

Minutes of the regular scheduled meeting of the Mid-Michigan Aquatic Recreational Authority held Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 5:15 p.m. at Union Township Hall, Mt. Pleasant, Isabella County, MI

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by John Zang at 5:21 p.m.

John Zang noted last minute unplanned change in meeting location to Union Township Hall – notice has been posted on the door of Isabella County Commission on Aging.

Members present: Allison Chiodini, Mark Stansberry, Lisa Diaz Sytsema, Judy Wagley, John Zang.

Others present: Mark Stuhldreher.

Others present virtually: Paul Stauder and Nate Watson present virtually.

Members absent: Stan Shingles

Approval of Agenda

Lisa Diaz Sytsema made a motion supported by Judy Wagley, to approve the agenda.

Ayes: Chiodini, Stansberry, Diaz Sytsema, Wagley, Zang

Nays: None

Absent: Shingles

Motion carried

Public input on agenda items

None

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the August 16, 2023 MMARA Board Meeting

Judy Wagley made a motion supported by Mark Stansberry, to approve the Meeting Minutes from the August 16, 2023 MMARA Board Meeting.

Ayes: Chiodini, Stansberry, Diaz Sytsema, Wagley, Zang

Nays: None

Absent: Shingles

Motion carried

New Business

PFM Financial Advisors

Paul Stauder and Nate Watson joined us from PFM Financial Advisors. They are registered municipal advisors and therefore have to meet certain requirements in order to provide specific advice, so discussion was kept general and broad for this discussion. They have experience in working with Holland Aquatic Center and Holland Recreation Authority as well as Mt. Pleasant Public Schools, along with many other school districts and recreation authorities throughout Michigan and the United States. Their company assists municipalities in financial planning pre and post-election for planning and obtaining bond financing.

Attendance/Members Present Update

Stan Shingles present.

PFM Financial Advisors (continued)

Paul Stauder led discussion on importance in our situation of a financial advisor working closely with Bond Attorney to review legal statute under which our recreational authority was formed to ensure the bond financing options fall within the allowable parameters. They would first review all of our financial projections, cost models, along with the financing and bond revenue projections from Stu Isaac with Isaac Sports Group, and do their own projections to confirm the work we have already done with Stu. Then would dig into the legal statute and start pulling together bond financing structure options.

Mark Stuhldreher made the recommendation for the MMARA Board to move forward in contracting with a Financial Advisor and Bond Attorney at this time, in order to begin the process and get specific advice on our needs and options. Lisa Diaz Sytsema made a verbal request for proposal/agreement to Paul Stauder with PFM, to work with them as our Financial Advisors on this project. Paul noted he could have an agreement sent over to Board Chairman John Zang within a day or two, and the only immediate action that would be needed is just confirmation of receipt and acknowledgement that the agreement was read, and can be formally approved at next MMARA board meeting in October.

Referred bond attorney options include Thrune Law Firm out of Lansing (this is who Mt. Pleasant Public Schools uses) and Miller Canfield (Mark Stuhldreher has experience in working with Miller Canfield in past projects and municipalities, and noted Miller Canfield works with Union Township and City of Mt. Pleasant). Paul Stauder noted that Miller Canfield probably has more experience working specifically with Municipal Recreational Authorities. Mark Stuhldreher offered to reach out to Pat McGow at Miller Canfield on behalf of MMARA to make the introduction.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Lisa Diaz Sytsema provided financial update, including: updated monthly budget balance sheet and profit and loss reports dated August 31, 2023, as well as current accounts payable due needing approval, which include: Recurring Monthly Intuit Quick Books Fee of \$55.00, Online Bill Pay Fee of \$4.44, Recurring monthly fee to Constant Contact of \$35.00 and invoice from Knack Creative (for Graphic Design services for design of brochure) in the amount of \$775.00.

Judy Wagley made a motion supported Stan Shingles to approve the processing of August payments on current due invoices listed above.

Ayes: Chiodini, Stansberry, Diaz Sytsema, Shingles, Wagley, Zang

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried

Financial updates discussion also included discussion on financial projections and services needing payment over the next few months, such as monthly recurring expenses, website development fee invoice, estimate for audit that will be due at the end of the year.

Old Business

COMMITTEE UPDATE – Facility Committee

Allison Chiodini provided an update: Updated concept site plan from Tower Pinkster based on options presented, discussion and feedback from last meeting. Looks like all feedback was incorporated into revised concept site plan; no new added comments for Tower Pinkster. Allison to give Tower Pinkster the approval to proceed in this direction.

COMMITTEE UPDATE – Communication & Campaign Committee

Lisa Diaz Sytsema provided an update on the progress of this committee.

1. Several emails bounced back from the community leaders invitation sent out by Constant Contact. Please check the list of bounce back emails to see if you are aware of any corrections. It was noted that all of the emails from Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe all bounced back, so wondering if their internal email server flagged the emails as spam because they came from Constant Contact.
2. First community outreach group presentation to Rotary Club went very well and was overall very well received.
3. Please reference FAQ document in Communications folder on google drive for answers to the most commonly asked questions that this group is receiving, as we go out into the community and begin presenting and pitching this to community leaders and donors.
4. MMARA website has been launched and is live and able to accept donations.
5. Lisa Diaz Sytsema presented information from recent discussion with Byrum Fisk Advocacy Communications, which is the Campaign Strategy/Marketing/Communications consultant that was used by Mt. Pleasant Public Schools on their recent 2022 Bond Campaign. Estimated fees for services would be \$5,000 per month retainer fees up front and that would bump up to \$8,000 per month in the three final months before the election in February (estimated \$34,000 if we start on Oct 1), and that does not include printing or sending of mailings. There is an overlap of their services with some of the work that we have already done with Stu Isaac with Isaac Sports Group. Lisa Diaz Sytsema to go back to Byrum Fisk to get a more specific fee proposal based on the a-la-carte services that we would want. The larger discussion was on the needed fundraising push to raise the dollars to fund these services, how much we can feasibly raise, and how much services fees we can afford.

COMMITTEE UPDATE – Fundraising Committee

Discussion above from Communications & Campaign Committee led into discussion and updates on Fundraising efforts. Mark Stansberry provided an update that they are starting to see a slow down in their fundraising responses, and need help from the larger board to push the fundraising campaign forward. Some specific possible donors were discussed and board members assigned to follow up. Lisa Diaz Sytsema made recommendation in fundraising conversations to ask for a specific dollar amount, and if there is discomfort and resistance, then to ask what they would be comfortable with

COMMITTEE UPDATE – Finance & Legal Committee

John Zang provided an update that he did receive a response from attorney at Varnum acknowledging our request for drafting and development of the ballot language along with the letter to confirm tax deductible donation status. Lisa Diaz Sytsema requested for first draft of ballot language from Varnum from John Zang, in order to send to Byrum Fisk for their input and recommendations on next steps.

COMMITTEE UPDATE – Governance

Judy Wagley and John Zang provided update on recent grant application was discovered too late to be able to apply, as we do not yet have our SAM# (System for Award Management).

Announcements on MMARA Board related issues and concerns:

The next monthly meeting in October was rescheduled to the following date due to conflicts:

October Meeting Date revised to: Thurs Oct 12, 2023

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 5:15 pm, and will be conducted in person at Isabella County Commission on Aging, Mt Pleasant, Isabella County, MI.

Adjournment

Motion by Lisa Diaz Sytsema and supported by Stan Shingles to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Chiodini, Shingles, Stansberry, Diaz Sytsema, Wagley, Zang

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Allison Chiodini, Secretary