

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

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**Thursday, March 12, 2026, 6:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL:** Supervisor Slopsema called Roll.

**Present:**

Supervisor Linda Slopsema  
Treasurer Jill Koester  
Trustee Tim Arends  
Trustee Randy Mielnik

A quorum was established.

**Absent:** Clerk Wendy Hoeksema (excused)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Recording Secretary Kay Held

**SET/ADJUST/APPROVE AGENDA:**

- Remove "Closed Session: Written Opinion re: 6631 Baggs Road" from New Business
- Move "Board Comments and Discussion" to after the second Public Comment section of the Agenda.

**Board Action:** Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.  
**VOTE:** YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. C. Wroubel: He requested reinstatement of public comment during Zoom. He has ADA concerns and how this relates.

Mr. M. Jacobson: He raised questions regarding Lossie Rd Trail property owner's rights and referenced easement. He believes public comments via Zoom should be allowed during meetings.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy & Grand Traverse Regional Conservation District Presentation – Mr. Chris Garrock, Ms. Sara Vaughan and Mr. Steve Lagerquist:**

Mr. Garrock, Director of Land Stewardship and Mr. Lagerquist, of Trail and Infrastructure, reviewed a map with the Board and discussed the Conservancy's plan to acquire a 265-acre nature sanctuary adjacent to the Battle Creek Natural Area.

The Conservancy proposes to:

- Replace the existing footbridge on Lossie Trail that crosses the Battle Creek Natural Area.
- Establish a connection between the proposed Mabel Creek Nature Sanctuary and the Battle Creek Natural Area.
- Decommission most of the existing trail in favor of a hand-built trail system including a new loop around the pond.
- Create new boardwalk access to Elk Lake.
- Relocate the parking area to improve user and neighbor experience.

The Conservancy will also seek out fundraising opportunities and endowment funds for improvements, parking and trails. There was detailed Board discussion regarding the acquisition of the area near Mabel Creek, hunting, a discreet viewing platform, dam/spillway issues, etc. They acknowledged public comments of previously planned fish management plan and shed.

The Conservancy will pursue a Trust Fund Development Grant for the improvements, not the acquisition. They will fundraise for grant matching funds. There is no financial investment of the Township. The application deadline for the DNR Trust Fund is in April; they would prepare for an April, 2027, application. It was noted that a current Township Five-year Recreation Plan is a pre-requisite for the Trust Fund Grant application.

**Planning Commission Report – Mr. Mielnik (In meeting packet):**

Mr. Mielnik verbally reported the Planning Commission’s last meeting included:

- A Public Hearing on a proposed re-zoning of a split-zoned property.
- A Public Hearing on the draft Winery/Cidery Ordinance.
- ROWG (Resident Outreach Work Group) activity. New PC Member Rod Rebant will serve as the ROWG Chair. They are reviewing proposals for assistance with a community survey.
- MSUE’s report on the recent Short-term Rental Community Workshop was in the meeting packet and is posted on the Township website.
- Discussion with Giffels-Webster on review of Zoning updates to the PUD, COPUD, Condominium Subdivision and Site Plan Review sections. A Public Hearing is expected to be scheduled in May.
- Updated By-Laws.
- Approved memo for Township Board review regarding the proposed fence height amendment.
- Budget review.
- Discussed draft of PC’s Annual Report.

**CONSENT CALENDAR (Receive and File):**

**Correspondence:**

Skegemog Point Road Construction: Laramie, Thomas  
Skegemog Point Road Speed: Bonato, Petersen, Taylor  
Closed Session: Beam, Hymore

**Trustee Report (In meeting packet).**

**Minutes for Approval:**

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

**Bills for Approval:** Pull from Consent Calendar.

**Board Action:** Mr. Mielnik made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**Bills for Approval:** There was a simple account # transposition correction.

**Board Action:** Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Bills Payable as amended. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Any Parks & Recreation Items:**

**Wood Storage Building Purchase Request:**

**Beach Safety Grant Purchase Request:**

Lead Park Ranger Tom Bartnicki submitted a request for a firewood storage building and Safety Grant items. Itemized expenses were provided.

**Board Action:** Ms. Slopsema made a motion declaring support for the wood storage building and to move forward to implement the safety improvements associated with the grant from the Tribe. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.  
VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. Motion carried.

**Boat Wash Station Project Authorization:**

Information on the Boat Wash Station was in the meeting packet. Mr. Arends reported C2AE will facilitate a sealed bid process. The Township will manage the project, construction, coordination and close-out.

**Board Action:** Mr. Arends made a motion that the Board authorizes the solicitation of sealed bids for the Whitewater Township Boat Wash Station project with the Clerk's Office to publish the bid notice in the Traverse City Record Eagle. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Inquiries were made about the engineer's responsibility; Township entered into an agreement with them. Beyond that they will provide service on an hourly basis. There is a ground water discharge permit, and the engineer will prepare that paperwork.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**STR (Short-term Rental) Survey Professional Services Proposal:**

**Board Action:** Mr. Arends made a motion to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$18,000 for a Short-term Rental (STR) Survey. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

**Discussion:**

Whitewater Township Planning Commission Chair Rene Stratton reviewed the four professional service proposals received for the STR Survey with the Board. There was extensive discussion among Board Members and Ms. Stratton regarding expenses and services identified in each proposal.

**Board Action: AMENDED MOTION:**

Mr. Arends made an amended motion to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$20,000 for a Short-term Rental (STR) Survey. Mr. Mielnik seconded the amended motion.

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

**Consideration of Whitewater Township Investment Policy:**

**Consideration of Whitewater Township Annual Renewal Resolution:**

**Board Action:**

Ms. Koester made a motion to discuss Resolution #2026-05 the Investment and Depository Designation, the Investment Policy Acknowledgement of Receipt of Investment Policy and Depository Designation and Annual Renewal Resolution. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Treasurer Koester provided an explanation of each document's purpose and procedures. The Investment and Depository Designation Resolution has not been updated since 1998 and is missing pertinent information. The Investment Policy states the purpose of the Policy and is compliant with MTA and MMTA standards. These documents are to be reviewed annually by the Township Board. The Acknowledgement of Receipt of Investment Policy was not previously signed; it is to be provided to the bank, signed by them and added to the P&P Manual.

The Township attorney has reviewed and approved the documents for accuracy.

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

**Additional discussion:** Ms. Slopsema noted these documents would update the book of Resolutions and become an Appendix document in the P&P Manual, replacing the prior document.

**Board Action:** Ms. Koester made a motion to adopt Resolution #2026-05 Investment and Depository Designation which is replacing Resolution #98-13 in Appendix B of the Policy and Procedure Manual. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

**Alden State Bank – Depository Interest Rate Proposal & Recommendation:**

**Board Action:** Ms. Koester made a motion to accept the Alden State Bank proposal dated March 3, 2026, guaranteeing a minimum interest rate of 3.75% APY on Whitewater Township’s total deposit relationship for one year, and to authorize the Township Treasurer to transfer a minimum of \$250,000 into a 30-day Certificate of Deposit at Alden State Bank and to take all actions necessary to implement and administer the arrangement consistent with the Township’s Investment Policy and applicable Michigan law. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

**Recommendation to Close Idle Money Market Account at Alden State Bank and Consolidate Funds into General Funds Checking Account :**

**Board Action:** Ms. Koester made a motion to authorize the Township Treasurer to close the idle money market account held at Alden State Bank and to transfer all funds contained therein into Whitewater Township’s primary general fund checking account at Alden State Bank, provided that the Treasurer first confirms no restricted funds are held in the account, and to ensure that all transfers are properly recorded in the Township’s financial records. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** There was Board discussion clarifying process for ensuring all transfers are recorded in the Township’s records as well as the history behind the idle money market account.

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

**Proposed Fence Height Zoning Ordinance Amendment #2025-5:**

**Board Action:** Mr. Mielnik made a motion to concur with the findings and conclusions developed by the Whitewater Township Planning Commission and not approve proposed Zoning Amendment #2025-05. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mielnik provided a background on the proposed text amendment requesting a maximum fence height from six feet to seven feet.

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 12/3/25 and discussed the matter at the 1/14/26 meeting where it concluded updating the fence requirements is a more complex matter. He explained the current requirement in the Zoning Ordinance as well as potential issues of increasing the maximum fence height. The PC recognized there are varied topographies in the Township. They have also discussed types of fencing.

Mr. Mielnik stated the applicant chose to pursue an Ordinance amendment rather than a variance. The Planning Commission will be revisiting this matter in the near future.

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

**Presentation of 2026-27 Draft Budget :**

The 2026-2027 Whitewater Township draft Budget is in the meeting packet, posted on the Township website, and a physical copy is on display in Township Hall.

Mr. Arends reviewed each section of the budget and also prepared a budget memo with explanatory information. He asked Board Members to review the document and prepare for discussion. The Township will be holding a Public Hearing at a Special Meeting on Thursday, 3/19/26 at 6:30 p.m. A Special Meeting will also be held on Tuesday, 3/24/26 at 9:00 a.m. Budget Resolutions will be presented at the Regular Meeting of Thursday 3/26/26 at 9:00 a.m. if necessary.

**TABLED ITEMS:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Next Township Board Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2026, 6:30 p.m. – SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**

**Board Member Announcements:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. M. Jacobson: Concerns with post office parking. He commented on Mabel Creek Natural Sanctuary and possible increased trespassing. He supports fence height changes. He hopes the Board incorporates unbiased STR survey questions.

Ms. D. Peltonen: She wants a Joint Township Board/Planning Commission meeting and asked the Board to discuss this at their next meeting. She asked if any questions regarding the proposed Winery/Cidery Ordinance could be included in STR Survey for public exposure.

**BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:**

Discussion of Potential Post Office Expansion:

The Post Office property owner contacted the Supervisor and would like to expand their building. The Township owns a piece of property adjacent to that location. Board Members reviewed the map of the properties. Setbacks and lot coverage requirements will also be checked.

Mr. Arends responded to Ms. Peltonen regarding her request to include Winery/Cidery questions on the Short-term Rental survey and does not want to water down the STR survey with questions related to other topics. He suggested the PC consider utilizing Survey Monkey. Treasurer Koester stated that information about the Winery/Cidery Ordinance can be included on the tax bill. Supervisor Slopsema stated it could be communicated in the spring newsletter and distribution of information during Community Cleanup Day. Mr. Mielnik stated the Public Hearing on the Winery yielded many people in support of it. He agrees with Mr. Arends not to add off-topic questions to the STR survey.

Supervisor Slopsema stated there have been issues with accessing files in OneDrive; the Township's IT service will be contacted for training and accessibility.

**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 8:52 p.m.-

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Submitted by:

Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary

Wendy Hoeksema, Clerk