

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 9, 2025
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
January 9, 2025

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

Acknowledgment of the passing of Gordon Roush, cemetery sexton from 1968 to 2021.

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

Staff Present: Rich Beukema, Frank Fiala, John Frigmanski, Brad Williams, Dennis Buist

Visitors: 25

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to approve the agenda as presented. Roll

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

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

- Board minutes 12/12/2024 Regular BOT meeting.
- December 2024 Accounts Payable: used for print alignment Checks # 918303 through #918335. Total Amount \$71,692.14.
- December 2024 Payroll Checks (#8091 used for print alignment) #8092 through #8111 = \$15,402.87. December 2024 Fed. P/R withholding \$4,291.38. Also, an additional withholding for November was made in error, \$6,516.70. (We are not sure how this will be refunded.) Quarterly state payroll tax withholding \$3,273.80.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to approve the consent agenda. Roll Call

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

Members of the Yankee Springs Fire Department

Rachelle Smit (Michigan State Representative 43rd District) gave a brief overview of the conclusion of the 2024 "lame duck" session of the Michigan House of Representatives. The new term began yesterday.

INVOCATION

ROLL CALL

**MOTION TO ACCEPT
AGENDA**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
CONSENT AGENDA**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
VISITORS**

Marcia Bassett (County Commissioner) provided an update on the activity at the County level. She is a newly elected commissioner and will be taking turns with Catherine Getty to attend our township meetings.

Dan Miller (Deputy Fire Chief) reviewed the December 2024 fire and medical reports.

- 16 fire responses in the community including mutual assists. Two major incidents were the fires at the car junkyard on M179 and the fire at Yankee Bills, which was a total loss.
- There were 13 medical calls in December and Yankee Springs EMRs responded to 12 of them.
- Currently the YS Department has a deputy chief, one captain, and two lieutenants.

TREASURER’S REPORT: By Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

- December 2024 Financial Statement and Investment reports were reviewed.
- Payments are continuing to be made on the IPA loan as the current interest rate on monies invested continues to outpace the loan rate of 2.64%.

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

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

CLERK’S REPORT:

- January 2025 Current Invoice Journal as of 01/07/2025 totaling \$15,508.00.
- A bill for over \$30,000 was received for damages to the fire truck. The township received \$25,000 from the insurance company. The bill for the damages will be paid with a net cost to the township of \$5,000 which is the insurance deductible.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to approve the January 2025 Current Invoice Journal. Roll Call Vote: Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Recycling Committee:

- Tom Mawson has been hired as Maintenance working in the building for 6 hours each week. He takes care of the recycling area and whatever is needed in the office building.

Park Committee:

- There will be a meeting next week on January 16 at 2:00 PM to open the bids for the pickleball project.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

- Next meeting 01/14/2025.
- February meeting will be 02/11/2025 if needed.

TREASURER’S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE
TREASURER’S REPORT

CLERK’S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE
INVOICE JOURNAL

RECYCLING COMMITTEE
REPORT

PARK COMMITTEE
REPORT

ZBA REPORT

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PC REPORT

Planning Commission:

- PCI December 2024 report in board member packet.
- December 2024 Complaint log in board member packet.
- 12/19/2024 regular meeting:
 - Approved an SEU for guest quarters in an outbuilding on Hermitage Point Road.
 - Requested a date change for the joint meeting and it has been changed to January 20th.
 - Also requested an additional joint meeting with the BOT on February 20th. The DNR will be attending this meeting.
 - A sub committee was formed to work on the zoning issues for Whispering Pines development. They have not met yet but are scheduled to meet next week.
 - A draft of the CIP will be coming to the Board.
- Next regular meeting 01/16/2025.

Fire/EMS Report:

- December 2024 Fire/Emergency Medical responses in board member packet.
- Thanked the following groups and individuals who helped provide information to the Board with regard to the possible stand-alone department.
 - Orangeville Fire Department
 - Freeport Fire Department
 - Thornapple Fire Department
 - Leighton Fire Department
 - Wayland Fire Department
 - Hastings Fire Department
 - Barry County 911 office
 - State Fire Marshall
 - Jim Stoddard and Joe Miller
- Mr. Van Houten said that the fire departments in the surrounding are all stand-alone fire departments and they are supportive of Yankee Springs also becoming a stand-alone department.

FIRE/EMS REPORT

Water Advisory Committee:

- Next meeting will be in Spring of 2025.
- GLASWA December 2024 minutes in board packet if available.
- The water system pumped an extra 140,000 gallons last month due to the fire fighter activity.

WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Board Action Items:

- Contract with Ocean Omega.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Mousseau to approve the contract with Ocean Omega to take care of the computers. Roll Call Vote: Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.

MOTION TO APPROVE CONTRACT WITH OCEAN OMEGA

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

- Zoning Update:
 - Last STR case was heard in Barry County on Tuesday and the judge upheld the ordinance. All 23 cases from 2024 were resolved in favor of the township.

- Proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments:
 - Short Term Rental amendment changes: the only changes are adding the language regarding “grandfathered” STRs. The board decided at the last meeting not to adopt the language regarding adjacent properties.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Knowles to pass the amendment to the articles to the short-term rentals of the Township Zoning Ordinance amendment to Article X of the rental section. *Roll Call Vote: Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.*

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

- Authority of the ZBA: This was covered at the last meeting when they handled the practical difficulty standards.

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to approve separation from the Wayland Fire Department and establish a stand-alone Fire Station here in Yankee Springs. Discussion took place about the structure and the budget process of the fire department if this change takes place. *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 Knowles to withdraw from Wayland EMS and pursue association with Thornapple EMS and to authorize Supervisor Heethuis to send notice of withdrawal to Wayland EMS from their services as of February 1, 2025. Discussion: A potential contract with Thornapple has been received. There are no bad feelings toward Wayland EMS but the committee feels this will provide better service to our residents and will be a cost savings to the township. *Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes.*

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

- Joint meeting of Board of Trustees, PC and ZBA to be held on January 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM.
- Board will meet with the Road Commission on January 14, 2026, at 10:30 AM.

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to refurbish the restrooms. Discussion: A committee will need to be formed to manage this; hopefully Mr. VanHouten and Mrs. Mousseau will be willing to work on that. *Roll Call Vote: Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.*

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

Motion by Heethuis with support from Mousseau to pass Poverty Exemption Income Guidelines and Asset Test Resolution No. 01-09-2025 1. *Roll Call Vote: Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes.*

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kathy Velthouse (541 Round Lake Dr., Caledonia): She is here for Wayland EMS. She wants

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**MOTION TO PASS
AMENDMENT TO SHORT-
TERM RENTALS ARTICLES
OF THE TOWNSHIP
ZONING ORDINANCE**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
SEPARATION FROM
WAYLAND FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

**MOTION TO WITHDRAW
FROM WAYLAND EMS
AND TO AUTHORIZE
SUPERVISOR HEETHUIS TO
SEND NOTICE OF
WITHDRAWAL TO
WAYLAND EMS**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
REFURBISH OF
RESTROOMS**

**MOTION TO APPROVE
POVERTY EXEMPTION
INCOME GUIDELINES AND
ASSET TEST RESOLUTION 1-
9-2025 1**

PUBLIC COMMENT

the citizens to know that Wayland does carry the MFR license and by switching to Thornapple they will be losing the MFR license that they carry here in Yankee Springs which is very important. Also, although Thornapple can make the corner of M37 and Yankee Springs faster than Wayland EMS – Wayland can beat Thornapple to the more high-volume call area where most of the citizens are all around the lake. You will also be losing your Vital Care, which a lot of people depend on. It's \$35 a year and that covers all of your deductible. Thornapple does not offer that at all and a lot of people depend on that because an ambulance ride is \$250 to \$300. The Board voted to change it but the citizens need to keep in mind that they are losing that when they lose Wayland EMS.

Eric Zuzga (4169 South Shore Dr., Delton): He is the County Administrator. He made a promise when hired to come out and visit every township, village, and city, although it has taken a while to get here because a lot of the meetings are held on the same nights. He and his wife moved back to Long Lake last fall. There are a lot of new elected officials so please be patient. The treasurer Kelly is taking over for Sue who was there for a long time and the same with the clerk and the register of deeds. The Emergency Management Coordinator, Jim Yarger, is retiring and will be replaced by Patrick Jansens. Jim McManus, another 30-year employee, retired in December and Jeff Keesler has been hired to take his place. Just wanted to introduce himself. Feel free to stop in and say hello. Marcia and Catherine will keep you all informed of what is going on.

Dave Laansma (Payne Lake Rd): Adding his comments to what Representative Smit said; she did not mention this but she is the newly appointed Speaker Pro Tem for the House. This is a huge honor not just because she is from our district but it is a crucial position because the Pro Tem essentially runs the workings of the House. We've been under the leadership of a Democrat controlled House and Senate with a Democrat governor and the nature and essence by which they have been conducting business has been horrendous for the state so to achieve control of the House by the Republicans is wonderful and to know that Rachelle is actually the one in charge of that. He also would like to Board to consider adding back in the other Public Comment. He liked what Marcia said that the County has reworked the comment section so that you must comment on the actual agenda items. This makes sense and would like to see that added back in. Tonight that would have given an opportunity for people to make public comment on business that you were addressing.

Mike Cunningham (Yankee Springs Township): read the following statement to the Board: "During the past year while I was Yankee Springs Township Clerk, I observed a quorum of the board (3 of 5 members) meeting together on two different occasions. One time was in one of the offices and the other time was in the conference room. On both occasions I told them that a quorum of the board was present. Some of our most basic training tells us that a nonpublic meeting of a quorum of the board is against the law. I would have thought that reminding them they were breaking the law would have kept it from happening again but it did not. It was the same three board members each time. I only hold two of them, Rob and Dave, to be responsible for the violations. I did not contact the sheriff or the county prosecutor about these violations. Maybe I should have. I did not write down the exact date or time of these meetings either. I have mentioned these violations in a past board meeting but none of the board members seemed to care. I have a copy of a letter from the county prosecutor in 2012 when three board members violated the Open Meeting Act in a similar way. The prosecutor did not press charges but stated the further violations would result in charges. At the November 14, 2024, board meeting, the board passed a resolution to prevent board members from attending, speaking or sending letters at PC and ZBA meetings. It is clear to me that this resolution was adopted to prevent my meeting attendance and communication with the PC and ZBA and to cause my resignation from the board. On November 25, 2024, I emailed the township attorney and Rob asking them to investigate the Open Meeting Act violations and

Rob's violations of the recently passed resolution. Rob violated the resolution when he acted as chair of the STR subcommittee which as making recommendations to the PC. I still have not been told who created this committee and appointed its members. Rob has also attended many PC and ZBA meetings. I requested that the findings of the investigation be reported at the December board meeting. So far, over one month later, I have not had any response to my request..." (Time expired).

Brenda Mays (Hopkins, MI): She is the Wayland EMS General Manager. She congratulated the Fire Department and stated it is a big deal and they are ready for it. As far as dissolving from Wayland EMS, she found out about it at a meeting with a packet of papers that had quite a few, maybe 6 or 7 points about Wayland EMS that were all incorrect. If you are going to make a decision you need to educate yourself and you need to educate yourself from both sides. No one ever talked to her about it and she doesn't know where they got the information. She did try at the meeting to correct that but she's very disappointed that a decision was made without an educated decision and she feels sorry for the citizens of Yankee Springs Township that are going to be losing out.

BOARD COMMENT:

BOARD COMMENT

Hopkins: Thanked the other members of the board and the gals in the office who have been extremely helpful during this transition time. They have covered for me a bunch and so I appreciate that very much.

Knowles: Welcome to Tom and thanks to him for stepping up.

Mousseau: Thanks everyone for stepping up. It's been quite an adjustment and we appreciate it. Thank you.

VanHouten: Nothing.

Heethuis: I would like to thank the Board. We today took steps to separate from the Wayland Fire Department and become a stand-alone. This was a very important first step to put us on track to be an independent fire station. I also think the same thing about the motion to remove the EMS from Wayland. We never said we had anything bad to say about Wayland, they have been good to us. We just think there's more opportunity with our neighbor next door in Barry County to be part of Thornapple EMS. I'm glad to see you all here tonight and hope to see you again.

ADJOURNMENT:

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mousseau with support from Knowles to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 PM.

Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
January 10, 2025