

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

REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, February 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

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

ROLL CALL: Clerk Hoeksema called Roll.

Present:

Clerk Wendy Hoeksema
Treasurer Jill Koester
Trustee Tim Arends
Trustee Randy Mielnik

A quorum was established.

Absent:

Supervisor Linda Slopsema (excused)

ALSO PRESENT: Recording Secretary Kay Held

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion to nominate Clerk Hoeksema to chair the meeting in the absence of the Supervisor. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

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

SET/ADJUST/APPROVE AGENDA:

Add to New Business:

- Sale of Surplus 2004 Kubota RTV900
- Accept Resignation from Planning Commission
- Planning Commission Appointment
- Relocation of Recycle Bins.

Board Action: Mr. Mielnik made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

PRESENTATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Fire / Emergency Services Report – Chief Morgan (Report in packet)

Chief Morgan also reported on call volumes. Update on production of the new fire truck; the pump module has been installed, which will help facilitate completion.

The Grand Traverse Band offered a portion of their casino hotel for mid-rise fire training exercises. Forty people from seven Departments and three counties participated.

Chief Morgan continues to work on the Fire Department's Capital Improvement Plan and annual Budget.

Planning Commission Report – Mr. Mielnik: (Report in packet.)

Mr. Mielnik also reported Mr. Michael Sherman was appointed to the Planning Commission. Consideration of a proposed Zoning Amendment to increase maximum fence heights was tabled pending further study. A draft Private Road Ordinance was forwarded to the Township Board for consideration. Minor amendments were made to the PC By-Laws.

Annual election of officers was completed. Ms. Rene Stratton is Chair, Ms. Sadie Merchant is Vice-Chair and Ms. Denise Peltonen is Secretary.

Members reviewed proposed revisions of Zoning Ordinance updates with Giffels Webster; the first bundle is nearly complete and will be followed by a Public Hearing.

The next PC meeting is Wednesday, 3/4/26. Public Hearings on the proposed Winery Ordinance and a Re-zoning Application are on the Agenda. The PC's 2025 Annual Report will be submitted at their next meeting and forwarded to the Township Board for acceptance.

Zoning Report – Ms. Graber (Report in packet):

ZA Graber referenced the purpose of the re-zoning request, stating there are many split-zoned properties in the Township. The applicant is seeking to have the entirety of his property in one zone.

Four new permits were issued in January.

The ZBA reviewed Case ZBA-2023-ZA and held a Public Hearing on 1/22/26. Baggs Road Partners requested their 2023 variance request be withdrawn. This was approved by the ZBA. Subsequently, the Michigan Court of Appeals case is now moot.

Mr. Arends inquired if there is a file with all complaints received by the Zoning Administrator. Ms. Graber stated there is and it can be provided via FOIA. The Sheriff is responding to the Williamsburg Road issue of trucks parked on the road.

Regarding the Elk Lake Trail lawsuit, an Amicus Brief was filed by a resident and dismissed by the judge. Another hearing will be held on 3/13/26; ZA Graber and Mr. Arends have been asked by the Supervisor to attend. Two bench warrants have been issued for the resident. The attorneys have petitioned for reimbursement of \$2k to the Township related to this case.

Ms. Graber will provide an annual report of all Zoning activity to the Township Board.

Parks & Recreation Report – Mr. Bartnicki (Report in packet).

Review of Policies & Procedure Manual Section 3.0 – Mr. Arends:

Mr. Arends included a copy of Section 3.0 (Personnel Administration) of the P&P Manual indicating the Supervisor has asked Board Members to review the content for clarity and accuracy. The Clerk will cross-reference Section 3.0 with MTA guidelines and forward to Board Members. Any changes will be discussed at the 3/12/26 meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR (Receive and File):

Supervisor's Report: In meeting packet.

Treasurer's Report: In meeting packet.

Trustee Reports: In meeting packet.

MMR (Ambulance) Report: In meeting packet.

GT County Sherriff Report: In meeting packet.

PC Minutes: <https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/planning-commission.html>

ZBA Minutes: <https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/zoning-board-of-appeals.html> 9.

Park & Recreation Minutes: <https://www.whitewatertownshipmi.gov/advisory-committee.html>

Correspondence:

-Steelman: Clerk Positive Feedback

-ER Schools: Traffic Safety at Samel's Farms

Minutes for Approval:

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

February 12, 2026, Regular Meeting - Pull from Consent Calendar

Bills for Approval – Clerk Hoeksema:

Pull from Consent Calendar

Add Invoice from Social Explorations

Revenue & Expenditure Report - In meeting packet.

Board Action: Mr. Arends 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

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

Discussion: Clerk Hoeksema reported the Planning Commission Secretary's laptop is inoperable. She has added an invoice for purchase of a new one in the Bills for Approval.

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

February 12, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes: Minor amendments were identified.

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the February 12, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Any Park & Recreation Items: Report in meeting packet.

Boat Wash Station Project Update – Mr. Arends (verbal):

C2AE is completing the final engineering design. A sealed bid process will follow. This matter will be on the 3/12/26 Township Board Meeting Agenda.

The estimate is expected to be approximately \$47k including engineering and the boat wash itself. \$20k of that cost will be covered from the Tribal grant of four years ago. The remainder would come from Park funds. The boat wash requires a water discharge permit from EGLE. The Township will be asking for an exemption to the permit. Anticipated completion of the project is 6/15/26.

NEW BUSINESS:

Tribal Grant Acceptance & Related Purchase Order Motions – Mr. Arends / Chief Morgan:

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion to accept a total of \$26,439 in 2% Tribal Grant funding awarded by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to support Fire Department and Township Park safety projects, and to authorize the required \$980 local match from the Parks Budget, with grant funding and matching funds to be recognized and accounted for in the appropriate departmental budgets. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Chief Morgan was asked to speak. He stated \$26,436 was received in Tribal grants to support the purchase of three to sets of turnout gear, three thermal imaging cameras, park safety upgrades (safety boat, life vests, buoys, signage and supplies), and an AED and Stop the Bleed kits at both Whitewater Township and Hi Pray Park.

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

Tower Lease Renegotiation Offer Analysis – Mr. Arends:

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion to not renegotiate the existing tower lease agreements. Mr. Mielnik seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Mr. Arends provided an analysis of the proposed tower contract in the meeting packet. He spoke with a consultant and affiliate tower company who work on tower lease agreements and the renegotiation of these contracts. These contracts are for towers at the fire station and Whitewater Township Park. The Board discussed the projected costs over 15 years and the proposal. He also consulted with Supervisor Slopsema.

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

Consideration of a Purchase Order for Maner Costerisan for CPA Services – Mr. Arends:

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion that the Supervisor and Clerk be authorized to sign a purchase order with Maner Costerisan for general ledger/payroll system reconciliations and training, not to exceed \$10,000. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

Discussion:

There was Board discussion regarding the services and training to be provided by Maner Costerisan. They also discussed the existing process. Treasurer Koester asked that a workflow chart be created by Maner Costerisan.

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

Sale of Surplus 2004 Kubota RTV900:

Mr. Arends made a motion the Township Board authorizes the public sale of the 2004 Kubota RTV900, previously declared surplus, to Thomas Cosgrove in the amount of \$10,200.00, and authorizes the Township Clerk to execute all necessary documents and sign the title to complete the transfer of ownership. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

Discussion:

The Board discussed the market value of the equipment and the process to conduct public offerings based on MTA recommendations. Multiple bids were received and included in the meeting packet.

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

Accept Resignation from Planning Commission:

Mr. Mielnik made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Keith DeYoung from the Planning Commission effective 2/26/26. Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

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

Planning Commission Appointment:

Mr. Mielnik made a motion to confirm the recommendation of the Supervisor appointing Mr. Rod Rebant to the Whitewater Township Planning Commission effective 2/26/26. The term shall end on December 31, 2028.

Ms. Hoeksema seconded the motion.

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

Relocation of Recycle Bins:

Mr. Arends made a motion the Board resolves to relocate the recycle bins out of the Township Hall parking lot to another location. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

Discussion:

There was discussion about the recycle dumpsters being emptied including 3:00 a.m., service, noise, inadequate space, parking, safety and liability issues as well as damage to the parking lot. Potential sites for relocation of the dumpsters were also discussed. Board Members also considered the costs for relocation and site preparation; i.e., base, fencing, security.

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

TABLED ITEMS:

Review of Policies & Procedures Manual Section 4.0 – Ms. Hoeksema:

Board Action: Mr. Arends made a motion to approve the recommended changes to Section 4.0, Financial Administration, of the Policies and Procedures Manual as amended. Ms. Koester seconded the motion.

Discussion:

The Board had previously discussed reviewing policies and procedures to ensure compliance with best practices and legislation. Clerk Hoeksema conducted a comparison between the existing P&P policy and MTA recommendations, merging them into a proposed revision.

Mr. Arends provided an overview of existing content and proposed edits in the following sections: Accounts Payable, Financial Administration, Bank Reconciliations, Financial Reporting, Inventory of Fixed Assets, Expenditure Control/Procurement and Electronic Payments/ACH. The Federal Procurement Conflict of Interest Policy was added to this P&P section. They also discussed how procedures tie into the BS&A system.

The Treasurer would like a list of ACH vendors; she and the Clerk will locate that information in BS&A.

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

BOARD COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arends reviewed with Supervisor Slopsema proposed budget amendments YTD through 2/28/26. He will distribute this information to Board Members for review; it will also be available at the Township Hall and on the website for public access. Budget amendments will be discussed at subsequent meetings, and a Public Hearing will be held on 3/19/26.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Township Board Regular Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Board Member Announcements:

USPS Postmark Change Update:

Treasurer Koester referenced the previous announcement from the U.S. Postal Service regarding the new postmark process. Government leaders are requesting a reversal of this new policy.

Clerk Hoeksema also announced the local post office is now closed on Saturdays.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Mielnik made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Arends seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Submitted by Kay Z. Held, Recording Secretary