

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2025 6:00 pm - 7:38 pm

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Supervisor Tom Balmes, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Jake Miller, Trustee and Trustee John Carr. Also Present: Zoning Administrator Donna Shields, Hall Captain Fire Department Brandon Lewis, Matt Lang, and Scott and Peggy Smith.

Supervisor Balmes opened our January 13, 2025 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Moved Johnson/seconded Carr to **approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17355-17385; Fire Fund #9290-9303; Garbage Fund #2145).

Financial Reports/Budget Amendments:

Clerk Johnson presented the December Reports, which were reviewed. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting. No Budget Amendments were recommended.

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer - Balance as of December 31, 2024. General Fund \$296,406.77; Fire Fund \$242,449.67 + CD \$54,250.94; Garbage Fund \$258,594.83; Road Fund \$16,144.09.

Treasurer Cota noted that Winter Tax Bills are coming in steady and disbursed. There were over 45 emails, 6 texts and numerous phone calls with questions. Checks were received from Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians 2% Funding Disbursement of \$3,500.00, Michigan Municipal League Dividend payment of \$1,918.00 and a refund from MML Work's Comp overpayment of audited payroll for Fire Department of \$815.00.

Clerk - Clerk Johnson noted that since the December meeting several emails and FOIA requests were responded to. One in-depth request was denied as the petitioner refused to commit to the costs that were anticipated for the research. This was briefly discussed by the Board. Worked with the incoming Zoning Administrator Donna Shields to get the new office set up started and she took it from there. All files, including pending documents, were transferred. Access was authorized to the ZA Email Account. Donna's transformation of the outdated/not used Assessor office area is impressive. Her ideas and organization skills will be beneficial for the Township and as Clerk I look forward to working with her in this new role.

W2s and 1099s will be processed within the next week, for mail date no later than January 27th. Work on the Budget docs will start soon for our workshop meeting scheduled for February 20th.

Trustee's - Trustee John Carr didn't have a report after just coming on Board. Trustee Miller indicated it was a quiet month overall with Regular Zoning calls, including a permit copy request from Matt Marenger (from the Reel Inn Verhamme issue 20+ years ago). ZA Shields will add that to her list of items to research.

Supervisor - Supervisor Balmes noted that the Alternate Board of Review Member was not sworn in within the 10 days after appointment. He missed several opportunities and scheduled times to meet. The Board will likely need to find a person interested in serving in this position. Water testing was completed for the 4th Quarter. The City of Munising Department of Public Works will be able to provide testing services at \$20.00 per time. They report the results directly to the LMAS Health Department. He also noted receiving several calls regarding garbage collection services from GFL. The Wood Island Landfill Manager, Adam, was spoken to several times. Weather delays and a driver quitting has affected consistent pick up services. It was also noted that garbage needs to be placed by 6:00 am each morning and only items placed in the closed carts will be picked up. Clerk Johnson will provide another copy of the existing contract to the Board for review.

In addition, a call was received from a concerned citizen who suggested that refunds be issued to persons who submit an Appeal of Administrative Decision to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a hearing and are successful. Clerk Johnson noted this has not been a practice. Administrative costs exist whether the appeal is successful or not. No Board Action on the matter was taken.

Information was provided regarding a Grant Opportunity from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation to protect shorelines. Supervisor Balmes is currently attending the online meetings and workshops and will provide additional information as warranted.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Matt Lang.

Boards/Departments:

Zoning Administrator/Panning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals- ZA Shields was present. Monthly Report received, reviewed and discussed. It is on file. A new filing system by Tax ID Number and updates to the Zoning Administrators Report were noted. December 18, 2024 CUP Hearings for STR's Tracy and Oberdorf were approved. The Seaberg Resort CUP was not heard and will be rescheduled. The Planning Commission (January 16th at 6:00) and the Zoning Board of Appeals (January 23rd at 6:30) have scheduled their Organizational Meetings for this month.

Assessor/Board of Review - March Board of Review dates have been determined, with the Organizational Meeting scheduled for March 4th at 5:30 pm and then March 12th from 9:00 to 3:00 pm and March 13th from 3:00 to 9:00 pm to hear appeals.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther noted he would be absent from the meeting but that most of the month was focused on finishing the cabinet installation in the Clerk/Treasurers office and snow removal.

Fire Department: Hall Captain Brandon Lewis was present and provided the Department Report, which is on file.

Unfinished Business:

1. Street Sign Replacement - Any further Board action will be scheduled after obtaining a cost estimate, holding the upcoming February Budget Workshop Meeting, and 2025-2026 Budget Approval in March.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Correspondence was presented. Notice from CUPPAD upcoming meeting and Superior Central Schools thanking the Board for the contribution toward their Playground Project.

2. Guidelines Resolution for Poverty Exemption (Board of Review) - Clerk Johnson had prepared a Resolution for consideration by the Board, however, the Federal Guidelines will not be released until after January 17, 2025. This item will be added to the February Board Meeting Agenda.

3. Zoning Board of Appeals Recording Secretary - Clerk Johnson noted that last month, Zoning Administrator Donna Shields was approved as the Recording Secretary for the Planning Commission. The suggestion was for the Board consider the same role for the Zoning Board of Appeals until such time the Secretary of the ZBA is appointed and is willing and able to provide the duties of a Recording Secretary.

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson, **appoint Donna Shields as the Recording Secretary of the Zoning Board of Appeals (non-member) at a rate of \$75.00 per meeting.** Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Donna Shields and Matt Lang.

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

Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Moved Cota/seconded Balmes to **adjourn at 7:38 pm.**

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson