WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Whitewater Township Hall, 5177 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690
231-267-5141 Phone

SPECIAL MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 8:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER:
Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL: Clerk Wendy Hoeksema called Roll.

Present:
Supervisor Linda Slopsema
Clerk Wendy Hoeksema
Treasurer Jill Koester
Trustee Tim Arends

A quorum was established.

Absent:
Trustee Randy Mielnik (excused)

ALSO PRESENT:
Zoning Administrator Deb Graber
Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST/APPROVE AGENDA: None.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Barbara Dean: Ms. Dean discussed content of meeting agendas.

Mr. Frank Hymore and Ms. Connie Hymore: Both parties shared comments regarding the Baggs Road Lawsuit and recent Court of Appeals Decision.

Ms. Julie Zenas: Ms. Zenas made comments regarding short-term rentals near her residence and a board member's option to recuse themselves regarding the issue when before them.

Mr. Mark Krinock: Mr. Krinock spoke in opposition of short-term rentals in the R-1 District.

Mr. Jim Gaskin: Mr. Gaskin inquired about speed limits on Church St. and Vinton Rd. and the abandoned alley behind his house.

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth: Ms. Vollmuth commented on Zoom meeting attendance participation and public comment on Zoom.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Whitewater Township / Planning Commission Joint Meeting of 5/29/2025: No amendments.

Whitewater Township / PRAC Joint Meeting of 6/5/2025:
There were minor corrections on Page 4 and 5, clarifying the engineering of the Lossie Road Nature Trail, reference to the boat launch project and clarification about the Tribal Grant funds regarding toddler equipment/new bleachers. These changes are indicated on the Amended Approved copy.

Whitewater Township Regular Board Meeting of 6/12/25: No amendments.

Whitewater Township Regular Board Meeting of 7/10/25: No amendments.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the minutes of:

Whitewater Township / Planning Commission Joint Meeting of 5/29/25 (As Presented)
Whitewater Township / PRAC Joint Meeting of 6/5/25 (As Amended)
Whitewater Township Regular Board Meeting of 6/12/25 (As Presented)
Whitewater Township Regular Board Meeting of 7/10/25 (As Presented)

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:
Clerk Hoeksema referenced some inaccurate math and asked Treasurer Koester to make the necessary corrections.

BILLS FOR APPROVAL – Ms. Hoeksema:
Mr. Arends needs a copy of the Bay Area Disposal invoice for his file and for reference next year. Clerk Hoeksema will provide it to him.

Mr. Arends inquired about the recent invoice from C2AE showing two outstanding invoices from a few months ago. The Board will be approving payments to C2AE today and will verify that payments to the vendor are current.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Bills Payable as presented. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Arends-Y, Koester-Y, Slopsema-Y, Hoeksema-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

Mr. Arends inquired if the 2018 Federal Tax Invoice is now taken care of. The Clerk and Supervisor confirmed it is and the cause was due to incorrect amounts reported on 1099's.

ZONING AMENDMENT – CASE #2025-02 (Behrenwald Realty / AIS Rezoning) Zoning Amendment #89:
Representing the Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator Graber provided an overview of this proposed Conditional Zoning Amendment. At the July 2, 2025, Planning Commission meeting, the PC recommended the Whitewater Township Board approve the proposed Amendment and Conditional Rezoning Agreement which was reviewed and approved by Planning Commission attorney Chris Patterson after consultation with applicant AIS' attorney.

A memo from Planning Commission's Vice-Chair Rene Stratton is also included with Findings of Fact. ZA Graber reiterated there will be no access from Crisp Road, and AIS will be building a school facility and an additional structure.

Mr. Arends noted after the opportunity to review all information, he is now comfortable with the Conditional Rezoning Agreement that was drafted in response to public concerns.

Mr. Kraig Johnson of AIS was also present. There were no questions posed to him.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Conditional Zoning District Amendment #89 of Case #2025-02, which rezones Parcel 13-004-015-21 to N-1 Industrial, except that the southern portion of this parcel remains zoned A-1 Agricultural within 295 feet of Crisp Road (and parallel thereto), and the southern portion of this parcel remains zoned R-2 within 600 feet of Crisp Road (and parallel thereto). Parcel 13-004-010-10 is also rezoned such that the entire parcel is zoned N-1. Approval of the rezoning results in changes to the Official Zoning Map of Whitewater Township as described in Article 3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Koester-Y, Slopsema-Y, Hoeksema-Y, Arends-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

Clerk Hoeksema and Supervisor Slopsema will file this Amendment after it's notarized with the County Registrar of Deeds. Mr. Kraig Johnson will receive an executed copy to provide to Behrenwald Realty. A copy will be retained at the Township Hall.

