WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP BOARD
Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690
231-267-5141 Phone

SPECIAL MEETING
APPROVD AMENDED MINUTES
Monday, March 24, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER:
Supervisor Linda Slopsema called the meeting to order at 10:00 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

ALSO PRESENT:
Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST AGENDA:

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

In the Township Hall:
None.

Via Zoom:
No Zoom service this meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:
None.

AGENDA ITEMS (as Listed in the Special Meeting Notice):

Budget Review – All Funds:
Mr. Arends provided a revised version of the proposed Budget (Version 10) and communication specifying the following recommendations:

General Fund:

- Add a contingency of $20,000 (gives some flexibility for a very tight budget)
- Add Capital Expenditure of $10,000 ($5k for town hall technology needs & $5K for treasurer BS&A printers, etc.)
- Increase Brining Service to $38,700 (up $3K based on contract proposal)
- Decrease Legal Services to $87,000 (down $3K)
- Add Prior Years' Surplus revenue of $30,000 (due to first two bullet points)

Parks & Recreation:

- Increase Capital Expenditure projected to $173,400 and Recommended to $285,500. An $11,000 and $10,500 increase respectively, for the C2AE contract payments related to park electric upgrade project. These costs should be capitalized and depreciated instead of expensed as professional services.
- Decrease professional services by $11,000 projected and $10,500 recommended based on the above.
- Add $20,00 contingency (gives some flexibility for a very tight budget)
- Add $5,000 health insurance to recommended and eliminate same amount from projected.
- Increase Prior Years' Surplus revenue $25,000 (due to previous two bullet points) to $131,500

In addition, the following items were discussed:

A five-year lookback analysis for Parks & Recreation was suggested as there have been many changes and capital projects.

The following projects will be prioritized by the Board: Electrical service upgrade, Hi Pray Park bleachers, tennis/pickle ball court re-surfacing, playground equipment and the ranger station. Parks Capital Expenditures and Revenue History were discussed. The Parks Fund is now combined with the Recreation Fund per prior discussions.

All line items in the General Fund were reviewed and discussed as well as item notes provided by Mr. Arends; i.e., Road Fund and Road Repair, ARPA funds related to the new fire pumper truck, Capital Expenditures, Health Insurance clarification, Pension Plan correction, and Contract Engineering & Professional Fees.

With regard to Salary Schedules, there was extensive discussion regarding the Township Clerk Salary, specifically as it relates to Clerk Hoeksema's increasing work load, the amount of functions beyond her statutory duty and salary comparisons she made through informal research. Clerk wages are increasing more than other elected officials due to increased levels of responsibility. The Board discussed the need for a Salary Survey and resources from which to draw information as well as whether a survey should analyze the elected positions or all employees.

The wages in today's proposed budget call for a 3% increase.

There was Board consensus to research and present salary information at the May meeting. Mr. Arends will head this project.

PARKS & RECREATION: No additional changes to revised proposal.

FIRE FUND: No additional changes to revised proposal.

AMBULANCE FUND: No additional changes to revised proposal.

GENERAL FUND: Some adjustments were made to the proposed Budget for approval consideration at this meeting.

Resolution #25-02 - 2025/2026 Regular Meeting Dates:
The previous motion to adopt the Resolution to set Regular Meeting dates was incomplete. It is presented before the Board again.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to approve Resolution #25-02, setting the Regular Meeting dates for 2025/2026. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Resolution #25-03 – Supervisor Salary:

Board Action:
Ms. Koester made a motion to adopt Resolution #25-03 to set the salary for the Supervisor at $31k/year effective 4/1/25. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

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

Resolution #25-04 – Clerk Salary:

Board Action:
Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to adopt Resolution #25-04 ~~for a year base salary of~~ setting the Township Clerk salary at $31,600/year effective 4/1/25. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

Resolution #25-05 – Treasurer Salary:

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to adopt Resolution #25-05 to set the salary for the Treasurer at $31,000/year effective 4/1/25. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Resolution #25-06 – Trustee Salary:

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to adopt Resolution #25-06 to set the base salary of the Township Trustees at $225 per meeting effective April 1, 2025. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

Resolution #25-07 – General Appropriations Act:

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to adopt Resolution #25-07, the General Appropriations Act of Whitewater Township's 2025/2026 Budget as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Graded Wage Scale 2025/2026:

Board Action:
Ms. Koester made a motion to adopt the proposed Graded Wage Scale for the 2025/2026 fiscal year effective 4/1/25. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Salary Schedule 2025/2026:

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to adopt the proposed Salary Schedule for the 2025/2026 fiscal year effective 4/1/25. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

~~**Salary Schedule 2025/2026:**~~

P&P Manual Appendix C – Zoning Fee Schedule:
Mr. Mielnik ~~presented~~ included a memo in the packet regarding Zoning and Related Fees.

Mr. Arends would like clarification on some of the information in the proposed Fee Schedule and suggested the Board postpone this topic until Mr. Mielnik and Zoning Administrator Graber are available.

Supervisor Slopsema noted the Township's Fee Schedule was last amended in 2011. The Zoning Administrator conducts multiple site visits to ensure compliance. Expenses to pay PC and ZBA Members to hear Special Use or Site Plan Reviews versus current fees are not aligned. A competitive analysis against other Townships was performed, resulting in a new proposed fee structure.

There was Board consensus to postpone this item until the April meeting.

ZOOM – UTILIZATION AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS:

Zoom Public Comment:
Mr. Arends provided a memo in the meeting packet regarding Zoom Public Comment Participation. Zoom service was allowed during the pandemic. He surveyed numerous other municipalities and the use of Zoom post-Covid. He noted no area municipality allows Public Comment via Zoom post-pandemic.

The Whitewater Township Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual section 2.4(e)2 states public comment must be from the lectern. While the policy itself was never changed, the former Board continued to allow Public Comment via Zoom. The section governing Public Comment for electronic meetings only pertains to emergency situations that disallow in-person meetings.

Meetings would still be available ~~to attend~~ via Zoom and watch as recorded meetings. Video retention time needs to be determined.

Board Action:
Mr. Arends made a motion to discontinue the practice of allowing Public Comment through Zoom. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Zoom Equipment:
Supervisor Slopsema detailed the technical problems of the existing audio/visual Zoom equipment being used at the Township Hall.

A quote from Noah Creamer of Social Explorations, LLC with two options for video and audio equipment for Zoom functions was in the meeting packet. Ms. Slopsema also spoke with Waara Technologies who reviewed the existing system. A new USB hub was purchased as a possible interim solution.

Mr. Arends was asked to lead this project to further investigate audio and visual systems for Zoom services. He will provide information to the Board at the April 7, Regular Meeting.

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY ROAD BRINE AGREEMENT:
There was Board discussion regarding the proposed Road Brine Agreement with Grand Traverse County and attached map, found in the meeting packet.

Board Action:
Ms. Slopsema made a motion to authorize the Whitewater Township Clerk and Supervisor to sign the 2025 Road Brine Agreement for two applications on the noted roads at an estimated cost of $37,620. Funds for this expense are available in the General Fund Road and Road Repair Department. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

There was additional discussion regarding the map

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

2025 LAWN MAINTENANCE:

2024 Contract with West Winds Outdoor:

Supervisor Slopsema referred to last year's lawn care contract with West Winds Outdoor, which was contracted late in the season, effective June, 18, 2024, for the entire Township.

To date, West Winds has not submitted a bid for the 2025 season.

Utilization of Whitewater Township Zero Turn Mower Purchased Late 2024:
A zero turn mower was acquired for $10,993 in the fall of 2024. It is currently at Whitewater Township Park. The former Board's plan was to use this mower to do much of the lawn care at the Park through Township staff. Whitewater Township Firefighter Tom Bartnicki has expressed interest in doing park mowing. Sending out a new bid request was also considered.

There was Board discussion and consensus that the Township begins to mow its property with the existing mower and equipment.

Clerk Hoeksema suggested insurance liability concerns be reviewed.

Ms. Koester expressed concern with in-house liability and transportation of equipment.

Mr. Arends noted there was no cemetery spring cleanup last year due to the contract delay and to consider that expense/service this year.

The Supervisor and Clerk will determine a scope of service and distribute a request for bids via contacts and/or social media.

BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:
None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
The Special Meeting Budget Workshop previously scheduled for Monday, 3/31/25, at 10:00 a.m. was cancelled.

Next Regular Meeting: The next Regular Meeting is Monday, 4/7/25, at 6:30 p.m.

New Regular Meetings: Regular Meetings of the Township Board will be on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. beginning on Thursday, May, 8, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

In the Township Hall:
None.

Via Zoom:
No Zoom service this meeting.

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:33 p.m.

Submitted by Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary