

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 2026
 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
 February 12, 2026

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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INVOCATION

INVOCATION

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

ROLL CALL

Staff Present: Dan Miller, Dennis Buist, Frank Fiala, Sandy Marcukaitis

Visitors: 13

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to add a discussion on FOIAs to the meeting. **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes.

MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA

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

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

MOTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA

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

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of January 8, 2026 and January 20, 2026 (joint meeting)
- DISBURSEMENTS January 2026

IPA Twp Renov #43 - Jan 1, 2026 Auto Pay	\$	(5,689.47)
AP Checks of 1/8/2026: #918877-918891	\$	(24,905.98)
AP Checks of 1/31/2026: #918892-918914	\$	(31,601.31)
*Dec state W/H payroll (duplication refund? TBI	\$	(2,086.40)
Jan 19th payroll - 2 checks	\$	(349.01)
Jan 19th Federal W/H	\$	(177.98)
Jan General Payroll 1/31/26 Cks #8570-8593	\$	(18,275.89)
1/31/26 Payroll Federal W/H General	\$	(5,802.29)
Jan State W/H General Payroll inc. 1/19/26	\$	(1,039.90)
	\$	(89,928.23)

MOTON TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:

County Commissioner Marcia Bassett: Gave a brief overview of county activities. The County has an agreement with Kalamazoo County for our residents to drop off hazardous waste if needed between the Barry County collections held twice yearly. They also added three cardboard compactors, approved the 911 service plan, and approved updated bylaws for the Commission on Aging.

Fire Chief Dan Miller

Jeff Cheney

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): Mr. Cunningham shared his disappointment that although he has applied for vacancies on both the Planning Commission and the ZBA, others have been chosen for these spots.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Prepared by Deb Mousseau, Treasurer

- January 2026 Financial Statement and Investment Report were reviewed.

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

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

CLERK'S REPORT

Motion by Hopkins with support from VanHouten to approve the current accounts payable. Discussion: A couple of the bigger ones included are Backroad Services, for annual fire truck repair and inspection for \$6,600; the DK Landscape for \$5,900; the Granicus for our zoning team which was \$5,100; and an exceptionally high newspaper bill for publications for \$2,100. Total was \$44,251 which was higher than normal but those are the reasons why. **Roll Call Vote:** Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes.

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

Motion by Mousseau with support from Hopkins to approve the fire payroll for \$11,529.11. **Roll Call Vote:** VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes.

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT

CLERK'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE CURRENT PAYABLES

MOTION TO APPROVE FIRE PAYROLL

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Commission:

- Meeting January 15, 2026.
 - Approved an SEU to separate a backlot at 2236 Parker Dr,
 - Planning to hold public hearing for the mining ordinance next Thursday.
 - Reviewed a draft escrow and performance guarantee amendment.
 - Prepared for the joint meeting, the annual report, and the CIP.
- PCI Report
- Next regular meeting February 19, 2026.
- The mining ordinance may not be ready for the Board by March so the Board may want to entertain extending the moratorium at the next meeting.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

- No February meeting
- Next meeting will be March 10, 2026 if needed.
- Ron Heilman was sworn in for another 3-year term.

Fire/EMS Report:

- Review of January 2026 Fire/Emergency Medical responses.
 - Total of 20 fire responses and 24 medical responses.
- Currently have 20 personnel which includes 15 certified firefighters, 2 probationary firefighters, 6 EMRs, 4 paramedics and 4 EMTs.
- Training this month included a departmental meeting and testing on ropes and knots.
- For 2024 there were a total of 473 responses and for 2025 the total was slightly lower at 459.
- March 1st will be the conclusion of the first year as a stand-alone fire station.
- One EMT just graduated last night and will come to next month's board meeting.
- A sample of the cost recovery ordinance was passed out to the Board tonight for their review. The formal proposal will be presented next month.
 - The proposal is based on research done on similar programs in neighboring areas.
 - It is intended that charges would be billed to a homeowner's insurance company as most policies have coverage for fire service.
- Mr. VanHouten pointed out that we are through 58% of the fiscal year and the department has spent about 54% of the emergency services millage. It has not been more costly to operate as an independent station.
- Mr. VanHouten attended the Thornapple Emergency Services meeting and the next three-year contract was discussed with an agreement of lowered cost for non-transport over the life of the contract.
- Discussion took place about the Fire Department providing lift assist for a township resident for ongoing medical treatment. The clerk and the fire chief are going to look into this further to see if there's a way to recoup some of the expense since it does not technically fall under "emergency" services.

Park Committee:

- Will be looking at approving a disc golf tournament during board action items.

Recycling Committee:

- The next county meeting will be in Barry County on Friday.

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PC REPORT

ZBA REPORT

FIRE/EMS REPORT

**PARK COMMITTEE
REPORT**

Veterans Committee:

- First meeting of the year was held on February 4.
- Next meeting will be March 25.
- Appointed John Frigmanski as co-chairperson to assist Mr. VanHouten.
- Shared some pictures of the initial memorial, the current memorial as it has been improved, and some ideas of future expansion.
- There is a possibility of an F100 fighter jet being donated for the memorial and they will be looking into this, if there is space for it, etc.

Clean Water Committee

- The remainder of the grant money (\$37,500) is expected to be here within the week.
- EGLE approved the results of the pilot study.
- Peerless is applying for a permit for the project, so it is time to set up a meeting with Peerless and work up a budget whether it will be in this fiscal year or next fiscal year.

Gun Lake Improvement Board Committee

- No meeting (seasonal).

Board Action Items:

- Accept the Capital Improvement Plan. This is a formality that does not require the Board to do all the items on the list, but most of them are being worked on by the Board.

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

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

- Approve disc golf for Winterfest. This was a big hit last year, and Rex Roscoe has requested to have it again this year on February 21.

Motion by Hopkins with support from VanHouten to approve the disc golf for Winterfest. Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes.

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

- Approve Jeff Chaney to Board of Appeals
- Jeff Cheney introduced himself. He is a resident of Yankee Springs and has a history in public service. He has a degree from Grand Valley in Public Administration and used to work for Michigan Township Services as a zoning administrator dealing with seven townships. He worked with Kirk Sharphorn who is now the owner of PCI. His career path then led to private sector but now he is getting close to retirement and would like to get back involved with civic life. Living on the lake he's had some questions and dealt with our zoning administrator and has an interest in that area.

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RECYCLING COMMITTEE REPORT

VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT

WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

GLIB REPORT

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOTION TO APPROVE DISC GOLF FOR WINTERFEST

Motion by Heethuis with support from VanHouten to approve Jeff Cheney to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate. Roll Call Vote: Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes; Heethuis: yes.

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

- Pickleball Tournament (Thornapple Area Enrichment Foundation)
 - Kris Marcukaitis presented the Foundation's request of the use of the pickleball courts at the Yankee Springs Park for a fundraiser for their organization.
 - Event to be held on Saturday, September 12, with a rain date of September 13. Set up would begin around 7 AM and playing to start at 8 AM. Hopefully would be completed before dark.
 - It is being set up through a professional organization called Pickleball.com and will have volunteers present for set up and clean up of the courts and the park after the event.
 - TAEF will provide facilities, first aid kits, and AEDs with trained users.
 - She passed out an annual report and a publication put out by TK to the board members to give them some additional information about the foundation.
 - She reviewed some of the grants, scholarships, and projects supported by the foundation. They do several fundraising events every year, including an upcoming Trivia Event February 27.
 - The pickleball tournament may also be using some of the courts at the Curly Cone and they are working with Julie Fox on the possibility of using the food truck for refreshments.

Motion by Heethuis with support from Hopkins to approve the use of the pickleball courts on September 12, with a rain date the following day. Roll Call Vote: Heethuis: yes; Knowles: yes; Hopkins: yes; Mousseau: yes; VanHouten: yes.

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

- Approve Grant of Franchise to Great Lakes Energy Cooperative (Ordinance 2-12-2026). This is done every year to allow Great Lakes to run cable in the township.

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

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

- Recognize Lee Kooistra years of service
 - Supervisor Heethuis recognized Lee for working with the Planning Commission ever since his retirement. He volunteered to serve on all the ad-hoc committees, had a lot to do with the STR ordinance, and wasn't afraid to speak what was on his mind. He has been a strong member as decisions are made.
 - A plaque was presented and photos taken at that time.
- Discussion of FOIA procedure
 - The township has a policy in place but it has not always been closely

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MOTION TO APPOINT JEFF CHENEY TO THE ZBA

MOTION TO APPROVE USE OF PICKLEBALL COURTS FOR TAEF FUNDRAISER

MOTION TO GRANT FRANCHISE TO GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE

RECOGNITION AND PRESENTATION TO LEE KOOISTRA

followed.

- At the suggestion of the township attorney, the township should follow the policy as closely as possible going forward. This will include charging the requestor for costs expected to exceed \$50 for fulfillment of the request. There will be no charge for requests that are expected to cost under \$50.
- The board is not making changes to the policy just confirming the need to act in accordance with it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Cunningham (Heritage Bay Dr): He believes elected officials should be loyal only to their oath and the law. Teamwork is a good thing but that is totally different from team loyalty. He believes his actions were taken as disloyalty to the team rather than loyalty to his oath of office. Misplaced loyalty in government can lead to many bad outcomes. In the past year there has been an increase in unanimous votes, unilateral actions by the supervisor and a decrease in transparency. (time expired)

Robin Laansma (Precinct Delegate): She provided some additional information that she found on the F100 fighter jet. It's an awesome plan. She thanked Larry and the rest of the PC for their work on the mining ordinance. They have taken a good hard look at updating it. They have done their own homework; they have listened to and implemented recommendations from the residents of Yankee Springs. She is looking forward to next week's meeting to hear if there is any more input from the public.

BOARD COMMENT:

Knowles: Apologized for not making the joint meeting. He saw that the state of Michigan took bids for the Hall Lake Culvert replacement and received a bid for \$718,000 but he doesn't know if it was awarded. Thanked Dave for taking back the Veterans Memorial and said that he signed Dave up for the Polar Dip as a birthday present.

Mousseau: Happy birthday to Dave. Taxes are due Monday, March 2 at midnight and we will be open from 9 to 5.

VanHouten: Asked if there are liability issues with the pickleball tournament and Mr. Hopkins will check on that with the insurance company. He appreciates Lee and will be seeing him. He enjoyed the meeting and it's nice seeing more people from the community coming in. He enjoys it and the committee and it is not centralized; it is decentralized in the decisions that they make and that's the way to do it.

Hopkins: Thanked the people who applied for a couple of the jobs. It is really interesting to realize how much talent is around the area. He didn't know Jeff, had never met him, and when he comes in for an interview and he's spent four years in college studying this stuff and years doing it out there and all the stuff he's done, this guy's a natural. And there's people like that around here and it makes you feel good when people like that step up and want to give their time and talent to the community and help our citizens.

Heethuis: He agrees with Tom. Whenever they have put out for any position, good people have come forward and said they want to serve. That's good stuff. Happy birthday to Dave, a good old Team Yankee Springs member. And to Lee, there's a cake back there and Sandy's ready to serve.

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**DISCUSSION OF FOIA
PROCEDURE**

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOARD COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Mousseau to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM. Approved by all. Motion Carried.

Approved by:  Date: 3/19/2026

Respectfully submitted by:
Betsy Frigmanski, Recording Secretary
February 15, 2026

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ADJOURNMENT