

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting

April 10, 2023

6:00 o'clock p.m.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Au Train Township Board convened on the above date at 6:00 p.m. at the Au Train Township Hall, N7569 Spruce St., Au Train MI 49806

The Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Michelle Doucette, with the following members present: Mary Johnson, Clerk; Kristy Cota, Treasurer; Jake Miller, Trustee and Tom Balmes, Trustee.

\*VISITORS PRESENT – Approximately 10 persons attended the meeting. A complete list is on file.

\*APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Supervisor Doucette, second by Clerk Johnson, to approve the Agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

\*MINUTES

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

\*BILLS AND CLAIMS

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to accept this month's bill list as presented and authorize that they be paid as funds are available. JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES; MILLER, YES. MOTION CARRIED. (General Fund Checks Numbered #16895 through #16904; Fire Fund Checks Numbered #8952 through #8971; Garbage Fund Checks Numbered #2114.)

\*BOARD MEMBER REPORTS -

•TREASURER'S REPORT - For the Month ending March 31, 2023

GENERAL FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 312,781.01
Deposits	25,979.96
Interest	197.93
Disbursements	16,301.98
Total Checks Not Cleared	2,531.00
Ending Balance	\$ 320,125.92
FIRE FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 570,942.84
Deposits	69,548.24
Interest	206.07
Disbursements	255,097.91

Total Checks Not Cleared	2,218.05
Ending Balance	\$ 383,381.19
Certificate of Deposit	\$ 51,696.67
GARBAGE FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 313,238.58
Deposits	72,456.59
Interest	196.53
Disbursements	14,062.69
Total Checks Not Cleared	
Ending Balance	\$ 371,829.01
ROAD FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 148,469.27
Deposits	48,272.52
Interest	97.30
Disbursements	47.23
Total Checks Not Cleared	
Ending Balance	\$ 196,791.86

\*A Complete copy of the March 31, 2023 Report is on file with Clerk Johnson. Treasurer Cota noted that Winter Tax Collection 2022 balanced with the County Treasurer and that a final disbursement was received. There are no upcoming rentals.

\*CLERK'S REPORT - Clerk Johnson noted that she has been working on the May 2<sup>nd</sup> School Election administration. The state will be reimbursing for the postage costs of mailing the Absent Voter Applications and return postage for ballots. The Public Accuracy Testing has been scheduled for Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in the Clerk's Office. In addition she has been gathering documentation for the SLFRF Reports due to the state by April 30<sup>th</sup> for the expenditures from the Covid Relief Funds. Also, an email was received today from Alger County Clerk Mary Ann Froberg indicating she was retiring as of June 30, 2023. A new Clerk will be appointed to fulfill the remainder of her term.

\*TRUSTEE'S REPORT - Trustee Miller updated the Board on recent calls and inquiries. He noted he attended the recent Planning Commission meeting and will address that under the committee reports.

Tom Balmes provided information on recent activities which included addressing emails for some clarification, attended the recent Fire Department meeting where the driving a personal vehicle on a closed highway M28 while responding as a member of the Au Train Township Fire Department was again discussed. The department needs to develop a policy after checking with the Michigan State Police, Alger County Sheriff, insurance provider and possibly our attorney. Chief Perry King, who was present, indicated that they expect to address this issue at a yet to be scheduled meeting with the Alger County Sheriff Department and other law enforcement entities.

Also Mr. Balmes noted that we need to consider putting out on bids the fence removal at the ballfield after clarification is received from Brian Hinch of the USFS. Also, with recent snow melt and rain, Tom wondered if the Township had sandbags available for anyone who might need them. Supervisor Doucette noted that we do not currently provide sandbags, but will check as to who locally might carry them. The Sheriff Department does not have sand bags either.

\*SUPERVISOR'S REPORT - Supervisor Doucette updated the Board on recent activities. She noted that Charlie Marsh from the USFS Munising District is retiring. Also emails regarding the Au Train Forest Lake Dam was received and is an Agenda item. The May 20, 2023 Spring Clean up is confirmed. Tri County Septic porta jon rental will be a May Agenda item, as well as a Dust Control Cost quote.

\*SPECIAL PRESENTATION - None

\*PUBLIC COMMENT - Public Comments were received from John Carr, Donna Shields, and Tom Hall.

\*COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Financial Reports* - Clerk Johnson presented monthly financial reports for all funds. All reports were emailed to Board members prior to the meeting for review.

Au Train Township Budget Resolution  
Re: FY Budget 2023-2024 - Amendment No. 1  
April 10, 2023

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Au Train Township Board to establish a General Appropriations Act for the purpose of budgeting the Township finances in a manner which does not allow expenditure, to exceed revenues, including any available unappropriated surpluses, and,

WHEREAS, the Au Train Township Board recognizes that some activities may require amendments to this Act, and such amendment shall be made by resolution of the Au Train Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Au Train Township Appropriations Act for FY 2023-2024 does not permit deviations which cause expenditures for any activity to exceed budgeted amounts without amendment to the Act by the Au Train Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Au Train Township Board has duly reviewed the budgets for the General Appropriations Act, which includes all funds of Au Train Township, at public meetings of the Au Train Township Board,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Au Train Township Board hereby amends the Appropriations Act for FY 2023-2024 in accordance with budgetary information presented to the Board and the limitations defined within this Resolution.

The foregoing Resolution offered by Board Member: Johnson

Second offered by Board Member: Doucette

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

"Aye": Johnson, Doucette, Cota, Balmes, Miller

"Nay": None

The Clerk declared the resolution adopted.

Mary Walther Johnson  
Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk

General Fund - Fund No. 101

Expenditures	Current Budget	Amended Budget	Change
Fund Balance	300,214.00	320,125.92	(+) 19,911.92
Ending Fund Equity	158,220.00	178,131.92	(+) 19,911.92

Reflects Actual Fund Balance as of March 31, 2023.

Fire Fund - Fund No. 206

Expenditures	Current Budget	Amended Budget	Change
Fund Balance	454,906.00	435,078.57	(-) 19,827.43
Ending Fund Equity	126,719.00	106,891.57	(-) 19,827.43

Reflects Actual Fund Balance as of March 31, 2023.

Garbage Fund - Fund No. 226

Expenditures	Current Budget	Amended Budget	Change
Fund Balance	372,770.00	371,829.01	(-) 940.99
Ending Fund Equity	365,370.00	366,310.99	(-) 940.99

Reflects Actual Fund Balance as of March 31, 2023.

Road Fund - Fund No. 204

Expenditures	Current Budget	Amended Budget	Change
Fund Balance	261,395.00	196,791.86	(-) 64,603.14
Ending Fund Equity	238,253.00	173,649.86	(-) 64,603.14

Reflects Actual Fund Balance as of March 31, 2023

*Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/ZBA* - The Zoning Administrators report was provided and is on file. Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist was present and provided a brief update and answered any questions. The next meeting of the Planning Commission, which will include CUP Hearings, is scheduled for April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Discussion about recent CUP approvals, continuous use requirements, if any, for Conditional Use Permits and other obstacles they have encountered during the Hearing process were made. Trustee Miller will contact Township Attorney Bill Nordeen direct for some clarification on these matters.

There are no upcoming meetings scheduled for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Educational opportunities were discussed for the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. The MSU Extension and Michigan Townships Association are both offering classes that would benefit members. MOTION by Supervisor Doucette, second by Trustee Balmes, to authorize the expenditure for educational opportunities for members of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals through the MSU Extension Office at \$75.00 each and Michigan Townships Association at \$100.00 each. Clerk Johnson will verify attendance with members. DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES; MILLER, YES; JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

*Assessor/Board of Review* - The Assessor's report was received prior to the meeting, which updated the Board on recent activities. Board of Review Member Donna Shields noted that the March Meetings went well, very few petitions were received and new member Amy Hernandez proved to be an asset to the Board.

*Maintenance Department Report/Comm Bldg./Promotions/Cemetery* - Ryan Walther provided an update to the Board on recent activities. He plans to open the cemetery soon and install the flags. He will start working on outdoor maintenance as weather permits. The Heritage Trail kayak launch will be installed by the end of May. He also noted that the staining of the Heritage Trail Interpretive Cabin will begin as soon as weather permits.

*Fire Department/First Responders* – The Fire Department report was received and is on file. Members of the Department were present to provide additional information to the Board. There was one call for the month - a CO2 alarm check/false alarm. Trucks are currently receiving yearly MDOT certifications. Information was provided to contract with Northwoods Compressor for SCBA air rather than purchase our own filling system, which was discussed during the budget workshop. Information was also provided on contracting for hose and ladder testing.

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to enter into a 3 year Contract with Fire Cat Hose of Troy, MI to provide hose and ladder testing at a cost of approximately \$3,500 per year. JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES; BALMES, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; MILLER, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Information was provided on locating a used Rescue Vehicle from the Flatrock Volunteer Fire Department in Leon, West Virginia. It is a 2019 Ram 5500 with approximately 9,000 miles. It would serve the Department by carrying extrication and other tools, additional ladders, and the Jaws and Life. A discussion with Kevin at Pomasl indicated that the cost new would be approximately \$400,000. Fire Chief Perry King and Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttia would like to fly out to WV, pickup the truck and then drive it back. Discussion on the need, service records, consultation with Swem Services, travel expectations and cost ensued.

MOTION by Trustee Miller, second by Treasurer Cota, to proceed with the purchase of the 2019 Ram 5500 Rescue Vehicle from the Flatrock Volunteer Fire Department in Leon, West Virginia, pending service records review, at a cost of \$250,000. MILLER, YES; COTA, YES; JOHNSON, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Assistant Chief Knuttilla will work with Treasurer Cota to secure travel arrangements.

**\*UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Blight Update - Supervisor Doucette noted that the property taxes were paid for 2020 to keep the Moorman/Christmas Mall property from County Tax Foreclosure. Discussion about the next steps and notification was made. Supervisor Doucette will continue to work with Zoning Administrator Lindquist to address the storage container zoning violation.

**\*NEW BUSINESS**

Correspondence/Funding Requests - Clerk Johnson presented a request from the Munising 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee requesting funds for Munising's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration. MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to authorize \$750.00 for fireworks to the Munising 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee. JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES; BALMES, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; MILLER, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk Johnson presented the Contract for Services and Funding Request from the Tri County Volunteer Fire Department, and noted that Fire Chief King recommended its approval as they provide support services to the Department. MOTION by Treasurer Cota, second by Supervisor Doucette, to enter into a Contract for Services with the Tri County Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$3,000. COTA, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; MILLER, YES; JOHNSON, YES; BALMES, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

A Contract for Services was presented for our continued partnership with UPSET to assist our Fire Department and provide services within Alger County. MOTION by Treasurer Cota, second by Supervisor Doucette, to enter into a Contract for Services with UPSET in the amount of \$1,500. COTA, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES; MILLER, YES; JOHNSON, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

GFL Environmental Contract - Supervisor Doucette noted that she received an email today from GFL indicating an upcoming price increase. The contract called for the increase of 5% in 2022, which they never implemented. The increase for 2023 should be 6.5% (based on CPI). They are proposing a 10% increase, effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, plus the monthly fuel surcharge. After discussion, MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to accept the 10% monthly increase with GFL Environmental for curbside pickup within the Township, effective May 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024, which would equal a monthly service rate of \$14,410, plus the fuel surcharge. JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES; MILLER, YES; BALMES, YES; DOUCETTE, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

RWE Bankruptcy Notification - Supervisor Doucette noted she received an email indicating that Harris Energy Group, owner of several FERC related hydro power licenses has filed for Bankruptcy protection in Wisconsin, which would include the Forest Lake Dam in Au Train Township, which has an Active License with its affiliated project through Renewable World Energies (RWE). The Township Board is not sure how this effects the status of the Forest Lake Dam at this time, as it was noted that “we are unsure of the potential implications....or what the filing means in terms of the FERC projects, licenses, dam safety issues, etc.(sic) It appears that FERC will have to work out the details with RWE. Supervisor Doucette noted she will continue to monitor the publications and correspondence and keep the Board updated.

\*PUBLIC COMMENT - None

\*ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, MOTION by Supervisor Doucette, second by Trustee Balmes, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED. MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:04 pm.

Submitted by: Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk