

**Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2025 6:00 pm - 7:46 pm**

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Supervisor Tom Balmes, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee John Carr. Also Present: Zoning Administrator Donna Shields, Fire Department Member/Maintenance Ryan Walther, Fire Chief Perry King, Assistant Fire Chief Justen Knuttila, Hall Captain Brandon Lewis, Emily Molnar, Scott and Peggy Smith, Lou and Jodi Eiseman. Additional persons may have been in attendance who did sign in.

Supervisor Balmes opened our April 14, 2025 meeting at 6:00 p.m. leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Moved Cota/seconded Johnson to **approve the minutes of the April 14, 2025 Regular Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Moved Balmes/seconded Carr to **approve the minutes of the May 5, 2025 Special Board Meeting**. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:

Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **pay bills**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17454-17475; Fire Fund #9348-9359; Garbage Fund #2149 and #2150).

Financial Reports/Budget Amendments:

Clerk Johnson presented the April (4-1-25 thru 4-30-25) reports, which were reviewed. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting.

Board Member Reports:

Treasurer's Report - Treasurer Cota emailed her report - Balance as of April 30, 2025. General Fund \$337,151.71; Fire Fund \$422,196.32 + CD \$55,130.10; Garbage Fund \$351,718.47; Road Fund \$175,387.29.

Treasurer Cota noted that she has an online call BS&A to set up online tax payments. Upcoming rentals dates 5/24/25 and 6/7/25.

Information about contracting with KCI for Summer Tax Bills and mailing was provided. Moved Johnson/seconded Carr to **contract with KCI for Summer Tax bills processing at a cost of up to \$2,000.00**. Johnson, yes; Carr, yes; Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried.

Clerk Johnson noted that another increase in postage is expected July 1, 2025. Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **purchase 20 rolls of First Class Postage Stamps at a cost of \$1,460.00**. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes;; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

Clerk - Since the April Meeting I have answered several emails, and responded to FOIA requests. Information about a FOIA Request from Duane Newton in which he requested information on a transfer of property within the Plat of Au Train located on the North end of Spruce Street as it connects to Park, was provided to the Board. An estimated FOIA research cost of \$60.00 was determined, which Mr. Newton declined. He continues to email Board members requesting an explanation. Research of Township and County records dating back 3 decades would be required to fulfill this FOIA.

Updated information about the SLFRF Reporting will be addressed under Unfinished Business.

Trustee's - Trustee John Carr had nothing to report. Trustee Jacob Miller noted trash collection questions and discussed installation of the kayak launch/dock at the Heritage Trail. Wondered if the Board should install this year with the expected trestle bridge construction. Installation will be on hold until Supervisor Balmes has a chance to check with the DNR.

Also, Trustee Miller wondered if there was any word regarding the recent Foreclosure Auction of the Forest Lake Dam and surrounding property that was brought up last month. Stephenson Bank, is the lender involved. Supervisor Balmes said he would do some research on the matter.

Supervisor - Supervisor Balmes noted that he continues with the meetings with the US Fish & Wildlife, and Army Corp of Engineers regarding the flooding issues with the Au Train River mouth. Also contacted Bob Lindbeck at the ACRC regarding the orange bridge, where demo funding is still on hold, to indicate the Township may like to consider alternative use as a walking/fishing bridge.

Community Building water testing will be completed this month and Dust control dates will be confirmed when weight restrictions are lifted and availability of the ACRC to grade prep the roads first. It is anticipated to be the last week of May. One inquiry was received regarding when the meetings will go live again.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: Public Comments were received from Emily Molnar.

Boards/Departments:

Fire Department: Fire Chief King was present and provided the report. The \$10,000 reimbursement check from the County was received for the purchase of the rescue tool. The Rescue Truck is back after the recall repairs and Pomasi contracted work. There is hose testing scheduled for June 1st and pump testing on June 6th. There is a controlled burn scheduled for June 7th with Munising Township. The DNR Cooperation Agreement needs to be signed.

Upon discussion and review, Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes to **authorize up to \$2,500.00 in Fire Department expenditures through Pomasi, because of our ongoing relationship, without prior Board approval. Any additional expenditures over \$1,000.00 need prior Board approval. This does not include emergency expenditures.** Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Cota, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

Maintenance Department: Ryan Walther noted that the snow removal equipment has been stored for the winter. New flags and basketball nets have been ordered. Ryan also noted that the pickleball net needs to be replaced.

The riding mower has been picked up from Northland with \$350.00 in repair costs. Discussion about a possible trade-in and upgrade was made. The Heritage Trail bathrooms will be opened next week for the season.

Community Building: Supervisor Balmes noted an issue with the septic system, reported during a rental on Saturday. Efforts were made to have the septic tank emergency pumped to accommodate the Sunday rental, but there was still an issue. Superior Drain and Sewer was able to resolve the blocked pipe and get things flowing again. Supervisor noted that there are no cleanouts installed between the tank and the pipe to the building and that should be considered. Discussion about the procedure for notifying all Board Members when there are rental commitments and issues within the building was made and established.

Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals- ZA Shields was present. The Monthly Activity Report has been received, reviewed and discussed. It is on file.

Assessor/Board of Review - Assessor Fuess report has been received, reviewed and is on file.

Unfinished Business:

1. Board Action Items - Trustee Carr noted that he met with the Window Store and provided a proposal for review. He is still working on obtaining a second proposal for consideration by the Board.
2. SLRRF 2024 Report - Clerk Johnson noted that the 2024 report was completed and filed by the April 30, 2025 deadline. After reaching out for assistance, attending 3 additional Zoom Meetings and discussing with Alger County Treasurer Pam Johnson, who recommend a reporting company that ultimately denied taking on additional clients, it clicked and the reporting issue was corrected. Au Train Township is in full and complete compliance. It was noted that in the future should the Township accept funding from the US Treasury Department, that we consider contracting with a reporting company from the start.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Clerk Johnson presented a funding request from Pictured Rocks Road Race. No Board Action. There will be a Veterans Open Town Hall Meeting on May 15th at the VFW Post in Christmas. Northern Michigan Public Service Academy sent notice that they are phasing-out their services.
 2. Heritage Trail Center - Supervisor Balmes provided information on the cleaning contract with Anthony Grady. He will continue to provide daily cleaning services and garbage removal at a rate of \$20.00 per day. Moved Cota/seconded Balmes to **contract with Anthony Grady to provide bathroom cleaning and garbage removal at the Heritage Trail Center at a rate of \$20.00 per day from May 23, 2025 through September 30, 2025.** Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.
 3. Tri County Septic Portable Restroom placement for the season was discussed. Moved Cota/seconded Carr, to **contract with Tri County Septic to place two portable restrooms at the Au Train River Doucette Bridge Parking area at a rate of \$175.00 each, per month.** Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Johnson, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried. Supervisor Balmes will make arrangements for delivery.
 4. Zoning Administrator Salary - Clerk Johnson noted that Trustee Miller requested a review of the monthly salary for Zoning Administrator Shields be addressed this month. After job performance discussion, Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to **increase the salary for Zoning Administrator Donna Shields to \$1,250.00 monthly, effective June 1, 2025.** Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.
 5. Board Member Appointments - After receipt of letter of interest, Motion Johnson/seconded Carr, to **appoint Emily Molnar to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending 12/31/2026.** Motion carried.
- Ms. Molnar also indicated she would be interested in also serving on the Board of Review. Motion Cota/seconded Balmes to **appoint Emily Molnar to the Board of Review, for a term ending 12/31/2026.** Motion carried.


Public Comment: None

Board Member Comments: None

Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is on June 9, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Moved Balmes/seconded Cota to **adjourn at 7:46 pm.**

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk



Mary Walther Johnson