

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024 6:00 pm - 8:12 pm

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Supervisor Michelle Doucette, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee Tom Balmes. Also Present: Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist, Ryan Walther, Donna Shields, John Carr, Dan and Phyllis LaCombe, Scott and Peggy Smith, Thom Smith, Matt Lang, Brian and Kristen Van Wieren, and Kris Francis.

Supervisor Doucette opened our September 9, 2024 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:

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

Approval of Minutes:

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

Pay Bills:

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **pay bills**. Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17239-17262; Fire Fund #9217-9229; Garbage Fund #2139).

Financial Reports:

Clerk Johnson presented the August Financial Reports, which were reviewed. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting. A Quarterly Budget Review will be on the October Meeting Agenda.

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer - Balance as of August 31, 2024: General Fund \$305,033.72; Fire Fund \$270,518.01 + CD \$53,385.38; Garbage Fund \$310,859.02; Road Fund \$4,804.48.

There are no upcoming rentals for September or October. Treasurer Office Hours scheduled for Monday September 16th from 9:00-5:00, the last day to pay 2024 Summer Taxes without interest.

Treasurer Cota also addressed the accusation that Board Members are being paid with Township Funds, other than those authorized. Under no circumstance would the Treasurer or other Board Members accept monies for any reason other than monthly salary. The Treasurer was accused of being paid under the name of KCI, which is a company you would see within our reports. KCI does not mean Kristy Cota Inc, but rather Kent Communications Inc., a company based out of Grand Rapids that is used twice a year to print and mail out tax bills. The Assessor also uses KCI to print and mail out Tax Assessment Notices yearly.

It is very offensive that our Treasurer was accused of this. Anyone is always welcome to review the Township Financial records. Treasurer Cota or Clerk Johnson would be able to discuss every transaction and provide documentation.

Clerk -Since the August Meeting several emails were answered, responded to FOIA requests, returned phone messages or forwarded to appropriate Board Members. Prep for November 5th General Election has started. I expect ballots September 23rd and will begin processing and sending Permanent Absentee Ballots. I will be scheduling the Public Accuracy Test and weekend office hours this week.

Received the L4029 for the Winter Tax Collection, which is on the Agenda, completed the docs needed for the Worker's Comp audit, began the application for the MML Insurance Renewal (The invoice will be presented for review at the October Meeting), and received another application for cemetery lots. Website updates continue. The Audit Report DRAFT from Anderson, Tackman & Co., was received, which will be reviewed by Treasurer Cota and Clerk Johnson.

Donna Shields, ZA Kathleen Lindquist and myself met to review and create the policies related to Zoning Enforcement. Prepared the policies for review and consideration by the Board. Also prepared a Newspaper Publication policy to clear up any confusion regarding publication of notices and announcements.

A desk was purchased for the Clerk/Treasurer office and cabinets were ordered from Menards. Once they are in Ryan will pick them up and get them installed when he has time. The total cost was \$3395.00. 2 or 3 additional base cabinets will be ordered to finish out the space.

Trustee's - Trustee Miller noted he received calls regarding trash complaints and concerns about delayed pickup. It was noted they have new employees and the route is taking longer than usual. Trustee Balmes noted that he continues to receive inquiries regarding roads in the Village of Au Train plat. He indicated that the Board will be considering a Road Ordinance and encouraged participation and attending the meetings to provide input. Also, an inquiry with the GFL driver regarding cart placement was made, the driver stated either way for placement was acceptable.

Supervisor - Supervisor Doucette provided her report. Phone calls continue and are numerous regarding GFL garbage collection. The Regional Government Meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2024. Supervisor Doucette asked Trustee Balmes to attend, if able, as she will be out of town. Recently sent in the Community Building water samples and both were negative. A reminder for the upcoming Au Train Onota Recycling Event for tires September 13th and 14th from 10:00-4:00, located at the Odovero pit in Deerton. Supervisor Doucette also read a thank you letter sent to Steve Barr and the volunteers for their efforts in installing the pickle ball court. A notice about Sea Lamprey Treatments to the Au Train River was posted on Facebook. Supervisor Doucette and Ryan Walther attended the MDOT Informational Meeting. A left turn lane on both sides of State Hwy M28 is planned for construction in 2027. Also, the DNR shut down the Tressel Bridge at the river intersection of M28 and Arbutus/Forest Lake Road. The bridge is deteriorating rapidly and they have concerns as it is used as part of the SOVRA ORV/Snowmobile Trail. Alternate route plans are being made.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Matt Lang.

Boards/Departments:

Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals- ZA Lindquist was present. The monthly Zoning Administrator report was received and is on file. It was reviewed and discussed by the Board. The Planning Commission board member terms were provided. Secretary Shields continues to work on forms updates. The Planning Commission has a Meeting scheduled for September 12th to continue review of the Master Plan and subsequent Zoning Ordinance Amendments. A Public Hearing date has been scheduled for September 18th to hear the continuation of the CUP Resort Request for Seaberg. The Zoning Board of Appeals has a Public Hearing scheduled for September 19th to hear Zoning Administrative Decision Appeals for Smith - Perry Road Zoning Violation Complaints and VanWieren - Seaberg Motel Application approval.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Fuess provided an emailed report prior to the meeting. December Board of Review is scheduled for December 11, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther provided an update. The lock on the dumpster was broke. GFL will need to provide a new key. The kayak launch dock will be removed by the end of the month and Tri County Septic will be notified to empty the Trailhead bathrooms. The porta jons will be removed by the end of the month.

Fire Department: The Fire Department report was provided. The MABAS Agreement needs to be reviewed and approved by the Board. This will be placed on the October Agenda as it was just received today.

Clerk Johnson noted that the Price Control Agreement has been finalized for the 2024-2025 Heating season with UP Propane.

Unfinished Business:

1. Contract CUPPAD Zoning Ordinance Review/Updates - Supervisor Doucette presented the Contract from CUPPAD for the Zoning Ordinance Review and updates, with two options available. Option #1 \$9,450 - two payments. Option #2 Hourly rate \$75.00 per hour, not to exceed \$10,200, billed quarterly. Both options would include: review text of entire current zoning ordinance and assist the Planning Commission in developing ordinance text that meets the standards of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and aligns with the Township's Master Plan, hold Workshop Meetings, facilitate the formal public hearing on the Final Draft and attend one Township Board Meeting wherein the final draft Zoning Ordinance is to be considered for adoption, answer questions and provide clarification and/or guidance as needed. Motion Johnson/seconded Miller, to **accept the Contract with CUPPAD for an update to the Zoning Ordinance, Option #2.** Johnson, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes. Motion carried.

2. Road Sign Replacement Order - Supervisor Doucette noted she has completed the field work and preliminary list of the road signs that need replacement. Further review by the Board, discussion and cost estimate review will be placed on the October Agenda.

3. Ridge Road Residents Request - The Residents of Ridge Road asked that the Township Board Revisit their email dated January 4, 2024 seeking the removal of Planning Commission Members William Gramm, Jason Cain and Bill Weisinger for misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance in office. Supervisor Doucette read portions of an email from Attorney Nordeen regarding the matter. The Board would need to determine if there was misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance in their actions as it relates to the approval of the Resort CUP for Seaberg. Information was provided regarding upcoming expiring terms, reviewing the appointments and education requirements. No further action was taken by the Board. The following are the current terms for Members of the Planning Commission: Jason Cain, Chair – Term Expires 12/31/2025, Donna Shields, Secretary – Term Expires 12/31/2025, Jake Miller, Board Member Representative – Term Expires 11/20/2024, Bill Weisinger, Member – Term Expires 12/31/2024, William Gramm, Member – Term Expires 12/31/2024.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Presented and reviewed.

2. Newspaper Publication Policy - Clerk Johnson presented a Newspaper Publication Policy for consideration. A question came up regarding scheduling a Hearing for the ZBA whereas discussion about what publication for the notice was acceptable. After review and discussion, Motion Cota/seconded Balmes to **approve Newspaper Publication Policy - No. 2024 - 001**, as presented. Motion carried.

3. L4029 2024 Tax Rate Request - Clerk Johnson presented the 2024 Tax Rate form for review as prepared by Alger County Equalization. After review of the General Appropriations Act approved for the 2024-2025 Budget, Motion Johnson/seconded Cota, to **approve the following millage tax rates for the Winter 2024 Tax Collection: General Fund Operate - 0.6782; Fire Fund Voted - 2.8782; Garbage (Waste) Fund Voted - 2.0000; Road Fund Voted - 2.0000.** Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

4. Alger County Road Commission Agreement - Clerk Johnson presented the Agreement between Road Commission and Township for the 2025 Project as previously discussed, which includes paving Curtis Drive 0.54 miles and Norlin Way 0.17 miles. After review and discussion, Supervisor Doucette will contact Engineer/Manager Bob Lindbeck and request that he attend the October Regular Board Meeting to discuss and provide additional details and cost breakdown.

5. Fall Cleanup - Supervisor Doucette confirmed the Fall Clean up date with GFL, with drop off at the Wood Island Landfill in Wetmore for Saturday October 5th from 9:00-11:30 am. Motion Johnson/seconded Doucette to **approve the Fall Clean-up and associated costs funded from the Garbage Fund Account**. Johnson, yes; Doucette, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.

6. Policies for the Enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance - Clerk Johnson presented the existing Ordinance for Ordinance Enforcement Officer and Procedures developed for policies, with the assistance of PC Secretary Donna Shields and Zoning Administrator Kathleen Lindquist. A Policy for the Zoning Administrators procedure for handling zoning ordinance complaints and/or violations is needed to create consistency and transparency in the process. In addition a specific Policy for Zoning Ordinance Enforcement was drafted to set up procedures for the Township Board in governing the enforcement of its Zoning Ordinance. The policies were discussed at length with recommendations made. They will also be provided to the Planning Commission for additional input. Both policies will be presented to the Board for final consideration and approval at the October Regular Township Board Meeting.

Public Comment: Public Comments were received by Kristen Van Wiernan, and John Carr.

Board Member Comments: Board Members Johnson, Doucette, and Cota offered additional comments.

Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Motion Johnson/seconded Cota to **adjourn at 8:12 pm**. Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: _____

DRAFT

09/17/2024
mwj