

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF SUPERIOR BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
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1. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Charter Township of Superior Board was called to order by the Supervisor Ken Schwartz at 5:00 p.m. on July 9, 2024, at the Superior Charter Township Hall, 3040 North Prospect, Superior Charter Township, Michigan.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor Schwartz led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

3. ROLL CALL

The members present were Supervisor Ken Schwartz, Clerk Lynette Findley, Treasurer Lisa Lewis, Trustee Nancy Caviston, Trustee Bernice Lindke, Trustee Rhonda McGill, and Trustee Bill Secrest.

Absent: Trustee Bill Secrest

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

It was moved by Trustee Lindke supported by Treasurer Lewis, to adopt the agenda.

The motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

A. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Ron Cochell, Berry Rd., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Glen Thomas, Barrington Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Eric Eeles, Arlington Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Thelma Perry, Berkshire Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with communication and with the Township waste collection services.
- Gilda Myles, Manchester Dr. expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- John Brooks, Wexford Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.

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- Irma Golden, Sheffield Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Param, Golfview Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Lillian Jones, Knollwood Band, expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Jonathan Laye, Hamlet Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Georgia Genwright, Ascot Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Brian Clark, Barrington Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Steph, Zoom, expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Clerk Findley raised two points on behalf of individuals. First, she mentioned that a staff member had asked if Priority Waste was aware of and would honor the bag tag program in place for residents without monthly service accounts. Second, read an email from Steve Schultz, Eastbrook Rd., expressing disappointment that they received the email about Priority Waste attending today's meeting only at 3:00 p.m., giving them just two hours' notice, which prevented them from attending. He also highlighted that last week; Priority Waste had picked up both trash and recycling with the same truck and stressed the importance of ensuring this does not happen again.
- Steph, Zoom, further expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Trustee Lindke read a letter from a resident expressing dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services and shared that it was relayed to her that 41 calls have been made to Township Hall.
- Supervisor Schwartz said the calls are slowly being returned.
- Trustee McGill said she spoke with several residents about ongoing waste management issues, highlighting a specific case where GFL failed to replace a destroyed bin and deleted the ticket. She stressed that Priority Waste must address these issues and shared observations of health and safety concerns from uncollected trash, noting that the problem was supposed to be resolved by July 4 but remained unresolved. She urged for immediate answers and resolution, emphasizing Priority Waste's prior experience.
- Trustee Lindke countered McGill's observations, noting her area (north side) was clean and that neighborhoods like Tanglewood and Glenborough had no issues. She pointed out the perception of a north versus south issue, emphasizing the need to address the problem as a unified township. She acknowledged residents' anger and justified frustrations.
- Eric Eeles, Arlington Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services and explained how to address "critters."
- Leona Foster, Tanglewood Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Kim Harding, Ascot Dr., expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Emily Dabish-Yahkind, Beaumont Ave, expressed dissatisfaction with the Township communication.

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- Natasha Allen, Golfview Dr., Zoom, expressed dissatisfaction with the Township waste collection services.
- Brian Clark, Barrington Dr., stressed that someone should take the lead on billing.
- Clerk Findley expressed her frustration about being given incorrect information regarding garbage pickup on July 4, which she then shared with residents. She emphasized the need for better communication from Priority Waste, stating the Board had been begging for information to share with residents. Findley noted hydraulic fluid from broken trucks on the streets as an additional issue. She requested that Priority Waste provide information by the next day for posting on the website. She stressed that both residents and the Board deserve respect, which they are not currently receiving.
- Glen Thomas, Barrington Dr., raised the idea of adding waste collection services to the residents tax bill.

Supervisor Schwartz gave a brief history of the Townships waste collection services.

- He explained that Republic Services handled residential pickup for about 10 years satisfactorily, despite occasional issues, but in August 2022, they informed the Township they would end service by October 1, giving only six weeks' notice.
- After negotiations, Republic extended service to October 31, rushing the Township into the RFP process, where bids were received from Wastemaster, Priority, and GFL. GFL, being the least expensive and qualified, was chosen.
- Since GFL took over, there have been numerous problems, such as missing subdivisions and streets. Schwartz communicated frequently with GFL representatives, but issues persisted.
- In June, GFL announced their sale to Priority, but the Township received no information from either company. The contract allowed for an assignment, and to avoid disrupting service, the Township approved it. July 1 was set as the test date, but Priority failed to meet expectations.
- The Township staff has been inundated with calls from residents about missed pickups. Schwartz agreed with Clerk Findley's earlier comments on the lack of information and expressed embarrassment over the situation.
- Supervisor Schwartz said he looks forward to Sam Caramagno, Priority Waste, addressing the issues and fulfilling the necessary promises.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSS PRIORITY WASTE

- Sam Caramagno from Priority Waste acknowledged residents' concerns and explained that there were limitations on communication with GFL customers due to the sale agreement.
- Caramagno noted that Priority Waste is a Michigan based company and faced a rough start, taking over seventy-four contracts from GFL just before the holiday. He mentioned significant delays caused by GFL delivering both operational and disabled trucks together, hindering Priority Waste's ability to maintain service.

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- Caramagno reported that they were behind on trash collection and working through the weekend to catch up, having worked on the Fourth of July and the following days. He assured residents that damaged trash carts would be replaced free of charge and emphasized that no new carts needed to be purchased.
- Caramagno explained that equipment issues, including removed GPS units from trucks, were being addressed by acquiring rental trucks and hiring additional employees. He mentioned addressing oil spills and the need for a route manager to oversee collections and ensure all areas are serviced.
- Caramagno confirmed that mixing trash and recyclables was unacceptable and would be addressed with employees. He stated that trucks would eventually be equipped with cameras to monitor activities and ensure service quality.
- Caramagno apologized for the delays and assured residents that efforts were ongoing to improve service and communication.
- Clerk Findley interjected, emphasizing that explanations did not solve the immediate issue of garbage collection. Findley urged Priority Waste to prioritize picking up garbage, especially starting on the south side of Geddes Road and addressing critical needs like a wedding event.
- Caramagno agreed, stating they were working on completing the Monday section and moving into Tuesday's collection.
- Supervisor Schwartz added that residents' frustration stemmed from months of poor service with GFL, and Priority Waste was inheriting that dissatisfaction, hoping for improvement.
- Supervisor Schwartz expressed frustration over the last three months, stating he received around 300 phone calls during the contract life of GFL. He mentioned that Paul Ruthenburg, Priority Waste, assured him there would be no problems, but even on vacation, he received calls about missed pickups. Schwartz emphasized the health concerns of having trash left uncollected for two to three weeks and asked Caramagno to promise the Board that collections would be completed by the end of the week.
- Sam Caramagno promised that Priority Waste would ensure trash and yard waste collection by the end of the week. He clarified that Priority Waste had been servicing the community for only seven days, and any issues before July 1 were GFL's responsibility.
- Supervisor Schwartz asked about procedures for yard waste during expected heavy rains. Caramagno advised residents to leave yard waste at the curb for collection despite the weather.
- Trustee McGill interjected, highlighting the issue of maggots and rats due to uncollected trash. Caramagno assured that trash with maggots would not be left behind.
- Attorney Fred Lucas clarified that residents who paid GFL would not be double billed by Priority Waste. Caramagno confirmed that the billing information would be reconciled and transferred appropriately.
- Supervisor Schwartz inquired about automatic debit payments to GFL. Caramagno confirmed that these would be transferred to Priority Waste, and residents would receive appropriate credits.
- Fred Lucas mentioned receiving flyers from Priority Waste and recommended posting the information on the website and sending postcards to residents.

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- Trustee McGill and other board members emphasized the need for better communication from Priority Waste, stressing that it was their responsibility to inform residents about the changes and ongoing service issues.
- Fred Lucas suggested that before any communication is sent to residents, Priority Waste should meet with a Township appointed board member to ensure all necessary points, such as no double billing and no charge for replacement bins, are covered.
- Trustee McGill agreed with Lucas's suggestion.
- Clerk Findley asked Sam Caramagno if he had anything else to add, emphasizing the importance of effective communication.
- Caramagno said he would take the feedback back to his department to develop a communication plan and ensure it gets proofread by township representatives.
- Clerk Findley stressed the need for a communication plan and mentioned that questions asked by Irma Golden, Deputy Supervisor, last week still needed answers, which could have helped in communicating with residents sooner.
- Caramagno assured that they would work with their communications team to improve coordination and communication with the community, acknowledging challenges faced across multiple townships.
- Trustee Lindke asked when the communication plan would be provided, and Clerk Findley suggested it should be ready by the end of the week.
- Caramagno agreed that the timeframe was reasonable and committed to detailing the communication plan to address residents' concerns and service specifications.
- Supervisor Schwartz asked if there were any more questions from the Board, and Lucas mentioned forwarding emails to Caramagno that had been sent to Paul, containing information about the neighborhoods discussed. Caramagno agreed to review the emails and ensure the necessary people received the information.

The floor was opened for residents to ask questions.

- Gilda Miles, Manchester Dr., asked Sam Caramagno if his experience with GFL should have informed Priority Waste's preparation and questioned the response to the community's waste collection issues.
- Sam Caramagno explained that truck maintenance was not his responsibility at GFL and assured residents that he is committed to resolving the issues.
- Jan Wiseman, Arlington Dr., asked about the plan for missed yard waste and recycling collections and suggested providing an FAQ for common questions like billing, automatic payments, and bin replacements.
- Georgia Genwright, Ascot Dr., highlighted that her area was missed after July 1 and questioned the investigation process before signing the contract with Priority Waste.
- Fred Lucas, Township Attorney, clarified that the Township's contract was originally with GFL and was assumed by Priority Waste when GFL ceased operations. He emphasized the need for constructive suggestions to resolve issues and supported Trustee McGill's efforts in calling the meeting.

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- Clerk Findley emphasized the importance of effective communication and requested immediate answers for residents, suggesting that Priority Waste ensure all necessary points, such as no double billing and free replacement bins, are covered before sending out communication.
- Jonathan Laye, Hamlet Dr., suggested combining trash billing with the water bill and having carts available at Township Hall for residents.
- Brian Clark, Barrington Dr., suggested setting up dumpsters at key points for immediate trash disposal.
- Mark Brown, Panama Ave, questioned if the waste collection workers were trained properly, as he had experienced issues with garbage cans being left in inconvenient places.

Fred Lucas proposed that Priority Waste should meet with township representatives to ensure all communication materials cover necessary points before sending them to residents. Sam Caramagno committed to developing a communication plan with the input of the Township board and improving service coordination and response.

- Steph, Zoom, criticized Priority Waste for prioritizing customers who were one day late over those who were a week or more late, and for poor communication and unprofessional behavior. She expressed frustration over uncollected trash and the lack of effective communication channels and questioned the evaluation of GFL trucks prior to acquisition.
- Fred Lucas suggested that Priority Waste representatives be present at the Township Hall one or two days a week for the first month to meet with residents and address their concerns. Clerk Findley agreed it was a great suggestion.
- Irma Golden, Sheffield Dr., asked if recycling that wasn't picked up last week would be collected this week. Clerk Findley confirmed with Sam Caramagno that all trash, yard waste, and recycling would be picked up.
- John Brooks, Wexford Drive, expressed concern about having to put trash in his recycling bin to prevent rats and raccoons from getting into it, and asked if it would be picked up.
- Rebecca, Zoom, asked if Priority Waste had considered third-party contracts to catch up on delayed collections. Sam Caramagno responded that third-party providers were not available, and Priority Waste was working to pick up all delayed collections.
- Supervisor Schwartz informed the residents that two recycling bins are available at the Township hall and Fire Station No. 2 for overflow recycling.
- Eric Eeles, Arlington Dr., questioned the necessity of six cameras on garbage trucks, expressing frustration over the complexity of waste management operations.
- Clerk Findley reiterated the importance of clear communication and immediate action, stating that a post on the website and further communication with residents would be prioritized.
- Supervisor Schwartz emphasized that all trash, including yard waste and recyclables, would be collected as soon as possible and asked for patience as Priority Waste worked through the delays. He also raised the concern of rebranding of the carts.

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- Sam Caramagno assured residents that efforts were ongoing to rebrand the carts and improve service communication.

7. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Trustee Lindke supported by Clerk Findley, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynette Findley, Clerk

Kenneth Schwartz, Supervisor