

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2024 6:00 pm - 8:05 pm**

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**Roll Call:**

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, and Trustee Tom Balmes. Absent: Trustee Jake Miller. Also Present: Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttila, Brandon Lewis, Ryan Walther, Donna Shields, John Carr, Scott and Peggy Smith, and Rebecca Wilder.

Supervisor Doucette opened our March 11, 2024 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

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

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved Doucette/seconded Balmes to **approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Moved Doucette/seconded Cota to **approve the minutes of the February 19, 2024 Special Board Budget Workshop Meeting**. Motion carried.

**Pay Bills:**

Moved Johnson/seconded Doucette to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17074-17093; Fire Fund #9141-9150; Garbage Fund #2129).

**Financial Reports:**

Clerk Johnson presented the February Financial Reports, which were reviewed. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting.

**Board Member Reports:**

Treasurer - Balance as of February 29, 2024: General Fund \$317,353.34; Fire Fund \$195,264.80 + CD \$52,534.46; Garbage Fund \$325,731.54; Road Fund \$137,076.17.

Treasurer Cota noted that Winter Tax Collection is complete and that she will be reconciling with the County this week. There is one community building rental for Easter Sunday. The Treasurer also noted that 2023 Taxes (Summer and Winter) will no longer be accepted by the Township and persons owing will need to contact the Alger County Treasurer direct for payment amounts and mailing instructions.

Clerk - Since the February Meeting several emails were received, phone messages were returned or forwarded to appropriate Board Members. Most of the month was spent working on Election Administration for the February 27<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary. The early voting agreement worked out well - and there was plenty of staff to cover all 9 shifts. We had a total of 75 Early Voters Countywide. Election Day went well with a total number of 301 voters (including 128 AV). I will be submitting the Reimbursement request to the State by the upcoming deadline. By the end of March, ballots for the May 7, 2024 Munising Public School Millage Election will be issued to AV Voters.

We are still waiting to hear on the Application with get.gov for our autraintownship.gov domain request. The website updates continue and working with Word Press gets easier every day.

Budget Documents were prepared for this meetings Public Hearing and approval based on information gathered at our Budget Workshop Meeting.

Quickbooks was contacted and the payroll service was canceled. They will be issuing a refund. The yearly fee is \$600.00 plus an additional per employee fee totaling \$60+ per month. The cost increase isn't worth the direct deposit feature. March payroll will be issued by check, which will be mailed for receipt no later than the end of each month. They are also forcing an upgrade to their software for 2024.

The Deadline for Nominating petitions and Affidavits of Identity for partisan and nonpartisan candidates (Township Board positions) are due on Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 4:00 pm. They need to be turned into the Clerk's office for official receipt. The withdraw deadline elapses at 4:00 pm on April 26<sup>th</sup>. There are forms currently available.

The Deadline for petitions to place local ballot question (millage request or renewal) for the August Election needs to be filed by Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. Should the Township want to consider the Fire Department renewal before the December 2024 expiration date, it will be placed on the April Meeting Agenda for discussion and/or approval.

Trustee's - Trustee Balmes noted that Counties in Upper Michigan qualified for a drought designation for the lack of snow this winter. There is Federal Relief options for loans, at no interest for one year, and minimal interest if extended payback time is needed for business owners affected. Trustee Balmes also noted that he attended the Fire Department Meeting and then workshop for Stress Management that assist Fire Fighters, First Responders and Police Department members. Some very good information was provided.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette provided her report. Noted that a letter was received by Raelene Reilly requesting introduction of Board Members at the start of meetings or having name place cards. Clerk Johnson suggested adding roll call to the Agenda. Supervisor Doucette also confirmed Board of Review meetings on March 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-3:00 pm and March 14<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-9:00 pm. A review of the Heritage Trail Cleaning Contract and placement of the Porta Jons will be placed on the April Agenda.

Supervisor Doucette noted that an email from Joan Potter was received with information on possible Township Partnership with Superior Watershed and funds available from their EGLE Grant award.

In conclusion, Supervisor Doucette noted that she will not be seeking re-election for the upcoming term.

**Special Presentation:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Boards/Departments:**

**Zoning Administrator** - ZA Lindquist present. Report received and on file and was reviewed and discussed. The Planning Commission has scheduled CUP Hearings for March 13<sup>th</sup>. Additional meeting dates and schedule will be provided. The Zoning Board of Appeals has an Organizational Meeting scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

**Assessor/Board of Review** - No report received from Assessor Fuess. BOR Chair, Donna Shields reported on their Organizational Meeting.

