

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 14, 2023 6:00 pm - 8:48 pm**

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**Roll Call:**

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee Tom Balmes. Board Members Absent: None. Also Present: Ryan Walther, Fire Chief Perry King, Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttia, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Matt Lang, Dean Seaberg, Bill Harris - RWE, Becky Wilder.

Supervisor Doucette opened our August 14, 2023 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **approve the agenda** as amended. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Doucette/seconded Cota to **pay bills**. Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #16964-16983; Fire Fund #9018-9034; Garbage Fund #2021.)

**Financial Reports:**

Clerk Johnson presented the Financial Reports for July, 2023. No budget amendments were recommended.

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of July 31, 2023: General Fund \$302,819.99; Fire Fund \$130,587.06 + CD \$51,696.67; Garbage Fund \$336,531.11; Road Fund \$209,636.21. Summer Tax Bill payments are coming in steadily. There have been two disbursements. No upcoming Community Building rentals. Received two Fire Department donations - Karen Schaefer, \$250 and Cooks Lake Association, \$100. Treasurer Cota also noted the 2022 CFR payment received of \$9,437.48 was distributed in July.

Clerk - Answered several emails, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board member. There are two outstanding FOIA requests, one additional request has been denied. Working on providing information and layout suggestions for the new website. The Townships new website need, design and cost have nothing to do with the need to update the Master Plan, which is implemented by the Planning Commission. The MML Worker's Comp Audit is complete and the insurance renewal application is being finalized to secure a quote for review at the September Meeting. A Parcel Division application was processed after it was reviewed and approval recommended by our attorney.

Finished reviewing the approved Zoning Ordinance document Eff. 9/12/23 and compared it to the PDF version uploaded to the Township website. The only error, despite being told otherwise, was the Table of Contents and a minor Page Number error where it should have referenced Page 41, rather than Page 42, for Article V, Sections 501, 502 and 503. The approved document was saved as a PDF and uploaded to the Township website. Treasurer Cota and I will be spending the next couple of weeks finalizing Audit Prep items, which begins the week of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes attended the Fire Department Meeting, and is continuing to monitor the Ballfield Land Lease Restoration Project and working with Ryan on obtaining bids to complete the process.

Trustee Miller noted he will be attending the upcoming Planning Commission/CUP Hearing. He also responded to questions about garbage pickup, contacted GFL and had a conversation with Mr. Beauchaine regarding Cory Cole.

Supervisor - Received several phone and emails over the past month. Provided information on the Scrap Tire Event, held with Onota Township on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in Onota Township. Anyone who can volunteer to help would be appreciated. A thank you from the VFW Chapter 237 was received. The auto lock was installed on the cabin at the Heritage Trail and it is open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm daily. Received a request for the Board to review the noise ordinance and address fireworks. Supervisor Doucette attended a meeting, via Zoom, with RWE, Army Corp of Engineers and Alger County Board Chair Dean Seaberg, and other entities. A message was left for MDOT about the installation of the life saving stations at the Au Train River Beach with no response.

**Special Presentation:** Sean O'Neill, member of SORVA provided information on their services and upcoming project redecking the ORV/Snowmobile Trail bridge over the Au Train River. It is scheduled for the week of Labor Day. They will make sure everything is replaced "as is" in the trailhead.

Bill Harris, President-CEO of Kiser Hydro, LLC, which operates the *RWE Hydro Plant* at the Au Train Basin, provided additional information to the Board regarding the Au Train Basin project and is again requesting a letter from the Township Board indicating our support for continued operation of the dam as it retention provides a profound impact on our Recreation opportunities. Moved Johnson/seconded Miller to **provide a letter of support to RWE to continue operation of the Forest Lake/Au Train Basin Dam project** and the needed upgrades and repairs but bare no financial responsibility. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Comments were received from Dean Seaberg, as Alger County Board Chair, providing additional information from the Zoom Meeting with FERC and RWE, and noted the Alger County Board was also asked to provide a letter of support. Title III monies were received by the County that may assist Fire Departments. An emailed comment from Duane Newton was read by Supervisor Doucette.

#### **Boards/Departments:**

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file. Three CUP Hearings are scheduled for August as part of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting. Three Zoning Compliance applications were approved. Two additional CUP Applications have been received and the Public Hearing needs to be scheduled.

Planning Commission - PC Member and Township Board Liaison Miller noted the upcoming CUP Hearings/Meeting on August 17, 2023. Clerk Johnson urged the Planning Commission to begin the review process for the Master Plan, noting that the number of CUP applications has delayed the starting process.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Member Matt Lang had questions regarding the Judge's decision on the Cole Fence matter and how that limits the role of the ZBA.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Fuess monthly report was received and is on file.

**Maintenance Department:** Ryan Walther present. Provided an update to the Board. Normal clean-up and summer maintenance work continues. The kayak launch and fishing pier will be scheduled for removal by the end of September. The water pressure tank was replaced at the cemetery. Discussion about the possibility of utilizing community services workers was made.

**Fire Department:** Report received and is on file.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

1. Ballfield License Surrender - Trustee Balmes presented information to the Board regarding the bid request process to finish the land restoration and noted two contractors looked at the project. Clerk Johnson noted the only bid received was Seaberg Enterprise. Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **accept the bid proposal for the Ballfield Restoration Project from Seaberg Enterprise in the amount of \$3,015**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

1. Correspondence - Supervisor Doucette presented a letter from NEPA asking for review and information regarding the installation of a communications tower. The proposed location is LSR1, which does not allow for a tower, primarily or with a conditional use. ZA Lindquist will review.
2. L4029 2023 Tax Rate Request - Clerk Johnson presented the 2023 L4029 Tax Rate Request and recommended the following based on the Approved 2023/2024 Fiscal Year Budget. General Allocate 0.6782; Fire Voted 2.8782; Garbage Voted 2.0000; Road Voted 2.0000. Motion Johnson/seconded Cota to **approve the L4029 2023 Tax Rate Request**. Motion carried.
3. Zoning Ordinance - PDF Table of Contents Update - Noted in Clerk's Report
4. Treasurer Computer Purchase - It was noted that a Treasurer laptop was purchased this past month based on an urgent need, from Dell, in the amount of \$1,200.
5. Tipper Carts Mirror Lake - Issues at Mirror Lake continue and Supervisor Doucette is continuing to assist in developing a plan.
6. Fall Cleanup 09/23/2023 - Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette to **proceed with Fall Clean-up with Wood Island Landfill on September 23, 2023 from 9:00-11:30 am, with allocation from the Garbage Fund**. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** Comments were received from Dean Seaberg, Becky Wilder and via email (read by Supervisor Doucette) from Duane Newton.

**Board Member Comments:** Additional Comments were shared by Board Members Doucette and Balmes.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion Johnson/seconded Cota to **adjourn at 8:48 pm**.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: 09/11/2023