

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

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**AMENDED / APPROVED MINUTES**  
Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Supervisor Linda Slopsema called the meeting to order at 9:00 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  
Trustee Randy Mielnik

A quorum was established.

**Absent:**

None.

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Recording Secretary Kay Held

**SET/ADJUST AGENDA:**

Under New Business, move Items J2 through J5 (Appointments to Boards & Commissions) to immediately after Public Comment section.

Add to New Business as Item J6: Credit Cards

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

None.

**FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Tim Maylone, CEO Cherry Capital Connection, P.O. Box 866, Elk Rapids, MI 49629

Mr. Maylone stated the previous Board allocated ARPA funds to Cherry Capital Connection and 186 Network was split 50/50. Their commitment was to build fiber plant north of M-72; 186 Network committed to fiber plant work south of M-72. Whitewater Township committed \$62k toward engineering and inventory on the \$638k project. He outlined the geographic directions of the project, various organizations and programs, and the importance of support from the public and elected officials regarding unserved and underserved areas. He explained the five-year goal of broadband service as laid out by the Federal Government. Mr. Maylone will be asking for letters of support in the future. He provided an informational packet to the Board.

Ms. Vickie Beam, 6847 Baggs Road, N.W., Williamsburg, MI 49690

Ms. Beam thanked the Board for taking on their new positions and commented on the positive environment. She provided the Board with a written copy of her statement expressing numerous concerns about the Baggs Road property, inflammatory comments from past Board Members, statements overheard of the former Planning Commission Chair and former Zoning Administrator that the Baggs Road property involved in the lawsuit was split improperly, multiple claims of non-compliance with the Township's General and Zoning Ordinances, and improper actions by the ZBA.

She also referenced the resulting lawsuit, the financial burden on the Township, lack of neutrality from the former Board, and the frustrations felt by her and other members of the community. She appealed to the current Township Board and Planning Commission to review the history of this situation in its totality, particularly Ordinances that were ignored. She understands the Board has much to do as they enter into their new terms and looks forward to a Township Board that recognizes and enforces its Ordinances.

Ms. Connie Hymore, via Zoom (address not provided)

Ms. Hymore welcomed and thanked every Board Member for committing their time and efforts to the betterment of Whitewater Township and its residents. She concurred with Ms. Beam's comments.

**Appointments to Committees (Moved to this portion of Agenda by approved motion):**

**BOARD OF REVIEW:**

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Ms. Brenda Baker to a term on the Whitewater Township Board of Review. The term will end on December 31, 2026. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Ms. Tammy Jarvis to a term on the Whitewater Township Board of Review. The term will end on December 31, 2026. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Eric Sandborn to a term on the Whitewater Township Board of Review. The term will end on December 31, 2026. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**PLANNING COMMISSION:**

**Board Action:**

Mr. Mielnik made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Ms. Denise Peltonen to a 2-year term on the Whitewater Township Planning Commission. The term will end on December 31, 2026. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PRAC):**

**Board Action:**

Mr. Koester made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor revising Mr. Tom Cosgrove's appointment from a regular member to an alternate member on the Whitewater Township Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The term will expire on 12/31/26 (no change). Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Ms. Koester made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor revising Mr. Gary Buczkowski's appointment from an alternate member to a regular member on the Whitewater Township Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The term will expire on 12/31/26 (no change). Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

Messrs. Roberto Garza, Richard Boyd and Eric Gall were present and introduced themselves, providing a summary of their applications.

**Board Action:**

Mr. Mielnik made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Roberto Garza to a 3-year term on the Whitewater Township Zoning Board of Appeals. The term will end on December 31, 2027. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Richard Boyd to a 2-year term on the Whitewater Township Zoning Board of Appeals. The term will end on December 31, 2026. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Eric Gall to a 3-year term on the Whitewater Township Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate. The term will end on December 31, 2027. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

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

Clerk Hoeksema or Deputy Clerk Hoeksema will administer the Oaths of Office.

**Deputy Supervisor, Pay Rate:**

Supervisor Slopsema announced Ms. Whitney Boecker will be the new Deputy Supervisor and provided a brief summary of Ms. Boecker's background. Ms. Slopsema is recommending the new Deputy Supervisor start at the Step 12 rate of pay of \$22.24/hour.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Koester made a motion to approve the Supervisor's recommendation for Deputy Supervisor Whitney Boecker's starting wage of \$22.24/hour. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

**RFQ for Engineering Services Supporting PC/Zoning Administrator – Mielnik:**

Mr. Mielnik explained the Board previously authorized the distribution of an RFQ for plan review and engineering services. Two responses were received and included in the meeting packet. Trustee Mielnik made the recommendation to hire Gourdie-Fraser, Inc. (GFA). He has worked with them in the past and found them professional and helpful to local governments, particularly in more complicated projects.

Supervisor Slopsema noted the Zoning Ordinance provides the Township the ability to hire professional engineering support services; the cost of these services is not borne by the Township but rather by the applicant.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to select Gourdie-Fraser, Inc. (GFA) to assist Whitewater Township with site plan reviews, Special Use Permits and related matters as applications are submitted by property owners and their agents as necessary, and to authorize a contract for the calendar year 2025 per the Whitewater Procurement Policies. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

**Park Disposals – Arends:**

Mr. Arends met with Parks employees and identified some assets as unusable surplus.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to declare the old dock, golf cart and printer from Whitewater Township Park as old surplus and authorize park staff to dispose of these assets, in the best interest of the Township. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

None.

**REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:**

**County Board of Commissioners:**

Grand Traverse County Commissioner Mr. Darryl Nelson expressed thanks to the new Board Members and wished them well.

He spoke about the County's \$51m budget; some members of the Board have been critical of the budgeting process. They continue to work on achieving a balanced budget, are being fiscally conservative and have good fund balances.

Mr. Nelson also serves on Airport Authority Board. He noted the Terminal Expansion Plan and detailed statistics on passengers served, airport capacity and that Cherry Capital Airport is the fastest growing airport in the country by passenger count. No local tax dollars are allocated to the terminal expansion nor are local tax dollars used to operate the airport. The expansion is a \$120m project; \$60m will come from State and Federal dollars. If the county backs a \$60m bond, which will be repaid by airport operations, \$18.23m will be saved through the life of the bond.

The County Board discussed salaries at the last meeting and outlined pay structures. Mr. Nelson expressed frustration in the timing of the ad hoc committee's planning and presentation of salary changes in that they were passed after the General Election.

He spoke highly of Mr. Tim Maylone with Cherry Capital Connections as a strong resource in executing improved broadband. Mr. Nelson is meeting with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission today to discuss this matter.

He has asked Acme Township Supervisor and will ask Whitewater Township Supervisor Slopsema to meet with High Pointe to have discussions about Arnold Road.

Mr. Arends inquired whether Leelanau County has to approve the bonding for the airport. They do not; however, they voted in favor of it.

**Fire Report – Chief Morgan – see consent #8:**

Chief Morgan noted he was one of 21 Chiefs from across the country to attend the National Fire Academy at the National Emergency Institute (FEMA property) in Maryland. The training was funded by the Federal Government.

The Department provided resources to the Iceman race; the Township does not pay for these services.

Two new probationary firefighters were approved through Michigan Works; their Fire Academy training will be funded through the State of Michigan. Tom Cosgrove of the Cosgrove Foundation will fund half of one firefighter's turnout gear. Chief Morgan is applying to the Assistance for Firefighters Grant.

The Department applied for the Tribal 2% Grant requesting \$30k to replace the Kubota RTV. It is 20 years old; NFPA standards state that equipment should be replaced after 20 years. A 10% match (\$3k) from the Capital Improvement Fund is required.

Calls for service are trending higher than past years; to date, there have been 133 calls compared to a total last year of 113.

The Department will be working on a strategic 5-10 year Plan and will be asking for Board and community input. They will also be working on the revision of Standard Operating Procedures.

**Planning Commission Report – Randy Mielnik:**

Mr. Mielnik reported the Planning Commission met on 12/4/24. The Board welcomed new Member Rene Stratton.

There was a review of Silver Birch Resort. A public hearing was previously held. At last week's meeting, the Board reviewed and approved the project with numerous conditions.

The Master Plan is moving forward. The prior Board provided comments on the draft. It had also produced a Resolution from 2008 defining authority over approving the Master Plan; however, it was done prior to the current Planning Act adoption. The current Act states the Township Board decides whether it or the Planning Commission is the final authority to approve the Master Plan. This will be reviewed.

As required, the draft of the Master Plan has been sent to adjacent jurisdictions for a 63-day comment period which closes on 12/23/24. The Planning Commission is receiving some feedback on the Master Plan, specifically from East Bay Township proposing working together on a non-motorized transportation plan.

A public hearing was held on the Zoning Clarification Project. There were some comments regarding the Map. This will come forward to the Township in the future.

Work continued on the By-laws, which was approved with amendments in accordance with state statutes.

The Planning Commission and Township Board will be evaluating fees for Zoning Permits, Site Plan Reviews and Special Use Permits. There have been no changes in fee structure since 2011.

A new Planner to be retained to assist with Zoning Ordinance updates. Numerous amendments will be presented, many of which are described in the Master Plan.

**Parks Report – Mike Dwyer – see consent #11:**

Park Manager Dwyer reported the park is closed for the season, and the system has been maintained and winterized. All park assets have been removed and secured. Restrooms, tennis & pickleball courts are closed.

He is reviewing vendors for costs of services and supplies; this information will be presented to the Board.

He is working with the booking company Rover Pass on the process to implement any changes in price structures and length of stay. A presentation will be forthcoming.

Mr. Dwyer has been inspecting trails and monitoring all parks. There is a tree down at Battle Creek. He is receiving a positive response after contacting staff from last season, and he is confident he will have a full staff for the upcoming season.

Reservations open April 1, 2025.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Receive and File.

Special Minutes of 11/26/24 were pulled.

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

**Supervisor Report:** Arnold Road Abandonment Request

Correspondence included in the meeting packet.

**Clerk's Report:** None.

**Treasurer Report:** None.

**Trustee Reports:** None.

**Zoning Report:** Provided in packet.

**MMR Report:** None.

**Fire Monthly Report:** Verbal report.

**PC Report:** Provided.

**Historical Society Report:** No report.

**Parks & Recreation Report:** Verbal report.

**PC Minutes:** <https://www.whitewatertownship.org/planning-commission.html>

**Parks & Recreation Minutes:** <https://www.whitewatertownship.org/advisory-committee.html>

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

**Whitewater Township Regular Board Meeting Draft Minutes 2024.10.08:**

Amendments: None.

**Whitewater Township Special Board Meeting Draft Minutes 2024.11.26:**

Pulled from Consent Calendar.

**Items Pulled from Consent Calendar:**

**Whitewater Township Special Board Meeting Draft Minutes 2024.11.26:**

Amendment:

Item #7 on page 2: correct the number of cell phones approved from four to five.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Koester made a motion to approve the Whitewater Township Special Board Meeting Draft Minutes 2024.11.26 as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**BILLS FOR APPROVAL:** Pending.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS:** None.

**REVENUE & EXPENDITURE REPORT:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Whitewater Township Toddler Playground Equipment:**

Supervisor Slopsema reported there was a very lengthy discussion by the previous Township Board at the October, 2024, meeting, at which time they asked for several changes. No approval was granted at that time.

Ms. Melissa Melton, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) spoke to the Board about the toddler playground equipment project. The former Township Board previously approved the project. She distributed a drawing of

the playground layout with correct equipment model numbers. The supplier, Burke, has offered a discount for equipment, shipping and installation totaling approximately \$8k. PRAC received a Tribal grant of \$14,532.91 toward of the project. These funds equal 50% of the grant request amount. Equipment costs are \$24,299. Survey fees are separate.

Ms. Melton is asking the Board for a motion to approve the transfer of \$9k+ which is the departure of the funds not provided by the grant.

Board Members inquired about the process to facilitate and pay for the project as well as equipment and placement, park layout, weed barriers, ground materials and containment, fall zones, aged equipment, etc. The Board is also concerned about surface preparation and any ADA accessibility requirements.

The Board acknowledged Park Manager Mike Dwyer and Mr. Gary Buczkowski who discussed the population of park users, poor quality of the existing sand surface and improved playground surface options.

Ms. Melton and the Board discussed these topics at great length. Board Members do not believe the Resolution proposal is complete with regard to the issues discussed.

The Board would like to clarify the Financial Policy's requirement whether sealed bids from multiple vendors are required.

PRAC will be submitting requests for Whitewater Township and Hi Pray Parks for additional projects in the future.

A motion was asked for on this request.

**Board Action:**

No motion was made.

Ms. Melton indicated the \$8k discount from Burke would be forfeited if not purchased in 2024.

Board Members asked if there were any conditions on the Tribal funds. Ms. Melton stated the funds are specified for toddler equipment at the park. Ms. Koester read from Tribal correspondence which stated funds are to help build a toddler play structure as outlined in the application. A report regarding the expenditure of funds is due one year of being awarded the grant (July).

Supervisor Slopsema asked if there was a second motion on the floor.

**Board Action:**

No motion was made.

There was further Board discussion regarding ground foundation and materials prior to placement of any equipment. Supervisor Slopsema would like to give PRAC clear feedback. There was Board consensus for Parks & Recreation to address the following:

- cost of fall surface for the existing playground and new play area before considering adding additional equipment
- determine if the Tribe is willing to amend their grant approval to pay for some of the surface; i.e., defer money for toddler equipment to focus on surface equipment exclusively in efforts to then get toddler equipment
- follow Township's bid/purchase process to procure new bids

The Board will also provide feedback to PRAC on the Township's financial procedure for a project of this magnitude.

