

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

SPECIAL MEETING
APPROVED AMENDED MINUTES
Monday, March 17, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

Supervisor Linda Slopsema called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisor Linda Slopsema called Roll.

Present:

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

A quorum was established.

Absent:

Clerk Wendy Hoeksema

ALSO PRESENT:

Recording Secretary Kay Held

SET/ADJUST AGENDA:

Board Action:

Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT:

In the Township Hall:

None.

Via Zoom:

No Zoom service this evening.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – 2025/2026 WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP BUDGET:

https://www.whitewatertownship.org/uploads/2/1/9/6/21966412/i3_c_whitewater_2025-26_budget_v.8.pdf

A sign-in sheet was available for each of the Public Hearings for attendees to sign.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2025/2026 WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND ALL OTHER TOWNSHIP BUDGETS:

Board Action:

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the 2025/2026 Whitewater Township General Fund Budget and all other Township Budgets. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Opened at 6:36 p.m.

A notice for the Public Hearing was published in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 3/12/25 and the Elk Rapids News on 3/13/25.

Supervisor Slopsema stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is to review the 2025/2026 General Fund Budget and all other Township Budgets.

The General Fund Budget is 1 mill, estimated at \$183,850.

Written Comments: None.

Public Comments: None.

Board Action:

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the 2025/2026 Whitewater Township General Fund Budget and all other Township Budgets. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Closed at 6:39 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2025/2026 FIRE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT BUDGET:

Board Action:

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the Whitewater Township 2025/2026 Fire Special Assessment District Budget. The Fire Special Assessment District Budget is 1.5 mills, estimated at \$470,250. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Opened at 6:40 p.m.

A notice for the Public Hearing was published in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 3/12/25 and the Elk Rapids News on 3/13/25.

Written Comments: None.

Public Comment: None.

Board Action:

Ms. Koester made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the Whitewater Township 2025/2026 Fire Special Assessment District Budget. Ms. Slopsema seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Closed at 6:42 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2025/2026 AMBULANCE MILLAGE BUDGET:

Board Action:

Ms. Slopsema made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the Whitewater Township 2025/2026 Ambulance Millage Budget. The Ambulance Millage Budget is 1.5 mills, estimated at \$458,250. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Opened at 6:44 p.m.

A notice for the Public Hearing was published in the Traverse City Record Eagle on 3/12/25 and the Elk Rapids News on 3/13/25.

Written Comments: None.

Public Comment: None.

Board Action:

Mr. Mielnik made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the Whitewater Township 2025/2026 Ambulance Millage Budget. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

Note: The Public Hearing Closed at 6:46 p.m.

BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION:

Fire Fund & Fire Capital Improvement Fund:

Mr. Arends noted the structure of the proposed budget to include Prior Year Approved, Actual and Amended as well as Year-to-Date and Proposed Projected and Recommended budget figures. Supervisor Slopsema noted that Mr. Arends built the budget primarily from the Audit's verified information rather than strictly the prior year's budget.

Board Members reviewed the funds of the proposed budget throughout the discussion process and clarified questions to date.

Chief Morgan spoke about the Fire Fund and payment structure of responders. They are a state-licensed MFR (Medical First Responder) agency. The other levels are BLS (Basic Life Support) and ALS Paramedic (Advance Life Support). He explained Med Control structure and policies with regard to dispatch rules. He met with the Supervisor regarding obtaining MFR licensure to minimize medical response liability. He has spoken with Dispatch regarding a potential agreement regarding call-out procedures.

The Board reviewed the Fire Fund and funding of the On-Call budget item, Line 709, for first time since the 2022/2023 Budget. Run Wages and On-call Wages increase to account for having Fire employees as Responders on the On-Calls. Chief Morgan estimates calls for service to increase from 130 to 400.

Mr. Arends reviewed the budget years 2022/2023 (\$246k), 2024/2025 (\$227k) and 2025/2026 (\$340k). Wages and higher call volume increases impact the new budget model.

Mr. Arends noted the millage accounts for this model and referenced specific funds related to transfers, Fire Capital Improvement, and the Special Assessment District (SAD) regarding the fire truck purchase. The transfer of the Special Assessment .5 mill for the final payment of the fire truck (Line 62) equals the \$508,700 deficit.

The Chief will be asking for a \$50k transfer from fund balance to the Capital Improvement Plan as the Kubota is 20 years old and needs to be replaced this year. There may be an option to swap Kubotas with the Parks; however, Fire will need to see if it can be outfitted properly.

Regarding the Ambulance Fund, there is a \$353,400/year contract with MMR (Mobile Medical Response) through 2029. The millage verbiage is for "ambulance services" and expires in 2025. In the future, the Chief will be rewording the proposal to read "emergency services" to be more inclusive.

The prior Board had a goal of an ambulance within the Township; however, that does not appear attainable in the short-term. ~~No change to the Ambulance Replacement Fund will be made.~~ The Ambulance Replacement Fund was eliminated.

Overall, there is a \$1.6m fund balance between the Fire and Ambulance Funds.

BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION - Parks & Recreation Fund:

A balanced ~~PRAC~~ Parks budget needs to be presented. With regard to some of PRACs requests and recommendations, they may not have not been informed of the Parks budget. It was suggested PRAC be an Advisory Committee of the Planning Commission.

A six-year Capital Plan is due. Rec Plans are required every five years; the new one is due April 1, 2026. Without it, the Township does not qualify for DNR/DEQ grant opportunities. There was discussion about conducting this in-house over outside services. Mr. Mielnik stated the DNR reviews Rec Plans to ensure all thresholds have been met in the plan. Several Board Members are confident the Parks Department has a strong foundation from which to work to complete the next Rec Plan.

Mr. Mielnik commented a Park Master Plan should be prepared to show prospective expansions, improvements and the potential for water & sewer, electric, playground, ranger station, etc. This also ties into the Capital Improvement Plan, which is required by the Planning and Enabling Act. Supervisor Slopsema suggested another survey should be completed as the most recent one was five years ago.

The Auditors have recommended the Recreation Fund be a department of the General Fund; however, was combined with the Parks fund.

There ~~was~~ should be a review of the campground finances from 2022 to present regarding revenues and expenditures.

BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION - Other Non-General Funds:

Mr. Arends noted he ~~conducted~~ pending will conduct a wage comparisons. This budget includes a proposed 3% increase for the Fire Chief wage. He recommended a study on hourly Firefighter wages and the existing wage scale.

There was Board discussion regarding procedures for all staff wage increases as well as resources from which to draw regarding wage scales.

Mr. Mielnik referenced under Salaries and Wages (spreadsheet line 37/38), it is titled "Resident Outreach Committee (ROS)." It should be corrected and specified to "Sub-committee," "Sub-committee Chairperson" and "Sub-committee Recording Secretary."

There was additional discussion regarding Board Member salary rates with a note that a Clerk salary survey was needed. The MTA and other similar Townships may have applicable information.

Recording Secretary Held noted a correction on the Recording Secretary rate listed. The "\$200/Regular two-hour meeting" was correct; however, with regard to additional hours rate, it should read "\$75/hour beyond two hours" rather than "\$75 beyond two hours." The Special Meeting information was correct. This was also corrected under the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals sections.

The Auditor recommended the Road Fund and Road Repair Fund be closed into the General Fund.

The Federal Fund (ARPA monies) will not show up on next year's budget.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Special Meeting Budget Work Sessions will be held on Monday, 3/24/25 and Monday, 3/31/25, from 10 a.m. – noon. The Board discussed Agenda items for the Special Meeting of 3/24/25.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

In the Township Hall:
None.

Via Zoom:
No Zoom service this evening.

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 9:02 p.m.

Submitted by: Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary