

**TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 31ST, 2022
6:00 PM**

**SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- 1) This is a Special Meeting of the Harmony Township Commissioners for the purpose of filling a vacancy. Due to the interest of the public, the meeting will be available by Zoom and at the Township Building subject to Fire Code capacity limits.
- 2) The Township Commissioners have requested the seven residents who have submitted letters of interest be present at the meeting in the event a Commissioner would like to ask a question of them.

CALL TO ORDER. President DeBona called the meeting to order and led those in attendance, both in person and on Zoom in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL of the Commissioners and other officials who were all in attendance except as noted.

Mrs. DeBona, President
Mrs. Mylan, Vice President
Mr. Angus, Commissioner
Mr. Molchen, Commissioner
Mr. Kokoski, Vacancy In Memoriam
Ms. Shannon Steele, Solicitor
Mr. Villella, Manager

**RESIDENTS AND INTERESTED PARTIES IN ATTENDANCE
VIA ZOOM**

Paula Winne
Frank Presto
Jess Johns
Maria Kotula
Christine Whipple
Denise
Albert Mylan

IN PERSON ATTENDANCE

A copy of the Sign In Sheet of all persons attending the Special Meeting in Person is attached.

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COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSION President DeBona made a brief statement that the reason we are here this evening, is due to the passing of Paul Kokoski, who will be sadly missed.

Solicitor Steele made a statement that the reason for being here is to select a party to take the remainder of the term of Commissioner Kokoski. The Board of Commissioners have thirty (30) days by law to appoint a successor. Initially the Board planned to have interviews to learn more about the parties who submitted letters of interest. In an effort to provide transparency the Board of Commissioners determined to have te meeting in this forum.

President DeBona announced at this time the Board of Commissioners will discuss the filling of the open seat. President DeBona offered each of the interested parties the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Commissioners and the community. The parties will be presented in the order the letters of interest were submitted.

The following candidates made statements highlighting their background, experience, and interest in serving as Commissioner.:

Fabiola Gergerich

Joseph Kotula

Paul Mitchell

John Cermak

Donald Gunther

Constance Barlamas and

Garrett Kovacevic.

President DeBona opened the floor to the Commissioners to ask the candidates questions.

Commissioner Molchen began by asking John Cermak and Don Gunther what they believe their greatest achievements were during their term of Commissioner.

Both candidates responded to the inquiry citing. Mr Cermak highlighted efforts to obtain Grants to get funds for the sanitary sewer system throughout the community.

Mr. Gunther responded by stating having served the Board for 17 years and always being available to the residents. He loved being a member of the Board.

Commissioner Molchen asked the candidates that in light of recent situations where funds are missing what would you do?

Mr. Cermak responded by stating eliminating the cash system.

Mr. Gunther stated that the members of the Board were not all equal members.

Mr. Kovacevic stated the need to reconcile account activity at the end of each month.

Ms. Barlamas answered by identifying delinquencies at the end of each month and transparency.

Ms. Gergerich cited her experience in the finance sector of business.

Mr. Mitchell offered comparisons being made month to month and how does the Township compare to other communities.

Mr. Cermak suggested that it may have been the time when it occurred that may have led to certain instabilities. He offered the example when there were issues in the past and Commissioner Angus was successful in identifying the incident.

Commissioner Angus briefly spoke to his involvement at the time referenced by Mr. Cermak.

Commissioner Mylan asked the candidates what the biggest issues and challenges are.

Ms. Barlamas responded by saying that we are not developing ourselves and the need to establish the difference with the Township and the Borough of Ambridge. She continued to state her advocacy for small business.

Mr. Mitchell referred to the property owned by Enterprise Bank and a residential property on Ridge Rd.

Ms. Gergerich said they should meet with the County to see what they are able to offer the Township.

Mr. Kovacevic stated the need to try and advocate for small business.

Mr. Cermak stated the problems with Duss Avenue and a building located on 24th Street and that it should be condemned.

President DeBona asked the candidates what should be done in the event of a deadlock?

Mr. Cermak referred to past situations when he was on the Board and was the swing vote. The situation was examined and came to a decision. He suggested that they do not hold the vote personal.

Mr. Kotula stated that they should act in the best interest of community.

Ms. Barlamas stated they should do research, maintain an open mind, and conduct due diligence. She offered if decisions are made to move backward then not doing their job.

Mr. Mitchell offered respect and professionalism should be followed. See it as a business decision and remove the personal side out of the decision.

Ms. Gergerich offered that they should listen to the public.

Mr. Kovacevic offered that they should look to the facts to see if they may lead in a different direction and facts can compliment how feelings may impact upon certain things

Commissioner Angus stated he was impressed by the answers provided by the parties.

Commissioner Molchen asked the opinion of the candidates regarding the Regionalization of the Police and Fire department?

Ms. Barlamas stated she does not know how she feels about it. Need to figure out the best way to get things accomplished.

Mr. Cermak referenced that they previously discussed regionalization and he spoke to the stakeholders. There would be more resources, elimination of parochialism and there would not be a duplication of services. He thought highly of the Volunteer Fire department.

Ms. Gergerich stated there was to be a meeting with the District Attorney's office. She inquired will the Police get to my house or do I have to wait

Mr. Kovacevic asked about the public perception. How do they add value to the community?
Need to communicate the support they are given.

Commissioner Molchen asked why is there interest in the Commissioner position now?

Mr. Mitchell stated he had been waiting for an opportunity to work with people in the community.

Mr. Kovacevic said there was a steep stable of people running and this was a unique opportunity to present themselves today.

President DeBona asked what kind of time commitment do you think the job requires?

Ms Barlamas responded by saying a lot of time will be required.

Mr Kotula stated that he is active and will put the time into do the job and whatever needs to be done. Give everything to the Board.

Ms. Gergerich stated she knows there is a lot required and she will have free time. She never ran for office before and once into something she is very driven.

Mr. Mitchell stated when you own your own business you can make your own hours. He is a whatever it takes kind of guy.

Mr. Kovacevic offered that there are continual changes and must rely upon each other and work with other individuals.

PUBLIC COMMENT. President DeBona opened the floor for public comment and asked that the public make comments only and that the comment period be limited to 5 minutes per resident.

Bill Gandjos Woodland Rd. Wants to thank everyone for coming out to meeting this evening. Believes the Township has big problem with properties on Duss Avenue and that particular property has liens placed against it by the County Community Development Corp.

On Police Consolidation he would like to see this being revived.

Bradley Payne Sunset. Connecting as a resident, fantastic to see 7 individuals interested in the position

He asked the Board to choose wisely . . .

Jack Bedalota Sylvan Rd. Asks the Board to select a person who will fit in. A lot of things look bad on Duss Avenue

President DeBona said there were 7 great candidates. Everyone has brought something . . . she hopes everyone can continue to be involved . . . take the initiative you have and run with it

Commissioner Molchen . . . appreciates if whoever is not chosen will participate in the Board . . . nice to see new blood.

Commissioner Mylan . . . the candidates have made it very hard on us(Commissioners) I am looking for the candidate who will move the community forward

President DeBona welcomed nominations from the floor

Commissioner Molchen nominated Connie Barlamas

Commissioner Angus seconded

Commissioner Mylan nominated Garrett Kovacevic

A vote was taken on Connie Barlamas resulting in a two - two tie as follows:

Molchen Y Angus Y Mylan N DeBona N

A Vote was taken on Garrett Kovacevic resulting in a two- two tie as follows

:

Angus N Molchen N Mylan Y DeBona Y

President DeBona stated that both candidates have equal skill sets

Commissioner Mylan stated that she has a lot of questions. Both candidates have very similar backgrounds.

Commissioner Mylan stated that she felt Ms Barlamas appears to have too much on her plate.

Ms Barlamas responded by saying that she was not going anywhere and is vested in Harmony Township.

Commissioner Angus stated that he scored everyone and that he scored Garrett number 2 and Connie is a ball of fire. Commissioner Angus continued by saying the Board needed someone who is a go getter . . . with energy and may be a part of the Board in the future

President DeBona said the Board can take nominations again and vote again

Commissioner Mylan stated that Connie is so involved and asked Garrett what is he able to do

Mr Kovacevic said that his family moved here and liked what was here. Spoke of family moving here, they have a young daughter and there os a need for young children in the neighborhood. He wants to make the community better by investing in it. He wants to invest time for a forever home for his daughter so she will want to return to their home.

Commissioner Molchen expressed that he would like to see Garrett run again

The Board of Commissioners took a recess from the meeting at approximately 7:35 Pm and the meeting was resumed at 7:45Pm.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Molchen to nominate Connie Barlamas

A Vote was taken as follows:

Molchen Y Angus Y Mylan Y DeBona Y

Motion Carried and Ms. Barlamas was welcomed to the Board of Commissioners

President DeBona asked Bill Gandjos to make a few comments about the Municipal Authority. Mr Gandjos said the Board would be reorganizing this month and they will be working to move to a usage-based billing.

President DeBona then invited Sue Palombo of the Planning Commission to speak about the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT Voice Vote. Motion Angus Second Molchen

Time of Adjournment: 7:50PM