Approved	**MINUTES: Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 9:00 am**
Regular Meeting	**Whitewater Township Board** 5777 Vinton Rd. Williamsburg, MI 49690
CALL TO ORDER	Supervisor Slopsema called meeting to order at 9:00AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
ROLL CALL **Quorum established**	Members present: Supervisor Linda Slopsema, Clerk Wendy Hoeksema, Trustee Randy Mielnik, Trustee Tim Arends Members absent: Treasurer Jill Koester Also present: Recording Secretary Sara Quigley (Deputy Clerk)
SET APPROVE AGENDA	Supervisor Slopsema proposed the following changes to the agenda: 1. Add Cherry Capital Connect Fiber Distribution Center to New Business. 2. Remove New Business Item 2, Ordinance No. 57 Adoption of the 2024 International Fire Code, at the request of Chief Morgan, for additional study. 3. Note that New Business Item 1, regarding the Baggs Partners LLC lawsuit, may require a closed session with Attorney Brad Wierda who was expected to attend at 10:30 a.m. Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Mielnik, to approve the agenda as amended. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote.
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	None declared
PUBLIC COMMENT	A.Tezak: Stated his intent to apply for the Township Treasurer position and summarized his background, including Township(s) experience, familiarity with Township software and invited the Board to ask him questions. Supervisor Slopsema noted the Board could not discuss the matter during public comment, and Trustee Arends requested that Mr. Tezak submit a formal résumé, with further discussion to occur at an appropriate time.
PUBLIC HEARING	None

REPORTS	1. Planning Commission Report Trustee Mielnik reported that a complete Planning Commission update would be moved to next regular meeting. He also reported on the recent civil infraction zoning meeting attended by approximately 25 people. Comments were received both in favor of and opposed to the proposed process. The PC tabled the matter pending additional information regarding clarification of fines and items requiring further discussion with the Township attorney. Minor edits are expected before the matter returns for consideration at the August meeting. 2. August Election Information Clerk Hoeksema reported that the Primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026. She gave details on important dates and reported that preparations were underway, including pre-election maintenance to machines, explained tabulating procedures, and contingency plans. Early voting begins Saturday, July 25 and continues through Sunday, August 2 at East Bay Township Hall, with Whitewater Township election workers participating both in early voting and at Whitewater Township on Election Day.
CONSENT CALENDAR	The Board reviewed the Consent Calendar items as presented. Items removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion: • Bills for Approval • Revenue and Expenditure Report – June 30, 2026 Motion by Slopsema, second by Mielnik to approved the Consent Calendar as amended. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote. Following approval of the Consent Calendar, Clerk Hoeksema stated that the reports submitted to the Board differed from those posted on the Township website because highlighted versions had been sent to the website manager. She expressed concern that alterations had been made to her reports before publication. Trustee Arends stated he had inadvertently forwarded the incorrect version to the Township website manager.
ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR	1. Bills for Approval Clarification was given for several bills, including park debris removal, landscaping work and legal services. Clerk Hoeksema also requested adding an additional $6.00 amount added to the post office box rental, as the price went up to $120 since the invoice was issued. Motion by Hoeksema, seconded by Slopsema to approve bills for approval report as amended. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT CALENDAR (cont'd)	2. Revenue and Expenditure Report – June 30, 2026 Discussion by Board of line items and possible movement for budget clarification. Motion by Arends, seconded by Slopsema to receive and file the Revenue and Expenditure Report. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote.
APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES	1. June 30, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes Supervisor Slopsema requested two corrections to the draft minutes: • Correct the pronoun reference to Kim Mangus from "he" to "she." • Correct "Mr. K. Mangus" to "Ms. K. Mangus." Motion by Mielnik, seconded by Arends to approve the June 30, 2026, Special Meeting minutes as corrected. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote. 2. July 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes The Board complimented the quality of the minutes and had no corrections. Motion by Arends, seconded by Slopsema to approve the July 9, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes as presented. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	1. Assessor Candidates Supervisor Slopsema provided an update on the assessor's replacement search. Several qualified candidates have expressed interest, including both individuals seeking salaried employment and private assessing businesses interested in providing services by contract. Initial interviews have been completed by the Supervisor. The Board discussed the interview process and whether interviews should be conducted publicly. The Board agreed that Supervisor Slopsema will continue leading the preliminary review process with assistance from Trustee Mielnik, with finalists to be brought before the Board for possible public interviews. 2. Parks & Recreation Items: <u>Tribal Grant:</u> Chief Morgan reported that the Fire Department received a $2,000 GT Band grant and recommended using the funds toward the upgraded Playground Certified Mulch for the campground playground. The upgrade was recommended by the vendor because the mulch is not chemically treated and is safe for children. Motion by Slopsema, second by Arends to accept the 2% Tribal grant award and approve the use of the funds for campground playground costs. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont'd)	Mowing: Chief Morgan reported that he will survey Township park sites to determine whether some mowing can be handled in-house to reduce landscaping contractor costs. Battle Creek Natural Area Spillway: Chief Morgan reported that he is working with East Jordan Iron Works on a more functional debris cover for the spillway and coordinating with the conservancy to address flooding risks. Wildfire Smoke: Chief Morgan reported that, due to reduced air quality from the recent Canadian wildfire smoke, park staff offered partial refunds to campers who left early and full refunds or rescheduling options to those who had not yet arrived. Park Road Maintenance: Chief Morgan recommended considering a more durable gravel mix with concrete dust for Park Road after the season to reduce recurring storm-related repair costs. Supervisor Slopsema suggested consulting a vendors for recommendations. 3. Ambulance Millage Renewal Language Approval The proposed ambulance millage renewal language was reviewed by the Board. Discussion included the renewal status of the millage, the impact of the required Headlee rollback on the authorized levy, and the Board's authority to levy less than the authorized amount if deemed necessary in the future. The Board also discussed public communication regarding the proposal. Informational materials, including newsletter content and social media posts, were considered as potential methods for educating residents. The importance of ensuring that all communications remain informational and comply with applicable election laws was noted. Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Arends, to approve the Ambulance Millage Renewal ballot language. **ROLL CALL VOTE** Supervisor Slopsema – **Y** Trustee Arends – **Y** Trustee Mielnik – **Y** Clerk Hoeksema – **Y** ***Motion carried.***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont'd)	4. Public Comment Rules Policy Update The Board reviewed proposed revisions to the Township's Public Comment Rules (Administrative Policy and Procedure Section 2.4 (d)). Following discussion, the Board reached consensus on revisions. Motion by Arends, second by Hoeksema, to adopt the amended Administrative Policy and Procedure Section 2.4(d) as discussed. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote. Supervisor Slopsema will prepare the revised policy language, update the meeting agenda templates, and forward the revisions to Clerk Hoeksema for incorporation into the Township's master Policies and Procedures Manual.
NEW BUSINESS	1. Tribal Grant Award Acceptance – Fire Department The Township was awarded a separate $7,500 tribal grant for Fire Department water and ice rescue equipment, including life vests, helmets, gloves, and upgrades to the rapid intervention rescue board. Chief Morgan reported the equipment replacement is an important safety improvement due to the Department's annual ice rescue responses. Motion by Arends, seconded by Mielnik, to accept the 2% Grand Traverse Band Tribal grant and authorize the purchase of proposed fire equipment. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote. 2. Consideration of Participation in MERS Retirement Plans The Board discussed transitioning Township retirement benefits to MERS. Clerk Hoeksema reported that former employees contacted about existing retirement accounts had not responded and may continue working directly with their current providers. The Board agreed implementation could occur after the August election, with a proposed effective date of September 1, 2026. All documents to be confirmed accurate by MERS specialist. Motion by Arends, seconded by Hoeksema, to approve the MERS resolution 2026-07 and authorize the Clerk and Supervisor to sign the required documents. **ROLL CALL VOTE** Supervisor Slopsema – **Y** Trustee Arends – **Y** Trustee Mielnik – **Y** Clerk Hoeksema – **Y** Treasurer Koester-Absent ***Motion carried.***

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)	3.Township Treasurer Resignation Update Supervisor Slopsema reported that Treasurer Jill Koester's resignation had not yet been accepted in order to maintain continuity of Treasurer services during tax collection. The Treasurer vacancy has been advertised, and applications received from Deputy Treasurer Andy Tezak and Deputy Clerk Sara Quigley. Applications will be accepted through August 4, 2026. The Board agreed to conduct public interviews at a Special Meeting on August 11, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., with approximately 30 minutes allotted per candidate. Clerk Hoeksema will publish the required notice, including continuing an ad for candidates in the ER News. 4.Cherry Capital Connect Fiber Distribution Center Supervisor Slopsema presented Cherry Capital Connect's proposal to install a fiber distribution hub on Township property to support fiber service from Elk Rapids. The Board reviewed possible locations and discussed site considerations and future Township Hall property use. The Board reached consensus to request additional clarification from Cherry Capital Connect and to recommend a location near Township Hall that addresses all concerns.
Enter into CLOSED SESSION 10:30 AM **Return to OPEN SESSION 11:30 AM**	Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Hoeksema to enter Closed Session to consult with Attorney Brad Wierda regarding the Baggs Partners LLC v. Whitewater Township litigation Case No. 1:26-cv-1432 per MCL15.268 (e). **ROLL CALL VOTE** Clerk Hoeksema – **Y** Trustee Mielnik – **Y** Trustee Arends – **Y** Supervisor Slopsema – **Y** Treasurer Koester-Absent ***Motion carried.*** The Board left to meet with Mr. Wierda behind closed doors. After approximately an hour, the Board returned to the meeting room. Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Mielnik, to return to Open Session. **ROLL CALL VOTE** Supervisor Slopsema – **Y** Clerk Hoeksema – **Y** Trustee Mielnik – **Y** Trustee Arends – **Y** Treasurer Koester-Absent ***Motion carried.***

ANNOUNCEMENTS	**Meetings:** Thursday, August 13th 2026 @6:30pm **Board Member Announcements:** None
PUBLIC COMMENT	None
BOARD DISCUSSION	Short-Term Rental (STR) Survey and Planning Commission Discussion The Board discussed the timing of reviewing the PC's short-term rental survey results, which are not expected before the Board's regular August 13, 2026 meeting. Members also discussed future ordinance workshops, seasonal resident participation, and the need for legal guidance before further policy discussions. Recycling Update The Board received an update on efforts to explore curbside recycling options and discussed service feasibility within the Township. Existing recycling opportunities and potential future locations were reviewed. The Board confirmed that battery recycling will continue at the current location.
ADJOURNMENT	Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Mielnik to adjourn the meeting. ***Motion carried*** by unanimous voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 11:41am
Minutes submitted by Sara Quigley, Recording Secretary	Wendy Hoeksema 8-11-2026 Wendy Hoeksema, Township Clerk Date