting my energy and services into. I went to monthly board meetings and observed positions opening up and nobody took them after months of postings. So I stepped up. Months for posting open positions at the township level and nobody took interest. I stepped up for the Ski Hill, the cemetery, deputy clerk, and clerk of the township. It is unfortunate that some individuals believe that it is OK to treat community service members with disrespect, slander, libel, stalking, and many other forms of harassment towards people who are just trying to make a difference for the good of the community we live in, especially when nobody stepped up when the board requested in the first place. I will not subject my family or my two daughters to this type of treatment any longer.

It is at a point where this harassment towards the township is at its limit. The governing body cannot function properly while being attacked on a day to day basis. This is a small township government where regular people of the community try to step up and step into positions and do the best they can for their community members after their regular jobs and family time. Statutory duties of the clerk are growing every day and it is only fair that the clerk be able to do their job without the added stress of unhinged hate groups.

It was at the moment I knew this no longer was personal but political when I witnessed the unwarranted man-hunt the newly appointed Treasurer had to endure the second I made the minutes regarding her appointment public. I knew it was time to step away because now I know people think it is ok to stalk and harass civil servants at their home where they live with their children. This was not an acceptable form of freedom of speech before 2016. Having a new employee call you terrified about the safety of herself and family because someone is asking people for their home address, is not something I wish to be a part of and shouldn't be an issue at all. There were no other applicants. If you have a problem, step up and help, don't step on the only person who does. That person could have calmly asked their local official for that information instead of intimidating the one person who stepped up and making them afraid to be in their own home.

I will continue happily volunteering for our community but not serving at the Rock River Township, Clerk position any longer as I do not feel comfortable even going to the office alone. My resignation is effective 10 PM, Today, Tuesday, April 16.

I wish the current and future board members luck, safety, and success.

Maria Strand

**Motion to accept resignation of Annie Dunn effective by 12:01 Wednesday April 17th by Strand Seconded Case
Roll Call Vote: Maria Strand Aye - Annie Dunn Aye - Trevor Case Aye - Rowan Bunce Aye
Absent : Teri Grout
Recused : Annie Dunn
Letter of Resignation Attached**

**Motion to accept resignation of Trevor Case effective by April 17th, Midnight, by Strand Seconded Dunn.
Roll Call Vote: Maria Strand Aye - Annie Dunn Aye - Trevor Case, Recused - Rowan Bunce Aye
Absent : Teri Grout
Recused : Trevor Case
Letter of Resignation Attached :**

To the community of Rock River Township: April 16th 2024

Today is a sad day in my heart as I have to make the very difficult decision to resign from my Trustee position on the Rock River Township Board effective at midnight on April 17th. I joined the township board when I was elected when I ran unopposed for the Trustee position in 2016. The first six years of my service was rather effective as a board member and we implemented numerous beneficial things such as the road improvement millage, improvements to the ski hill, fire dept, cemetery, and township hall. This year in particular I was happy to be able to budget for all the street signs to be replaced and to continue our dust control program. Township board members are not professional administrators, they are citizens who have chosen to lend their time and effort to local governance. They are regular folks who have families, run local businesses, and volunteer their time to community efforts. In return, we have been subjected to systematic harassment and abuse. Our board members do not feel safe and have been victims of defamation, accusations of malfeasance, and even embezzlement without any proof.

Two years ago, a contingent of radical political activists from our community decided that they didn't like our board and wanted the board seats in 2024. Since then there has been a premeditated and choreographed attack on all our township board members and anyone that

would speak to their defense. Even those that would try to deliver public facts would be personally attacked. Sure, a lot of these attacks happen on social media but it doesn't end there. These attacks have been at our home, at our place of business, public meetings and anywhere else where these individuals find us whether public or private. At great personal expense, I have been forced to erect a 7 foot privacy fence in front of my house to stop Alisa Charlevoix personal attacks on my home at all hours of the night while we have infants trying to sleep. We have been granted a Personal Protection Order to hopefully curb some of her harassment and stalking behavior. We have also had baseless attacks on our farm, business, and character by Alisa, Jim and Tara Rondeau, Jon Rondeau, Dawn Rondeau, and Ron Lejune.

The last straw was losing our Treasurer to a stroke. We opened the job to anyone in the community and only received one letter of interest. So we hired that person since she was very qualified. Before she could even sit at one meeting on the board, she was attacked to the point of quitting. These baseless attacks waste thousands of taxpayer dollars and resources at the township and county level.

Serving this community was a great pride of mine but after how my family has been treated for doing the best we can for our community is simply not right and cannot continue. I won't raise my daughters in this political environment and we shouldn't have to. This contingent of political activists have already pushed out numerous good public servants by shameless, unethical, and unhinged attacks and will continue to do so until their agenda is met.

Trevor W. Case

Letter of Support from Trustee Bunce: Letter of support for the resignations of:

Trevor Case, Trustee

Maria Strand, Clerk

Annie Dunn, Treasurer

First and foremost, I would like to thank Trevor, Maria and Annie for their work on the board. These jobs take a lot of time and effort and the work you've done and the volunteer time you've put in has been an amazing and helpful resource to this township. These positions are not easy, and it is extremely unfortunate that you are leaving the board under these circumstances.

We, the board, are not government professionals. We are your neighbors, we shop locally, some of us are raising our children here, we own local businesses, and we all live within a few miles of one another. We understand that when we take our oaths of public office we are engaging with our community on a different level and in a role where we can expect a level of scrutiny by our neighbors to ensure that the community we are serving is being treated with respect and listened to. I understand that there would be decisions made where we all wouldn't agree on everything, and no one would be happy with the conclusion. That's a fundamental point of democratic governance. However, no one should be subjected to the level of accusations, ridicule and malicious comments that we have been experiencing in this community. From social media to hand painted signs you are entitled to your first amendment rights to say what you feel but hateful rhetoric shouldn't be the default. Talk to us, ask us questions, listen to our answers and if you are still not satisfied help us find solutions. Treat us like your neighbors because we are your neighbors.

This board has received dozens of FOIA requests. We have been consistently threatened with litigation. We have been recorded and videotaped and then our statements have been misrepresented. We have been called names and unsubstantiated rumors have been spread. This is a small community and word gets around. And to what end? No evidence of the perceived misconduct has been brought forward. No lawsuits filed. No recall petitions circulated. If the accusations levied against the members of this board are true, show your work and prove them to be true. But to this day nothing has come forth. It has just been bullying, intimidation, misinformation

and misgivings that is leading all of us to distrust each other and become further apart than ever in our small neck of the woods. This agitation takes a physical toll on all of us in the form of anxiety, anger, fear and sleepless nights. Nobody deserves this. Not this board and not any of you.

Speaking for myself and I believe the rest of the board would agree that we are here to do right by this township. I want this township to thrive. I want it to be safe, keep its character, keep its sense of community while simultaneously moving into the future, growing and improving. I'm not here to damage the place I've spent my entire life and started a business in. Despite the accusations to the contrary. This is a thankless job and if you were sitting where we are now, I would treat you like the neighbors you are. The reasons for your resignation are valid and completely understandable. I wish you the best outside of public service and I hope the dedication to your community will continue.

Rowan Bunce
Rock River Township Trustee

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS OR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Motion to close the meeting by Case seconded by Strand Meeting Adjourned at.

Maria Strand, Clerk

Teresa Grout, Supervisor

Proposed Minutes, Subject to Change

NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING, MAY 21ST, 2024, AT 7PM AT THE TWP. HALL