Mr. Mielnik requested that Gosling-Czubak specify that material and installation meets ADA requirements.

The Board thanked Ms. Melton and Mr. Buczkowski for the time they have put into the project and information

**Note: The Board took a short recess at 11:13 a.m.:**

**Note: The Board reconvened at 11:20 a.m.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Parks ARPA Fund Resolution:**

Supervisor Slopsema received an email from County Finance Director Dean Bott stating he reviewed the documentation from the October, 2024, Township meeting sent by former Supervisor Popp regarding funding of the Lossie Road Trail using County and Township ARPA funds.

She spoke with Mr. Bott this morning who stated because the Township will not have contracts in place by 12/31/24 it cannot use County or Township ARPA funds for this project.

There are \$95,917 from County ARPA monies and \$81,236 unused remaining Township ARPA funds available. Approximately \$5-6K in Township ARPA funds were used for consulting services through Gosling-Czubak.

PRAC Chair Melton believes ARPA funds must be obligated and the Township must have an attestation statement and interagency agreement. She commented on local, State and Federal ARPA funds, asking the Township to consider passing a Resolution today to solidify that obligation. The Supervisor reiterated because a contract is not in place, those funds would not be available at this time. There has been some conflicting information along the way regarding the process of utilizing ARPA funds.

Supervisor Slopsema and Treasurer Koester will be meeting with Mr. Bott shortly to discuss viable ways in which the County ARPA funds can still be used. Mr. Bott believes the Township can still utilize all of the funds available to it.

**Board Action:**

No motion for a Resolution was made.

**Credit Cards:**

Clerk Hoeksema spoke with Alden State Bank regarding the need to assign approved credit card holders and limits. Credit cards held by the former Township Board have been cancelled.

There was Board discussion to determine specific staff of the Township requiring credit cards and financial limits. They also discussed specific needs for their use. These typically include expenses for training, electronic needs, office incidentals, and travel.

Park Manager Dwyer has a valid Fuelman gas card. His need for using a card includes emergency purchases, hardware, and office expenses. Fire Chief Morgan holds a valid Township credit card with a \$10k limit. Zoning Administrator Graber will be asked if she has a need for a Township credit card.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to set up credit cards and credit limits through Alden State Bank for the following individuals:

- Park Manager Mike Dwyer, \$5k credit limit
- Supervisor Linda Slopsema, \$5k credit limit
- Treasurer Jill Koester, \$5k credit limit
- Clerk Wendy Hoeksema, \$10k credit limit

Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

Clerk ~~Secretary~~ Hoeksema will provide Alden State Bank with approved minutes to enact these authorizations.

**TABLED ITEMS:** None.

**BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION:**

Clerk Hoeksema received an invoice from CSI for the fire truck in the previously approved amount of approximately \$113k. She will notify the bank of this large transaction and consider processing it via ACH transaction.

Supervisor Slopsema expressed concern with Commissioner Nelson's comments suggesting a meeting with him and Acme Township to engage in a joint discussion with High Pointe regarding the Arnold Road closure. This matter has been heavily discussed and reviewed in the past. She believes a meeting with High Pointe would be premature. There

was Board discussion and consensus to delay this for the time being. The Supervisor will speak with Commissioner Nelson and follow-up with the Board.

Clerk Hoeksema suggested all candidates who expressed interest or completed a committee application should receive a thank you note. Board Members agreed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Regular Township Board Meeting Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Vickie Emerson, (address not provided)

Ms. Emerson provided Board feedback stating this meeting and conversations have been very refreshing. She appreciated the respectful and productive nature of the meeting and the Board engaging with each other and members of the audience. As a Park Ranger, she stated wood chips are acceptable; however, maintenance levels are high. She asked the Board to consider the pros and cons of various materials including rubber mulch.

Ms. Vicki Beam, Via Zoom

Ms. Beam stated she concurred with the comments of Ms. Emerson regarding the Board working together. She thanked the Supervisor for her comments about Arnold Road.

Ms. Beam made a presentation at the Road Commission about the Arnold Road closing. She ran into the owner of High Pointe who stated it was the DNR starting the conversation about Arnold Road and he did not indicate plans to hear from the public. She would like public comment on this matter.

Ms. Beam asked the Board to consider holding its meetings in the evening to allow for more public attendance.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Board Action:**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53a.m.

Presented by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary