DRAFT	**MINUTES Thursday, August 13, 2026 at 6:30 pm**
Regular Meeting	**Whitewater Township Board** 5777 Vinton Rd. Williamsburg, MI 49690
CALL TO ORDER	Supervisor Slopsema called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
ROLL CALL **Quorum established**	Clerk Hoeksema called Roll. **Members present**: Supervisor Linda Slopsema, Clerk Wendy Hoeksema, Treasurer Sara Quigley, Trustee Randy Mielnik **Members absent**: Trustee Tim Arends **Also present**: Recording Secretary Kay Held
SET/APPROVE AGENDA	Changes: Unfinished Business: Add "New Township Assessor Michael Beach Introduction" Move "Zoning Board of Appeals Recommendation" after "Assessor Introduction." Delete #4, #5, #6 "Possible Treasurer Resignation Acceptance", "Possible Appointment of Township Treasurer to Fill Unexpired Term" and "Assessor Resignation." Consent Calendar: Add Correspondence. Motion by Mielnik, seconded by Quigley, to approve the Agenda as amended. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried.***
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	None declared.
PUBLIC COMMENT	Mr. E. Sanborn: Expressed opposition to the Zoning Ordinance penalties and nuisance provisions, stating concern that daily fines would be excessive. Mr. J. Snider: Discussed blight issues and expressed concern regarding the wording of fines in the Ordinance. Mr. J. Fitzgerald: Requested transparency on resolution of the Township Clerk's repayment plan and that it be made public. Ms. R. Steelman: Stated that residents who oppose the Civil Infraction Ordinance have felt mocked by the Board through the use of a nickname, and expressed concern that this does not address constituent concerns. Ms. K. Mangus: Expressed opposition to the Civil Infraction Ordinance, stating concern that it creates a mandate without discretion and that the Zoning Ordinance is not ready for this type of enforcement. She requested that the Board display a public comment countdown timer. Mr. M. Williams: Expressed opposition to the Civil Infraction Ordinance and raised concerns regarding snowplowing, school bus pickups, and recycling. He also referenced language from the Pledge of Allegiance and the Declaration of Independence. Mr. M. Jacobson: Stated agreement with prior public comments and expressed concern regarding 7th Amendment rights. He also discussed prior communication with the Board and Road Commission about cleaning his driveway culvert and stated concerns that a culvert is needed to prevent flooding on the Lossie Road Trail.
PUBLIC HEARING	None.
REPORTS	None.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR	Add Correspondence: D. Jacobson - constitutional rights A. Zybtowski - recycling M. Taylor - speed signs Motion by Quigley, seconded by Mielnik, to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried.***
APPROVAL OF MINUTES	None.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS **New Whitewater Township Assessor Michael Beach Introduction:**	Supervisor Slopsema introduced Mr. Beach. He provided a brief overview of his personal and professional background. He is currently the Equalization Director with Benzie County. He will coordinate the transition to Whitewater Township with former Assessor Dawn Kuhns.
ZBA Appointment/ Recommendation (Slopsema):	Mr. Dan Soper applied to the Zoning Board of Appeals and is being recommended by the Supervisor. He provided a brief overview of his personal and professional background. There was Board discussion with Mr. Soper. Motion by Hoeksema, seconded by Mielnik, to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Dan Soper to a three-year term on the Whitewater Township Zoning Board of Appeals. The term will end on December 31, 2029. ROLL CALL VOTE: Quigley-Y, Mielnik-Y, Slopsema-Y, Hoeksema-Y. ***Motion carried.***
Any Park and Recreation Items:	Boat Wash Update: An EGLE Water Discharge Permit application has been accepted. Construction can proceed once a contractor has been selected.
Recycling Update:	Supervisor Slopsema explained the recycle bins were removed due to citizen injuries and traffic/pedestrian safety concerns. She will be meeting with GFL on Tuesday, 8/18/26 at 10:00 a.m. at the Township Hall to discuss options for recycling locations and potential curbside recycling. The Supervisor has spoken with the County to explore the possibility of relocating recycling containers to GT Band tribal property.
Speed Signs Update:	Electronic speed signs have been installed on Church Street and Skegemog Point Road. Feedback has been received from residents on the placement of signs. The Supervisor states she will further engage in discussion with residents.
NEW BUSINESS **Consideration of Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Article 22 Violations Section 22.01 Penalties (Mielnik):**	Mr. Mielnik reviewed revised information in meeting packet from him and PC Chair Stratton regarding the proposed Article 22 Zoning Amendment. The Planning Commission held a Special Meeting on 6/30/26 on Civil Infractions as an enforcement mechanism. Attorney Peter Wendling delivered a presentation on the topic. A motion passed to recommend the Amendment to the Township Board. The PC held a Special Meeting with Public Hearing on 7/22/26 on the proposed Amendments to Article 22 with changes to Sections 22.01 and 22.02. At the PC's 8/5/26 Regular Meeting, a motion to recommend approval of ZOA #2026-04 passed. The most relevant changes include changing the penalty provision from a criminal to a civil infraction and the benefits of doing so. Enforcing a criminal violation is at a much greater cost to the Township and residents than that of a civil infraction. The 86th District Court's position supports this.

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NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)	Research in the packet shows that a Civil Infraction mechanism is the preferred enforcement approach; thousands of Michigan municipalities have adopted civil infractions as their method to enforce an Ordinance. BOARD DISCUSSION: Hoeksema: Supported the CIO, stating that infractions are civil matters and should not be treated as criminal offenses. She noted that enforcement procedures would not change and that protecting property rights includes both allowing residents to use their property and addressing zoning violations that affect others. She stated the Amendment does not create new zoning restrictions or grant new Township authority but only changes the penalty. The goal includes fair enforcement, voluntary compliance, due process and the protection of the rural community. Ms. Quigley: Acknowledged public's concerns regarding the $500/day fee; however, it is not an automatic per day fine on the same violation. She clarified this verbiage with the Board. Ms. Slopsema read aloud the relevant language from the Michigan Compiled Law. Ms. Slopsema: Explained the process of Civil Infractions from complaint through dispensation of fines by a judge or magistrate if it were to advance to that level. She reiterated that voluntary compliance is always the goal. The Zoning Ordinance needs a mechanism through which to enforce Zoning rules. Mr. Mielnik: Stated the PC has been actively working on Zoning Amendments which will be presented to the Township Board. He explained they address several issues in the Zoning Ordinance and are consistent with community expectations and the Master Plan. He further explained aspects of the Ordinance revision process. Supervisor Slopsema stated the Planning Commission has a prioritized list of projects and encouraged citizens to provide their concerns to the PC. Motion by Mielnik, seconded by Slopsema, that based upon the findings of fact under Section 21.05 of the Zoning Ordinance and the Planning Commission's recommendation that Zoning Ordinance Amendment #2026-04 is adopted. ROLL CALL VOTE: Hoeksema-Y, Mielnik-Y, Slopsema-Y, Quigley-Y. ***Motion carried.***
TABLED ITEMS	None.
ANNOUNCEMENTS **Next Meetings** **Board Member Announcements**	Note: The 8/27/26 Regular Meeting was canceled at the last Board Meeting. **Thursday, September 10, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Whitewater Township Hall** None.
BOARD DISCUSSION	None.
ADJOURNMENT	Motion by Slopsema, seconded by Mielnik, to adjourn the meeting. VOTE: YEAS: All. NAYES: None. ***Motion carried.*** Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.
Minutes submitted by: Kay Held, Recording Secretary	Wendy Hoeksema, Township Clerk Date

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