

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 11, 2025

6:00 pm

Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville, MI 49333

DRAFT MINUTES

DRAFT MINUTES

Page 1 of 6
YS Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 11, 2025

Routing 9/18/25

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION with a moment of silence in recognition of 09/11

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

Staff Present: Rich Beukema, Dan Miller, Dennis Buist

Visitors: 10

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to add a possible roll call vote to the discussion to move the public comment. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.

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

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

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

Consent Agenda: One correction was made by Mrs. Mousseau to the check numbers under AP Checks 08/12/2025. Mr. Hopkins mentioned that the larger than normal amount of the AP checks on 08/27/2025 was due to the \$181,000 for the construction work at the park, \$50,000 for insurance payment, and a payment of \$30,000 for the trail repair at the park.

- Minutes of August 14, 2025 board meeting
- Disbursements August 2025

IPA Renovation Payment #38 08/01/2025 Auto Pay	\$ (5,689.47)
AP Checks 08/12/2025 #918633-918662	\$ (45,072.28)
AP Checks 08/27/2025 #918663-918676	\$(279,555.89)
Charge for NSF Check collected in Aug. from PCI	\$ (129.00)
Payroll # 8340-8357 Fire 8/15/2025	\$ (11,537.59)
Payroll #8358 - 8381 End of Month P/R General	\$ (19,741.08)
Mid-month payroll Fed. w/h for FIRE 8/15/2025	\$ (2,631.67)
Federal End of Month W/H General payroll	\$ (6,455.69)
State Monthly W/H including Fire \$582.39	<u>\$ (1,687.73)</u>
Total Disbursements	\$(372,500.40)

**MOTION TO AMEND
AGENDA**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT
AGENDA**

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

Fire Chief Dan Miller

County Commissioners Marsha Bassett and Catherine Getty: Shared the activities at the County level including a temporary change in the structure of county meetings. Also discussed was a housing development in Delton and Health Department fees. Hazardous waste collection will take place September 20 at the Barry County Fairgrounds and pre-registration is requested. There will be a Youth event going on this weekend at Charlton Park.

Beth Hannapel and Robin Walters, Thornapple Area Enrichment Foundation: Ms. Walters gave a brief presentation on the Foundation. Established in 1992 with a single \$30,000 donation, it has now grown to net assets of \$3.1 million and 60 different funds which include: scholarship funds, grants, classroom programming. The primary focus has been serving the TK school district but the goal now is to expand and offer support in the community, not just within the schools.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Prepared by Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

- August 2025 Financial Statement and Investment Report were reviewed.
- \$131,200 will be received from the state for the park project.

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

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

CLERK'S REPORT

Motion by Hopkins with support from Mousseau to approve current payables from August 1st through 11th for \$120,942.37. Discussion: There were some large items in there including \$30,000 to Greenbauer for the walking path, \$50,000 to Stafford for blacktop, and \$7,000 for the recycle bin. **Roll Call Vote:** Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Commission:

- Meeting August 21, 2025.
 - Worked on the mining ordinance with a lot of public attendance.
 - It was decided to form a subcommittee to work with the Zoning Administrator, attorney, and planner to do some background work on the mining ordinance. The subcommittee will be reporting to the committee

DRAFT MINUTES

Page 2 of 6
YS Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 11, 2025

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT

CLERK'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE CURRENT PAYABLES

PC REPORT

<p>next week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approved a short-term rental in Whispering Pines. ○ Planning to hold an open house on Saturday, September 20, from 9 AM to 11 AM to hear from the public on the Master Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting September 18, 2025. 	<p>DRAFT MINUTES Page 3 of 6 YS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting September 11, 2025</p>
<p>Zoning Board of Appeals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No meeting since the last Board meeting. • Next meeting will be October 7, 2025 if needed. 	<p>ZBA REPORT</p>
<p>Zoning Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one month left for the car yard to remove the junk cars. The township is preparing to handle the removal starting on October 13. • There will be three separate groups for the removal: 1) some cars will go to auction; 2) some will be taken for parts; 3) the rest to be crushed. Any money that comes from that will pay for expenses and any leftover funds will go back to Mr. VanderKam. If there is a deficit, that will be put onto his tax bill. 	<p>ZONING DEPARTMENT REPORT</p>
<p>Fire/EMS Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2025 Fire/Emergency Medical responses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 14 fire responses including assisting Orangeville and Prairieville Township. ○ 32 medical calls with 15 of the calls handled by the duty shift. Response to medical calls has been 100%. ○ Staff is currently at 21 staff with 16 certified firefighters and 14 medical personnel. ○ Fire Prevention Open House will be held on October 6 from 6 PM to 8 PM. 	<p>FIRE/EMS REPORT</p>
<p>Park Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shed was received and is housing the tools that are needed for park maintenance. • Frisbee Golf event is coming up at the end of the month as part of the Gun Lake Business Association Fall Fest. • A group volunteered today to scrape and paint the picnic tables. • Supervisor Heethuis stated that he has received a lot of compliments on what the park looks like now. 	<p>PARK COMMITTEE REPORT</p>
<p>Recycling Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New concrete pad has been poured. • The bin is ready to be placed once the concrete has cured, probably in another week or so. 	<p>RECYCLING COMMITTEE REPORT</p>
<p>Veterans Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Veneman of Yankee Springs Dental will be offering veteran's dental support free service on Friday, November 14. 	<p>VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT</p>
<p>Clean Water Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water committee met on September 2nd and were presented with the Peerless proposal for increasing the capacity of the water system. • Fleis and Vandenbrink had estimated a cost of \$1.5 million including a new well so the committee talked to Peerless and got a different proposal. Instead of adding four new filtering tanks, their plan is to do a pilot study and try a new media which they believe will double the capacity of the existing tanks. 	<p>WATER COMMITTEE REPORT</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The cost of the pilot study will be \$33,000. ○ They are anticipating the cost of upgrading the tanks and the new media to be just under \$260,000. ○ They also propose to replace the current well which has a 250 gallon per minute capacity with a new well with a 400 gallon per minute capacity for about \$250,000. ○ That Peerless report is what will be voted on tonight under Board action items. ● Still working on a grant from the State Drinking Water Fund. <p>Gun Lake Improvement Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Testing will be done on the tributaries that are coming into Gun Lake. ● There is concern about damage from wake boats in shallow water. They are trying to make a recommendation to keep them in 20' of water. 	<p>DRAFT MINUTES Page 4 of 6 YS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting September 11, 2025</p> <p>GLIB REPORT</p>
<p>Board Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Assessment #51 for Payne Ridge paving. The numbers have been corrected for 17 residences, not 18. <p><u>Motion by Hopkins with support from Knowles that we reapprove the resolution from 08/14/2025. Roll Call Vote:</u> Mousseau: yes. VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.</p> <p>Yes: 5, No: 0. MOTION CARRIED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approve recommendation of the Water Board to begin testing for feasibility to update arsenic compliance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The \$33,000 will cover just the pilot study to make sure that this can happen. ○ If approved this study will be started in approximately two weeks. <p><u>Motion by Knowles with support from VanHouten that we approve the Peerless proposal for \$33,000 to do the pilot study. Roll Call Vote:</u> VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes.</p> <p>Yes: 5, No: 0. MOTION CARRIED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion regarding moving the Public Comment agenda item to just after the Acknowledgement of Visitors. <p><u>Motion by Knowles with support from Heethuis to move the Public Comment agenda item to just after the Acknowledgment of Visitors.</u> Discussion: This gives everyone an opportunity to talk about what is coming up. This would be for any topic but still with the 3-minute time limit. Mr. VanHouten felt that what is being done now is working well so he doesn't feel a need to change it. Mr. Knowles would support going to two comment periods, but Mr. Hopkins feels that would be redundant. <u>Roll Call Vote:</u> VanHouten: no; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes.</p> <p>Yes: 4, No: 1. MOTION CARRIED</p> <p><u>Motion by Knowles with support from Heethuis to have two public comment periods.</u></p>	<p>MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION FOR PAYNE RIDGE PAVING</p> <p>MOTION TO APPROVE PEERLESS PILOT STUDY FOR WATER SYSTEM</p> <p>MOTION TO MOVE THE PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM</p> <p>MOTION TO HAVE TWO PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS</p>

Discussion: Mr. VanHouten feels that there is no need for two comment periods since the residents have other opportunities and means to communicate with board members such as emails or phone calls. It doesn't have to be just during public comment. Discussed if changing the time limit would be helpful. Mrs. Mousseau feels the earlier one is more important because it pertains to what the board will be talking about.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Cunningham (1908 Heritage Bay Dr.): At the August board meeting, the supervisor stated that the administrative fee covers the costs of assessing and taxing residents, is permitted under state law, and is common among other townships. However, these costs were previously covered without the fee, the township has waived it in the past, and imposing it now only adds unnecessarily to an already large general fund balance. He never claimed the funds were being used improperly but emphasized that the general fund balance is much higher than necessary. He argued that maintaining an excessive balance creates a target for fraud and wasteful spending. As an example, he pointed to the addition of \$150,000 in this year's budget for the water system. He maintained that tax dollars should not be used for the water system and asked that a budget amendment be made to remove the item. In his view, the issue is not about refunding taxpayers but about preventing the township from collecting money it does not truly need.

Dave Laansma, Precinct Delegate (Payne Lake Road): He was surprised that there wasn't more discussion on the merit of being able to listen to public comment twice. He doesn't agree that it's redundant. Allowing people to comment at the beginning and the end gives people the opportunity to comment on what will be on the agenda and get our opinions before you, and the comment at the end is also important. He is hopeful that the Board will reconsider that. He also would like to see them reconsider the Board's policy to not respond to the residents during public comment.

Robin Laansma, Precinct Delegate (Payne Lake Road): Thanked Larry for bringing up the public comment because it has been lacking. The standard format for meetings has always been two public comments until it was stopped in December 2024. She feels that this was related to the resignation of the township clerk at that time. Her opinion is that this shows weak leadership. She is asking for two public comment periods, not moving one of them. Public servants should want to hear from the residents of the township. There are many ways to contact the board but speaking during public comment ensures that the comments are put in the permanent record.

Marsha Bassett: She wants the public to be aware that the County received funds from the opioid settlement for \$250,000 and have only received on request for \$15,000. The task force has redone the application and extended the deadline until October 31st. It can be used for substance use disorders: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, or recovery support. They are hoping community members will apply through the simpler process. Also, the final concert in the Delton Summer Sounds is September 18 with the band "Fleetwood Magic" if anyone wishes to come out.

Catherine Getty: On behalf of B. Healthy Barry County (formerly Blue Zones) she has shared in the past about an effort to create a community food center in Hastings to support the local agriculture community. She is happy to say that the project is under construction and provided information on it to the Board. They are soliciting vendors for

DRAFT MINUTES

Page 5 of 6
YS Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 11, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT

the farm stop market and it will also have a day care center. Another event is the Feast of Home dinner at Pierce Creek Institute. These are exciting opportunities for local growers.

BOARD COMMENT:

Mousseau: On 9/11, she thanked our firefighters and medical personnel. Also, congratulations to the Laansmas on their 50th wedding anniversary. Taxes are due at midnight on Monday, the 15th, and the office will be open until 5 PM that day.

VanHouten: Expressed appreciation to Dan (Miller) for cleaning up around the sign in front of the Fire House. He also appreciates this Board, the staff, and the work that has been accomplished. Thank you.

Hopkins: Thanked Larry for all the work done on the water systems. Any community that wants to grow, water and sewer are the key and if this can be done without hurting the taxpayers it will be huge for Yankee Springs. That's something that can be passed on when this Board retires. A lot of work has been done.

Knowles: Rest in peace, Charlie Kirk.

Heethuis: There has been some positive information heard on Hall Lake. The state is strongly looking at instead of changing from a 42-acre lake to an 8-acre lake, it will be trimmed down to a 33-acre lake. The lake will still have its appearance but this will not be damaging that road. This is the direction that EGLE and the DNR are taking after all the public input.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Hopkins with support from VanHouten that we adjourn the meeting at 7:24 PM. Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
September 13, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

Page 6 of 6
YS Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 11, 2025

BOARD COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT