Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2026 6:00PM - 8:15PM

Roll Call:
Board Members Present: Supervisor Tom Balmes, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, and Trustee John Carr. Absent: Trustee Jake Miller. There were 6 persons in the audience.

Supervisor Balmes opened our meeting at 6:00PM 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 Cota to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:
Moved Balmes/seconded Carr to pay bills. Balmes, yes; Carr, yes; Miller, yes; Cota, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried (General Fund #17891-17914; Fire Fund #9576-9591; Garbage Fund #2173-2174; Road Fund #3023. Clerk Johnson expected to pay election inspectors and the septic contractor, upon health department approval, before the next meeting.

Financial Reports:
Clerk Johnson presented the September 2026 Financial Reports. Reports were emailed to Board members prior to the Meeting. These cover the period 9/1/2026 through 9/30/2026. Funds remain within spending limits and a review of year to date reports and consider any amendments at the November meeting.

Board Member Reports:
Treasurer - Balance as of September 30, 2026: General Fund $267,101.28; Fire Fund $329,272.68 + CD $56,931.40; Garbage Fund $283,656.24; Road Fund $18,959.88. A hall rental was scheduled for the annual Craft Show on November 7, 2026. The Munising Public School has not yet paid the summer tax collection bill and the Treasurer previously approved non-statutory payment will follow receipt.

Clerk - Since the last meeting, the Clerk reported continued FOIA activity and emails. Received the Draft Audit, reviewed and accepted. Notification was received that it was filed to the State.

Work with our Zoning Administrator (the staff) on several issues and in preparing the DRAFT Resolution for a Moratorium on New Resort Uses was completed. Clerk Johnson noted that she will be concentrating on November General Election Administration activities effective Saturday October 17th. Addressing several responsibilities and deadlines, as well as early voting hours, office hours and testing. There may be delays in responding to emails/FOIA's during that two week period.

Trustee's - Trustee Carr noted that he attended the Planning Meeting on September 29th, Superior Electric completed the generators service, reviewed options with TDS for internet at the Township Hall as it may offer faster speeds and better pricing. He also received clarifications on the HVAC Quotes reviewed in August so the Board can proceed with awarding the proposal.

Trustee Miller noted that he met with GCI Engineers at the Forest Lake Dam. Au Train Lake/River are a little lower this year, but lack of rainfall and drought conditions are contributing factors as well.

The state is still hopeful the trail bridge can be installed before winter. Trustee Miller also noted that the necessary parts for the Kayak Launch should be ordered so the repairs and installation can be on schedule in the spring.

Supervisor - Supervisor Balmes updated the Board on recent meetings attended. EGLE's Dam Safety Director reported that GCI and the State were still deciding whether to remove the dam fully, partially, or pursue another option. There is 5 million allocated to dam projects statewide. Physical work is not likely until 2027. Supervisor Balmes also noted receiving complaints regarding the Contractors yard on Woodland Avenue. Zoning Administrator Shields will reach out to the owner and encourage they apply for a CUP on Oak Street. The Trestle Bridge project is moving forward with funding secured. Contacted Tri County Septic to pull the portable toilets and the closure of the Heritage Trail will coincide with the State Roadside Park closures.

Special Presentation: Terry Pihlainen introduced himself as a Candidate for District 4 County Commissioner and described his public service background. He encourage communication between the Township and County. A brief question and answer period followed.

Bob Lindbeck, Manager/Engineer with the Alger County Road Commission presented the 2027 Contract Agreement and the 5 Year Road Plan. Additional information was provided regarding dust control, their local road policy for development, "paper" streets in platted subdivisions, easements, rights of way, setbacks, road abandonment and plat amendments.

Discussions about the need for a Township Road Ordinance that states the Township takes no responsibility for the development of "paper" roads and that the Township has no responsibility to fund their construction. The funding has been allocated for the Orange Bridge (East end of Woodland Avenue) removal project, which is moving forward with the environmental phase.

After review and discussion, Moved Cota/seconded Miller, to enter into a contract with the Alger County Road Commission for the 2027 Road Improvements as presented, at a Township Cost of $95,000 plus a 10% Contingency. Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes; Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Public comments were received via email from Duane Newton.

Boards/Departments:
Maintenance Department/Comm Bldg/Cemetery/Heritage Trail: Ryan provided an update to the Board noting he spoke with Tri County Septic to schedule the closure of the Heritage Trail bathrooms to coincide with state park closures. Ryan will winterize facilities and store the damaged invasive species sign and materials that was at the Heritage Trial. The sign is usable but installation posts were damaged. A safer location for reinstallation will occur in the Spring. Temporary plywood wind protection at the Clerk/Treasurer entrance will be installed using existing supports. Plow and truck will be checked for winter readiness.

Fire Department: Assistant Fire Chief Knuttila provided a report to the Board. There were 5 calls for the month. Discussion about the Old Christmas Fire Hall/Storage building improvement project was made. Bid Advertising will be scheduled. The project scope includes removing the existing and replacing the bathroom, add an office, storage furnace area, and replacement of the water heater and furnace, as well as water lines and electrical work.

Swem requested that the MDOT Inspections and Certifications service start in November 2026, rather than Spring 2027. This would align better with the service availability. Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes, to authorize the MDOT Inspections and Certifications with Swem Services beginning in November 2026. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes; Cota, yes. Motion carried.

Discussion about the Departments By-laws and training requirements was made. Noting both needed updates. State requirements are 12 hours per year, 36 over a 3-year period. Along with documented compliance and smoke-program certification. Supervisor Balmes will schedule a meeting with Fire Department Chief/Assistant Fire Chief and Attorney Nordeen for guidance.

Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals- Zoning Administrator Donna Shields was present and gave her report, which included the 2026 Cumulative report on permits/meetings and actions. Specific items within the report were discussed as needed.

Zoning Administrator Shields also reported attending meetings and continued training. Supervisor Balmes wanted to thank ZA Shields for her commitment to the time and energy continually attending education opportunities.

Assessor/Board of Review - No Assessor Report was received this month. December Board of Review is scheduled.

Unfinished Business:

1. Board Action Items - None

2. UPDATE - Seaberg Properties, LLC vs Au Train Township - Court of Appeals. As previously noted there was an appeal filed. There is still no movement from the Court on the Appeal.

3. UPDATE - Seaberg Properties, LLC vs Au Train Township - Claim of Appeal that was filed in Alger County Circuit Court. Just received notification that the brief was received by the Petitioner. Attorney Nordeen is working on filing our response.

4. Township Hall Furnace/AC Replacement Bids - Additional information was provided to the Board reviewing the comparison of manufacturer and warranty of products offered by all three bids received. Moved Carr/second Balmes to accept the Bid Proposal from Hiawatha Heating and Cooling in the amount of $14,250.00 for the Township Hall HVAC System Replacement, with ½ down and balance upon completion. Carr, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried.

5. Septic System Installation - Supervisor Balmes noted that the installation is complete. Upon confirmation and approval from the LMAS Health Department Sanitarian, payment is authorized.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - Received a request for a Contract for Services from the Tri County Fire Department. As previously contracted, they provide additional support services/Mutual Aid for areas on Co Rd 440 and the southern areas in the Township. Moved Cota/seconded Carr, to Contract for Support Services with the Tri County Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of $3,000. Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

Received notification that our current long term 2% Funding Allocation is under review and may be subject to reduction or cancellation by the Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors. The Long Term 2% Funding for Fall 2026 will be made without changes. No final decision has been made. Supervisor Balmes will contact them and discuss the matter and remind them the Township is providing service directly to the Christmas Casino, located within our Township. The Township has received $5,000 yearly, with quarterly payments. Funds are typically placed in the General Fund Account.

2. Computer Equipment Purchase - As noted in August, the Township Supervisors laptop was having issues, along with the scanner. It was determined that it cannot be repaired. Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to authorize up to $1,200 for the purchase of a laptop and scanner for the Supervisor's office. Johnson, yes; Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Miller, yes; Balmes, yes. Motion carried.

3. Resolution to Impose a Six Month Moratorium on New Resort Uses. Clerk Johnson presented the Draft Resolution for consideration, as recommended by the Planning Commission, as they continue the review of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. *See Attachment No. 1 for the Complete Resolution*

AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP BOARD
RESOLUTION TO IMPOSE A SIX MONTH MORATORIUM ON NEW RESORT USES

Resolution Number 2026- 009
Resolution offered by Board Member: Carr
Resolution seconded by Board Member: Johnson

ROLL CALL VOTE
AYES: Carr, Johnson, Balmes, Cota, Miller
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.
Dated: October 12, 2026

4. Claim of Appeal - Clerk Johnson noted that just prior to the meeting tonight, Supervisor Balmes was served by LMPR, LLC Notice of their Claim of Appeal of the decision by the Planning Commission to deny their CUP Application for a Short Term Rental on Radcliffe Road. Attorney Nordeen will be notified of it's receipt and a copy dropped off this week.

