Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2025 6:00PM - 9:08PM

Roll Call:
Board Members Present: Supervisor Tom Balmes, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, Trustee Jake Miller and Trustee John Carr. There were approximately 10 persons in the audience.

Supervisor Balmes opened our meeting at 6PM leading us with the pledge.

Approval of the Agenda:
Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:
Moved Johnson/seconded Carr to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:
Moved Balmes/seconded Carr to pay bills. Balmes, yes; Carr, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried. (General Fund #17553-17573; Fire Fund #9393-9402; Garbage Fund #2156; Road Fund #3020).

Financial Reports:
Clerk Johnson presented the August, 2025 Financial Reports. Reports are provided to Board Members prior to the meeting. Bank statements arrived late again from the bank. No Budget Amendments recommended. Quarterly review for the FY 1st and 2nd Quarter will be placed on the October Regular Meeting Agenda.

Board Member Reports:
Treasurer - Balance as of August 31, 2025: General Fund $302,845.67; Fire Fund $426,709.85 + CD $55,130.10; Garbage Fund $287,907.35; Road Fund $181,546.97.

The Treasurer's Office will be holding office hours on September 15th from 9:00AM to 5:00PM, the last day of Summer Tax Collection (without penalty and interest).

Treasurer Cota also noted she would be absent from the October Regular Board Meeting.

Clerk - Since the August Meeting several emails, and FOIA requests were responded to. The Civil Infraction Ordinance Notice was prepared and submitted for publication. Election Equipment maintenance (as contracted through the state), was completed. Parcel Division applications were received and forwarded to Attorney Nordeen for review, and review of the MML Insurance Quote prompted further analysis of building replacements costs. A quote should be received for the renewal within the next few weeks and will be forward to the Board for review.

Trustee's - Trustee Carr noted that he met with the Window Store to check measurements for the window replacement bid. He also attending the Planning Commission Meeting, checked the dumpster placed on Maple Grove Road and worked on securing information regarding the operation of the installed security camera system from the hall.

Trustee Miller inquired about additional copies of the current Master Plan and wondered if there was any update from GFL about replacement garbage carts. Also, wondered if any word was received about repair the major pot hole at Forest Lake Road and M28.

Supervisor - Supervisor Balmes indicated that recent water testing passed. Also noted the Alger County Emergency Management was contacted about the Forest Lake Dam and also inquired about an alarm system. Recently attended the Alger County Road Commission meeting for any updates on the Woodland Ave "Orange" bridge project. Funding remains on hold, but they are moving forward as planned, with no cost to the Township, as soon as it is restored. Supervisor Balmes indicated to the Commission that the Township is still very interested in creating a walking/fisher pier in the area. The ACRC is concerned about safety and liability, however, the Township could apply for a grant to possibly develop a fishing platform. The ACRC could retain access rights and would be open to considering a project for that area after the bridge is removed.

There were numerous calls regarding the Curtis Drive Road improvement project before the Road Commission was complete. Concerns resolved themselves once the project was finalized. Blight Complaints were addressed regarding Mardi Krantz property, Kimar boats on M28, and the Christmas Mall clean-up continues. Supervisor Balmes met with the Michigan Municipal League auditor to go over the Community Building. It was noted that the fire extinguishers need to be checked and tagged. Lammi (now Summit Fire Protection) should be contacted for this service.

Seaberg Enterprise vs Au Train Township hearing scheduled for October 28th at 1:15 PM, at Alger County Circuit Court.

Special Presentation: Bob Lindbeck, Engineer/Manager for the Alger County Road Commission presented the 2026 Project Agreement, which includes the last 1.2 miles of 16 Mile Lake Road extending north to Doe Lake Road. Also discussion about updating the 5 Year Road Plan, millage expiration date, maintenance of existing paved projects and other areas of need within the township. A Special Meeting will be scheduled at a future date to work on an updated 5-Year Road Plan for late winter/early spring to develop based on funding and needs. The Board will also need to consider a Road Fund Millage renewal for placement on the August 2026 Primary Ballot.

