

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
November 11, 2024 6:00 pm - 8:13 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. Also Present: Peggy Smith, Scott Smith, Donna Shields, John Carr, Amy Hernandez, Brandon Lewis, Brian Van Wiernan, Brice Burge, Matt Lang, Duane Newton and Mark Maki.

Supervisor Doucette opened our November 11, 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 Balmes/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the October 14, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Moved Balmes/seconded Cota to **approve the minutes of the October 24, 2024 Special Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17297-17326; Fire Fund #9243-9255; Garbage Fund #2141-2143)

**Financial Reports:**

Clerk Johnson presented the October Financial Reports. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting.

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of October 31, 2024: General Fund \$294,407.95; Fire Fund \$242,859.29 + CD \$54,250.94; Garbage Fund \$279,642.41; Road Fund \$4,812.52.

Treasurer Cota noted that there are no upcoming scheduled rentals. That Winter Tax bill prep will be completed and sent to KCI. The proposal from KCI has been received and accepted. The postage deposit of \$986.45 has been sent in. The payment of \$3,636.00 from Munising Public School for Summer Tax Collection Services, as well as payment of \$1047.68 for May Election Administration were received.

Clerk - Clerk Johnson it was a very busy month leading up to the General Election. All went well on Election Day and the Inspectors did a great job. Au Train Township had a total of 779 ballots cast, 630 on election day (which includes the Absentee Ballot Voters) and 149 participating in Early Voting. This is a record turnout for the Township at 70%. Over 32 hours in the 5 days prior to and including Election Day were spent administrating. Vote tallies were Supervisor Tom Balmes - 600; Clerk Mary Johnson - 612; Treasurer Kristy Cota - 601; Trustee John Carr - 568; and Trustee Jake Miller - 491.

Clerk Johnson also noted that she provided election assistance, at the request of the State of Michigan Bureau of Elections, to Rock River Township and their appointed Election Administrator Wilma Hill.

The Township received administration reimbursement from the State of Michigan for Presidential Primary Election costs of \$2,782.08 and Munising Public Schools for May Election costs of \$1,047.68.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes noted he received several calls regarding the Basin water levels and concerns over the basin drainage and the dam status. He also noted he also reviewed the Maxon Blight Violation. Trustee Miller also noted receiving several calls regarding the basin and the concern for the aquatic life and damage it caused, as well as concerns for future Au Train River levels.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette noted this would be her last meeting as Supervisor and thanked the Board and residents for their support over the past 8 years. Information was provided regarding the Forest Lake Basin, DNR Signs regarding the closure of the ATV trail because of the Trestle Bridge safety concerns. Will discuss alternate placement options with the DNR and Alger County SORVA. The Moorman Court Hearing was postponed again. Supervisor Doucette also noted receiving a noise complaint for a Rooster at Au Train River Estates.

**Zoning Administrator Position Interview:** Donna Shields, who submitted her letter of interest and resume for the position, was interviewed using the same format and questions as the other two candidates.

**Special Presentation:** None - ACRC Engineer/Manager Bob Lindbeck was scheduled, but he was unable to attend. The contract agreement for 2025 was discussed and includes "all work associated with graveling, grading and paving... 0.54 miles of Curtis Drive and 0.17 miles of Norlin Way, with a total Township obligation of \$119,000 plus 10% contingency of \$11,900 for possible unforeseen overruns." Moved Johnson/second Doucette, to **approve the Alger County Road Commission 2025 Agreement, as presented for paving projects on Curtis Drive and Norlin Way as presented.** Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

**Boards/Departments:**

**Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals-** Acting Zoning Administrator, Clerk Johnson provided a verbal update to the Board. No meetings held since last Township Board Meeting of the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals. There are two upcoming Planning Commission Meetings, CUP Hearings on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm and a Special Meeting to review the Master Plan DRAFT on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

**Assessor/Board of Review -** Assessor Fuess was present and provided an update to the Board. Information was provided regarding updating Property Transfer Affidavits, Winter tax bill prep, millage reduction fractions, regular site visits and sales study information. The December Board of Review Meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**Maintenance Department:** Ryan Walther provided an update on maintenance items. Just finished prep for winter and working on scheduling the office cabinets installation.

**Fire Department:** The Fire Department report was provided by Hall Captain Brandon Lewis and is on file. There was three calls for the month. The 2017 Chevy PU Brush Truck needed some major repairs and was towed to Swem Services. There is no cost estimate at this time. The Rescue Truck has recalls that need to be addressed, but will need to go to Green Bay, which is the closest authorized location. It will be scheduled. There is an upcoming can drive on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and the Fire Department will hold their officer elections at the December meeting.

**Unfinished Business:**

1. Discussion Blight - E7336 State Hwy M28 (Maxon) - Supervisor Doucette provided additional information about the fencing installed at the Blighted property owned by Roy Maxon. Sarah Kimar, whose late father owned the boats, is assisting Mr. Maxon. After much discussion, incoming Supervisor Balmes agreed to meet with Ms. Kimar to develop a plan for resolution.
2. Street Signs List Update - Supervisor Doucette provided the Board with an updated extensive list of signs that need to be installed/replaced within the Township. The Board will review the list and address at the December Meeting. Supervisor Doucette was thanked for all her time and effort in developing a list so the Township can move forward with the project, however indicated.

3. Superior Central School Playground Funding Request - Clerk Johnson provided the request from Superior Central Schools regarding their playground installation and costs. Moved Miller/seconded Johnson, to **provide \$2,500.00 for the Superior Central Schools Playground Project**, as a recreation expense. Miller, yes; Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

1. Zoning Administrator Position/Employment Contract - Discussion and review of the three candidates interviewed for the position was made. Applicants Brice Burge, Mark Maki and Donna Shields were considered. Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette, to **offer the position of Zoning Administrator to Donna Shields, effective January 1, 2025**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.

Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette to **offer Zoning Administrator appointee Donna Shields a salary of \$1,000 per month, with a six month review date**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

2. Educational Requirements - Amend Policy 2024-004. Clerk Johnson presented language to amend Policy 2024-004 Policy for Appointment of Members to the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to include the following: Effective January 1, 2025, a member of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, will be required to attend a minimum of one continuing education course per year. Moved Johnson/seconded Cota, to **amend Policy 2024-004, as noted**. Motion carried.

3. Planning Commission Vacancies - Clerk Johnson noted that with the appointment of PC Member/Secretary Donna Shields as Zoning Administrator, there will be three vacancies on the Planning Commission. The position will be advertised, and we can review an applications at the December meeting. There will also be at least one vacancy on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Because of the in depth responsibilities involved as Planning Commission Secretary, Clerk Johnson suggested appointing Donna Shields as the Recording Secretary for the Planning Commission for the time being. That will ensure accurate minutes and recording moving forward until such time a member of the Planning Commission feels comfortable taking on those responsibilities. Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette, to **appoint Donna Shields as Recording Secretary for the Planning Commission at a rate of \$75.00 per meeting**. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Public Comments were received by Peggy Smith and Brice Burge.

**Board Member Comments:** Board Members offered additional comments, which included wishing Supervisor Doucette the best in her retirement and thanking her for her years of service to the Township.

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

**Adjournment:** Motion Doucette/seconded Johnson to **adjourn at 8:13 pm**. Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

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

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