

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 12, 2024 6:00 pm - 8:28 pm**

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**Roll Call:**

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, and Trustee Tom Balmes. Absent: Trustee Jake Miller. Also Present: Attorney Bill Nordeen, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Assessor Cameron Fuess, Fire Chief Perry King, Maintenance Ryan Walther, Donna Shields, Jason Cain, Wyatt Seaberg, Bob and Tina DesArmo, Kris and Greg Lindquist, Dan and Phyllis LaCombe, Kristen Van Wieren, Wade and Lynda Cross, Amy Hernandez, John Carr, Scott Smith, Matt Lang and Kathy Reynolds.

Supervisor Doucette opened our August 12, 2024 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

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

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Cota/seconded Doucette to **pay bills**. Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17209-17238; Fire Fund #9202-9216; Garbage Fund #2138; Road Fund #3017).

**Financial Reports:**

Clerk Johnson presented the July Financial Reports, which were reviewed. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting.

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of July 31, 2024: General Fund \$309,353.32; Fire Fund \$277,109.31 + CD \$53,385.38; Garbage Fund \$326,080.22; Road Fund \$159,685.85.

Treasurer Cota noted that Summer Tax Collection is underway and going well. BS&A is offering additional services for accounting software and will be making a presentation in October. Clerk Johnson was also invited to attend. There are no upcoming rentals for August or September.

Clerk -Since the July Meeting several emails and FOIA requests were received. The August 6<sup>th</sup> Primary Election is complete. Overall it was good, just a few issues at closing that have been addressed. Over 30 hours were spent in the final few days prior to the election being available, preparing and completing the administration. There will be about a 30 day break prior to starting all over for November. There were a total of 411 in-person and Absentee Ballot voters. This does not include early voters who voted at the County offices. The Fire Fund Millage Renewal passed. Tom Balmes secured the Supervisors candidate position for the November ballot. All other races were uncontested.

The dot gov domain transfer was complete. Anyone going to autraintownship.org will automatically transfer to .gov. Website updates continue.

Anderson, Tackman and Co. did their onsite audit to gather the information needed to complete the report. It will be provided to us when complete. They will also file the F65 Report to the State of Michigan. The Uniform Accounting Procedures Manual and Numbering system has been completed through the State, which will require assigning new account numbers to all funds that will need to be completed prior to the next fiscal year (April 1, 2025).

Worker's Comp payroll figures are being audited and I will be working through the online forms to complete this. The renewal packet application for the MML Liability and Property Insurance Renewal has been received. Our current policy expires 10/22/24.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes noted that he continues to receive inquiries regarding roads in the Village of Au Train plat. The Rapid River Truck Trail paving begins August 20<sup>th</sup>. The USFS is providing one-half the funds for this project. In addition, some work on Highway M28 from Scott Falls to Harborview Drive is set to begin.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette provided her report. Phone calls continue and are numerous regarding GFL garbage collection, cart placement, replacement and allocation requests for those who indicate they never received a cart and dumpster placement and/or access. GFL was also contacted about billing practices at the request of Clerk Johnson. Basically they bill the Township for any additional carts disbursed but the cost was collected from the residents. Then, the following month those costs are credited to the Township.

**Special Presentation:** None

**Public Comment:** Public Comments were received from John Carr and Wade Cross.

**Boards/Departments:**

**Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals-** ZA Lindquist was present. The monthly Zoning Administrator report was received and is on file. It was reviewed and discussed by the Board. The Planning Commission has a Special Meeting scheduled for August 19<sup>th</sup> to continue work on the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates.

**Assessor/Board of Review** - Assessor Fuess was present and provided a report to the Board. Assessing is going well. They are currently working on New Construction and Full Builds. BS&A is recommending their new online software platform. Information was provided regarding the recent AMAR Review. The review went very well with only a minor adjustment recommended. The December Board of Review Meeting date has been scheduled.

**Maintenance Department:** Ryan Walther provided an update on maintenance items. The pickleball court is complete and he thanked Steve Barr and his volunteer crew for getting this project completed. It was suggested the Township consider adding an additional court next year. Routine maintenance and mowing projects are being completed. Additional repairs on the mower are needed and it will be delivered for repair after the final mowing of the season. Work continues for the electrical reinstallation at the cemetery. A portion of the Kayak launch was found floating down the river. It was retrieved. The fencing at the Heritage Trail was damaged again by ORV's and repaired.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Perry King was present and provided his report. There were three calls this past month, two trees down on power lines and a two car PIA at the intersection of Hwy M28 and Au Train Forest Lake Road. Pump testing is complete. Valves have been ordered for the 16ML Tanker, Au Train Pumper and both small tankers. North Shore Compressor will be servicing the SCVA's in September.

On behalf of the Fire Department, voters were thanked for approving the Fire Department millage renewal request. The department will continue to provide services for those in need.

Clerk Johnson provided information on the 2024-2025 Propane Price Control Contract offered by UP Propane. Motion Cota/seconded Balmes to **purchase 1,000 gallons of propane at a cost of \$1.899 per gallon from UP Propane** for the 16 Mile Lake Fire Hall. Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried.

**Unfinished Business:**

1. Litigation Resort CUP Ridge Rd - Attorney Nordeen was present to provide information to the Board and any members of the Planning Commission who were also present, on how to proceed. The Judge vacated the decision made by the Planning Commission for approval of the Seaberg Resort Conditional Use Permit. The court had concerns on the process and took exception of the use of the Private Road for access to the development. The Planning Commission must redo (New) the hearing where the applicant must provide alternate access. In addition, there needs to be more formal Findings of Fact while considering the Standards set forth in Section 802. The public was reminded that the Township Board is a separate body who is unable to appoint a Special Commission to hear the matter or request that it be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals (as requested).

2. Zoning Ordinance/Master Plan Updates - The review of the Master Plan continues in conjunction with discussion about the Zoning Ordinance and the amendments needed. In as much as both documents work side by side, it was recommended by members of the Planning Commission that the Township Board consider contracting with CUPPAD to work with the Planning Commission also updating the Zoning Ordinance. The cost estimate was \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Motion Doucette/seconded Johnson, to **contract with CUPPAD to work directly with the Planning Commission on updating the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Master Plan updates and correct any errors or omissions.** Contract review and approval with CUPPAD for such services would be at the September Board Meeting. Doucette, yes; Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.

3. Undeveloped Platted Roads - As discussed on several occasions, there are roads listed on the Plat of the Village of Au Train that have never been developed. Property owners and developers have requested information on who is responsible for said development of the roads, and associated costs. The Alger County Road Commission does not have them on their list required under Act 51 (An act to provide for the classification of all public roads, streets, and highways in this state, and for the revision of that classification), and according to Engineer/Manager Bob Lindbeck, has no obligation for development. According to Attorney Nordeen, the Township could cover the cost to develop the roads, but has no obligation to do so. The Township is not responsible for undeveloped roads nor do they have the ability to just vacate the roads for private use without going through the unlikely process of amending the plat. The property owners could develop the roads at their own expense, but they would remain public access ways. Attorney Nordeen suggested the Township consider a Road Ordinance for clarification. Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette, to **authorize Attorney Nordeen to draft a Road Ordinance** for consideration by the Board to address undeveloped platted roads within the Township. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

1. Correspondence - Presented and reviewed.

2. Zoning Board of Appeals Resignation - Zoning Board of Appeals member and Trustee Candidate, John Carr resigned from the Zoning Board of Appeals effective immediately. Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette, to **accept, with regret, the resignation of Zoning Board of Appeals Member John Carr.** Motion carried.

3. Zoning Board of Appeals Appointment - Three applications were received from residents interested in serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Amy Hernandez, Robert Stein and Matt Lang. After review and discussion, Motion Doucette/seconded Johnson to recommend that **Matt Lang be appointed full time member to the Zoning Board of Appeals, effective immediately.** Motion carried.

Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette, to recommend that **Amy Hernandez be named Alternate member to the Zoning Board of Appeals, effective immediately.** Motion carried.

4. Enforcement of Ordinances (via Policy/guidelines/Resolution) - The need for a written policy regarding the steps and process for enforcement standards of Ordinances within the Township was discussed. The first one for consideration should be the Zoning Ordinance so that the process and step by step procedure is clearly defined and followed. Clerk Johnson, along with Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist and Planning Commission/ZBA Member Donna Shields will get together to develop a draft for consideration.

5. Educational Opportunities - Motion Cota/seconded Doucette, to **authorize up to \$500.00 (\$125.00 each member) to enroll members into the MSU Extension ZBA online Certification Course.** Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Public Comments were received by Matt Lang.

**Board Member Comments:** Board Members offered additional comments regarding MTA Fall Regional Meetings on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and public thank you's for Steve Barr and crew for the installation of the pickleball court.

**Next Meeting:** The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion Johnson/seconded Cota to **adjourn at 8:28 pm.** Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: 09/09/2024

08/20/2024  
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