

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

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**Thursday, September 11, 2025, 6:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.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/APPROVE AGENDA:**

Add Invocation for 9/11 (new item D)

**Board Action:**

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

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

**Invocation for 9/11**

Clerk Hoeksema read aloud an invocation acknowledging the anniversary of 9/11.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Steelman, Jacobson, Mangus, Vollmuth, Krinock**

Multiple residents raised concerns about meetings, including time held and Zoom access, ethics and board conduct, short term rentals (STR's) and their proposed enforcement, the Special Assessment District (SAD) and public hearing procedures.

*A written letter of correspondence was read aloud by a member of the public alleging misconduct and attributing responsibility for recent acts of violence to the Board. The statements included unverified and potentially defamatory claims. Therefore, the content has been summarized here to reflect the nature of the concerns without reproducing specific allegations. This correspondence remains in the Clerk's office for accessibility to the public.*

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

**Planning Commission Report – Mr. Mielnik:**

Meeting attendance at 08/06/25 Public Hearing at the Township Hall exceeded capacity therefore it was rescheduled for 08/26/2025. A Special Meeting held 08/14/25 to complete regular business. ROS/ROWG members were selected and their first meeting was held 09/02/2025.

09/03/2025 PC Meeting had discussions regarding Winery Ordinance and Outside Event Spaces Ordinance. Grand Traverse Plastics Site Plan Review was postponed for more information. The proposed STR Amendment was unanimously denied, while the proposed amendment to Article 21.04 was recommended to be approved. Both amendments are to be forwarded to the Township Board. Giffels-Webster Planner identified high priority updates, PC approved next steps.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to amend the Agenda to add the 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (Open and Closed Sessions) for approval. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** YEAS: 4 (Koester, Slopsema, Hoeksema, Mielnik). NAYES: 1 (Arends)

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Correspondence:

Myler, Hill, Ford – Short-term Rentals  
Chadha – Proposed Special Assessment District

Minutes for Approval: <https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/township-board--subcommittee-meeting-minutes.html>

8/14/25 Regular Meeting Minutes

8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes

Bills for Approval:

A minor clarification was made on one invoice.

Items pulled from Consent Calendar:

-Minutes of 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes

**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.

**Approval of 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (Open Session):**

Board Members noted amendments to be made to the 8/28 Minutes.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve the 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (Open Session) as amended. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** YEAS: 3. NAYES: 2.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Slopsema, Hoeksema, Mielnik – Yes. Koester, Arends – No. Motion carried.

**Approval of 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (Closed Session):**

Clerk Hoeksema distributed hard copies of the Closed Session Minutes to Board Members for review.

**Board Action:**

Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the 8/28/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (Closed Session) as presented. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

The Clerk collected copies of the Closed Session Minutes from Board Members. According to procedure, they are to be sealed and then destroyed one year and one day from date of meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Any Parks & Recreation Items:**

Lead Ranger Bartnicki rated park assets and suggested improvements; marketing, beach/playground upgrades, firewood cost, ranger station and reservation system.

Treasurer Koester reported the Asset List is part of the PRAC Five-year Plan. The Disability Network of Traverse City rated the Park for accessibility. A draft of the Plan will be forwarded to the Board soon, including survey results.

Volunteers are needed this Sunday at 9am to help assemble the final new bleacher at Hi Pray Park.

**Consideration of Resolution to Adopt the Whitewater Township Code of Ethical Conduct and Governance Policy – Mr. Mielnik:**

A memo and updated version of the proposed Resolution was in the meeting packet. Grand Traverse County's Code of Ethics Policy was also in the packet.

**Board Action**

Mr. Arends made a motion that Whitewater Township adopts Resolution #2025-14, approving the Whitewater Township Code of Ethical Public Conduct and Governance Policy, effective immediately. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

There was Board discussion that referenced the County's Policy and included topics such as reporting/investigative procedures, conflict of interest, impartiality, best practices, prospective enforcement and MTA guidelines. Amendments addressed personal vs. financial interests and strengthened ethics protections.

Mr. Arends read aloud the proposed Resolution #2025-14 in its entirety with discussed Amendments.

**Board Action – Amended Motion:**

Mr. Mielnik made a Friendly Amendment to the original motion. Mr. Arends accepted the Friendly Amendment.

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

**PRAC By-Laws Discussion/Review – Ms. Hoeksema:**

The Board reviewed modified content of the Whitewater Township Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) By-Laws. Clerk Hoeksema noted changes, which were included in the proposed amended document included in the meeting packet. The Board discussed these.

The PRAC Liaison to return By-Laws to committee which will be modified and presented at a later date for approval. No Board Action was taken at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Consideration of Public Comment Rules Change – Mr. Arends:**

There was Board discussion about distinctions of Public Comments during the course of a Regular Meeting and during Public Hearings. They also discussed the issue of commenting on the same topic during separate Public Comment sections and setting time limits for commenting.

**Board Action:**

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to approve a change to Policy Rule 2.4d – Meeting Agendas Part E.4 to read: "The Chair shall control the amount of time each person shall be allowed to speak, which shall not exceed five (5) minutes, excluding the time needed to answer Board Member questions." Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

**Discussion of LIAA Video/Audio Meeting Service Consultation:**

There was discussion about LIAA (Land Information Access Association) providing audio and video services during meetings vs. a Board Member operating the AV and Zoom system. Mr. Arends asked Mr. Matt Kern of LIAA to speak on the subject.

He spoke about technical issues of the different microphones, speakers, audio quality improvement, cable management, camera equipment, reconfiguring Zoom connectivity, the pros and cons of streaming meetings, and reorganization of room setup. Mr. Kern highly recommends there be a dedicated operator of the AV and Zoom during a meeting.

LIAA is a non-profit organization, provides service to numerous municipalities and operates the local governmental television channel. He noted LIAA is not an equipment vendor.

Mr. Arends asked for a proposal from LIAA on video services and Zoom facilitation.

**TABLED ITEMS:** None.

**BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:**

Supervisor Slopsema responded to Mr. Jacobson's earlier comment regarding Public Comment at the 9/30 Civil Infractions Ordinance meeting. She indicated the Chair has the authority to limit the length of time for comments, comments are not to exceed five minutes and the Chair can request multiple speakers consolidate time if commenting on the same subject. A Public Hearing can be suspended and reconvened to continue comments if it becomes excessively lengthy. She also consulted with the attorney who verified the Board is not required to give unlimited comment time during a Public Hearing but must be fair.

Ms. Slopsema stated the Board understands this is an important issue to the public, which is the sole purpose of a Public Hearing.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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 Academy (Old M-72)**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**R. Steelman:**

Supported the use of LIAA, feels public hearing time limits should be consistent but also longer, so more people can speak.

**K. Mangus:**

Voiced opinion that the County Ethics Policy does not apply to the Township, urged Board to preserve Zoom service and restore two-way communication, and requested no last-minute adding of Agenda items.

**M. Jacobson:**

Agreed Zoom service needs improvement, opposed adding items Agenda in the middle of meeting and has concerns regarding strict public enforcement in the [proposed] Civil Infraction Ordinance.

**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 9:02 p.m.

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