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YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2026
6:00 pm
Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333

DRAFT MINUTES

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

Roll Call: Deb Mousseau, Dave VanHouten, Rob Heethuis, Larry Knowles, Tom Hopkins (All Present)

Staff Present: Frank Fiala, Brad Williams, John Trygier, Dan Miller, Dennis Buist

Visitors: 6

Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles to accept the agenda. Roll Call Vote:
Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.

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

MOTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of October 8, 2026 Board Meeting and October 8, 2026 Election Commission Meeting
- Disbursements October 2026

IPA Twp. Renov. #52 Oct. 1, 2026 AUTO PAY	(5,689.47)
AP Checks of 10/8/26 #919270-919290	(21,801.71)
Oct. FIRE payroll Chks. #8977-8994	(10,368.16)
Oct. FIRE State withholding	(528.08)
Oct. FIRE Fed. Witholding	(2,479.31)
Stop Pymt/VOID on 10/26/26 for Ck #918868 dated 12/30/25	3,176.50
Stop Pymt/VOID on 10/26/26 for Ck #919145 dated 7/9/26	74.94
Oct. Gen. Payroll 10/31/26 Ck#s 8995-9018	(20,651.99)
Oct. General PR Fed, withholding	(6,404.74)
Oct. Gen PR State Withholding	(1,140.05)
Oct. AP Checks # 919291-919307	(38,312.92)
Total Disbursements	$ (104,124.99)

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

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

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

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Fire Chief Dan Miller

Bill Bryker, GLIB representative: He reviewed highlights from PLM's recently completed annual report. Aquatic herbicide treatments were applied from May through October, primarily in the channels. A survey identified 31 different native aquatic plant species. These plants benefit the lake by supporting fishing, absorbing phosphorus from the water, and helping keep sediment in place. A new chemical treatment was applied twice in the channels to bind phosphorus in the sediment, making it unavailable for algae growth. Water clarity was better in 2025 than in 2026. Additional water testing is being conducted to better understand the lake's health. Inlets were sampled in April and August, with particularly high levels of phosphorus and nitrates found in the Cuddy Drain. Although those levels decreased by August, two other inlets also showed elevated readings. Several algae blooms occurred in two channels, likely triggered by the high phosphorus levels. PLM has identified a particular hot spot that needs attention.

GLIB REPORT

The GLIB Board has decided to move funds previously managed by the county into accounts overseen directly by the GLIB Board. Approximately $700,000 is currently held in CDs. The Board plans to hire accountants to manage the money next year. These funds will be available if corrective measures are needed to address phosphorus levels in the lake.

PLM's current contract expires at the end of 2027. The Board plans to request proposals from various lake management companies, with a public meeting scheduled for August. Increased water testing and sediment sampling will be important moving forward to better understand the lake's condition and determine the most effective ways to address phosphorus levels.
EGLE collected lake water samples in 2025 from the Cuddy Drain, County Park, and State Park. Testing identified eight different PFAS compounds, with PFOA being the most prevalent. The highest concentration was found at the Cuddy Drain. The foam observed on the lake is believed to be primarily due to the PFAs levels.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): At last month's meeting the board approved moving $100,000 back to the trail budget as investigative monies. He questioned the Board's continued consideration of a proposed trail, noting that the project has been discussed for 12–13 years and previously involved thousands of dollars in design and cost estimates. He said the original proposal was intended to provide State Park visitors safe access to businesses along M-179, while more recent discussions have focused on connecting the State Park to the Township Park.

He argued that the State Park and benefiting businesses should pay the full cost of constructing and maintaining the trail, rather than township taxpayers. He also opposed using township funds for further investigation or taking private property for the project.

He urged the Board to either kill the project or put it on the ballot for residents to decide. There's no urgency or other reason to not take the time to put it on the ballot and let the voters decide. If the board thought the voters would approve the project it could have been placed on the ballot and decided already. In his opinion it's not been put on the ballot because the board knows it will not be approved. He believes public support should determine whether the project moves forward, rather than support from organizations such as Blue Zones or the DNR. It might be put on the ballot with wording such as, Should the township raise $100,000 by a millage to investigate the cost of the trail that would cost (Time Expired).

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David Laansma, Precinct Delegate (Payne Lake Rd.): He also wants to speak about the trail, a multi-million-dollar expenditure that is being proposed. Looking back at the old plan, Phase 1 was over a million dollars then and the full extent would probably be multiple millions. He doesn't know what part of that would be the township's but it would have to be a lot. Sitting in the ZBA meeting earlier this week he heard ideas proposed for development along M179 such as apartments or additional housing that would require expansion of the water system. He thinks it would be wiser to consider this upcoming expense rather than blowing money on a trail that should be approved by the public rather than just barreling through. Some are determined to push this project but he feels strongly that it would be an unbelievable financial burden not to just build it, but to maintain for years to come.

John Trygier (Barlow Lake): There was a survey conducted about two years ago to be utilized on the development of the master plan. There were 430 responses from that survey that went out to everybody in the township. One of the questions was do you feel that Yankee Springs should explore the development of a trail system for bicycles, hikers and pedestrians. 319 responses said yes, 70 said no, 40 were unsure. 74% of the people who took time to respond said yes, they would like to have the township look at the development of a trail system, so doing so is actually responsive to what the residents said in the township survey.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Prepared by Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

- October 2026 Financial Statement and Investment Report were reviewed.
- Annual audit was conducted in October. There were no red flags with that.
- A county wide meeting was held for Treasurers and Clerks that was mostly led by our software company, BS&A. They are saying that we will have until December to commit to their cloud-based software. The dot-net program that we are currently on is being phased out. It's approximaly triple cost of what we currently spend: it will be $50,000 for the first year to get started and then every year after $25,000 plus 7% increase going forward. Clerk Hopkins also commented that it's frustrating because we are stuck having to go to the next level and it would be very difficult to go outside BS&A. Since there's about a month, he wants to make some phone calls and see if there's any other option. They will give us a rebate if we do it by December 11, possibly up to $5,000. So it looks like a decision will have to be made on this at the next meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to accept the Treasurer's Report. Roll Call Vote: *Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes.*

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

- Motions for Amendments #1 of Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Adopted General Fund Revenue & Expenditures:

MOTION TO ADOPT BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 TO AMEND YST GENERAL FUND 101 REVENUE

Motion by Mousseau with support from VanHouten to adopt Budget Amendment #1 of the General Fund Budget Resolution # 11-12-2026 "1" to amend Yankee Springs Township General Fund- 101 Revenue to increase the REVENUE amount to $2,098,710. Roll Call Vote: *Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.*

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

MOTION TO ADOPT BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 TO AMEND YST GENERAL FUND 101 EXPENDITURES

Motion by Mousseau with support from Knowles to adopt Budget Amendment #1 of the General Fund Budget Resolution # 11-12-2026 "2" to amend Yankee Springs Township General Fund- 101 Expenditures to increase the EXPENDITURE amount to $2,098,710. Roll Call Vote: *Hopkins: yes;*

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Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

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

CLERK'S REPORT

CLERK'S REPORT

Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles to approve the current accounts payable Checks #919308-919335 for the amount of $36,079.66. Discussion: A couple of the large expenses were Siegfried and Crandall over $10,000 for the audit, and a PCI bill for almost $7,000.00. ***Roll Call Vote:*** *Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.*

MOTION TO APPROVE CURRENT PAYABLES

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

Motion by Hopkins with support from Mousseau to approve the Fire and Election payroll Checks #9019 to #9069 for the amount of $20,762.72. Roll Call Vote: *VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes.*

MOTION TO APPROVE FIRE PAYROLL

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

ELECTION REPORT

- Report on the election:
  - Out of 4,610 registered voters there were 2,524 that voted.
  - That's about 55% - Precinct 1 had 50% and Precinct #2 has 61.73%.
  - Other townships around here had turnout as high as 69% and unfortunately Yankee Springs was the low at 50% for Precinct 1.
  - Thanks to all the election workers who did an outstanding job.

GLASA REPORT

GLASA REPORT

- The numbers are coming down with 1.7 million gallons pumped in October.
- Finances are about where expected with the arsenic removal project,
- The new well is completed and about $430,000 has been paid, with about $250,000 to go when the well is approved (probably in about 4 months).
- The well can pump 700 gallons per minute but our system will be pumping 400 gallons per minute.
- Year to date the sewer and water has taken in about $2.3 million and spent $2.2 million.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Commission:

PC REPORT

- PCI Report
- Approved to amend the Article IX land division: Opted out of Section 108 which doesn't authorize land divisions outside of those permitted.
- Tabled a commercial site plan for a proposed business next to the Sand Bar.
- Next regular meeting November 19, 2026.
- The DNR will attend the special meeting on December 8 at 6:30 PM.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

ZBA REPORT

- Meeting November 10, 2026.
  - Tabled a request for a lakefront setback variance.
  - The applicant will have to come back with a proper plan and surveys for the ZBA to understand what is requested.

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FIRE/EMS REPORT

Fire/EMS Report:

- Review of October Fire/Emergency Medical responses.
  - 16 fire responses last month, YTD is 227 compared to 129 last year.
  - 39 medical responses in September, YTD is 286 compared to 264 last year.
  - The duty shift responded to 9 medical calls and 3 fire responses. Off duty personnel responded to the remainder.
  - There are currently 22 personnel: 15 certified firefighters, 2 probationary firefighters who will start at the academy in January 2027. Medical personnel include 6 EMRs, 5 EMTs, and 4 paramedics.
  - Training was fire prevention week during the open house, and water rescue techniques with ropes and knots.
  - Open burning (leaves) – residents should call for a fire permit so they can keep track. It is not necessary if in a burn pit or barrel.
  - On Call personnel (after duty shift goes home) start at approximately 3:00 PM. Two person crews are run during the night, covering until 6:00 AM. They put in a lot of time on call but they don't get paid unless they get a call. They try to limit personnel to a five-mile radius of the fire station. It is more difficult for the medical personnel because there are so many more medical calls than fire calls.
  - Trustee VanHouten spoke about the future possibility of putting in a pay system for on-call personnel.

PARK COMMITTEE REPORT

Park Committee:

- All of the nets have been put away and things are wrapping up for the season.

RECYCLING COMMITTEE REPORT

Recycling Committee:

- No meeting.

VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT

Veterans Committee:

- The township's new sound equipment worked well for the ceremony on November 7.
- Ceremony went well, good speakers and good turnout.
- The women's club provided cookies and Curley Cone provided hot dogs and french fries.
- Reminder that Dr. Veneman provides free dental service for vets once a year.
- 131 hot dogs given out!

Board Action Items:

- Trail Engineer discussion
  - Two different engineering firms, Prein and Newhof, and a competing firm provided plans to the township.
  - Prein and Newhof was $15,000 cheaper than the other firm. They have also worked on this project with the township in the past.
    - The committee consisted of Chuck Shira, Nikki Smith, Catherine Getty, Tom Hopkins, Rob Heethuis and Brad Williams. They met and are recommending Prein and Newhof to the board.
    - Looking at it now because they would like to look at a grant in April. It is hard to bring something to the community in the form of a millage or election without having something to show them.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins that we approve using Prein and Newhof as engineers for our trail. Discussion: The cost that they laid out is for the grant writing, since most of this project will be covered by grants. Their fee is $36,000 compared to $54,000 for the competing firm. Prein and Newhof is very knowledgeable in trail projects. If a grant is received,

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the money would come to the township and the township would pay Prein and Newhof. This initial $36,000 would be paid by the township. This is the initial phase. Any further expenditure would have to be approved by the Board.

MOTION RESTATED:

MOTION TO APPROVE PREIN AND NEWHOF AS ENGINEERS FOR THE TRAIL PROJECT

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins that we approve using Prein and Newhof for an amount not to exceed $36, 950 as engineers for our trail. ***Roll Call Vote:*** *VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: no.*

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

- Review of township hours:
  - An informal survey of area offices shows that most are not open on Friday.
  - Friday is not typically a busy day, only one to two people currently work on Friday.
  - If the office were closed on Fridays, they would adjust the schedule for election times and property tax deadlines as needed.

MOTION TO CLOSE TOWNSHIP OFFICE ON FRIDAYS

Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles to close the township office on Fridays starting January 1st. ***Roll Call Vote:*** *Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.*

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): He is happy to see one trustee represents the residents at the last meeting and this one when it comes to trails. 74% of 400 comes up to less than 10% of township residents. Some people don't respond to surveys. Surveys are not conducted with the requirements of an election. On the survey, no cost was assigned to the question which creates a biased survey. Grants are taxpayer money, maybe not from this township but if from the state we did pay a portion of it. They also tend to pay only a portion of the project cost. The overruns that happened on the park project – grants don't pick up on that so the township has to cover that. The pickleball project was originally supposed to be 75 grant/25 township but ended up closer to 50/50. There is no reason not to do this on the ballot. The only reason would be to side step the people in the township, one baby step at a time, without voter approval. (Time expired)

Robin Laansma, Precinct Delegate (Payne Lake Rd): With regard to the survey, of course a lot of people would say yes to the trail. They will say yes until they are asked to pay for it or maintain it. A survey without a cost to the resident is pretty much irrelevant.

BOARD COMMENT:

BOARD COMMENT

Hopkins: Thanks to everyone for their help with the election, Deb and Rob especially. Thanks to Dan and the crew at the fire barn for getting everything cleaned up so it was easy to set up and take down. All the workers did an outstanding job.

Knowles: Thanks, Tom, glad that you stepped up to be the clerk, you do a nice job. I also just want to publicly thank to Dave for everything he has done for us and for me. Glad he stepped forward.

Mousseau: Dave did a great job, he always does, coordinating everything and getting everyone there. It's so much work and we really appreciate it, Dave.

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VanHouten: Thanks for the thanks! I enjoy it. It was a busy and exciting month.

Heethuis: Blessed to have this group. Talking to a person the other day and he said he would like to be a part of this board. The way we work and get things done, has been a blessing. I agree, you guys are a blessing to this township and I'm thankful for it. Be careful, it's deer season, and have fun.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Mousseau with support from VanHouten to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM.
Approved by all. Motion Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
November 16, 2026

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