After review of the Agreement, Moved Johnson, seconded Cota to **approve the 2026 Agreement with the Alger County Road Commission, that includes the final portion of 16 Mile Lake Road at a cost of $190,000 + 10% contingency (if necessary) - for a Township obligation of not more than $209,000.** Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Public Comments were received by Tyler Penrod, Jesse Cadwell, and John Carr who read a portion of an email from Matt Lang, as a member of the Planning Commission.

Boards/Departments:

Maintenance Department: Ryan provided a brief update to the Board. Trustee Carr presented the window replacement proposal from The Windows Store to replace the window in the Supervisor's office and in the Zoning Administrator/Assessor office. They can install these when they schedule the door replacement project. Moved Cota, seconded Johnson, to **accept the proposal from The Windows Store for replacement windows in the amount of $3,531.41**. Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

Fire Department: No report this month.

Assessor/Board of Review - Report received and on file.

Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals- Zoning Administrator Donna Shields was present and provided her report. Additional information was provided, including discussion regarding upcoming educational opportunities.

Planning Commission Member Scott Smith has resigned from his position. Moved Carr, seconded Cota to **accept the resignation of Planning Commission member Scott Smith**. Motion carried. Scott was thanked by the Board for serving as a member.

Clerk Johnson will advertise for the open position and place any appointment consideration on the October Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

Unfinished Business:

1. Board Action Items - None

2. Zoning Fees - Additional discussion with consideration to raising zoning permit costs for an "after the fact" application. Zoning Administrator Donna Shields was asked to do a little more research on the matter and report back to the Board. Majority of the Townships surveyed or who responded on an open request in the MTA forum, indicated they double the permit application fees. She also was able to obtain additional information from MSU. After continued discussion, Moved Carr, seconded Balmes, to **double the zoning fee costs for an after-the-fact application**. Carr, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes; Cota, no. Motion carried.

3. Ordinance Enforcement Officer - Clerk Johnson presented the Ordinance Enforcement Officer Ordinance No. 01-1010, adopted October 10, 2001, for review. After discussion, the Board came to agreement that *Blight Ordinance Complaints* would be addressed by the Board as a whole and assigned to a Board Member for review on an as received basis. *Zoning Ordinance Complaints* would be addressed by the Zoning Administrator and *Noise Ordinance Complaints* would be addressed by the Supervisor.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - None

2. MML Insurance Proposal Review - Clerk Johnson presented the adjusted replacement costs for Township Buildings. The proposal will be prepared based on this information and emailed to Board Members upon receipt from the Michigan Municipal League.

3. Email/Blight Complaint - Clerk Johnson provided information to the Board regarding a Blight Complaint received by Shawn Vass for the dumpster located on Maple Grove Road. Trustee Carr visited the site earlier today and provided photos to indicate that there is currently no blight on site. Mr. Vass will be notified that no violation of blight exists and further explain the need for the dumpster and its placement on Maple Grove Road for use by residents.

4. Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Review of the recommendations from the Planning Commission for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance as they relate to short term rentals, continued based on discussion by the Township Board at their August 11th Regular Board Meeting and then the Planning Commission at their August 21st Meeting. After much debate, the need for a Special Meeting, with an invitation to the

members of the Planning Commission, is needed to come to an agreement. There are still concerns about the Districts that would be able to obtain approval, as a permitted use or by Conditional Use Permit, whether CUPs are needed at all, and which Districts short term rentals would be removed as permitted or available by Conditional Use Permit (for any new requests). October 2nd at 6:00 PM is the tentative date for the Special Meeting contingent on confirmation from members of the Planning Commission and Ryan Carrig from CUPPAD being able to attend.

Public Comment: Public comments were received by Donna Shields, Raelene Reilly, and Tyler Penrod.

Board Member Comments: None.

Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2025 at 6:00PM

Adjournment: Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes to **adjourn at 9:08PM.** Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

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Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: October 10, 2025

Prepared: 09/23/2025
mwj