

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026
6:00 pm
Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333

DRAFT MINUTES

DRAFT MINUTES

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YS Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
April 9, 2026

Routing 4/16/26

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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: Dennis Buist, Frank Fiala, John Trygier, Brad Williams

Visitors: 8

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA

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

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of March 12, 2026 and March 25, 2026 Board meetings
- DISBURSEMENTS March 2026

IPA Twp. Renov. #45- March 1, 2026 AUTO PAY	\$	(5,689.47)
AP Checks of 3/12/26: 918961-918984	\$	(179,012.65)
AP Checks of 3/30/26: 918985-919005	\$	(12,330.29)
March 10 FIRE payroll Chks. #8635-8652	\$	(11,613.66)
March 10 FIRE State W/H	\$	(587.46)
March 10 FIRE Fed. W/H	\$	(2,678.52)
Mar. Gen. Payroll 3/31/26 Ck#s 8653-8673	\$	(20,134.67)
Mar. FEDERAL withholding 3.31.26 gen. payroll *		-
March State W/H Gen. payroll *		-
Total Disbursements	\$	(232,046.72)

**processed in April*

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

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

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County Commissioners Marcia Bassett and Catherine Getty provided an update on the Barry County activities. Highlights included a grant for improvements at Charlton Park and a MSHDA grant for public utilities which will be managed by the county for the Stepping Stones housing project in Delton.

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): Asked the Board to declare that no funds from the Township will be used for the expansion of the water system and that the \$150,000 in the township budget for this project be removed. He also expressed that he does not support designating the Veterans' Memorial as a park nor the expansion of it.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Prepared by Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

- March 2026 Financial Statement and Investment Report were reviewed.

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

**MOTION TO APPROVE
TREASURER'S REPORT**

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 for \$23,445.71. Roll Call Vote: Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

**MOTION TO APPROVE
CURRENT PAYABLES**

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

Motion by Hopkins with support from VanHouten to approve the fire payroll Check for \$15,760.39. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.

**MOTION TO APPROVE
FIRE PAYROLL**

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Commission:

PC REPORT

- PCI Report
- Meeting March 19, 2026
 - Discussed PC bylaws and reviewed some suggestions. Plan to have a draft ready for the April 16 meeting for further discussion.
 - Asking for board approval to hold some additional workshop meetings.
- Next regular meeting April 16, 2026.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

- No March meeting
- Next meeting will be April 14, 2026 if needed.

ZBA REPORT

Fire/EMS Report:

- Review of March 2026 Fire/Emergency Medical responses (given by Trustee VanHouten in the absence of Chief Miller).
 - 47 fire responses which included 29 lift assists. Will be looking into the large number of lift assists.
 - 29 medical dispatches.
 - There were 14 medical calls to Yankee Springs Meadows Park.
- Current personnel are 21, including 15 certified firefighters, 3 probationary firefighters, 6 EMRs, 4 paramedics, and 5 EMTs.
- Training for the month included fire officers meeting, all departmental meeting and safety class put on by Consumers Energy.

Park Committee:

- Park is opening up for the year. The nets will be put up as soon as the correct brackets are received.
- New cedar mulch has been put down in the playground. The baseball diamond is going to be refurbished as well.
- Supervisor Heethuis is interviewing two young people next week for the custodial positions at the park. If anyone else is interested please let him know.

Recycling Committee:

- No meeting.

Veterans Committee:

- The expansion of the Memorial (Phase III) needs to be done before building season starts due to availability of the contractor. Therefore, the committee opted to go ahead with the project and will fund it personally if not approved by the Board.
- Two bids were received and the best price is \$3,000 for the project.
- Designating the Veterans' Memorial Park –this is not a zoning change but a legal name change approved by the Board.
- The size would be approximately 200 x 200 sq feet.
- Being a park will allow the committee to apply for grant funds for future plans.

Motion by VanHouten with support from Hopkins that we approve the Veterans' Memorial Park, that would be approximately 200' to the south. Roll Call Vote:

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

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

Motion by VanHouten with support from Hopkins that we approve spending not to exceed \$3,000 on the Memorial Phase III. Discussion: The funds could possibly come from the Tribal revenue sharing, but the township attorney did say that there is no problem with using township funds as well. The committee will try to forecast expenses for the next fiscal year budget. **Roll Call Vote:** *Heethuis: yes; Knowles: no; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: no; VanHouten: yes.*

Yes: 3, No: 2. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Next meeting will be April 15, 2026.

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FIRE/EMS REPORT

PARK COMMITTEE REPORT

RECYCLING COMMITTEE REPORT

VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE VETERANS' MEMORIAL PARK DESIGNATION

MOTION TO APPROVE FUNDS FOR PHASE III OF VETERANS' MEMORIAL PARK

Clean Water Committee

- Peerless water contract will be reviewed later in the meeting.

Gun Lake Improvement Board Committee

- Marcia Basset provided report from the first meeting of the year where the chair and vice chair were appointed.
- They approved a newsletter on what was done last year and what is planned for this year.
- Treatments will start soon (probably in May) depending on water temperature, rain levels, etc.

Board Action Items:

- Resolution to put on the August ballot the renewal of the Fire/EMS millage – this is the same that has been done for past years with no increase.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to adopt the millage ballot language.

Roll Call Vote: Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

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

- Mining ordinance

Motion by Heethuis with support from Knowles to adopt an ordinance to amend the township of Yankee Springs Zoning Ordinance to adopt new requirements for planned mineral removal, to provide an effective date, and to repeal all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this.

Discussion: Trustee VanHouten states that if the Board decides to pass this, he would like to see added a requirement that the mining company and the Barry County Road Commission have an agreement on road maintenance and the timing of that maintenance. He thinks the Planning Commission did an outstanding job on the ordinance but wondered if they considered not allowing mining at all in the township. He expressed his opposition of the ordinance, which is summarized as follows: Yankee Springs Township’s unique identity—defined by its extensive state-owned recreation land, abundant lakes, dense residential areas, and tourism-driven economy—makes it highly incompatible with sand and gravel mining, which poses significant environmental, economic, and community risks. With over 22% of the township dedicated to public recreation and limited land actually suitable for mining, such operations would threaten groundwater systems, wetlands, and lake levels while degrading air quality and disrupting wildlife habitats. Additionally, mining could reduce property values, harm tourism (a \$25–\$35 million economic driver), increase heavy truck traffic, and strain infrastructure, ultimately lowering quality of life and tax revenue. Given these substantial and often long-term costs—compared to only short-term, limited economic benefits—along with legal grounds for denial under Michigan law, the township has strong justification to prohibit mining in order to protect its environment, economy, and community character. Trustee Knowles expressed that the Planning Commission did consider all these things in drawing up the ordinance and Clerk Hopkins praised the ordinance for being as restrictive as possible. Supervisor Heethuis stated that this is the way to handle it per the attorney and the planner so that any issues will prevail in court. Amendments can be made going forward as needed. **Roll Call Vote:** Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: no; Heethuis: yes.

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

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**WATER COMMITTEE
REPORT**

GLIB REPORT

**RESOLUTION TO RENEW
FIRE/EMS MILLAGE**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
MINING ORDINANCE**

- Contract with Peerless
 - Presentation was made at a special meeting and the Board requested a formal contract to be reviewed and voted on at this meeting.

Motion by Knowles with support from Hopkins to accept the contract with Peerless for \$650,821.40. Roll Call Vote: Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

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

- Spring cleanup will be Saturday, April 25 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Bins, garbage bags, and gloves will be provided, and hopefully pizza as well.
- Motion on special assessment for Elmwood Beach.

Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles to approve Resolution 04-09-2026 to establish Special Assessment District #52 for road improvements to Elmwood Beach Road. Discussion: There are 72 parcels involved. It would be a three-year term with a 3% interest rate. The total cost would be about \$63,540. Including interest, the cost per parcel would be \$882.50. Interest is charged on unpaid balance at the end of each year and the assessment will be added to the 2026 winter tax bill. **Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.**

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): He was critical of the process that was used to appoint a new clerk in December 2024. The clerk will now have to stand for election in November and the filing deadline for that position is April 21st. He hasn't seen the Township doing anything to make residents aware that the position is up for election. He hopes that there will be more applicants for the position.

Dave Laansma (Payne Lake Rd., Precinct Delegate): Thanked Dave VanHouten for a very compelling argument and he wonders if there has been an instance in the state of Michigan where a township has successfully denied mining. He appreciates all the work that the PC put into the ordinance as it is as restrictive as possible. It doesn't shut the door completely but makes it much more difficult and sets high standards for cleanup.

Robin Laansma (Payne Lake Rd., Precinct Delegate): Thanked Dave for everything he put into his argument. If we could say no mining in Yankee Springs, she would be all for it. She appreciates the current ordinance being as restrictive as possible and expressed appreciation to the Planning Commission.

Catherine Getty: The household hazardous waste collection will be held at the Fairground on May 2 from 9 AM to 3 PM. Residents are encouraged to make an appointment online either through Facebook or on the County website.

BOARD COMMENT:

Mousseau: Clarified that the time for the hazardous waste collection is until 3 PM and that there will only be one held this year. The sign that is being purchased for the office

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MOTION TO APPROVE CONTRACT WITH PEERLESS WATER

SPRING CLEANUP DAY

MOTION TO APPROVE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR ELMWOOD BEECH

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOARD COMMENT

should say that Yankee Springs Township was established in 1839.

VanHouten: He states that he was happy to get out of the meeting without a public flogging.

Hopkins: Thanked Larry for all his work with the Planning Commission and also on the well system. That's one of the best things that the Board is doing.

Knowles: He will not be at the Barry County Road Commission road tour but wants to find out what happened to Briggs Road and what is going to be done about it. There are other roads outside of Yankee Springs that have issues as well so something went wrong.

Heethuis: Thanked the Planning Commission for this document that will serve the Township well and Dave too, he agrees with all that he said. The Spring Cleanup Day is April 25 and he hopes to see everyone there. It's always a good time with the DNR, the Women's Group and the citizens show up. Will have to pass the hat to make sure there's pizza.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM.
Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Respectfully submitted by:

Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
April 11, 2026

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ADJOURNMENT

