

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2024 6:00 pm - 7:01 pm

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee Tom Balmes. Board Members Absent: Supervisor Michelle Doucette. Also Present: Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Matt Lang, John Carr, Phillip Martin, Joshua Grove - Munising Beacon, Kris and Greg Lindquist, Bob and Tina DesArmo, Dan and Phyllis LaCombe, Wyatt and Kirsten Seaberg, Kerby Albro, Kristen and Brian VanWieren, Rebecca Wilder and Susannah LaCombe.

It was agreed that Trustee Tom Balmes would chair the meeting in the absence of Supervisor Doucette.

Trustee Balmes opened our January 8, 2024 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:

Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes to **approve the agenda**. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes, Miller, yes.. Motion carried. (General Fund #17042-17062; Fire Fund #9113-9124; Garbage Fund #1128).

Financial Reports:

Clerk Johnson presented the December Financial Reports, which were reviewed for any needed Budget Amendments and provided the reports to Board Members prior to the meeting. The Board will do a detailed review next month, and amend as necessary.

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer - Balance as of December 31, 2023: General Fund \$293,874.81; Fire Fund \$108,513.37 + CD \$52,534.46; Garbage Fund \$301,558.13; Road Fund \$53,212.15. Account totals include one Winter Tax Disbursement. Office Hours were held on Friday, December 29th from 9:00-5:00. There was a payment received from the Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the amount of \$3,500.00 deposited into the General Fund Account. The 2024 AA Hall Rental payment was received. There were two donations totaling \$150.00 for the Fire Department and there are no upcoming rentals.

Clerk - Clerk Johnson noted that since the December Meeting several emails were answered, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board Members. The emails and FOIA requests from Duane Newton continue. I also received FOIA requests related to the PC's CUP Hearing held on 12/14/23

Just finalized a few details on the website. With the holiday we decided to delay until this month for the launch. We will address the website hosting/domain registration as an agenda item. There was a lot of work involved and the more that could be done on the back end before going live, the better. I will need to catch up on uploads over the next couple weeks after I schedule a training. I want to thank Greg and Brenda from Kelley Marketing for all their work and making our vision a reality.

I will be purchasing postcard stamps, and we should consider purchasing additional postage, as the rate increase goes into effect January 21, 2024. I will also need additional 2 ounce postage for Absentee Ballots.

I will be spending the balance of January processing W2's and 1099's, filing IRS reports, working and training for the February election and preparing documents for the February Budget Workshop. The Election Commission will need to meet to approve the roster for Election Inspectors for the Feb 27th Presidential Primary.

Trustee's - Trustee Miller noted he was notified by Matthew Watkey of the Alger Conversation District that they applied for a trash pickup grant. He also noted phone calls regarding zoning and attended the December 14th Planning Commission CUP Hearings. Trustee Balmes had no report.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette submitted a report. The MDOT permit for dredging the Au Train River mouth for 2024 was submitted. A current permit is in place until January 30th. The new permit will be for the period January 31, 2024 through January 30, 2025. In 2025, the EGLE Permit will be due for renewal.

Letters to Summer Homes residents were sent out regarding the need for tipper carts in the spring for their garage collection. The three full time residents will be using the east end Woodland Ave dumpster during the winter months.

A Blight letter was sent to Roy Maxon on M28 where boats are stored, along with two uninhabitable buildings. The boats were owned by Dave Kimar, who has recently passed away. Contact with his daughter was made and efforts will continue with what to do with the boats. The property may be sold this spring, which would resolve the Blight Issue.

The Blight Issue with Connie Albro has been resolved as the building was removed.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: An emailed comment was received and on file from Duane Newton and forwarded to the Board members prior to the meeting.

Boards/Departments:

Zoning Administrator - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file. There is a Planning Commission Organizational Meeting scheduled for January 18th at 6:00 pm. The Zoning Administrator continues to scan and upload zoning documents.

Planning Commission - Jake Miller noted that he attended the CUP Hearings on December 14th. A January 19th Meeting was scheduled as the organizational meeting. Zoning Amendments and the Master Plan are the main focus of the Agenda for 2024. The Planning Commissions Annual Report for 2023 has been received and is on file.

Zoning Board of Appeals - The Zoning Board of Appeals will be scheduling an Organizational Meeting for 2024 after the new year.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Fuess provided his report for December and is on file. Deeds, Property Transfer Affidavits and Principal Residence Exemptions have all been collected, coded and entered. Works continues on entering and pricing field work collected this past summer. Personal Property Statements have been mailed to those required to submit them, as well as disabled veterans exemption affidavits to those who received the exemption in 2023.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther provided a verbal report prior to the meeting. Winter projects are underway and plowing will continue as needed. The Election Mail Dropbox has been installed.

Fire Department: Assistant Knuttila provided an update prior to the meeting. No calls were received for the past month.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Clerk Johnson presented an email from Denise Gerth requesting financial support for Valley Spur Equipment needs. This request will be discussed during the Budget Workshop Meetings.

2. BS&A Proposal - Clerk Johnson presented the proposal from BS&A to provide online public records search services, containing property data and tax information, at no cost to the Township. Treasurer Cota provided additional information, and Assessor Fuess previously recommended the Township proceed with the proposal. Motion Johnson/seconded Balmes, to **accept and proceed with the proposal with BS&A Online Services** as presented. Motion carried. Treasurer Cota will work with Assessor Fuess to get this implemented.

3. CUPPAD Membership and Dues - Clerk Johnson presented the Membership Dues Invoice from CUPPAD for 2024. Motion Cota/seconded Balmes, to **continue Membership with CUPPAD for 2024 and pay dues** in the amount of \$198.00. Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

4. Website Hosting/Domain Registration - Clerk Johnson presented costs related to having Kelley Marketing and Design handle the website hosting and domain registration moving forward. Motion Johnson, seconded Miller, to **authorize website hosting and domain registration for the autraintownship.org website with Kelly Marketing and Designing**, as proposed. Johnson, yes; Miller, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

5. Letter of Resignation Matt Lang - Clerk Johnson presented an email from Planning Commission Member Matt Lang submitting his resignation. Motion Johnson/seconded Cota, to **accept the Letter of Resignation from Matt Lang**, who has served for the past 5 years as a member of the Planning Commission, with regret and thanked him for his service. Motion carried. Matt Lang was also the Planning Commission Representative on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

6. Correspondence Kristen VanWieren, et el - Clerk Johnson referenced the email from Kristen VanWieren, et el, demanding the board seek removal of William Gramm, Jason Cain and Bill Weisinger from the Planning Commission for misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance in office under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110 of 2006, Article III Zoning Commission 125.3301(9). Clerk Johnson further noted that as a General Law Township we are not required to post Proposed/Draft Minutes or Approved Minutes of the Planning Commission on the Township website. Trustee and Acting Chair Balmes noted there are avenues to seek an appeal of a decision by the Planning Commission. After further discussion and given the absence of Supervisor Doucette from the meeting, Motion Johnson/seconded Cota, to **call a Special Board Meeting for January 29, 2024 at 6:00 pm to review and discuss the request**. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Kristen VanWeiren and John Carr.

Board Member Comments: Additional Comments were shared by Board Members.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Motion Johnson/seconded Miller to **adjourn at 7:01 pm**.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson