

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 12, 2024  
6:00 pm  
Yankee Springs Township Hall  
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333  
MINUTES

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YS Board of Trustees – Regular  
Meeting  
September 12, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Supervisor Rob Heethuis

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**INVOCATION**

**Roll Call:** Deb Mousseau, Rob Heethuis, Mike Cunningham, Larry Knowles, Dave VanHouten (All Present).

**Staff Present:** Dennis Buist, Brad Williams, Joe Shea, Frank Fiala, Shana Bush

**Visitors:** 12

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:**

**Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to add or delete all items in red text to the agenda.** **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Cunningham: yes; Knowles: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

**Motion by Heethuis with support from Mousseau to approve the agenda as amended.** **Roll Call Vote:** Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; Heethuis: yes; VanHouten: yes; Mousseau: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Board minutes 08/08/2024 Regular BOT meeting and 08/27/2024 Special BOT meeting.
- August 2024 Accounts Payable: Checks # 918116 through Check # 918165 Total Amount \$63,188.36.
- August 30, 2024, Payroll Checks #7947 through Check #7996 = \$30,334.41. August 2024 Fed. P/R withholding \$7,607.02.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the consent agenda.** **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:**

**Catherine Getty** (County Commissioner) shared an update on what is happening at the County. The new county administrator, Eric Zuzga, started at the end of August and is reaching out to

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**INVOCATION**

**ROLL CALL**

**MOTION TO AMEND  
AGENDA**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT  
AGENDA**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
CONSENT AGENDA**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF  
VISITORS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
TREASURER’S REPORT**

**CLERK’S REPORT**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
INVOICE JOURNAL**

**ELECTION UPDATE**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
RESOLUTION  
09-12-2024**

**CEMETERIES UPDATE**

meet people within the community.

Shana Bush, Frank Fiala (Planning Commission Representatives)

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** (Limit 3 minutes)

None

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** By Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

- August 2024 Financial Statement and Investment reports were reviewed.

**Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes.**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

**CLERK’S REPORT:** By Mike Cunningham, Clerk

- September 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 09/12/2024 totaling \$30,867.82.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the September 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 09/12/2024 totaling \$30,867.82. Roll Call Vote: Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes; Knowles: yes; Heethuis: yes; Mousseau: yes.**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Election Update:
  - AV ballots will be available 09/23/2024.
  - The election commission meeting will be 10/08/2024 at 11:00 AM.
  - The Public Accuracy Test will be 10/11/2024 at noon.
  - Early voting will be Saturday, 10/26/2024 through Sunday, 11/03/2024.
  - REMINDER – The permanent AV list used to send out AV ballot applications will end in 2024. In the future, voters will need to send in applications on their own or request to be put on the permanent ballot list.
- Resolution 09-12-2024 establishing exit pollster distance requirement.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Heethuis to approve Resolution 09-12-2024 establishing a minimum distance from the polling place of 100’ for exit polling activities. Roll Call Vote: Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; VanHouten: yes.**

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Cemeteries update:
  - A township resident wishes to donate funds for a privacy fence along the south property line at Robbins Cemetery.
    - Mr. Cunningham has started to get estimates for removal of the old wire fence and installation of approximately 515 linear feet of 6’ high vinyl fence. It looks like the cost for the fence and installation will be in the range proposed for the donation.

- The Board will need to decide whether to accept the donation and install the fence.
- The proper handling of the donation will need to be discussed with the township attorney.
- The Yankee Springs Cemetery driveway is becoming rutted to the point that smaller cars will soon have difficulty in some spots.
  - The sexton has been asked to provide an estimate to be used for future capital planning.
  - The driveway is about 755' x 8' compared to about 1,000' x 8' for the Coman cemetery driveway that cost \$7,200 in 2023.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Recycling Committee:**

- Meeting 09/10/2024.
- The committee is looking for a new member.
- The township waste hauler, Walsh Disposal & Recycling LLC, and Supervisor Rob Heethuis are being considered for membership in the Barry County State Required Materials Management Plan Committee.
- Recycling committee member Claudette Lozano is setting up a recycling Facebook page containing township recycling information.
- Next meeting 10/22/2024.

**RECYCLING COMMITTEE  
REPORT**

**Park Committee:**

- The committee received a thank you note from a family in appreciation of the improvements to the township park and also a note that says work needs to be done on resurfacing the path. At this point the resurfacing is on hold until the pickleball project is done.
- The Little League used the ball field for practice during June and July. The baselines are in need of being rechalked.
- The reservation process was used successfully through the summer season.
- Discussion took place regarding the rebidding of the pickleball project and other options.

**PARK COMMITTEE  
REPORT**

**Zoning Board of Appeals:**

- 08/13/2024 meeting:
  - On Heritage Bay Drive the board affirmed the ZA's decision to deny an STR.
  - There was one on Mac Drive regarding using two shipping containers for storage buildings which was tabled and referred to the Planning Commission.
- 09/03/2024 meeting:
  - The ZBA first went into closed session with the attorney as the cases were quite involved.
  - On Oakleigh Drive regarding an STR, the ZBA overturned the ZA's decision and allowed the short-term rental.
  - On Park Drive they upheld the ZA's decision that the docks, temporary boat shelter, boat lift, and the gas tank were a zoning violation.
  - On Russell Drive, affirmed the ZA's decision granting STR permits for 2735 and 2751. The ZBA reversed the ZA's decision and granted a short-term rental for 2739 and 2741 and upheld the decision to not allow a short-term rental for 2753.
- Next meeting 10/08/2024 if needed.

**ZBA REPORT**

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**PC REPORT**

**Planning Commission:**

- PCI August 2024 report in board member packet.
- August 2024 Complaint log in board member packet.
- 08/15/2024 regular meeting:
  - Approved an SEU for a short-term rental at Whispering Pines. That property is zoned recreation. The SEU is good until January 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Finalized the survey questions for the master plan.
  - Discussed commercial storage units again and plan on having all of the PC's recommendations put together at next week's meeting to then have something to present to the Board of Trustees.
- Next regular meeting 09/19/2024.

**Fire/EMS Report:**

- August 2024 Fire/Emergency Medical responses: Deputy Chief Miller stated that calls were up in August, but it was a good month with 20 out of 21 medical calls being responded to from our department.
- New fire truck status
  - Had some warranty work done at Cummins Diesel and it is now back at Spencer's to finish up the punch list items. Will be getting it back soon and hoping to have it on the road by October 1<sup>st</sup> after everyone has been trained on it.
- 08/21/2024 meeting.
- Next meeting 09/25/2024.
- YST/Wayland meeting held 08/27/2024.
- The EMS meeting was held 09/11/2024. The main topic was that there is going to be a large (at least 22%) increase in insurance rates for the next year.

**FIRE/EMS REPORT**

**Water Advisory Committee:**

- 09/03/2024 meeting. Next meeting 10/01/2024.
  - Michigan Rural Water performed the rate study, and they will be presenting their findings at the YST Water System Rate Study Public Hearing 09/24/2024 at 6:00 PM.
- GLASWA September 2024 minutes in board member packet.
- GLASWA Sewer Rate Study Public Hearing was held 08/29/2024.

**WATER ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

**Veterans Memorial Committee:**

- 09/04/2024 meeting. Next meeting will be 10/09/2024.
- Veteran's Day Ceremony will be Saturday, 11/09/2024 at 11:00 AM.
- Phase II of the Memorial was started with excavation being done and concrete scheduled in order to put in two benches.
- Local dentist Tyler Veneman will sponsor one of the benches and will also provide free dental care for veterans on November 15 from 8 AM to 12 noon.
- Carole Ditkof, Quilts of Valor, will be donating two quilts to two veterans that might be going through some type of challenge. If anyone has a recommendation, please let the committee know. Hoping to present them as part of the Veterans Day Ceremony.

**VETERANS MEMORIAL  
COMMITTEE**

**Board Action Items:**

- Update on replacement of four steel entry doors at the fire station.
  - The doors have been installed.
  - The fire station personnel will be painting them red next week.
  
- Update on kitchen renovation project.
  - The cabinets have been ordered from the supplier, KSI Kitchen & Bath in Byron Center.
  - We were told about 6 weeks for cabinet lead time.
  - Allowing a couple of weeks for installation indicates project completion could be in mid-October. Just in time for the election.
  - Formica countertop color has been chosen.
  
- Planning & Zoning office HVAC modification
  - The office is staffed by three people who are usually all in the office at the same time. During the one year plus that the new office has been in use it has been established that this office needs more air movement to be comfortable.
  - The office has one air distribution register located in the ceiling.
  - Discussions with the project HVAC contractor who now performs our annual HVAC servicing have resulted in a small project/experiment to add an additional air distribution register in the ceiling. It is thought this will increase air circulation and make the office more comfortable for the occupants.
  - There is no guarantee that this will completely solve the problem, but it should be a step in the right direction.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Heethuis to approve up to \$1,000 to modify the Planning & Zoning office HVAC ducting to add a second air distribution register.**

**Roll Call Vote: VanHouten: no; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes.**

Yes: 4, No: 1. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Hall/office, fire station and park lawn sprinkling contractor.
  - Our longtime lawn sprinkling contractor, Scott Havens/Gun Lake Sprinkling retired during the past year and sold his business to GRAPIDS Irrigation in Grand Rapids.
  - The township has utilized GRAPIDS for 2024.
  - The service we get from GRAPIDS is very different than we received from Gun Lake Sprinkling. GRAPIDS is a larger company and we are totally isolated from the person who does the work. All communication is done by email, and they seem to do more selling than servicing/maintaining.
  - The township has received estimates for the 2024 winterization of our three sprinkling systems from GRAPIDS and from VWL Sprinkling. The estimates are both under \$500 with VWL being about 10% lower so cost is not the determining factor.
  - Mr. Cunningham uses VWL Sprinkling for his two sprinkling systems and has found the service to be very similar to that provided by Scott Havens, with personal contact with the person actually maintaining the system.
  - Mr. Cunningham is asking for the Board's approval to have VWL Sprinkling do the 2024 winterization of the township's sprinkling systems and then consider who to use for the 2025 season for the township's sprinkling contractor.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Van Houten to approve using VWL Sprinkling to**

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**UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT  
OF ENTRY DOORS AT FIRE  
STATION**

**UPDATE ON  
KITCHEN RENOVATION  
PROJECT**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
HVAC MODIFICATION  
FOR PLANNING & ZONING  
OFFICE**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
VWL SPRINKLING TO  
WINTERIZE THE TOWNSHIP  
SPRINKLING SYSTEM IN  
2024**

**ZONING ISSUES  
UPDATE**

**MOTION TO APPROVE  
INSTALLATION OF  
SIGNAGE ON ROBERT  
DRIVE**

winterize the township sprinkling system in 2024. Discussion: The township will look for someone to use for the 2025 season. **Roll Call Vote:** Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Zoning Issues Update:
  - Based on the complaint received about a township property owner, the ZA and the Zoning Enforcement Officer rightfully entered the property to investigate. There was a meeting with the property owner in July and at that time the property owner threatened to file a trespassing charge if they entered his property again. They have not returned to the property.
  - On Sept 3 the ZBA upheld the decision of the Zoning Administrator that there are zoning violations at the property. After the meeting a sheriff deputy met Mr. Shea in his driveway to tell him they were investigating a trespassing charge against him.
  - When Brad Williams and Joe Shea inspected the property, they were acting on behalf of the township, not as private citizens. Therefore Mr. Shea and the township attorney do not think it was appropriate that they sent a deputy to Mr. Shea's private residence. A FOIA request has been made for the incident report. It does not seem to be a coincidence that this happened on the same night as the ZBA meeting. This is considered to be a frivolous complaint and has been brought to the attention of the Prosecuting Attorney, Julie Nakfoor Pratt.
  - The Board expressed their apologies to Mr. Shea for this occurrence. It was felt that this was an act of intimidation and the Board puts their full support behind Mr. Shea and getting this matter resolved.
  
- Bassett Lake/Robert Drive access rules sign.
  - The township was in court today regarding a citation against an individual for the offense of blocking a public easement (Robert Drive) in violation of the zoning ordinance.
  - The Zoning Administrator and the Code Enforcement Officer believe that the Township should post a sign, similar to what was posted last year on Russell Drive, at the Robert Drive public easement, along with "No Parking" signs on both sides of Robert Drive.
  - Posting the rules for use of the easement would make it clear to everyone what they can and cannot do on the site. This worked well when it was done at Russell Drive.

Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the installation of Lake Access and No Parking signs on Robert Drive for a total cost up to \$200. Discussion: This is not about the cost. The sign is not a statement that Yankee Springs is making this a public access, but is indicating that as a public easement these are the rules that apply. This is the ordinance and this is what needs to be lived by. **Roll Call Vote:** Knowles: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Mousseau: yes; Cunningham: yes.

Yes: 5, No: 0. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Planning Commission request for approval of the Master Plan survey.
- Board members discussed if any additional questions should be included.
- Mr. Cunningham expressed his concerns, particularly that there is no way to know if

residents are responding only once.

**Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the use of a township resident survey as part of the master planning process and the printing and mailing of (2,400) 4" x 6" postcards to township residents for a cost not to exceed \$2,000.** Discussion: Using a QR code does isolate people who are not computer users. **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Mousseau: yes; Knowles: yes; Heethuis: yes; Cunningham: no.

Yes: 4, No: 1. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Blood Drive was held Wednesday, September 11, at the Fire Station.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Frank Fiala:** The Solid Waste Oversight group had a very successful event last Saturday where they took in over a thousand gallons of motor oil, three semis loaded with tires, and about 550 automobiles which prevents all this from going into the landfill. We also got tires from the DNR that were picked up over the year. The whole concept of Solid Waste Oversight is being reworked and is now going to be Materials Management Planning and Handling. They will be working on creating and implementing a plan to do a better job of recycling and reusing products. State Law requires there be a dozen people on the committee and the county will be appointing people in the next couple of months. They have asked the Solid Waste group for their recommendations, so they are going through that process. This is a really good thing because the landfills are just not a good place to put this stuff.

**Marvin Helder:** The Township is doing a very good job except for one area: communication. Many of the people on the lake do not live here full time and don't receive mail here. The only thing that is received is taxes, water bills, and weeds in the lake. If something is going on with a neighbor within 300 feet you get a notice. When you send out the tax bills put in some information about what is going on in the township. These property owners do everything elsewhere and just come here to relax. Communication is very important and needs to be worked on. If you don't know and it affects you, you are in trouble.

**BOARD COMMENT:**

**Cunningham:** I told Dan the meeting would take 1 hour and 15 minutes. It's 7:13 right now.

**Knowles:** Thanks to all of our staff. The next couple of months will be a lot of work.

**Mousseau:** Taxes are due Monday at midnight. The office will be open until 5.

**VanHouten:** Veterans Committee likes to have some fun and we were trying to find the sprinkler heads. We couldn't find them all so Dan Miller turns on the sprinkler. We were poking around and one of the sprinklers came on and nailed Dan right in the buttocks. It was funny and we enjoyed it.

**Heethuis:** We have people in our community that go to Wayland and people that go to Thornapple. Tomorrow night is the Wayland/Thornapple football game. You'll see a great marching band, cheerleaders, great football and if you see me there don't forget to say hi.

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**MOTION TO APPROVE  
MASTER PLAN SURVEY**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**BOARD COMMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion by Cunningham to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM.** *Approved by all. Motion Carried.*

Approved by:   
Michael S. Cunningham, Township Clerk

Date: 10/01/2024

Respectfully submitted by:  
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary  
September 13, 2024

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**ADJOURNMENT**