**Maintenance Department:** Ryan Walther provided an update on maintenance items and plans for the next couple of months. Discussion about opening date for the Heritage Trail, dock placement and cemetery was made. Also discussion about some needed upgrades to the Playground was made.

**Fire Department:** Assistant Knuttila was present, along with members Brandon Lewis and Ryan Walther, and provided the Department Report, which is on file. There were no calls for the month. Fire Chief King requested approval for the purchase of a TV for training purposes.

Information was provided regarding membership into the MI-MABAS (The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System), which is a statewide mutual aid agreement that covers liability and authority to receive and provide mutual aid to other Fire Departments in Michigan who have signed the MABAS Agreement. There is no cost to the Township to join and no membership fee. Motion Cota/seconded Balmes to **authorize the Fire Department to join the Michigan-MABAS**. Motion carried.

After further discussion, Motion Johnson/seconded Balmes, to **authorize up to \$1,000.00 for the purchase of a Flat Screen TV by the Fire Department** for use in training. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried.

### **\*Budget Public Hearing**

Supervisor Doucette opened the Public Hearing at 7:06 pm for the presentation and comment period of the Proposed 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget.

Proposed Budgets for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 for the General Fund Account, Fire Fund Account, Garbage Fund Account and Road Fund Account were presented and reviewed for accuracy.

Clerk Johnson updated the Board on actual and projected State Revenue Sharing payments, and the allocation of the remaining funds from the SLFRF monies. Treasurer Cota provided information on the expected funds from Grand Island Township for Fire Protection Services.

The General Fund Budget, based on the fund balance and allocated millage of 0.6782 was reviewed and discussed.

The Fire Fund Budget, based on the fund balance and voted millage of 2.8782 (Exp 12/31/24) was reviewed and discussed.

The Garbage Fund Budget, based on the fund balance and voted millage of 3.0000 of which 2.000 mills were authorized to be collected, (Exp 12/31/26) was reviewed and discussed.

The Road Fund Budget, based on the fund balance and voted millage of 2.0000 (Exp 12/31/26), was reviewed and discussed.

The total millage levied and authorized to be collected is 7.5564 for the Winter 2024 Tax Period.

Clerk Johnson noted that the Fund Balance for all accounts, effective March 31, 2024 will be amended to reflect actual reconciled balances at the April Regular Board Meeting.

No Public Comments were received. Being no further comments or discussion, Supervisor Doucette noted the Public Hearing Closed at 7:12 pm.

### **General Appropriations Act - RESOLUTION NO. 2024-003**

Motion Johnson/seconded Cota, to **adopt the foregoing General Appropriations Act Resolution No. 2024-003**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Doucette, yes. Resolution Adopted. **See Attachment #1**

**Unfinished Business:** Litigation update - Ridge Road/VanWieren et el vs Au Train Township. Supervisor Doucette indicated that today she received a filing packet from Attorney Nordeen and has not had a chance yet to review.

### **New Business:**

1. Correspondence - None

2. Spring Cleanup - Cleanup is scheduled for **Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at Wood Island Landfill**. Discussion about hours of service and whether a fall cleanup is also being considered was made. Moved to April Agenda.

3. Dust Control - Information on current rates from Liquid Calcium Chloride Sales for dust control were provided. Preliminary application dates **May 29<sup>th</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>, after Memorial Day**. The current cost is 0.969 per gallon (compared to 0.939 in 2023). **Motion Johnson/seconded Balmes to proceed with the purchase from Liquid Calcium Chloride Sales for dust control**, with funds from the Road Fund Account. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried.

4. Zoning Board of Appeals Appointment - Supervisor Doucette noted there were no applications. Julie Adams remains an Alternate until a 5<sup>th</sup> member can be appointed.

5. Wage Detail Report - Clerk Johnson presented the current pay schedule for Departments and Board Appointed Positions. After review and discussion, Motion by Johnson/seconded Doucette, that **effective April 1, 2024, wages will be amended and reflected as per the New Pay Schedule**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried. **See Attachment #2**

6. Board Members Salary - Clerk Johnson presented a Salary Resolution for Township Board Member positions for review. She noted that the salaries were last increased by Resolution in January, 2022, effective April 1, 2022. After review and further discussion the following Resolutions were offered.

**Board Member Salary RESOLUTION NO. 2024-004 - Supervisor**

Motion Johnson/seconded Balmes, that as of **May 1, 2024, the salary of the office of Supervisor shall be as follows: \$1,400.00 monthly**. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes. Resolution Adopted. **See Attachment #3**

**Board Member Salary RESOLUTION NO. 2024-005 - Clerk**

Motion Cota/seconded Balmes, that as of **May 1, 2024, the salary of the office of Clerk shall be as follows: \$1,400.00 monthly**. Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Doucette, yes; Johnson, yes. Resolution Adopted. **See Attachment #4**

**Board Member Salary RESOLUTION NO. 2024-006 - Treasurer**

Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette, that as of **May 1, 2024, the salary of the office of Treasurer shall be as follows: \$1,400.00 monthly**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes. Resolution Adopted. **See Attachment #5**

**Board Member Salary RESOLUTION NO. 2024-007- Trustee**

Motion Cota/seconded Johnson, that as of **May 1, 2024, the salary of the office of Trustee shall be as follows: \$375.00 monthly**. Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes. Resolution Adopted. **See Attachment #6**

**Public Comment:** Public Comments were received from Peggy Smith.

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

**Next Meeting:** The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion Doucette/seconded Balmes to **adjourn at 8:05 pm**.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

A resolution to establish a general appropriations act for Au Train Township; to define the powers and duties of the Au Train Township officers in relation to the administration of the budget; and to provide remedies for refusal or neglect to comply with the requirements of this resolution.

The Board of Trustees of Au Train Township resolves:

Section 1: Title

This resolution shall be known as the Au Train Township General Appropriations Act.

Section 2: Chief Administrative Officer

The Supervisor shall be the Chief Administrative Officer and shall perform the duties of the Chief Administrative Officer enumerated in this act.

Section 3: Fiscal Officer

The Clerk shall be the Fiscal Officer and shall perform the duties of the Fiscal Officer enumerated in this act.

Section 4: Public Hearings on the Budget

For general law townships: Pursuant to MCLA 141.412, notice of a public hearing on the proposed budget was published in a newspaper of general circulation on January 5, 2024 and published on the [autraintownship.org](http://autraintownship.org) website on March 1, 2024 and a public hearing on the Proposed Budget was held on March 11, 2024.

Section 5: Estimated Revenues

Estimated Township General Fund revenues for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, including an allocated millage of 0.6782 mills; and various miscellaneous revenues shall total \$575,305.00 for the General Fund, which includes a 2/29/2024 approximate Fund Balance of \$348,774.00.

Estimated Township Fire Fund revenues for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, including a voted millage of 2.8782 (Exp 12/31/24) and various miscellaneous revenues shall total \$580,948.00, for the Fire Fund, which includes a 2/29/2024 approximate Fund Balance of \$322,961.00.

Estimated Township Garbage Fund revenues for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, including a voted millage of 2.000, (3.0000 available)(Exp 12/31/26) and various miscellaneous revenues shall total \$534,697.50, for the Garbage Fund, which includes a 2/29/2024 approximate Fund Balance of \$360,504.50.

Estimated Township Road Fund revenues for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, including a voted millage of 2.0000 (Exp 12/31/26) and various miscellaneous revenues shall total \$378,773.00, for the Road Fund, which includes a 2/29/2024 approximate Fund Balance of \$187,576.97.

Section 6: Millage Levy

The Au Train Township Board shall cause to be levied and collected the general property tax on all real and personal property within the township upon the current tax roll an amount equal to total 7.5564 mills as set forth by the Tax Allocation Board (or as authorized under state law and approved by the electorate).

Section 7: Estimated Expenditures

Estimated township general fund expenditures for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the various township activities (cost centers) are as follows: see attached Exhibit A, B, C, D.

#### Section 8: Adoption of Budget by Reference

The General Fund, Fire Fund, Garbage Fund and Road Fund Budgets of Au Train Township are hereby adopted by reference, with revenues and activity expenditures as indicated in Sections 5 and 7 of this act.

#### Section 9: Adoption of Budget by Cost Center

The Board of Trustees of Au Train Township adopts the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year General Fund Budget, Fire Fund Budget, Garbage Fund Budget and Road Fund Budget by cost center. Township officials responsible for the expenditures authorized in the budget may expend township funds up to, but not to exceed, the total appropriation authorized for each cost center, and may make transfers among the various line items contained in the cost center appropriation. However, no transfers of appropriations for line items related to personnel or capital outlays may be made without prior board approval by budget amendment. In addition, those activities with single line item budgets, shall be subject to prior board approval by budget amendment prior to any transfers.

#### Section 10: Appropriation not a Mandate to Spend

Appropriations will be deemed maximum authorizations to incur expenditures. The fiscal officer shall exercise supervision and control to ensure that expenditures are within appropriations, and shall not issue any town order for expenditures that exceed appropriations.

#### Section 11: Transfer Authority

No Officer shall have the authority to make transfers among the various cost centers (or line items) without prior board approval. Under no circumstances may the total general fund budget be changed without prior board approval.

#### Section 12: Periodic Fiscal Reports

The fiscal officer shall transmit to the board at the end of each of the first three quarters, and at the end of each month occurring during the fourth quarter, a report of financial operations, including, but not limited to:

- a. a summary statement of the actual financial condition of the General Fund at the end of the previous quarter;
- b. a summary statement showing the receipts and expenditures and encumbrances for the previous quarter and for the current fiscal year to the end of the previous quarter;
- c. a detailed list of:
  - i. expected revenues by major source as estimated in the budget; actual receipts to date for the current fiscal year, and any revisions in revenue estimates resulting from collection experience to date.
  - ii. for each cost center: the amount appropriated; the amount charged to each appropriation in the previous quarter for the current fiscal year and as compared with the same period in the prior fiscal year; the unencumbered balance of appropriations; and any revisions in the estimate of expenditures.

#### Section 13: Limit on Obligations and Payments

No obligation shall be incurred against, and no payment shall be made from any appropriation account unless there is a sufficient unencumbered balance in the appropriation and sufficient funds are or will be available to meet the obligation.

#### Section 14: Budget Monitoring

Whenever it appears to the Fiscal Officer or the Township Board that the actual and probable revenues in any fund will be less than the estimated revenues upon which appropriations from such fund were based, and when it appears that expenditures shall exceed an appropriation, the Fiscal Officer shall present to the township board recommendations to prevent expenditures from exceeding available revenues or appropriations for the current fiscal year. Such recommendations shall include proposals for reducing appropriations, increasing revenues, or both.

Section 15: Violations of This Act

Any obligation incurred or payment authorized in violation of this resolution shall be void and shall subject any responsible official(s) or employee(s) to disciplinary action as outlined in Public Act 621 of 1978) and the Au Train Township personnel manual.

Section 17: Board Adoption

Motion made by Johnson , seconded by Cota , to adopt the foregoing Resolution.

Upon roll call vote, the following voted aye: Johnson, Cota, Balmes, Doucette

The following voted nay: None

The Supervisor declared the Motion carried and the Resolution duly adopted on the 11th day of March, 2024.

mwjohnson, Clerk

*Signed: Mary Walther Johnson, Township Clerk*

Approved 03/11/2024

Au Train Township, Alger County, MI  
Salary & Wage Pay Scale - Approved March 11, 2024  
Effective April 1, 2024

Attachment #2

Michelle Doucette, Supervisor  
Elected 11/03/2020  
Salary - \$16,800.00 per year (Eff 5/1/2024)

Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk  
Elected 11/03/2020  
Salary - \$16,800.00 per year (Eff 5/1/2024)

Kristy Cota, Treasurer  
Elected 11/03/2020  
Salary - \$16,800.00 per year (Eff 5/1/2024)

Jacob Miller, Trustee  
Elected 11/03/2020  
Salary - \$4,500.00 per year (Eff 5/1/2024)

Thomas Balmes, Trustee  
Elected - 11/03/2020  
Salary - \$4,500.00 per year (Eff 5/1/2024)

Jennifer Walther, Deputy Clerk  
Appointed - 12/2020  
Salary - \$1,200.00 per year

Sarah Mannisto, Deputy Treasurer  
Appointed - 12/2020  
Salary - \$1,200.00 per year

Ryan Walther, Maintenance  
Hired July, 2018  
Salary - \$15,000.00 per year (Eff 4/1/2024)

Kathleen Lindquist, Zoning Administrator  
Hired June, 2022  
Salary - \$15,000.00 per year (Eff 4/1/2024)

Perry King, Fire Chief  
Appointed February, 2024 (Yearly Appointment)  
Salary - \$12,000.00 per year (Eff 4/1/2022)

Justen Knuttila, Asst Fire Chief  
Appointed February, 2024 (Yearly Appointment)  
Salary - \$9,000.00 per year (Eff 6/1/2022)

Brandon Lewis, FD Hall Captain  
Appointed  
Salary - \$3,000.00 per year

Fire Department Members are  
Volunteer Paid - Current Pay Scale is  
\$25.00 per hour

Board of Review Members  
\$20.00 per hour (Min. 2 hours)  
Donna Shields, Chair  
Kristy Drake, Member  
Amy Hernandez, Member  
Tommy, McHale, Alternate

Planning Commission  
\$50.00 per meeting Chair  
\$75.00 per meeting Secretary  
\$50.00 per meeting Member  
Jason Cain, Chair (01/01/2025)  
Donna Shields, Secretary (01/01/2026)  
Bill Weisinger, Member (01/01/2026)  
William Gramm, Member (01/01/2025)  
Jacob Miller, Twp Bd Rep (11/2024)

Zoning Board of Appeals  
\$50.00 per meeting Chair  
\$75.00 per meeting Secretary  
\$50.00 per meeting Member  
Kathy Reynolds, Chair  
Donna Shields, Planning Comm Member  
John Carr, Member  
Julie Adams, Alternate Member

Election Inspectors  
\$20.00 per hour  
Appointment each Election from  
Certified/Trained Pool of Applicants

Assessor - Greenstone Mapping  
Contracted October, 2018  
Renewed December, 2023  
Contract 1099 Payment - \$28,332.00 (2024)



*Board Member Salary*

RESOLUTION No. 2024-004  
Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan

Attachment #3

WHEREAS, according to MCL 41.95(3), in a township that does not hold an annual meeting, the salary for officers composing the Township Board shall be determined by the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk noted that the last pay adjustment for the office of Township Supervisor was April 1, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Township Board deems that an adjustment in the salary of the office of Supervisor is warranted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as of May 1, 2024 the **salary of the office of Supervisor** shall be as follows: \$ 1,400.00 monthly.

This resolution offered by board member Johnson

Supported by board member Balmes

Upon a roll call vote, the following voted:

Aye: Johnson, Balmes, Cota, Doucette

Nay: None

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk

Approved 03/11/2024

*Board Member Salary*

RESOLUTION No. 2024-005

Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan

Attachment #4

WHEREAS, according to MCL 41.95(3), in a township that does not hold an annual meeting, the salary for officers composing the Township Board shall be determined by the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk noted that the last pay adjustment for the office of Township Clerk was April 1, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Township Board deems that an adjustment in the salary of the office of Clerk is warranted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as of May 1, 2024 the **salary of the office of Clerk** shall be as follows: \$ 1,400.00 monthly.

This resolution offered by board member Cota

Supported by board member Balmes

Upon a roll call vote, the following voted:

Aye: Cota, Balmes, Doucette, Johnson

Nay: None

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk

Approved 03/11/2024

*Board Member Salary*

RESOLUTION No. 2024-006

Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan

Attachment #5

WHEREAS, according to MCL 41.95(3), in a township that does not hold an annual meeting, the salary for officers composing the Township Board shall be determined by the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk noted that the last pay adjustment for the office of Township Treasurer was April 1, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Township Board deems that an adjustment in the salary of the office of Treasurer is warranted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as of May 1, 2024 the **salary of the office of Treasurer** shall be as follows: \$ 1,400.00 monthly.

This resolution offered by board member Johnson

Supported by board member Doucette

Upon a roll call vote, the following voted:

Aye: Johnson, Doucette, Cota, Balmes

Nay: None

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk

Approved 03/11/2024

*Board Member Salary*  
RESOLUTION No. 2024-007  
Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan

Attachment #6

WHEREAS, according to MCL 41.95(3), in a township that does not hold an annual meeting, the salary for officers composing the Township Board shall be determined by the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Clerk noted that the last pay adjustment for the office of Township Trustee was April 1, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Township Board deems that an adjustment in the salary of the office of Trustee is warranted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as of May 1, 2024 the **salary of the office of Trustee** shall be as follows: \$ 375.00 monthly.

This resolution offered by board member Cota

Supported by board member Johnson

Upon a roll call vote, the following voted:

Aye: Cota, Johnson, Doucette, Balmes

Nay: None

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk

Approved 03/11/2024

END  
mwj