

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

SPECIAL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, March 19, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL: Clerk 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:

Board Action: Mr. Mielnik made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. M. Taylor: Concerned about traffic safety and excessive speed on Skegemog Point Road and has spoken with multiple officials regarding his concerns. Speed limit signs near the Township Hall were removed by County. He asked the Board to consider purchasing a solar speed limit sign; MDOT has stated this works to slow drivers.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing – 2026-2027 Millage to Support the General Fund Budget:
(1.0 mills estimated at \$192,700)

Open Public Hearing and State Time:

Board Action: Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing opened at 6:37 p.m.

Request Attendees to Sign Attendance Sheet:

The Supervisor explained the Public Hearing Attendance Sign-in Sheet.

State Dates of Public Hearing Notice Publication and Newspaper Published in:

The Public Hearing was posted in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 03/11/26 and Elk Rapids News on 3/12/26.

Read Any Written Comment: Numerous emails were received from Skegemog Point residents requesting purchase of a speed sign including M. Taylor, R. Gold, B. Campbell, G. Clark, R. Beitel, J. King, J&M Volk, C. Kreger, F. Schulte, G. Blight.

Receive Public Comment:

In the Meeting Room: None.

Via Zoom: None.

Close Public Hearing and State Time:

Board Action: Ms. Koester made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:40 p.m.

Public Hearing – 2026-2027 Millage to Support the Fire Fund Budget:
(1.25 mills estimated at \$416,800)

Board Action: Ms. Koester made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing opened at 6:41 p.m.

Request Attendees to Sign Attendance Sheet:

The Supervisor explained the Public Hearing Attendance Sign-in Sheet.

State Dates of Public Hearing Notice Publication and Newspaper Published in:

The Public Hearing was posted in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 03/11/26 and Elk Rapids News on 3/12/26.

Read Any Written Comment: None.

Receive Public Comment:

In the Meeting Room: None.

Via Zoom: None.

Close Public Hearing and State Time:

Board Action: Mr. Mielnik made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:42 p.m.

Public Hearing – 2026-2027 Special Assessment Millage to Support the Ambulance Fund Budget:
(.5 mills estimated at \$172,200)

Open Public Hearing and State Time:

Board Action: Ms. Koester made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing opened at 6:43 p.m.

Request Attendees to Sign Attendance Sheet:

The Supervisor explained the Public Hearing Attendance Sign-in Sheet.

State Dates of Public Hearing Notice Publication and Newspaper Published in:

The Public Hearing was posted in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 03/11/206 and Elk Rapids News on 3/12/26.

Read Any Written Comment: None.

Receive Public Comment:

In the Meeting Room: None.

Via Zoom: None.

Close Public Hearing and State Time:

Board Action: Ms. Hoeksema made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:44 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

CONSENT CALENDAR – Receive and File:

Correspondence: None.
Minutes for Approval: None.
Bills for Approval: None.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Any Park and Recreation Items: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

TABLED ITEMS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:

Trustee Arends presented the current proposed budget on the large screen as well as budget notes regarding specific items. An extensive discussion followed, with fund adjustments explained.

BUDGET DISCUSSION OF FIRE FUND, AMBULANCE FUND AND FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND:

Discussion – Fire Fund: Chief Morgan prepared an Executive Summary (in the meeting packet) regarding the Fire Fund questions/clarification.

He outlined costs and adjustments based on wages, equipment and turnout gear replacement, facility improvements and response trends. He also spoke about the unused Tribal Grant funds from the 2025-26 fiscal year and allocation to purchase of turnout gear.

Chief Morgan addressed the full-time Firefighter/Park Manager position. The cost of this position will be a 60/40 (Fire/Township) split.

Projected revenue decreases are due to the proposed reduction of the Fire Special Assessment District from 1.5 mills to 1.25 mills.

Insurance cost recovery is not forecasted in the budget; the Board asked the Chief to provide an estimate.

Discussion – Ambulance Fund: Reviewed the current, three-year 1.5 mills voter-approved millage rate which expires this year. The prior Board negotiated a three-year rate with MMR through 2029. A 1 mill rate will be presented to voters, and .5 mill will be charged for the first year due to the existing fund balance.

Chief Morgan noted the 1.5 is a renewal millage, not a new millage proposal. He will be involved in the future renegotiation of the MMR contract and maintains monthly statistics. Detailed financial information was discussed regarding Fire and EMS as well as reduction in costs to taxpayers.

Discussion – Fire Capital Improvement: No planned transfers from other funds. The prior year surplus is earmarked for final payment of new fire truck.

Discussion included facility upgrades and maintenance (garage doors, exterior access), long term consideration of new Fire station, potential collaboration with Grand Traverse Band, SAD millage capacity up to 10 mills for capital projects.

Chief Morgan invited the Board to consider holding a Special Meeting at the Fire Hall for facility review.

Discussion – Parks & Recreation Fund: Chief Morgan and Lead Park Ranger Emerson were present. Park reservations opened up in February instead of April this year, reflected in budget reporting.

The budget also reflects wage changes if the Township hires a full-time Park Manager/Firefighter position. The Campground Host position was discussed, P&P manual referenced.

A capital and maintenance priorities plan as identified by Parks staff was included in packet for discussion which included restroom repairs and roof replacement, tennis/pickleball court resurfacing, boat wash project, Park Road maintenance and engineering needs.

Campground was confirmed as self-sustaining. The Planning Commission is working on a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Discussion – Other Non-general Fund Budgets (time-permitting):

The Salary Schedule and Graded Wage Scale discussion was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

Information for the Public Improvement Fund was put forth in the budget. These funds may be utilized for Township Hall design, repairs, renovations, or a possible shared Township Hall/Fire Hall project. Mr. Mielnik had previously drafted an RFQ; however, it was not distributed yet. The current Hall was built in 1885 and is not adequate for modern operations. Concept designs are necessary before moving forward with any prospective plans.

The Special Assessment District (SAD) funding process was discussed and will be a topic on next week's Agenda. A budget amendment will be proposed at that time related to several miscellaneous costs. Mr. Arends specified the Skegemog Point Road SAD funds, resident expenses and the SAD process. Supervisor Slopsema will follow-up with Mr. Dan Watkins as to when the bid process will formally commence.

Mr. Arends will revise the proposed budget from today's discussion and distribute an updated copy to Township Board Members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Township Board Special Meeting: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – Budget Work Session

Board Member Announcements: Supervisor Slopsema thanked Chief Morgan and Ms. Vicki Emerson for their availability to answer questions and clarify information.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. M. Taylor:

Concerns over Skegemog Point Rd tree removal, the property damage caused and lack of transparency. Questions regarding County RC bid process delays. Requests hydrant/water improvements at lake as there is a currently non-functioning pump for fire. Supports Tribal opportunities and suggested township hall is outdated and inadequate.

Supervisor Slopsema asked Fire Chief Morgan to address the water supply issue on Skegemog Point. There is a dry hydrant at the end of Skegemog Point Road, at the lake, which has fallen into disrepair due to rust, low water table and liability issues. He explained the Fire Department's turbo draft function to pull water from the lake with their trucks and underground water storage tanks currently in the Township.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board Action: 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 8:41 p.m.

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