

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2023 6:00 pm - 8:05 pm

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: Ryan Walther, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, ACRC-Bob Lindbeck, Matt Lang, John Carr, Donna Shields, Brian and Kristen VanWieren, Scott and Peggy Smith.

Supervisor Doucette opened our October 9, 2023 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Moved Doucette/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **pay bills**. Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #16984-17013; Fire Fund #9046-9058; Garbage Fund #2023; Road Fund #3013).

Financial Reports:

Clerk Johnson presented the Financial Reports for September, 2023 and Full Quarterly Reports. No budget amendments were recommended. (Reports were emailed for review prior to the meeting).

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer - Balance as of September 30, 2023: General Fund \$290,171.39; Fire Fund \$103,567.98 + CD \$51,696.67; Garbage Fund \$307,552.21; Road Fund \$209,966.02. There will be a write-off, under the direction from the County for 2017 and prior Personal Property Tax that could not be collected. There will be a Fall Vendor Show Rental at the hall on November 4th.

Clerk - Clerk Johnson noted that she answered several emails, returned phone messages or forwarded them to the appropriate Board member. Several requests from Mr. Newton continue. Work continues with the web designer with approval of drafts and providing information. Finished up the Off-Year review Audit with Anderson, Tackman and Co. The F65 Report to the State will be submitted by them on our behalf. Working on a refiling system for all Zoning Compliance applications and CUP's, for easier access and research. Zoning Administrator Lindquist will continue digital capture of all Zoning Documents moving forward. Reviewed the current FOIA policy and summary and will recommend a few changes for Board consideration. Reviewed the Quarterly Financial Reports for any needed Budget Amendment. We are beginning February 2024 Presidential Primary Election preparations with continuing education requirements and supply ordering. Details for the County Clerk's office/Courthouse Complex being an Early-Voting site are being finalized with the County and local Clerks. AV ballot applications should be mailed out by mid December.

Trustee's - Trustee Miller noted he received several calls regarding zoning and some with specific questions regarding the upcoming CUP hearings. Also provided the Board with information regarding the disparity in the definitions of Resort and Campground.

Trustee Balmes attended the Fire Department Meeting, and continues work on with the US Forest Service on finalizing the ballfield lease end. Because of personnel changes at the local District Headquarters, it is taking longer than expected. Trustee Balmes also noted that when speaking with local business owners, it was noted that tourism this summer is down a little bit compared to the last few years.

Supervisor - Received several phone and emails over the past month. Supervisor Doucette provided information on the Sea Lamprey treatment, the Scrap Tire Collection event where over 1,000 tires were collected. Becky Wilder was thanked for her time as a volunteer. Information on the Fall Clean-up was provided with 19 participants, 3.52 tons and a total cost of \$781.80. The participant numbers continue to fall and the Township may want to consider holding the event just once a year, SORVA completed the trail repairs at the trestle bridge. Supervisor Doucette also explained the process for filing a noise complaint to a resident on 16 Mile Lake Road and noted she attended the Hydro Project Emergency Action Plan Event and the Au Train Township Fire Department participation was much appreciated. Supervisor Doucette noted how proud she was with their knowledge and assistance.

Special Presentation: Scott Smith, a resident on Perry Road, provided information to the Board regarding concerns in the Zoning Ordinance and definitions for resort and campgrounds. Residents of Perry Road have had to deal with a campground operating with anywhere from 4-7 campers all summer long. There is an upcoming CUP Hearing (October 19th) where the property owner has applied to operate a Resort. Mr. Smith noted there is conflicting information with the definitions of a resort and campground and is concerned because he feels that most CUP applications are approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Smith was informed that the Township Board is well aware of the concerns, and has reached out to the Alger County Building Codes Department and LMAS District Health Department for additional information. At this time the Board has a meeting scheduled with the Planning Commission on October 12th where these definition matters will be discussed. The Planning Commission is solely responsible for the outcome of the Public Hearing and the Township Board has no say in the matter.

Bob Lindbeck - Engineer/Manager of the Alger County Road Commission provided information to the Board on the 5 Year Road Plan, which was reviewed. He also noted that he secured funding from the US Forest Service for improvements of the Rapid River Truck Trail. They will be working on the project in 2024, with the USFS contributing \$288,000 in funds to the \$576,000 estimated project costs.

Discussion regarding 2024 Projects within Au Train Township were discussed, with the 16 Mile Lake Road upgrades continuing. The Township Board brought up concerns over Ridge Road and the blacktop conditions entering the road. The erosion issue was addressed as a 2023 Maintenance Project, which has improved the conditions. The Board has requested updated project costs to include Ridge Road on the 2024 Project Schedule along with the proposed 16 Mile Lake Road Improvements, with review at the November Regular Board Meeting.

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Donna Shields, and an emailed comment from Duane Newton that was read by Supervisor Doucette.

Boards/Departments:

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file, she noted that the report does not include spreadsheets. There is a Planning Commission Meeting/Hearing scheduled for October 19th at 6:00 pm. There are currently 3 pending CUP Applications to be scheduled. Educational Opportunities for the Zoning Administrator were also discussed.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Zoning Board of Appeals alternate Julie Adams accepted full appointment to the ZBA. Motion Doucette/seconded Cota to **appoint Julie Adams as a full member to the Zoning Board of Appeals**. Motion carried. Clerk Johnson will prepare advertisement for an Alternate ZBA member, as well as an Alternate to the Board of Review.

Planning Commission - PC Member and Township Board Liaison Miller noted the upcoming CUP Hearings/Meeting. He also brought up the concerns Mr. Smith shared in his Special Presentation, and noted that there appears to be a conflict in definitions of campgrounds and resorts. These along with other concerns will be discussed at the Township Board/Planning Commission Joint Special Meeting on October 12th at 6:00 pm.

Assessor/Board of Review - No Assessor Report was received this month.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther present. Provided an update to the Board on recent activities. With the Trailhead shut down, the bathroom clean out has been scheduled with Tri County Septic. The cemetery will be shut down in the next couple weeks. The new Election dropbox will be installed on the exterior of the Clerk/Treasurer office, and the final mowing of the season completed. The truck will be dropped off for winter maintenance and plow installation. Discussion regarding the hall for rentals was made. Supervisor Doucette thanked Ryan for his assistance in the well treatment flushing as a positive water test for ecoli and bacteria prompted a drinking water shut down (during a rental) and having Kopecky out for the well treatment. After multiple required follow up tests, results are now clear.

Fire Department: Report received via text and provided by member Ryan Walther. There was 1 call for the month. The Cascade air system was tested on September 16th. There is a Extrication Training on October 14th off 16 Mile Lake Road and the Au Train Fire Department will be hosting the Alger County Fire Fighters Association Meeting on October 16th at 6:00 pm at the Au Train Township Hall/Community Building. Ryan also noted that the 16 Mile Lake Fire Hall snow plowing should go out on bids for the upcoming season. Clerk Johnson will prepare the bid for advertisement.

Unfinished Business:

1. Ballfield License Surrender - Trustee Balmes noted that he is continuing to work with the USFS on the surrender, but with the District Ranger retiring and other personnel changes it is taking a bit longer.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Alger County Veterans Affairs asking for support of their Green Light Project; Supervisor Doucette presented letters with update from UP Hydro/RWE on the Forest Lake Dam Project, which were emailed to Board members prior to the meeting. The public is encouraged to check for updates using the link provided on the Township website. Information from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission was received regarding a transfer request within the Township.

2. CUPPAD Contract Proposal - Clerk Johnson/Supervisor Doucette provided information on the proposal from CUPPAD for the Master Plan rewrite. The Regional Commission will provide for revision of the Township's Master Plan and will assist the Township in all matters necessary to complete this within a reasonable amount of time. Motion Miller/seconded Cota to **contract with CUPPAD in the amount of \$17,250.00 for the rewrite of the Au Train Township Master Plan.** \$8,625.00 is due upon agreement. MILLER, YES; COTA, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES; JOHNSON, YES. Motion Carried.

Public Comment: Comments were received from Donna Shields, and an email from Duane Newton read by Supervisor Doucette.

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

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Motion Johnson/seconded by Doucette to **adjourn at 8:05 pm.**

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson