

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
November 13, 2023 6:00 pm - 8:05 pm**

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**Roll Call:**

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee Tom Balmes. Board Members Absent: None. Also Present: Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttila, Ryan Walther, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Matt Lang, John Carr, and Donna Shields.

Supervisor Doucette opened our October 9, 2023 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge. She also offered condolences to Fire Chief Perry King on the sudden death of his wife Shawna.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

Moved Doucette/seconded Johnson, to **approve the agenda** as amended. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette to **approve the minutes of the October 9, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Moved Doucette/seconded Cota to **approve the minutes of the October 12, 2023 Special Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **pay bills**. Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17014-17029; Fire Fund #9059-9078; Garbage Fund #2124-#2126).

**Financial Reports:**

Clerk Johnson presented the Financial Reports for October, 2023. No budget amendments were recommended. (Reports were emailed for review prior to the meeting). A full Budget Review will be provided for the December Board Meeting.

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of October 31, 2023: General Fund \$283,577.57; Fire Fund \$93,432.81 + CD \$52,534.46; Garbage Fund \$292,381.99; Road Fund \$29,875.22. Winter Tax Bills were sent to KCI for printing and mailing. They will go out on December 1, 2023. There is a Memorial Gathering for Shawna King at the Hall on November 18<sup>th</sup>. There are no additional rentals scheduled at this time.

Clerk - Since the October 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting Clerk Johnson answered several emails, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board Members.

The Township received a Petition for An Administrative Appeal for the ZBA from Mr. Newton. After sharing with the Zoning Administrator and ZBA Members, it was referred to Attorney Nordeen for an opinion on validity. ZA Lindquist will be returning the form and check to Mr. Newton with a letter indicating that an applicant has to clearly state what you are appealing; be an aggrieved party to the subject action; and file within the required time. He did not meet any of these requirements. His request was for the "ZBA to hear and decide many decisions of the Zoning Administrator, also decisions of the Planning Commission and Board Members".

Work continues with the website designer with approval of drafts and providing information. We are very close to being complete. In addition, the filing system for all Zoning Compliance Applications and CUP's is still underway.

An informational session was put on by Rep. Hill, with the Deputy Secretary of State, to review all the changes with early voting, the Presidential Primary and reimbursement of costs related to the requirements, was attended at Marquette Township Hall.

Review of the current FOIA policy and summary and have yet to determine if any changes need to be recommend. Reviewed the October Financial Reports for any needed Budget Amendments. Prepared the Public Comment Policy for consideration and prepared the Resolution to establish an Early Voting Site with the Alger County Clerk's Office for consideration.

Trustees - Trustee Balmes attended the Fire Department Meeting, and continues work with the US Forest Service on finalizing the ballfield lease end. Indicated he had received inquiries about when recording/live meetings would be starting back up again. Clerk Johnson noted that several platforms for recording and storage were being reviewed and would expect to start up again after the first of the year. Trustee Balmes also noted that Tim Moorman asked that the street light be turned off/removed near his property as it is causing light pollution. Supervisor Doucette will investigate the request.

Trustee's - Trustee Miller noted he received calls regarding zoning. He recently attended the Planning Commission CUP Hearings on October 19<sup>th</sup>, where one was approved and one denied. Also noted that the DNR can no longer offer Hunter Safety classes in the schools and may be looking for locations to offer the class.

Supervisor - Received several phone and emails over the past month. Residents in the Mirror Lake area are requesting a dumpster rather than individual garbage carts. Supervisor Doucette continues to review options for a location. Adam Thompson of GFL noted that the new garbage trucks will be put into service January 1, 2024, after which a tipper cart is required. He suggested that the Township get out of the garbage service and let residents contract direct with GFL. Our current garbage millage runs through 2026. If contracted directly with GFL, the cost would be \$39.00 per month for one cart and about \$50.00 per month for two.

Supervisor Doucette noted she continues to attend meetings when appropriate regarding the Forest Lake Dam and checks the website regularly for updates. Provided the Board information on correspondence received regarding the Forest Lake Dam and FERC Dam Safety and Concerns. The Army Corp of Engineers is requesting a letter of support from the Township for a consultation project regarding the Dam flow into the Au Train River and then exiting out into Lake Superior. The consultation would not cost the Township any money, as the Township and Alger County are considered economically disadvantaged.

Received an email requesting the meeting Agendas be posted sooner on the website.

**Special Presentation:** None

**Public Comment:** Public Comments were received from Donna Shields.

**Boards/Departments:**

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file, she noted that the report does not include spreadsheets. The Zoning Violation complaints on Perry Road for Tufnell will be revisited in the Spring. Three CUP Hearings for Seaberg have been scheduled with the Planning Commission for December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. One Resort and two Short Term Rental applications will be considered. Work continues on filing, scanning and preparing Google Doc Files for Zoning Applications. In the future, with the implementation of BS&A Online, these documents could be included with Public Records Search. Those persons wanting the information would pay a fee directly to BS&A to view and print (except for their own personal property, which can be accessed for free).

Zoning Board of Appeals - Clerk Johnson noted that meeting attendance will need to be submitted for 2023 Payroll. Supervisor Doucette will notify ZBA Chair Reynolds to schedule their 2024 Organizational Meeting.

Planning Commission - PC Member and Township Board Liaison Miller noted the upcoming CUP Hearings Special Meeting. He also reported on the October CUP Hearings, where one Short Term Rental Application was approved and the Resort Application denied, as it did not meet the definition of Resort. Clerk Johnson noted the Meeting Attendance Report being due for 2023 payroll.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Report has been received and is on file. Discussion about an alternate for the Board of Review was made. The December Board of Review Meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Maintenance Department:** Ryan Walther present. Provided an update to the Board on recent activities. Tri County Septic took care of the vault toilets at the Heritage Trailhead, and also pumped the septic at the Christmas and 16 Mile Lake Fire halls. There was a recent furnace repair required at the Au Train Fire Hall. Trudell was contacted, ordered the necessary part and repair. In addition, a digital thermostat was installed. The Dropbox installation will be completed over the next month, and Supervisor Doucette noted that the last water test was negative and the Township was placed back on Quarterly reporting requirements.

**Fire Department:** Report received and provided by Assistant Chief Knuttila. 2 calls for the month, both mutual aid with Onota Township. All gear/supplies for the new rescue truck has been installed. The water line at the Christmas Fire Hall has been installed. The Side by Side was removed from Grand Island and the winter tracks will be installed. Mr. Del Lewis has offered to do the snow removal at the 16 Mile Lake Fire Hall. \$30.00 per event, which includes snowblowing, shoveling and salting as necessary. The Township will provide the salt.

Discussion about the need to replace the repeater and antenna on the Au Train Fire Hall was made. A quote from Elcom for \$990.00 was received. Au Train area Fire Fighters are not receiving 911 pages, and text messages are delayed. Moved Johnson/seconded Cota, to **authorize Elcom to replace the repeater and antenna at the Au Train Fire Hall for a cost of \$990.00.** Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

**Unfinished Business:**

1. Ballfield License Surrender - Trustee Balmes noted that he has not received an update from the USFS on the license surrender request since reporting in October.

2. ACRC Road Improvement Contracts - Clerk Johnson presented ACRC Engineer/Manager Bob Lindbeck's email and contracts as discussed in October. Review of the 2024 Road Projects as presented were made. Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **approve the Contract with the ACRC for 2024 work on Ridge Road, with a Township Share amount of \$34,074.00.** Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

Moved Cota/seconded Doucette to **approve the Contract with the ACRC for 2024 work on 16 Mile Lake Road, which includes 1.2 miles of improvements, with a Township Share amount of \$155,000.00.** Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

1. Correspondence - A request was received from the Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians requesting funding for their Children's Christmas Events Program. No Board Action.

2. Early Voting Site Approval Resolution and Notification - Clerk Johnson presented information to the Board regarding a Resolution required to add the Early Voting Site and Notification requirements.

The following Resolution was offered.

**RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY VOTING SITE FOR STATE/FEDERAL ELECTIONS**  
**Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan**  
Resolution No. 2023 - 004

At a Regular Meeting of the Township Board of Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan, held on November 13, 2023, the following Resolution was offered by Johnson and seconded by Cota.

**WHEREAS**, Article II, Section 4(m) of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and the Michigan Election Law, 1954 Public Act 116, MCL 168.720a *et seq.*, states that an early voting site is a polling place and shall be subject to the same requirements as an election day polling place, except that an early voting site may serve voters from more than six (6) precincts and may serve voters from more than one (1) municipality within a county. An early voting site shall also be subject to the same requirements as an election day precinct, except that any statutory limit on the number of voters assigned to a precinct shall not apply to an early voting site;

**WHEREAS**, Article II, Section 4(m) of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and the Michigan Election Law, 1954 Public Act 116, MCL 168.720a *et seq.*, states that Jurisdictions conducting elections within a county may enter into agreements to share early voting sites. A jurisdiction conducting an election may enter into an agreement with the clerk of the county in which it is located authorizing the county clerk to conduct early voting for the jurisdiction.

**WHEREAS**, Au Train Township has entered into a Municipal Joint Early Voting Site Agreement with the Alger County Clerk's Office, 101 Court Street, Munising MI 49862 to share an early voting site. In said Agreement, each municipality will be represented by their respective clerk in their official capacity.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Au Train Township Board does hereby authorize an Early Voting Site under the terms of the Agreement for Election Services with the Alger County Clerk's Office, and with the responsibilities dictated by, Michigan Election Law. Said requirement shall remain in effect unless or until the Township Board adopts a Resolution determining otherwise.

AYES Johnson, Cota, Balmes, Doucette, Miller

NAYS None

ABSENT None

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
COUNTY OF ALGER

I, Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk of Au Train Township, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Au Train Board on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023, and is on file in the records of this office.

Mary Walther Johnson  
11/13/2023  
Au Train Township Clerk, Mary Walther Johnson

3. Letter of Support - Supervisor Doucette provided a copy of a letter of support for the Alger Conservation District for their grant application to Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. If awarded, the grant will provide funding to support lake shore protection efforts along State Highway M28 in Au Train Township. The support does not offer any funding from the Township. They will however, be looking for volunteers to assist with planting.

4. Proposal KCI Winter Tax Bill - Treasurer Cota presented the Proposal from KCI for the 2023 Winter Tax Billing Prep and Mailing. The total proposal is for \$1,518.37, which includes prepaid post of \$903.37 and prep fees. Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette to **accept the Proposal from KCI for Winter Tax Bill Services in the amount of \$1,518.37**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

5. Public Comment Policy - In as much as the Board has discussed needing a written policy regarding Public Comments during meetings, Clerk Johnson presented a draft for review and noted it was taken from a sample provided by the Michigan Townships Association and amended to meet the Townships specific needs. Trustee Balmes indicated he would like the Township Attorney to review the Policy prior to approval, after additional review and discussion, Moved Cota/seconded Doucette, to **approve the Public Comment Policy as written**. Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Johnson, yes; Balmes, no; Miller, yes. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Comments were received from John Carr.

**Board Member Comments:** Additional Comments were shared by Board Members.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion Johnson/seconded by Doucette to **adjourn at 8:45 pm**.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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