

Bill To:

Lake Township (Roscommon County)
 1380 Michelson Road
 Houghton Lake MI 48629

Time Entries	Rate	Hours	Sub
1/2/2026 Finalize legal opinion regarding referendum petitions, legal research and correspondence with Clerk regarding the same	\$250.00	3.5	\$875.00
1/8/2026 Telephone conference 2/co-counsel regarding petitions	\$250.00	.4	\$100.00
1/8/2026 Telephone conference with Supervisor and Clerk and legal research regarding referendum petitions.	\$250.00	1.7	\$425.00
1/9/2026 Research re referendum and petition certification	\$250.00	.4	\$100.00
1/9/2026 Telephone conference w/counsel re referendum issues	\$250.00	1.4	\$350.00
1/9/2026 Tele conference w/co-counsel regarding petitions	\$250.00	.2	\$ 50.00
1/9/2026 Telephone conference with Supervisor and co-counsel regarding referendum petition issue, legal research and draft legal opinion regarding the same	\$250.00	2.9	\$725.00
1/12/2026 Corresp w/co-counsel re referendum	\$250.00	.2	\$50.00
1/12/2026 Telephone conference with Clerk and Supervisor regarding referendum petitions, draft correspondence to petitioner regarding the same	\$250.00	2.5	\$625.00
1/13/2026 Telephone conference with Supervisor regarding meetings, petitions, and election law issues	\$250.00	1.4	\$350.00
1/15/2026 Telephone conf with Supervisor and correspondence with Board regarding referendum petitions and Ordinance 55D	\$250.00	1.8	\$450.00
1/26/2026 Review letter regarding petitions, tele conference with Supervisor and with Clerk regarding the same	\$250.00	.6	\$150.00
1/27/2026 Review letter from resident regarding petition determination, correspondence with Supervisor and Clerk regarding the same	\$250.00	.8	\$200.00
			\$4,450.00

Referendum Petition Review – Attorney Fees

Amount Spent:

\$4,450 in township funds for legal services

Purpose of Legal Work:

Legal review related to citizen referendum petitions concerning zoning ordinance amendments.

Initial Clerk Determination:

The Lake Township Clerk initially reviewed and certified the petition signatures as valid.

Subsequent Action:

After the Township Supervisor requested a legal opinion from the township attorney, the clerk later rescinded the certification based on the attorney's interpretation of the law.

Legal Context:

Disputes regarding petition procedures are occurring across Michigan following the Court of Appeals decision in Norway Township v. Wickman, which has created differing interpretations.

Statewide Issue:

Courts have indicated in similar disputes, including in Livingston County that clarification of the law may ultimately require legislative action rather than court rulings.

Why this Matters:

The expenditure highlights how public funds were used during the review of citizen referendum petitions and raises questions about administrative roles in the process.

Transparency Fact Box:

Ordinance 55D – Late Publication

Taxpayer Cost to Date:

\$1,492 in township legal fees related to the late publication of Ordinance 55D.

What the Law Requires:

Michigan zoning law requires a zoning ordinance to be published within 15 days after adoption for it to take effect.

What Happened:

Lake Township has acknowledged that Ordinance 55D was published after the required 15-day deadline.

Potential Administrative Remedy:

In some municipal situations where procedural errors occur, reenactment has been used as a practical method to correct the issue.

Resident Action:

A court case has been filed in circuit court asking the court to require the township to re-adopt and republish the ordinance to resolve the publication issue.

Community Context:

If the township were to re-adopt and republish the ordinance to correct the publication issue, that action could potentially restart the statutory referendum window, which would again allow residents the opportunity to submit petitions for a vote of the electorate.

Residents involved in the referendum effort previously submitted a sufficient number of signatures to trigger the referendum process. This referendum process supports the township

board's survey results. The township supervisor stated to the residents during a board meeting "We have to follow the law – we all can agree on that."

Lake Township Watch provides this information to help residents understand how township funds are being spent and how procedural issues involving local ordinances are being handled.