	MINUTES Thursday, April 23rd, 2026 9:00 AM
Meeting	**Whitewater Township Board** 5777 Vinton Rd Williamsburg MI 49690
CALL TO ORDER	Supervisor Slopsema called meeting to order at 9:00 AM The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
ROLL CALL	Members present: Supervisor Linda Slopsema, Clerk Wendy Hoeksema, Treasurer Jill Koester, Trustee Randy Mielnik, Trustee Tim Arends Also present: Recording Secretary Kay Held, Fire Chief Josh Morgan, Zoning Administrator Deb Graber
SET APPROVE AGENDA	-Move "Road Commission Annual Report" to immediately after "Declaration of Conflict of Interest." -Add "Public Comments" on Road Commission Items prior to Mr. Watkins presentation. -Move "Brick House Interactive Website Discussion" after "Road Commission Report." -Add to New Business "Discussion of Censure of Clerk and Surety Bond Claim for the Clerk." There was Board discussion regarding this matter and request for a motion to include on Agenda. Moved by Koester, seconded by Slopsema to approve adding "Discussion of Censure of Clerk and Surety Bond Claim for Clerk" ROLL CALL VOTE: Arends-No, Koester-Yes, Slopsema-No, Mielnik-No, Hoeksema-No. ***Motion failed*** (Approval of Agenda, continued): -Add Correspondence (2) -Add two invoices to Bills Payable. -Add to New Business "Discuss Purchase Order for Electronic Speed Signs." -Correct Consent Calendar to include Approval of Minutes of: 3/19, 3/24, 3/26, 3/31 and 4/13/26." Closed Session Minutes of 3/26 and 3/31/26 will be distributed to the Board for review during the meeting. -Add "Park Administrator Proposal" to discussion of "Full-time Firefighter/Park Manager Candidate."

	Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	None expressed.
PUBLIC COMMENT Supervisor asked for special comments with regards to roads while GTCRC present	J. Gaskin: Would like an update as to status of speed limit signs that were removed from Church and Vinton streets. There is confusion whether it is a County Road Commission or Michigan State Police responsibility. A. Fenlon: Says she called while she was Deputy Clerk and found out the State deals with speed signs, and that having no speed limit signs is dangerous for residents and children. A. Boyd: Encouraged residents to call Gaylord MSP post to help enforce speed limits on local roads
REPORTS **Grand Traverse County Road Commission**	Grand Traverse County Road Commission Manager Dan Watkins discussed excessive winter storms, recent flooding, equipment/materials usage and its effect on the budget. He also recapped recent damage to roads and demonstrated GTCRC website. Mr. Watkins addressed the Road Commission's 2026 updated project list and discussed Cook/Skegemog Point Roads planned SAD project to start wedge and chip/seal in late May/early June. There was discussion regarding missing road signs and the speed study requests sent to him last year. He clarified that the MSP has authority over speed studies and setting these limits which are a long process.
PUBLIC COMMENT 1st	Mr. R. Steelman: Agrees divisive subjects should not be on the morning meeting Agenda. Believes if the Clerk made a mistake, the Board should determine how to resolve it rather than incur more legal expenses. This causes decreased confidence with the public. The Clerk has a heavy workload and low salary. The Township has never owned a ticket book, demonstrating the lack of need for a Civil Infractions Ordinance. Mr. J. Zenas read a comment on behalf of Ms. C. Hymore: Regarding the issue surrounding payment to the Clerk, she has not heard the Clerk did not earn the money. This could have easily been resolved at the conference table rather than spending $7,000+ in attorney fees. Each Board Member is involved to some degree in monies paid out, yet no one flagged it. This is a process error. There is an internal leak of confidential information to the public and social media. Mr. J. Gaskin: The Board voted to return to one meeting per month; however, chose the morning meeting rather than the evening meeting

	which is not convenient to the public. He is concerned for the safety of the Whitewater Township Board and staff and would like to see panic buttons installed. A plan should be in place to respond to potential attempts to disrupt the upcoming election. Ms. K. Mangus: This morning's meeting Agenda is not read as regular business items. Placement of the big screen TV is very poor; the public cannot view it during any presentations. The PC's STR survey draft questions are inappropriate and designed to form or change opinions. Ms. J. Zenas: The public paid substantial legal fees regarding the STR court case and deserves a formal disposition report from the 86th District Court beyond Mr. Mielnik's reference to it in his PC report. She requested this information and transparent discussion. She also requested a summary from the Treasurer of the Township's financials including explanations of items that do not balance, as well as, if there are missing monies.
WEBSITE PROPOSAL	Mr. Jim Sundberg of Brick House Interactive delivered a proposal to update and enhance the Township's website. He explained the existing and proposed platforms and discussed ADA compliant requirements. There was extensive discussion with the Board. The Supervisor asked for Board Members to serve as liaisons between Mr. Sundberg and the Board during this upgrade. Clerk Hoeksema offered to assist. Ms. Slopsema made a motion to appoint Clerk Hoeksema to lead the website redesign and review progress with the Board each month. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** Ms. Slopsema made a motion to issue a P.O. to Brick House Interactive to redesign/upgrade the Whitewater Township website not to exceed $3,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hoeksema. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
REPORTS **Fire/ EMS**	Fire Chief Joshua Morgan briefly reviewed his packet report, which also includes a quarterly history. He recently attended a Command Officer Boot Camp conference. He reports that regarding civil infractions, if he received a call for illegal burning, he would be able to issue a ticket per state statutes.
REPORTS **Planning Commission**	PC Board Representative Trustee Mielnik reports the PC met on April 1 for its Regular Meeting and on April 20 for a Special Meeting to review draft questions for the STR survey with EPIC-MRA.

	Mr. Mielnik reported that pursuant to a decision from the 86th District Court in Grand Traverse County, the Whitewater Township Zoning Ordinance validly prohibits short-term rentals (Case #2025-255-400-OM). The next PC Meeting on May 6, has multiple items being discussed along with Public Hearing. After discussion it was proposed to hold a Joint meeting with the PC at the next Board meeting on May 14th.
REPORTS **Zoning**	Zoning Administrator Deb Graber reported verbally on packet report. She states she's already issued 21 permits this year, and complaints continue. A new land division law will need to be addressed by the PC. She has been attending local training and plans to attend upcoming GTC-MTA meeting. Mentions that there is still an open ZBA Board seat to be filled. Discussion with the Board regarding a complaint of trucks parked along Williamsburg Road is a police matter.
REPORTS **Parks and Recreation**	In packet.
CPA reconciliation update	Treasurer Koester reported Maner Costerisan is balancing the books and have reconciled through February. She stated there are some errors related to the software transition but clarified for the public there are no missing funds. Clerk Hoeksema noted the fiscal year end closing and stated there are some cash receipt issues that remain under review beyond the journal entries needed. She reported attending a recent MTA conference class presented by the CPA firm. Both anticipated issues to be resolved shortly.
CONSENT CALENDAR	**Treasurer's Report:** In meeting packet **MMR (Ambulance) Report:** In meeting packet. **GT County Sheriff Report:** In meeting packet. **PC Minutes:** https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/planning-commission.html **ZBA Minutes:** https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/zoning-board-of-appeals.html 9. **Park & Recreation Minutes:** https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/advisory-committee.html **Bills for Approval:** Added Fahey Schultz and Recording Secretary invoices. **Correspondence:** Vollmuth: Clerk Bowman, Rohraff: STR Survey Bruce: Meeting Times Irish: Judge Stepka STR Ruling **Minutes for Approval:** https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/township-board-subcommittee-meeting-minutes.html 3/19/26 Special Meeting Minutes

	3/24/26 Special Meeting Minutes 3/26/26 Regular Meeting Minutes 3/31/26 Special Meeting Minutes 4/13/26 Special Meeting Minutes (3/26 and 3/31 include Closed Session Minutes) Closed Minutes were distributed to the Board and initialed; no changes were made. **Consideration of Fire Department Purchase Order Requests** **Consideration of Authorizing Bidding of Garage Doors at Fire Station** **Bills for Approval – Clerk Hoeksema:** Add invoices from Fahey Schultz and Recording Secretary Kay Held. PULLED **Revenue & Expenditure Report** - In meeting packet. PULLED Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. Ms. Koester seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** There was a discrepancy of the account number for the Kubota. The Clerk will review. Fahey Schulz invoices need further inspection and will be added to next meeting. **Board Action:** Ms. Koester made a motion to approve the Bills Payable as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
UNFINISHED BUSINESS **Parks & Recreation Items**	Mr. Arends reported that the Boat Wash station bid was much higher than anticipated at $75,000 and will need to be discussed if the Board wants to continue. Treasurer Koester explained Rover Pass fees at Campground Ms. Koester made a motion to change the RoverPass settings to charge campers the RoverPass platform fee and eliminate the Whitewater Township reservation fee. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** Mr. Bartnicki provided a list of returning and new Rangers, existing wages and proposed wages for the 2026-27 season. Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the hiring/rehiring of Park Rangers Wagner, Emerson, Olds, Babcock, Doherty, AboHadba, B. Schulte, L. Schulte, K. Schulte and Boyd at the proposed rates as noted. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

	Motion carried Mr. Mielnik made a motion to increase the hourly rate of Lead Ranger Tom Bartnicki to $28.87 (5%) merit-based increase. Ms. Koester seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** **Park Manager/ Firefighter Dual Role update:** Two candidates applied and were interviewed, Mr. Tom Bartnicki was one and did not believe he could commit as he is focused heavily on his Firefighter/EMS work and certifications; however, will continue to work part-time with Whitewater Park. He will consider this role next season. The other candidate did not hold the desired qualifications and experience. Ms. Slopsema made a motion to appoint Josh Morgan to the position of Parks and Recreation Administrator for six months (May-Oct. 2026) at a salary of $4,800 (14 pay periods of $342.86 per pay period) and 50% off campsite fees for up to 20 nights during the season. Mr. Arends seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
RECESS	Mr. Arends made a motion to take a 10-minute break and extend the meeting beyond the three-hour mark. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** The meeting recessed at 11:50 a.m. The meeting resumed at 12:01 p.m.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS **Post office expansion**	The Post Office would like to expand into the small portion of land, .10 acre, owned by the Township, which is the Township's septic reserve field It was decided this needs further research by the Supervisor who will update at future meeting.
METRO Act Permit	Information is in the meeting packet. Mr. Levi Schrepfer of Cherry Capital Connection, LLC, was present and delivered a brief presentation regarding fiber optic internet service to those rural customers without high-speed broadband service. Mr. Arends made a motion authorizing the Supervisor and Clerk to sign the bilateral right-of-way telecommunication permit referencing the Cherry Capital Connection, LLC, application dated March 23, 2026, and

	directs the Supervisor to submit the required reporting information to the MPSC. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
Ordinance Enforcement Policy update	Supervisor Slopsema reports Township Attorney Peter Wendling was advised of the Township's May and June meeting dates in consideration of his attendance. He is currently available for both evening meetings. An off-site location is being considered based on previous public attendance at a Public Hearing. The June 11, Regular Meeting, is being considered. Mill Creek Academy and Elk Rapids Township Hall will be considered as venues for the meeting.
Relocation of Recycle Bins	Mr. Arends reports that sites are still being researched on placement due to safety issues at the Township Hall. It is being considered to relocate them to HI Pray park. Another option is to discontinue them, but they are heavily utilized.
Clerk Additional Compensation Issue Status	Supervisor Slopsema reports records were turned over to the Michigan State Police.
NEW BUSINESS **Brine Agreement**	Mr. Arends made a motion to authorize the Clerk and Supervisor to sign the 2026 road brine agreement with Grand Traverse County Road Commission for two brine applications. Ms. Koester seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: ***Motion carried***
TABLED ITEMS	Ms. Koester made a motion to table Payroll Outsourcing and Review of Policies & Procedure Manual Section 3.0. Mr. Arends seconded the motion. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried***
Retirement Plan – Acrisure/John Hancock Timely Posting	Supervisor Slopsema discussed with Clerk Hoeksema delays or inconsistencies in employee contributions to Acrisure and John Hancock retirement funds. Clerk Hoeksema reported information from the audit regarding timing for contributions and discussed in detail the process, fees, and vendor issues with internal turnover, etc. The Board may consider a different service provider and will be revisited in the future.
Purchase Order for Electronic Speed Limit Sign	Ms. Slopsema made a motion to authorize purchase order(s) not to exceed $10,000 for (2) electronic speed signs, miscellaneous hardware, installation, labor and permits to be installed within the road right-of-way within Whitewater Township. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Arends-Y, Slopsema-Y, Hoeksema-Y, Mielnik-Y, Koester-~~Y.~~ N ***Motion carried***

ANNOUNCEMENTS	Township Board Regular Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Township Hall Spring Newsletter is forthcoming
PUBLIC COMMENT 2nd	Mr. R. Steelman: Spending $10k for speed signs is silly because the actual speed limit of Skegemog Point is 55 mph. A lighted sign indicating that limit doesn't make sense. Ms. J Zenas; recognized Zoning Administrator Deb Graber for her work handling zoning and enforcement matters involving non-homesteaded properties. She requested greater transparency by moving the Treasurer's Report from the Consent Calendar to be discussed. She also commented on the ongoing Clerk matter, questioning a timeline of how the confidential information became public and suggested internal breach. She encouraged unbiased STR survey questions and broader public input methods for STR discussion and workshops. Ms. K. Mangus: This was a long meeting that covered a lot. She opposes the elimination of Zoom and Public Comment; she doesn't know the status regarding the elimination of Zoom. She encouraged including the return of publicly posting submitted correspondence in the meeting packet and/or it read aloud at meetings.
BOARD DISCUSSION	Discussion with suggestions on how to handle correspondence
ADJOURNMENT	Moved by Slopsema, seconded by Mielnik to adjourn the meeting. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried*** Meeting adjourned 1:20 PM
Minutes prepared by Kay Held, Recording Secretary	Wendy Hoeksema, Township Clerk Date