WWTP Electrical Upgrade:
Supervisor Slopsema reported that due to issues identified by Consumers Energy, additional engineering and design work was required. Additional transformers are necessary. Therefore, the Township needs to amend its contract with C2AE to $32,200.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion that the Agreement between Whitewater Township and C2AE for the Whitewater Township Park Electric Upgrade Project be amended to increase the amount to $32,200. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Slopsema-Y, Hoeksema-Y, Koester-Y, Arends-Y. Motion Carried. (Mielnik Absent)

Bid Review / Vendor Selection:
Supervisor Slopsema stated sealed bids were received for the Whitewater Township Park Electric Upgrade Project. Two comparable, low bids were from Isenhart Electric and Shoreline Power Services. C2AE recommended accepting the lower bid of $154,188 from Isenhart Electric. This is for the full project this fall, rather than the previously discussed phased project.

Mr. Arends clarified the reason this Board is choosing to execute the entire project this year. The prior Board estimated the project to be approximately $125k. C2AE's revised estimate was $300k. The phased nature of the project was to split costs into two years. With the new bid of $154k being closer to the original cost estimate, it makes more sense to complete the project and not disrupt next year's camping season. One loop is blocked out beginning September 1 to begin work.

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Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion that the Board award the Whitewater Township Park Electric Upgrade Project to the low bidder Isenhart Electric, LLC, in the amount of $154,188, and further authorize the Supervisor to execute a contract for the project. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Hoeksema-Y, Slopsema-Y, Koester-Y, Arends-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

C2AE Contract Amendment and Invoice Approval:
Clerk Hoeksema will follow-up on the C2AE invoices dated March 12, 2025, and April 11, 2025, to verify whether they have been paid.

SKEGEMOG POINT ROAD IMPROVEMENT – Ms. Slopsema (verbal)
Skegemog Point Road property owners were invited to a Special Meeting held at Samel's Farm on July 8. It was well attended.

Mr. Joe Slonecki, Grand Traverse County Interim County Highway Engineer, was present to explain the road improvement proposal to attendees and answer questions. There are 166 parcels and to-date 74 responses have been received with 63 in support and 11 not supportive of the project. Supervisor Slopsema reviewed returned and undeliverable mail, resending documents via USPS. She will continue to collect responses. A 51% approval rate is required for the Township to move forward to the next phase of engineering drawings by the Road Commission.

Board discussion followed; the Assessment List was utilized for the initial mailings. There will also be follow-up attempts to ensure everyone has an opportunity to respond.

If the project is approved, there will be informational meetings and Public Hearings to set up the Special Assessment District (SAD).

ANY PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:
Supervisor Slopsema explained the need and benefit for a Campground Host. Mr. Zach Whaley was recommended and interviewed. A "Roles and Responsibilities" document and Mr. Whaley's resume are included in the meeting packet. The Campground Host would reside at the Park. The concept was designed after reviewing Michigan State Parks and the County's Power Island camping management.

Of note is that Mr. Whaley has a 2-day/48-hour schedule with MMR, which gives him flexibility to work in the Campground Host role. Mr. Arends noted that living onsite with no 'rent,' he will provide the Park with 24 hours of work/week. Beyond those hours, he will be paid the Step 1 Ranger wage. This schedule should also be helpful in preparation of the electrical project and winter shutdown. His personality also appears to align well with greeting and serving the guests.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to hire Mr. Zach Whaley as Park Ranger Step 1 at $19.67/hour for time worked beyond 24 hours per week as Campground Host, effective immediately. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

TAX COLLECTION APPROVAL – Ms. Koester:
Treasurer Koester reported the Township collects taxes for the school systems and in return, the Township is paid $2.50 per parcel. The Resolutions for Elk Rapids Public Schools and Northwest Education Services (formerly TBAISD) and Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) need to be updated.

Board Action:
Ms. Koester made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-09 for the collection of Elk Rapids Public Schools and Northwest Education Services taxes for the 2025 tax year. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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Discussion: According to MTA, a Township can charge up to $5/parcel; however, school districts are only reimbursed $2.50. She has spoken with other districts, and this is the maximum amount being assessed based on government reimbursement to schools.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Koester-Y, Slopsema-Y, Arends-Y, Hoeksema-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

The following Resolution for TCAPS, BATA, Northwest Education services and NMC is for two years, also collecting $2.50 per parcel:

Board Action:
Ms. Koester made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-10 for the collection of Traverse City Area Public Schools, BATA, Northwest Education Services and NMC taxes for the 2025 and 2026 tax years. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Hoeksema-Y, Koester-Y, Slopsema-Y, Arends-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

ADD REGULAR MEETING DATES FOR GENERAL OPERATIONS – Mr. Arends:
Mr. Arends stated every meeting this year has had to be extended by motion beyond the three-hour mark and proposed scheduling a second Regular Meeting each month in the morning to reduce excessively long/late evening meetings for Board Members and the Public, more effectively address urgent and time-sensitive needs that arise, and more effectively manage routine matters of Township business. The standard evening Regular Meetings would include public hearings, address high-interest matters of the Public and hear other significant Board decisions.

This additional meeting would allow for timely processing of payments and documents by the Clerk and Treasurer and allow the Board to conduct Budget Study Sessions at the morning meetings rather than the regular meetings Regular evening meetings which consistently have very full Agendas. The Deputy Clerk/Deputy Treasurer could be available to serve the public during the business hours of the morning meetings.

Board Action:
COMMITTEE BY-LAWS:
Clerk Hoeksema included a memo in the meeting packet stating that at the 4/11/2023 meeting, the Board passed a motion directing that the By-Laws for the Planning Commission, PRAC and ZBA be reviewed and approved annually by the Township Board. None of these entities have submitted their By-Laws yet this year.

There was Board consensus that the Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) review and submit updated By-Laws for Township Board consideration within the next 60 days, with particular attention to the process and frequency of Special Meetings.

The purpose for this review is to ensure compliance with each group's mandates and the state's requirements. This includes ensuring ongoing required training of elected officials. Clerk Hoeksema will manage this process.

CAPTAIN TIM ARBENOWSKE RECOGNITION – Chief Morgan:
Chief Morgan announced Captain Tim Arbenowske's notice of retirement after 25 years of service with the Whitewater Township Fire Department, effective June 30, 2025. Chief Morgan would like to formally recognize Captain Arbenowske with a Proclamation acknowledging his service, which he read aloud into the Minutes. A copy of it is in the meeting packet. Chief Morgan indicated it is common practice to gift the retiree with their helmet and shield.

Chief Morgan is working on coordinating a retirement ceremony in August at Captain Arbenowske's church and is hoping the Township will present the Proclamation at that ceremony to honor him.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to declare surplus of Captain Arbenowske's fire helmet and shield and that they be given to him upon his retirement. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried. (Mielnik absent)

FIRE DEPARTMENT KUBOTA PURCHASE – Chief Morgan:
Chief Morgan procured bids from Kubota and Polaris for the purchase of a UTV for the Fire Department. The Kubota comes with a fire skid unit and at a lesser cost. Half of the cost will be covered by the Thomas Cosgrove Foundation with the other half coming out of the Capital Improvement Fund.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the purchase of a Kubota UTV with fire skid unit from Ginop Sales in the amount of $32,456, with 50% of the funding to be provided by the Thomas Cosgrove Foundation and the remaining balance to be paid by Whitewater Township Fire Department. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Slopsema-Y, Arends-Y, Koester-Y, Hoeksema-Y. Motion carried. (Mielnik absent)

The plan is to put the existing Kubota out for bid. A Pellston municipality and Mr. Thomas Cosgrove have expressed interest in purchasing it. It will be listed on a government platform specific to municipalities.

Firefighter and Lead Park Ranger Tom Bartnicki indicated there may be a need for a Kubota at the Park.

GRANT APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION – TOWN HALL ACCESSIBILITY - Ms. Hoeksema
Clerk Hoeksema provided a memo in the meeting packet regarding grant opportunities through the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) and the Michigan Department of State to ensure polling locations meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Currently, the Whitewater Township Hall has no push-button for automatic door access, a cracked concrete ramp surface and uneven entry, and heavy exterior doors without ADA assist. This grant would support infrastructure improvements.

The Board of Elections has an ADA ombudsman who can provide an onsite evaluation and recommendation. She has extended an invitation to them, has reached out to area vendors and is asking for authorization to apply for this grant.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Clerk to apply for the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Infrastructure Grant in the amount of up to $10,000 for ADA compliance improvements to the election polling place. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

TRAMONTO HOSPITALITY LIQUOR LICENSE – Ms. Hoeksema:
Clerk Hoeksema reported that at the June 11, 2024, Township Board meeting, a motion was approved for Tramonto Hospitality's application for an on-premises quota liquor license.

Attorney Cortney Danbrook was in attendance at today's meeting and explained the difference between an "on-premises quota liquor license" and an "on-premises G-1 quota liquor license." The G-1 is specific to golf courses, which is affiliated with Tramonto Hospitality. The Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) is requesting the Township's approval with the correct verbiage.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the issuance of an on-premises G-1 quota liquor license to Tramonto Hospitality, LLC. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

It was noted this revision does not change the Township's intent to support the application; it simply provides the correct terminology required by the State.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next Township Regular Board Meetings:
Thursday, July 24, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, August 14, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
The Board discussed topics they would like to include on the morning meeting Agenda moving forward.

Treasurer Koester inquired whether the Township needs a credit card acceptance policy to receive tax payments. Clerk Hoeksema will investigate.

Treasurer Koester noted the Audit will be conducted next week. She and Clerk Hoeksema will be working with the Auditor as needed onsite and remotely.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Frank Hymore: Mr. Hymore spoke on a variety of topics.

Ms. Connie Hymore: Ms. Hymore made comments regarding Public Comment on Zoom.

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth: Ms. Vollmuth spoke about Zoom services and Civil Infraction Public Hearing scheduling.

Ms. Jamie Gaskin: Ms. Gaskin inquired about the rescheduling of the Civil Infraction Ordinance Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried. (Mielnik Absent)

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Submitted by Kay Held, Recording Secretary

Wendy Hoeksema, Clerk