Public Comment: Public Comment was received by Donna Shields and by email from Duane Newton.
Board Member Comments: None
Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2026 at 6:00PM.
Adjournment: Moved Balmes/seconded Carr to adjourn at 7:48PM. Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE:
Prepared: 10/20/2026
mwj

AU TRAIN TOWNSHIP BOARD
RESOLUTION TO IMPOSE A SIX MONTH MORATORIUM ON NEW RESORT USES

Au Train Township, Alger County
Resolution Number 2026- 009
October 12, 2026

WHEREAS, Au Train Township, Alger County, Michigan (the "Township"), has adopted the Au Train Township Zoning Ordinance pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 PA 110, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the Township has recently undertaken amendments to its Zoning Ordinance concerning short-term rentals and conditional uses, demonstrating the Township's continuing review of regulations concerning transient and seasonal lodging uses; and

WHEREAS, the Au Train Township Master Plan provides a framework for future land use and development within the Township, and the Township Board desires to ensure that its zoning regulations governing Resort uses are appropriately coordinated with the Township's planning objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board desires to undertake a comprehensive review of the Township's regulations applicable to Resort uses, including their appropriate zoning districts, density, intensity, site design, access, parking, setbacks, water and wastewater capacity, shoreline and natural-resource impacts, compatibility with neighboring properties, and relationship to other transient lodging uses; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds that accepting and processing new applications for Resort uses while the Township's regulations are under review could result in development being approved under standards that may subsequently require amendment; and

WHEREAS, a temporary and limited moratorium will provide the Township Board and Planning Commission with a reasonable period in which to review the existing Resort regulations, receive public input, consult with planning and legal professionals as appropriate, and determine whether amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are warranted; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board intends that this moratorium be limited to the establishment of new Resort uses, as that term is defined in the Township's Zoning Ordinance, and does not intend by this resolution to prohibit or regulate lawful existing uses beyond the requirements otherwise applicable under the Zoning Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Au Train Township Board hereby imposes a six-month moratorium on the establishment, approval, and processing of new Resort uses within Au Train Township, subject to the terms and limitations of this Resolution.

Section 1. Definition of Resort
For purposes of this Resolution, "Resort" shall have the same meaning as the term is defined in Section 202 of the Au Train Township Zoning Ordinance

Section 2. Duration and Effective Date
This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Au Train Township Board and shall remain in effect for six (6) months from the effective date, expiring at 11:59 p.m. on April 12, 2027, unless earlier terminated by action of the Township Board. Any extension of the moratorium shall require separate action by the Township Board and shall comply with applicable Michigan law.

Section 3. Applications Filed During the Moratorium
During the moratorium, the Township shall not accept for processing, schedule for consideration, or issue zoning approval for an application whose purpose is to establish a new Resort use, except as expressly provided in this Resolution.

The Zoning Administrator shall determine, subject to applicable appeal rights and Township procedures, whether an application constitutes an application for a Resort use within the meaning of this Resolution.

Section 4. Applications Pending on the Effective Date
Any application for a new Resort use that is pending and has not received final approval as of the effective date of this Resolution shall be placed on administrative hold for the duration of the moratorium, except to the extent that withholding action would impair a vested right or otherwise violate applicable law. The filing date of an application shall not, by itself, create a vested right to approval under the Zoning Ordinance.

Section 5. Planning Commission Review
During the moratorium, the Au Train Township Planning Commission is directed to review the Township's Resort regulations and make recommendations to the Township Board concerning any appropriate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Clerk shall maintain a copy of this Resolution as part of the official records of the Township and shall provide copies to the Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, and other Township officials responsible for zoning administration.

TOWNSHIP OF AU TRAIN

ALGER COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Resolution offered by Board Member: Carr

Resolution seconded by Board Member: Johnson

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Carr, Johnson, Balmes, Cota, Miller

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dated: October 12, 2026

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Au Train Township Supervisor, Thomas Balmes

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Au Train Township Clerk, Mary Walther Johnson