

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 14, 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
November 14, 2024

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

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

Staff Present: Dennis Buist, Rich Beukema, Frank Fiala

Visitors: 3

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

Motion by VanHouten with support from Heethuis to add a discussion on setting a date and time for a meeting regarding the possibility of a stand-alone Yankee Springs Township Fire Department. Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Cunningham: no; Knowles: yes.

Yes: 4, No: 1. MOTION CARRIED

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to add or delete all items in red text to the agenda. Discussion: The main item is discussion and possible roll call vote on Board members taking part in Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals action items. **Roll Call Vote:** Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: no; VanHouten: yes.

Yes: 4, No: 1. MOTION CARRIED

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

Yes: 5, No: 0. MOTION CARRIED

- Board minutes 10/10/2024 Regular BOT meeting.
- October 2024 Accounts Payable: Checks # 918198 through Check # 918248 Total Amount \$190,803.55
- October 31, 2024 Payroll Checks #8020 through Check #8041 = \$19,572.21. October 2024 Fed. P/R withholding \$5,642.71.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

ROLL CALL

**MOTION TO ADD SETTING
SPECIAL MEETING DATE**

**MOTION TO AMEND
AGENDA**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT
AGENDA AS AMENDED**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
CONSENT AGENDA**

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

Dan Miller (Deputy Fire Chief)
Greg Chandler (View Newspaper Group)
Catherine Getty (County Commissioner)

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Limit 3 minutes)

None

TREASURER'S REPORT: By Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

- October 2024 Financial Statement and Investment reports were reviewed.

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

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

Motion by Mousseau with support from VanHouten to collect 50% of the 2025 Wayland Union School tax levy at a cost of \$2.50 per parcel. **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes.

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

- An audit was recently completed, and results have been emailed to all board members. If there are any questions regarding the audit they can be brought to the next meeting

CLERK'S REPORT: By Mike Cunningham, Clerk

- November 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 11/14/2024 totaling \$55,144.34.

Motion by Cunningham with support from Knowles to approve the November 2024 Current Invoice Journal as of 11/14/2024 totaling \$55,144.34. **Roll Call Vote:** Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

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

- Election Update:
 - Early voting turnout was relatively high: 1,284.
 - Absent voter turnout was 1,187.
 - Election day voting was steady: 1,082.
 - Total number of voters was 3,553 = 77.4%.
 - Thanks to all of those who helped with early voting and election day. Overall, both early voting and the voting day went very well.
 - 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.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION TO COLLECT 50% OF THE 2025 WAYLAND UNION SCHOOL TAX LEVY

CLERK'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE INVOICE JOURNAL

ELECTION UPDATE

- Cemetery update:
 - A letter containing the donation details was sent to the prospective donor for signature and that was received at the office today.
 - The project will proceed when the money is received and deposited.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Recycling Committee:

- 10/22/2024 meeting.
- Next regular meeting 02/04/2025.

CEMETERY UPDATE

**RECYCLING COMMITTEE
 REPORT**

Park Committee:

- No activity update.

**PARK COMMITTEE
 REPORT**

Zoning Board of Appeals:

- No October or November meeting.
- Next meeting 12/10/2024 if needed.

ZBA REPORT

Planning Commission:

- PCI October 2024 report in board member packet.
- October 2024 Complaint log in board member packet.
- 10/17/2024 regular meeting:
 - Has proposed changes to ordinance. One of them is the authority of the Board of Appeals.
 - The PC is recommending a change to the determination of Practical Difficulty Standards used by the ZBA.
 - Public hearing on the STR ordinance was tabled until next week.
 - Public hearing was held on shipping containers in October and the recommended changes will be presented to the Board.
 - Next regular meeting 11/21/2024.

PC REPORT

Fire/EMS Report:

- October 2024 Fire/Emergency Medical responses in board member packet.
- Deputy Chief Miller shared that the number of responses year to date are similar to 2023 and reviewed some details of calls responded to in the last month.
- Fire department members have been training on the new engine.
- Four fire fighters took Fire Instructor 1 training and passed the practical test. They are waiting for results on the written portion from the state.
- Training also took place using struts to stabilize overturned vehicles.
- A sub committee of Rob Heethuis, Dave VanHouten and Greg Purcell was set up to investigate the possibility of a stand-alone fire department.

FIRE/EMS REPORT

Motion by VanHouten with support from Heethuis to set a special meeting on December 4 at 6:00 PM at the township hall. Discussion: The meeting will be to look at finances and service levels and why it would or would not be a good idea to set up a stand-alone fire department. It is expected to be an informational meeting not decision making. **Roll Call Vote:** Knowles: yes; Mousseau: yes; Cunningham: no; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

**MOTION TO SET SPECIAL
 MEETING ON 12/04/2024**

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

- The EMS meeting was held last night and they talked about next year's budget. This

will be further discussed at the January meeting. The budget has to be passed by March.

Water Advisory Committee:

- Next meeting will be in Spring of 2025.
- GLASWA November 2024 minutes in board member packet.
- A luncheon was held to honor Tom for 38 years of service.

Veterans Memorial Committee:

- Veteran’s Day Ceremony was held Saturday, 11/09/2024 at 11:00 AM.
 - There were 131 people in attendance.
 - The Quilts of Valor presentation was a very nice addition.
 - It was appreciated that the Cub Scouts and High School students participated.
 - Thanks to Julie Fox of the Curly Cone for providing food.
- If anyone has ideas for future events, please let Mr. VanHouten know.
- The committee would welcome any new members.

Board Action Items:

- Update on kitchen renovation project.
 - The project has been completed for a total cost of \$32,980 and it looks great.
 - Disposal of old kitchen stove and sink: It was advertised on Facebook and the Township website to solicit bids for these items. One bid was received for the stove and one for the sink.
 - The bids were opened by Mr. Heethuis.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Mousseau to accept the bid of \$2 from Brad Williams for the electric stove. Roll Call Vote: Cunningham: yes; Mousseau: yes; Knowles: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

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

Motion by Heethuis with support from Cunningham to accept the bid of \$1 from Deb Mousseau for the stainless steel sink. Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: no; Cunningham: yes; VanHouten: no.

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

- Zoning Issues Update:
 - Brad Williams will have an update at the next meeting on the car yard on M179.
 - Mr. Heethuis brought up having the Planning Commission look into the township’s ordinance regarding gravel mining and ponds.
- Discussion and possible roll call vote on Board members taking part in Planning Commission or Zoning Board of appeals action items.

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to adopt resolution regarding Township Board members’ attendance and/or participation at PC/ZBA meetings. Discussion: Mr. Cunningham stated that he believes this proposed resolution is not random but was crafted specifically to stop him from having input at these meetings. The MTA recommendation and

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**WATER ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

**VETERANS MEMORIAL
COMMITTEE**

**UPDATE ON
KITCHEN RENOVATION
PROJECT**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT BID
FOR SALE OF ELECTRIC
STOVE**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT BID
FOR SALE OF STAINLESS
STEEL SINK**

**ZONING ISSUES
UPDATE**

**MOTION TO ADOPT
RESOLUTION REGARDING
TOWNSHIP BOARD
MEMBERS ATTENDANCE
AT PC AND ZBA MEETINGS**

the township attorney state that board members “should not” attend even if they have received public notification of a matter before the committee but there is not a law saying that they cannot. There is concern that the township could be sued because of board members having undue influence on the committee members because these committee members are appointed by the board. Further discussion took place regarding the Open Meetings Act, the formation of subcommittees, and how this resolution would affect board members if it is passed. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Heethuis made a motion to end the discussion and vote on the matter.

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to cut off discussion. Discussion took place regarding what type of penalty would there be if a board member violates the resolution and whether there was a violation of the attorney contact policy. **Roll Call Vote:** *Cunningham: no; Knowles: yes; Mousseau: yes; Heethuis: yes; VanHouten: yes.*

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

Supervisor Heethuis then called for a Roll Call Vote on his previous motion.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Betsy Frigmanski (township resident): She stated that she attends all ZBA meetings and has been there when letters from Board members were read regarding cases before the ZBA. It did not appear that these were undue influence but just the opinion of the resident who lives in an area where the case took place. It was stated that they were speaking as a township resident. Although we live in a litigious society the Board should not make decisions based on fear of lawsuits or any other type of retaliation. Their resolutions should only be based on what is the right decision.

Catherine Getty (County Commissioner): Catherine gave an update regarding activity at the County.

BOARD COMMENT:

Mousseau: Thanked Dave for the Veterans Day ceremony and thanked Mike for all his work on the early voting and election days.

VanHouten: Thanked the Veterans Committee for their work. The people who worked at the polls and Mike did a great job on the election. The discussions today are not terrible. Once a decision is made by the Board the decision will then be supported by the Board.

Knowles: The Veterans Memorial ceremony was fantastic. Nice weather and it was nice having the Scouts and the school kids there. Mike and the group of people working on the election did an incredible job.

Cunningham: Resigned from his position as FOIA coordinator and the recycling committee. He gave an overview of his involvement with the township committees prior to running for the Clerk position in 2024 and then made the following statement: “After 4 years that were harder and took more time than could have been expected, I waited until just about the last minute for a good candidate to show up to run for clerk. Not even a bad candidate wanted the job. I

**MOTION TO END
DISCUSSION**

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOARD COMMENT

had been under pressure (undue influence) for a long time and did not want any more. I reluctantly decided to run again and hoped that maybe it would get better in the second term. It does not seem like it will get better. My perception is that most of us will not run again in 2028 and because of that, the board can do whatever it wants, regardless of what the township wants. I will not be part of this, I therefore am resigning the position of township clerk effective 12/1/2024."

Heethuis: Thanked Dave for the great job with the Veterans Memorial and thanked Mike for the great job he did with the election. To all the deer hunters out there please be careful.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM.

Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by: 
Michael S. Cunningham, Township Clerk

Date: 12-19-2024

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
November 15, 2024

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ADJOURNMENT