

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 11, 2023 6:00 pm - 8:05 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, Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttia, Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Matt Lang, Jon Pacl, and Donna Shields.

Supervisor Doucette opened our September 11, 2023 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

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

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **approve the minutes of the August 14, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #16984-16997; Fire Fund #9035-9045; Garbage Fund #2122.)

**Financial Reports:**

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

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of August 31, 2023: General Fund \$310,845.99; Fire Fund \$122,979.46 + CD \$51,696.67; Garbage Fund \$322,038.58; Road Fund \$209,793.59. Reimbursement from MARESA for the May Election costs was received. There is a Community Building rental for September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> for a wedding. Appropriate insurance was obtained to serve alcohol. The Summer Tax payments continue. The last day for payment without interest and penalty is September 14, 2023. The Treasurer will be holding office hours that day from 9:00 to 5:00.

Clerk - Answered several emails, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board member. A total of 7 FOIA requests were received from Duane Newton over the past month and invoiced when appropriate. The application for insurance renewal was submitted and the proposal from MML was forwarded to Board Members for review prior to our meeting. Contacted UP Propane for their pre-buy plan for the 16 Mile Lake Fire Hall. The Election Equipment was dropped off at the County Clerk for certification and maintenance. Met with the auditors this morning to begin the off year audit process. A Parcel Division application was received and the applicant was notified it was incomplete for a review and noted the necessary modifications needed.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes attended the Fire Department Meeting, and is continuing to monitor the Ballfield Land Lease Restoration Project, noting that Mr. Seaberg completed the contract work. The US Forest Service will be notified of its completion and approval. Responded to residents who continue to have questions about Short Term Rentals.

Trustee Miller noted he attended the August 17, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting/Hearing for CUP applications. There was some discussion regarding the CUP use, process and citizen concerns on the procedures. He attended the presentation by Matt Watkeys on the completion of the Au Train Lake Project and responded to questions regarding the Scrap Tire Event.

Supervisor - Received several phone and emails over the past month. The Tom's Road area garbage dumpster is scheduled and keys obtained for delivery to participants. An agreement will be prepared for placement on the Ebbesen property and the existing tipper carts will be picked up on September 20<sup>th</sup>. SORVA will be working on the Railroad bridge redecking project next week and it will be signed appropriately. The Fall cleanup dropoff is scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00-11:30. The Scrap Tire Disposal cooperative with Onota Township will be September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Becky Wilder has offered to volunteer for the event. Bob Lindbeck of the Alger County Road Commission provided an update on the Perry Road/Grove Street projects, which will be complete by the end of the week. He also noted that the USFS provided grant monies to work on improvements for the Rapid River Truck Trail. Information on the Emergency Action Plan submitted by RWE was provided to the Board, along with additional documents requested from the past two meeting presentations by Bill Harris.

Supervisor Doucette also stated that the Munising Township Supervisor noted they were in conversations with Grand Island Township and will be proceeding with the concept of terminating Grand Island Township and merging into Munising Township. They are contiguous, as they both have shoreline with Lake Superior. They was some initial discussion to consolidate with Au Train Township, but it appears they have chosen Munising Township instead. Voter approval would be required. Brief discussion about the current fire services agreement with Grand Island Township was made. This is a lengthy process and could take up to two years to complete.

**Special Presentation:** None

**Public Comment:** An emailed comment from Duane Newton was read by Supervisor Doucette.

**Boards/Departments:**

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file. There is a Planning Commission Meeting/Hearing scheduled for September 12, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Planning Commission - PC Member and Township Board Liaison Miller noted the upcoming CUP Hearings/Meeting. There was zoning discussion about the CUP Hearing process and definition clarifications needed within the Zoning Ordinance. Clerk Johnson noted that it was recommended by Attorney Nordeen that the Township Board and Planning Commission schedule a joint meeting to review some of the Zoning Ordinance Concerns and recommendations for amendments. The Board was reminded that the Zoning Ordinance is a working document and can be amended when necessary for clarifications, changes and updates. The amendment process would remain the same and require proper notification and a Public Hearing. Planning Commission Chair Matt Lang will discuss possible dates with the Commission and report to the Supervisor to schedule a meeting date.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Zoning Board of Appeals member John Delany has resigned from the Board as he has relocated. His resignation was regrestfully accepted. Julie Adams is the ZBA Alternate. Supervisor Doucette will reach out to her regarding appointment as a member.

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 on recent activities. The dock at the Heritage Trail Center has been removed for the season. Additional repairs will be required in the Spring prior to installation. The trailhead cabin staining is complete. The cemetery has been mowed, and the water will be shut down by the end of the month. Scheduling for cleanup of the Supervisor's Office/Assessors Office and Storage Room will be worked out. The Heritage Trail Center and restrooms will be shut down September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Fire Department:** Report received and is on file. There we 4 calls, 2 of which were structure fires. The Cascade air system will be tested on September 16<sup>th</sup> and the Au Train Fire Department will be hosting the Alger County Fire Fighters Association Meeting on October 16th at 6:00 pm at the Au Train Township Hall/Community Building.

**Unfinished Business:**

1. Ballfield License Surrender - Trustee Balmes noted that Seaberg completed the project as bid and recommended payment. He will schedule a time to meet with a USFS Representative and get the lease surrender finalized.
2. Supervisor Doucette provided a copy of the Letter of support for Forest Lake Basin Dam Project on behalf of RWE.
3. Clerk Johnson provided information from the Michigan Municipal League regarding the clarification requested on liability coverage and members of the Fire Department responding to calls and/or traveling on closed highways to do so. A copy of the clarification was sent to the Fire Department for review and Dean Seaberg, Fire Department member and Chair of the Alger County Road.

**New Business:**

1. Correspondence - No correspondence presented.
2. MML Insurance Proposal - As noted, the proposal was provided to the Board prior to the meeting for review. Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette, to **accept the proposal for insurance coverage from MML for 2023-2024 at a total cost of \$22,354.00, not including Worker's Comp, which will be billed separately.** Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.
3. In Person Voting Plan - Clerk Johnson noted that grant monies were available from the State to assist in the cost of meeting the requirements for early voting. Each municipality must allow for in-person early voting the 9 days prior to an election. Au Train Township **entered into a Early Voting Plan with Alger County, in cooperation with other entities, to develop and implement a plan that would see early voting taking place at the Alger County Clerk's Office.** Additional information will be provided in the upcoming months as we prepare for the February 2024 Presidential Primary Election.
4. UP Propane - As noted, Clerk Johnson contacted **UP Propane for a pre-buy contract to service the 16 Mile Lake Fire Hall.** The plan and costs were emailed to the Board prior to proceeding. There was a deadline that required immediate action. A rate of \$1.799 was locked in for the 2023-2024 Winter Season. A payment of \$746.13 was required.
5. 5 Year Road Plan - Just prior to the meeting, a preliminary 5 Year Road Plan for the Township was provided by Bob Lindbeck of the Alger County Road Commission. Mr. Lindbeck will be at the October Regular Board Meeting to discuss an update in the plan and projects for 2024.

**Public Comment:** Comments were received from Matt Lang regarding the Master Plan and utilizing the services of CUPPAD in assistance in its update and amendment.

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

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Moved Doucette/seconded Johnson to **adjourn at 8:05 pm.**

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: 10/09/2023