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

REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED AMENDED MINUTES
Thursday, August 28, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 9:01 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
Trustee Randy Mielnik

A quorum was established.

Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT:
Zoning Administrator Deb Graber
Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST/APPROVE AGENDA:
- Move "Parks Report Items A-D" to Unfinished Business
- Add "Electrical Right-of-Way Easement Request to Parks" under Unfinished Business
- Move Fire Items to Fire Report
- Add "Request for Closed Session to Discuss Disciplinary Action" to Fire Report Heading
- Add "Approval of Consumers Energy Invoice for Park Electrical Upgrade Project"
- Add Additional Bills for Approval (from Clerk)
- Add "Solicitation of Bids for Township Legal Services" to New Business
- Add "Resolution #2025-14 to Adopt an Ethical Conduct in Governance Policy" to New Business
- Add ~~"Resolution #2025-15 to Adopt a Censure Policy"~~ Proposed Resolution #2025-15 Censure to New Business

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS–3. NAYES-2. Motion moved to a Roll Call Vote.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Arends–No, Slopsema–Yes, Mielnik–Yes, Koester–No, Hoeksema–Yes. Motion carried.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Connie Hymore: Ms. Hymore asked the Board to restore Public Comment on Zoom and add it to the September Agenda, and any explanation for any votes against it. Zoom equipment and facilitators were purchased by taxpayers. The Board should strongly consider hiring a different Township attorney from a local, rural-focused firm.

She spoke of conflicts of interest within the Township and requested PC Commissioner Carl Wroubel be recused from any PC and ZBA participation regarding Baggs Road due to bias and lack of impartiality. Another PC Member sent out an email stating his stance about STRs. The Board's Treasurer made a Zoom Public Comment during the STR Public Hearing.

Ms. Julie Zenas: She feels elected and appointed officials serve the residents of Whitewater Township, should be transparent and enact Ordinances that can be enforced.

The Zoning Administrator has been unfairly targeted by citizens because she lacks proper enforcement tools. A Civil Infraction Ordinance must be a top priority and essential to uphold laws. The Treasurer has repeated violations of the law this summer and eroded public trust. Her resignation is appropriate and necessary.

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth: Ms. Vollmuth requested Civil Infraction Ordinance and Private Road Ordinances be put back on the books. Emphasized ordinances must be based on the Master Plan and state law enforceable. Warned that without civil infraction provisions, ordinances have no enforcement. Asked the Board to clarify the Zoning Administrator role, and to look up whether officials should reside in township.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:

Any Park and Recreation Items:

WWT Halloween Party:
Campground Host Mr. Zach Whaley spoke with the Board about the proposed Halloweekend event at Whitewater Township Park. Mr. Whaley and the Board discussed the proposed date, purpose, schedule, events, benefits and funding sources. It was agreed that it would enhance community engagement and possibly include food trucks, vendors, trick-or-treating, games/activities, etc. It would also serve as a gauge for additional events next season. The event was cancelled last year, and public disappointment was noted.

The Park is asking for authorization to hold the Halloweekend event and that the Board formally reopens booking dates through October 5, as the park is scheduled for closure September 30 due to the electrical upgrade project.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion that Whitewater Township Park Campground remains open through October 5 to accommodate an event entitled "Halloweekend" at Whitewater Township Park. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

2 WWTP Reservation Service (Current: RoverPass) Customer Complaints:
Supervisor Slopsema explained issues the Park has had with the reservation system RoverPass. She asked Campground Host Mr. Zach Whaley to research other options. Mr. Whaley compared several other park websites and their reservation systems; Newbook, Campspot and Park.
It was noted there are have been ongoing problems with RoverPass; i.e., problematic updates, website crash, user access and rate confusion by campers (i.e., tent/secondary sleeping fee).

There was Board consensus that the current reservation system needs evaluation. Supervisor Slopsema asked for a proposal from Park staff to the Board to be considered at the 9/25/25 meeting.

WWTP Electrical Upgrade – Right of Way for Consumers Power:
Supervisor Slopsema received documentation for an updated easement for electric facilities to accommodate the new electrical power feed construction at the park. This will be notarized and filed with the Registrar of Deeds.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to adopt Resolution #2025-16 to update the Consumers Energy easement at Whitewater Township Park Campground at 9500 Park Road and authorize the Supervisor to sign the easement for the electric facilities agreement provided by Consumers Energy. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Mielnik-Y, Hoeksema-Y, Slopsema-Y, Arends-Y, Koester-Y. Motion carried.

Park Administrator / Park Manager Discussion:
Supervisor Slopsema reviewed the history of the Park Administrator role. This was previously handled by the Clerk for many years, and then two Park Managers in the last two years. It was discussed who is handling daily oversight and the amount of time this takes. There was Board consensus Park management needs clarity. This matter was tabled until the 9/25/25 meeting.

Parks Report – Mr. Bartnicki:
Report in meeting packet. The Park electrical upgrade project continues, but due to delays, the campground loops previously closed for construction will now be reopened for reservations in September. Battle Creek Natural Area had

maintenance performed on trees, and the water level is reportedly good. There was discussion about the mowing agreement with the Conservation District.

Fire / Emergency Services Report - Chief Morgan. Report in meeting packet.
Chief Morgan's reports include May-July. They are averaging 30 calls/month. EMS has increased significantly, as anticipated during busy summer months. July marked the best month for response time to date. Chief Morgan provided detailed statistics from April through July. Response times are well within the national average. Firefighters completed over 110 hours of training with 76% of staff participation for June and July. MMR report in packet. There was a request for clarification on EMS data, which Chief will follow up on.

He reports new hoses to arrive soon, and the fire engine that is in production has begun, with delivery expected this year.

Chief Morgan and Supervisor Slopsema recently met with Grand Traverse Band members to coordinate EMS response to the casino and will continue to do so ~~on a monthly basis~~ on an approximate monthly basis.
Chief Morgan has plans to expand public fire safety awareness and education, including to visit local schools.

New Hire – Graves/Whaley:
Chief Morgan is asking for approval to hire Firefighter candidate Gavin Graves and EMS candidate Zachary Whaley. Mr. Graves is enrolled in an EMT course, has Firefighter I & II and has experience with Torch Lake Township Fire Department. Mr. Whaley is an EMT.

There was Board discussion with Chief Morgan about the roles these two positions would serve. They also discussed the EMS On-Call services and outcomes, as well as MMR services. The Township is a licensed medical first responder. There are currently seven individuals on the On-Call staff; his objective is up to 10.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to hire Mr. Gavin Graves as a Paid-on-Call Firefighter for Whitewater Township Fire Department. Upon approval, he will begin the onboarding process, including background checks, medical evaluation and department orientation. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to hire Mr. Zachary Whaley as a Paid-on-Call EMS provider for Whitewater Township Fire Department. Upon approval, he will begin the onboarding process, including background checks, medical evaluation and department orientation. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Revised On-Call Pay:
Chief Morgan provided a proposal to revise the Paid On-Call pay structure, outlining the current and proposed costs as well as budgeted expenses. There was Board discussion with the Chief on this structure and how it aligns with other On-Call structures.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the revised on-call Firefighter/EMT pay structure for the Whitewater Township Fire Department, effective September, 2025, as presented. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Discuss Disciplinary Action of Fire Department Employee in Closed Session: per MCL15.268 sec 8 (a)

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to move into Closed Session to discuss Disciplinary Action of a Fire Department Employee. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
ROLL CALL VOTE: Hoeksema-Y, Koester-Y, Mielnik-Y, Slopsema-Y, Arends-Y. Motion carried.

Note: The Closed Session began at 10:58 a.m. Members of the public present were asked to temporarily leave.

Board Action:
Mr. Mielnik made a motion to end the Closed Session and return to the Open Session of the Regular Meeting. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Board Returned to Open Session at 11:09 a.m.

Planning Commission Report - Mr. Mielnik (verbal):
Mr. Mielnik reported the Planning Commission held meetings on August 6, 14 and 26. The initial STR Public Hearing at the August 6 Regular Meeting was not held as occupancy exceeded Fire Code in the Township Hall. The Special Meeting on August 14 addressed business items from the August 6 Agenda.

At the 8/14 meeting, the Planning Commission appointed the Resident Outreach Sub-committee (ROS). This will be renamed Resident Outreach Work Group (ROWG) as it is not a decision-making body. It is comprised of five citizen members: William Clark, Debbie McKeon, Rodney Rebant, Heidi Vollmuth and Barbara Dean. First and Second Alternates are Rachel Steelman and Mark Krinock, respectively. PC Members Rene Stratton will serve as Chair and David Boesler as a PC Member. They are set to meet next Tuesday, 9/2/25. The purpose of the ROS/ROWG is to conduct fact-finding with regard to Short-term Rentals (STR) and the Capital Improvement Plan.

The Commission continued to work on the Winery Ordinance.

On August 26, a Special Meeting was held at Woodland School with two Public Hearings, one of which was on STRs. Public attendance was 87. The second Public Hearing was a proposal to eliminate the specific fee amounts for Rezoning Amendments in the Ordinance to rely on the adopted Fee Schedule, where it belongs.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9/3/25 and will include discussion about the two proposed Zoning Amendments, Winery Ordinance and next steps with Planners from Giffels Webster.

A Site Plan Review with Grand Traverse Plastics was planned; however, some materials are still needed. Gourdie Fraser is assisting with that Site Plan.

Zoning Report – Ms. Graber. The Zoning Report is in the meeting packet. ZA Graber additionally reported:
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She was asked by the Supervisor to comment on the five letters sent by the Township attorney regarding rentals. Recipients were given 14 days to respond. Two individuals have chosen to move their rentals to 30 days, one is in communications with the attorney and one responded without specifying when they will cease short-term renting. She added any complaint filed by someone in the community is investigated. She responded to questions about the process for reviewing complaints before they are escalated to the attorney. Her goal is compliance.

A misdemeanor citation was issued on 7/3/25 to a property owner and forwarded to Grand Traverse County 86th District Court. No case number has been issued. No hearing date has been set.

There have been numerous comments made that the Township has many litigation cases; however, that is not the case as of this date.

ZA Graber reiterated her office day is now on Mondays.

PRAC Report – Ms. Koester (verbal):
Ms. Koester reported the PRAC continues to work on its Five-year Plan. A work bee will be held off-site on 9/2/25. On 9/14/25 at 9:00 a.m., they plan to assemble the remaining bleacher at Hi Pray Park. Volunteers are desired.

The PRAC has had three open positions since November. A recruitment announcement was placed on their Facebook page, with no response. Supervisor Slopsema received an inquiry yesterday and provided the individual with PRAC's By-Laws.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Receive and File:
Items pulled from Consent Calendar:
-Revenue & Expenditure Report (for discussion)
-Minutes of 8/14/25 Regular Meeting

Supervisor's Report: Report in packet.
Clerk's Report: Report in packet.
Treasurer's Report: Report in packet.

Trustee Reports: None.
MMR (Ambulance) Report: Report in packet.
GT County Sheriff's Report: Report in packet.
PC Minutes: https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/planning-commission.html
ZBA Minutes: https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/zoning-board-of-appeals.html
Park and Recreation Minutes: https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/advisory-committee.html
Historical Society Report: None.
Correspondence:
-STR – Zenas

Minutes for Approval: https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/township-board--subcommittee-meeting-minutes.html
8/14/25 Regular Meeting Minutes. PULLED.

Bills for Approval: Add additional Bills for Approval (from Clerk)
Budget Amendments: None.
Revenue and Expenditure Report: PULLED.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to accept the Consent Calendar as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Public Hearing Civil Infraction General Ordinance Time / Location:
Supervisor Slopsema investigated alternate sites and availability for the Civil Infraction Ordinance Public Hearing. The Board was polled for availability.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to schedule the Civil Infraction Public Hearing on Tuesday, 9/30/25, at 6:00 p.m. at Mill Creek School, with a potential backup location of East Bay Township Hall. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Note: Once the location is confirmed, it will be posted.

Abandonment of Township Common Area/Set Public Hearing Date:
This regards Mr. Gaskin's concern regarding property behind Church Street. Clerk Hoeksema reported Equalization has confirmed their tax bill is to the middle of the former alleyway. According to Equalization, it should have been abandoned in 2007 when the condos redid their Master Deed.

Mr. Lambert of Northern Title has been contacted to review the deeds. It is believed the plat book is incorrect. The Township Assessor stated the property has been abandoned. Clerk Hoeksema will follow-up with the Board.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to extend the meeting past the three-hour mark. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Note: There was a 10-minute break at 11:57 a.m. The meeting resumed at 12:09 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

PRAC, ZBA, PC By-Law Review – Ms. Hoeksema:
Existing By-Laws for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), the Whitewater Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the Whitewater Planning Commission (PC) were included in the meeting packet.

There was Board discussion confirming the By-Laws should not conflict with the authorizing document that established its entity. Several Board Members believe the PRAC By-Laws will require some modifications. Mr. Mielnik noted the Planning Enabling Act states a Planning Commission adopts its By-Laws.

Board Members will review the By-Laws and prepare their suggested changes. The Board will address PRAC By-Laws at the 9/25/25 meeting with a comparison to the General Ordinance #48 that created the committee.

Policy & Procedure Manual – OneDrive:
Clerk Hoeksema stated there has been difficulty among most Board Members with utilization of OneDrive. The Policy Manual will ultimately be moved in digital format to OneDrive.

2025 Tax Rate Request 4029 - Ms. Slopsema:
There was Board consensus to sign off on the L-4029 for tax to be levied December 1, 2025, as presented. The Supervisor, Treasurer and Assessor have reviewed it for accuracy.

Mr. Arends noted the Ambulance Millage expires 12/25.

Grant Acceptance – MAMC – Ms. Hoeksema:
Clerk Hoeksema reported the Township was successfully awarded up to $10k from the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) ADA Infrastructure Grant. Monies will be used for a new handicap-accessible door with push button access. The Clerk is procuring estimates.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to accept the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) grant award in the amount of up to $10k for facility improvements and authorize the Supervisor and Clerk to sign all necessary documents required by the Grantee Agreement. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Consumers Energy Invoice for Park Electrical Upgrade Project
Mr. Arends reported an invoice was received from Consumers Energy to set transformers and extend primary service through the Park.

Board Action:
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Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Consumers Energy invoice in the amount of $5,572 for the Park electric upgrade project. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Electrical Right-of-Way Easement Request:
This item was Amended to the Agenda; however, was already on the Agenda and covered earlier in the meeting.

Solicitation of Bids for Township Legal Services:
Mr. Arends acknowledged public sentiment on this matter. The Court of Appeals recently ruled on the lawsuit against the Township. Consequently, there are no active suits in process, making this a more reasonable time to consider other representation. There was Board discussion that there are numerous firms in this area that specialize in municipal law.

Supervisor Slopsema stated some firms provide a review of Ordinances as part of their proposal. Clerk Hoeksema noted the Township is a member of the Michigan Municipal League, and they have a legal fund that helps in these matters. They may have recommendations for no-fee review. She suggested the Township consider more than one firm in order to address different specialties.

Mr. Mielnik acknowledged resident comments and relayed his own experience working with municipal attorneys. He would like more insight into specific resident issues with the current Township attorney to better understand their concerns. He would like to review the recorded Attorney Opinions the Supervisor has on file. There was consensus there would need to be a process of sending out professional requests to various law firms.

Board Action:
~~Ms.~~ Mr. Arends made a motion for the Board to seek proposals for general legal services for Whitewater Township. Ms. Koester seconded the motion
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

Resolution #2025-14 to Adopt an Ethical Conduct in Governance Policy:
Clerk Hoeksema included a proposed Resolution for a Code of Ethical Conduct & Governance Policy in the meeting packet, which she read aloud in its entirety. She also referenced a memo to Township Board Members stating the

Purpose, Key Standards and Legal Basis for the Policy. A Conflict of Interest Policy ~~currently exists but is vague~~ exists for employees only and is limited to discussion of executing financial contracts.

Township Attorney Patterson suggested a one-word change to the proposed Policy (Section 8, first item), which was discussed by the Board. Mr. Arends is concerned with the potential of a Board policing a member of a public body.

Treasurer Koester stated she is not opposed to a document like this; however, is uncomfortable with the unethical nature in which this issue was introduced. There are many vague items in the Policy. Item #5, Conflict of Interest, is in conflict with comments of two attorneys with whom she spoke, who stated when there is a Conflict of Interest, the individual is able to debate and discuss an issue. Diverse opinions in a Board should be discussed. The problem is in recusing oneself when deliberating and making a decision.

The PRAC By-Laws state if one recuses oneself, they should remove themselves from the meeting. Mr. Arends doesn't believe a person is required to by law. Ms. Hoeksema stated recusing oneself and then still commenting is not illegal; however, it is unethical, according to MTA MCL published statements. Ms. Koester stated there are items in the document that can be interpreted in many ways.

Clerk Hoeksema stated the proposed ethics policy is not about Treasurer Koester, it is about the policy. She and Trustee Mielnik were previously directed to work on this document.

There were differing opinions that the proposed Ethical Conduct & Governance Policy and Resolution for Censure document were related. Mr. Mielnik believes there are larger issues to consider regarding ethical conduct and governance, and it is good to have a policy.

~~Ms. Koester had asked for an advance copy and that the Township attorney reviews it.~~ Several Board Members requested attorney clarification regarding Conflict of Interest. The Clerk stated the attorney has reviewed it, suggesting the one-word change. Ms. Hoeksema agreed that debate and differing opinions are allowed, unless there is a financial, fiduciary responsibility to the Township, believing Ms. Koester has crossed that line. Ms. Koester stated there are many assumptions that are not true and another attorney with whom she spoke stated there are many Conflicts of Interest, outside of monetary, where an individual stands to receive any direct benefit from an issue, one should recuse oneself. There was additional group discussion about expressing opinions, public perception, matters of disclosure, statutory duties and Oaths of Office. Clerk Hoeksema stated the Policy is also for legal protections.

Supervisor Slopsema referenced defining the context of a Michigan Township fiduciary duty, and including it in the document and in Definitions. She has discussed this with the attorney. Clerk Hoeksema stated the proposed Policy is drawn from Grand Traverse County's Policy.

Board Action:
Ms. Hoeksema made a motion that the Whitewater Township Board adopts Resolution #2025-14, approving the Whitewater Township Code of Ethical Conduct and Governance Policy, effective immediately.

Ms. Hoeksema read in the Resolution in its entirety, with one modification changing "annual signed financial disclosure forms for elected and appointed officials" to "annual agreement form for elected and appointed officials."

There was no second to the motion. The motion failed.

Supervisor Slopsema commented she would like to see the County Policy and follow-up with the attorney regarding Treasurer Koester's comments. Mr. Arends requested the attorneys' comments supporting the Treasurer's statements in writing.

Mr. Mielnik requested this item be on the Agenda at the next meeting.

Ms. Koester requested these materials be distributed in advance of meetings.

Resolution #2025-15 to Adopt a Censure Policy:
Clerk Hoeksema stated that elected officials are entrusted with the public's confidence and are held to higher standards under their Oath of Office. Ethical concerns are raised when an elected official has a financial interest in the outcome of an issue.

Treasure Koester benefits from short-term rentals and does not deny owning vacation or short-term rental properties. Her efforts to influence residents create the appearance of undue influence and potential interference with the public process. MCL 15.323 and MCL 15.342 require public officials avoid conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived. Treasurer Koester has attended MTA and MMTA ethics trainings. Censure has become an appropriate step due to repeated and documented actions which have reduced public confidence. Members of the public have requested the Board take action. The Board has a fiduciary duty to maintain fairness, truthfulness and public trust.

Ms. Koester stated it is not a formal reprimand but rather a public rebuke. Mr. Arends cannot support this and referenced Exhibit A, listing nine documented incidents. There was group discussion regarding implications and perceived conflicts.

Mr. Arends is awaiting the ROS's work on STRs. He referenced Ms. Koester's properties in Acme and Whitewater Township. If STRs are allowed and she chooses to rent for less than 30 days, she would have a financial benefit. Some people may have elected her because of her views on STRs and elected other Board Members believing they may not support STRs. He would like to meet with the Township attorney to discuss this issue in more depth. He is uncertain whether her actions cross the line into her freedom of speech.

Clerk Hoeksema stated the Treasurer was instructed not to put undue influence on the PC meeting regarding STRs and commented via Zoom.

Clerk Hoeksema read aloud the proposed Resolution of Censure (Resolution #2025-15) against Treasurer Jill Koester in its entirety. She added there are documented texts, emails and videos of Treasurer Koester putting undue influence on the public that cross the line and interfere. Mr. Arends referenced the texts, which were ultimately distributed to others, asking the public to attend a meeting, voice their opinion and participate in government is not undue influence. Clerk Hoeksema responded that, as a Trustee, it is undue influence, particularly after having a known conflict of interest. Mr. Arends doesn't believe a Conflict of Interest has been defined and may be the opinion of the Clerk. Mr. Arends believes a censure puts the Township at risk.

Treasurer Koester inquired if the Township has a policy allowing for a formal hearing. It was explained that a hearing is for appointed officials or employees, not elected officials. She stated the document has many inaccuracies and false accusations, and asked for a postponement in order to respond.

Trustee Mielnik agrees with some of Mr. Arends comments; however, Ms. Koester sending emails to friends and families crosses the line of what a public official should do in representing the public interest, particularly statements she made. Ethical lines have been crossed; however, he is not prepared to move forward today.

Supervisor Slopsema expressed her disappointment in Treasurer Koester's comments via Zoom at the Planning Commission's STR Public Hearing. It put the Planning Commissioners in an uncomfortable situation. She votes on appointment of PC Members, and this is undue influence regarding an issue on which she had previously declared a Conflict of Interest, as well as ethically incorrect. The Supervisor previously provided the Treasurer objective resources from the MTA supporting what she had expressed to Ms. Koester regarding proper versus improper behavior.

Ms. Koester disagreed, stating she received counsel, stating the opposite. During her Public Comment at the PC Meeting, she made it clear she was commenting as a resident, not a Township Board Member.

Board Action:
Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to approve Resolution #2025-15, a Resolution to Censure Whitewater Township Treasurer Jill Koester for repeated Conflicts of Interest, undue influencing and conduct that has diminished public trust in violation of ethical standards required of elected officials.

There was no second to the motion.

The motion failed.

TABLED ITEMS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:
Board members addressed concerns regarding the public treatment of the Zoning Administrator. The Board clarified that the ZA was carrying out responsibilities within legal authority and is following policy, enforcing regulations and the Township's direction, not her own.

It was discussed that Whitewater Township was not selected to move forward in the full application for the Rural Prosperity Grant for $50k in assistance with Zoning work. Funding requests outnumbered available funds by 8:1. Trustee Mielnik will follow up with them as to why and whether there are specific things to improve upon for future rounds.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Township Board Special Meeting – Skegemog SAD Public Hearing:
Tuesday, 9/9/25, 6:30 p.m., East Bay Township Hall

Township Board Regular Meeting: **Thursday, 9/11/25, 6:30 p.m., Whitewater Township Hall**

Township Board Regular Meeting: **Thursday, 9/25/25, 9:00 a.m., Whitewater Township Hall**

Township Board Special Meeting – Civil Infraction Ordinance Public Hearing:
Tuesday, 9/30/25, 6:00 p.m., Mill Creek School (backup location of East Bay Township; confirmed location will be posted)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Connie Hymore: Ms. Hymore responded to questions about why residents were requesting new township counsel. She cited that actions of our current law firm raised concerns about differing answers to different people. She has concerns about the FOIA she submitted and clarification on attorney client privilege of a letter read aloud at a PC meeting. She believes the Township ZA has misplaced public criticism despite working hard for the community betterment and works hard to uphold laws.

Ms. Heidi Vollmuth: Ms. Vollmuth spoke referencing issues with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) recent meeting and concerns of how Article 26 was handled, stating it was not followed. She requested the Board do their due diligence and change attorneys due to contradictory guidance. She offered to provide an affidavit of things the attorney has said to her in private but then did the opposite. She states complaint procedures should be clarified on the township website so residents know a complaint must be made before the ZA visits a site. She has reviewed previous Board votes and why Civil Infractions and Private Road Ordinances were not passed, and left the community without needed enforcement tools.

Ms. Julie Zenas: She has concerns about the Treasurer who is posing questions about Conflict of Interest to the same legal counsel representing the Township. She referenced Mr. Arends statement that Ms. Koester is not short-term renting her house and that he should check his facts. She expressed disappointment when elected officials avoid engaging in conversations that matter to the community. She stressed the Civil Infractions Ordinance still needs work and for enforcement to be meaningful, penalties should reflect the economic impact of the violation.

Mr. Mark Taylor of Samels Farm was told the meeting on the Special Assessment (SAD) couldn't be held there due to lack of internet service. Skegemog residents want to keep the SAD hearing in the Township and do not want it combined with the Civil Infraction hearing.

ADJOURNMENT:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Submitted by Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary
Wendy Hoeksema, Clerk