Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2026 6:00PM - 7:48PM

Roll Call:
Board Members Present: Supervisor Tom Balmes, Clerk Mary Johnson, Treasurer Kristy Cota, and Trustee John Carr. Absent: Trustee Jake Miller. There were 3 persons in the audience.

Supervisor Balmes opened our meeting at 6:00PM leading us with the pledge.

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

Approval of Minutes:
Moved Johnson/seconded Cota to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Pay Bills:
Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes to pay bills. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Carr, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes. Motion carried (General Fund #17866-17890; Fire Fund #9559-9575; Garbage Fund #2172; Road Fund #3022.

Financial Reports:
Clerk Johnson presented the September 2026 Financial Reports. Reports were emailed to Board members prior to the Meeting. The reporting period is August 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026.

Board Member Reports:
Treasurer - Balance as of August 31, 2026: General Fund $286,784.41; Fire Fund $354,811.63 + CD $56,931.40; Garbage Fund $300,129.86; Road Fund $227,787.69.

A hall rental was scheduled for the annual Craft Show on November 7, 2026. Treasurer Cota provided an update on Summer Tax Collection. Treasurer Office Hours are scheduled for September 15th from 9:00-5:00 pm for the last day of Summer Tax Collection without penalty/interest. In addition, a call was received from a person confronted by a local resident for using the Maple Grove Road dumpster. He complained about their use and wondered why Mirror Lake Road couldn't use tipper cans as an option.

Clerk - Since the last meeting, the Clerk reported continued FOIA activity and emails. SLFRF Report 2026 Close out was completed. There should be no more reporting requirements and since the grant amount was less than $500,000 there will not be an audit by the Department of Treasury.

Auditors were met 8/31/26 and completed the onsite data collection by Wednesday. The MML Insurance Renewal application was completed and a cost quote was received for review by the Board. Election Administration for November will resume soon. The Election Commission will meet on October 12th at 5:45. There is a final Election Inspector Training scheduled for September 23rd at 10 am and 6 pm. The Public Accuracy Testing and office hours for the weekend prior to the election are being arranged. Early Voting will be held at the Alger County Complex for 9 days prior to the election.

Trustee's - Trustee Carr noted that he attend the Planning CUP Hearing on August 13th for a STR, which failed, and a Zoning Ordinance amendment meeting on September 10th. Met with the Alger County sanitarian and had Bob Beauchaine repair the well head conduit. Obtained a service order with Superior Electric for generator maintenance at the Community Building and fire halls. Three quotes were obtained for HVAC replacement at the hall and contacted TDS to inquire about their fiber optic service for internet so the Board can consider switching from Charter due to lower cost and higher speeds.

Trustee Miller stated that the sign and flood gage has been installed at the Doucette Bridge. A second one will be considered for the kayak launch/public area access. He continues to receive questions about the dam and lake levels, but current conditions appear typical and steady. It was noted that the state hired GCI Consultants to work on the dam project, with engineering and consulting continuing and likely a spring report.

Supervisor - Supervisor Balmes updated the Board on recent meetings attended. The Township assigned laptop isn't working. Trustee Carr will take it in and see if it can be repaired or any data recovered. Clerk Johnson noted that file backup is important and suggested a jump drive or external hard drive. Supervisor Balmes also noted he met with the LMAS HD Sanitarian for the Community Building water inspection and noted the well head repairs needed, that Trustee Carr addressed. Additionally, check valves are needed on hose bibs and out spigots.

Special Presentation: None

Public Comment: Wyatt Seaberg offered public comments to the Board.

Boards/Departments:
Fire Department: No report was provided as neither the Fire Chief or Assistant were able to attend. There was one new member added, Adam Thompson and 2 calls.

Maintenance Department/Comm Bldg/Cemetery/Heritage Trail: Ryan provided an quick update to the Board via text. Clerk Johnson noted that pre-purchase with UP Propane was due. Moved Cota/seconded Balmes, to enter into a contract for pre-purchase propane for the upcoming heating season with UP Propane. 900 gallons at a rate of $1.799 per gallon for a total of $1,269.90 after current credit was applied. Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

Recreation: The porta jons are contracted to remain in place through the end of September. Supervisor Balmes will confirm arrangement with Maintenance Ryan Walther regarding the closing up of the trailhead bathroom vault. This typically coincides with the state closing the roadside parks.

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 a MTA webinar on sample data center ordinance language. In addition Verizon has a firm scouting the area for a potential parcel for a new cell tower as nearby towers are full. The purpose would be to improve service for areas including 16 Mile Lake and the southern part of Au Train Lake. The issue regarding zoning compliance for cell towers in possible residential districts is something the Planning Commission will consider as part of their broader ordinance revisions. Discussion about Data Center ordinances, resolutions, or moratoriums and future considerations for the Planning Commission.

Assessor/Board of Review - The Assessor report received this month was briefly reviewed. Assessor Fuess indicated that deeds, property transfer affidavits and PRE's have been collected, coded and entered. Fieldwork is ongoing with new construction visits across the township. December Board of Review was confirmed for December 16th at 6:00 pm.

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 by Seaberg Properties, LLC. Attorney Nordeen reported that 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 is still waiting for the brief to be filed on behalf of the Petitioner. Upon receipt the Township Attorney will file our response.

New Business:

1. Correspondence - None

2. Septic System Bids and Approval - Clerk Johnson presented two bids for the septic system installation for consideration. The Board discussed the design, contractor responsibilities and requirement that payment would not be made until the Health Department Sanitarian approved the completed project. It was noted that the project included a one-tank gravity system rather than a more complicated two-tank pump up system (the second tank servicing the fire hall). The Board also discussed the removal of the property line slab and trees, neighbor coordination, and property line location.

Bid Amounts: - Seaberg Enterprise: $15,990 and Northern Excavating: $7,320.

Moved Cota/seconded Balmes to approve the bid from Northern Excavating for Septic System Installation in the amount of $7,320. Cota, yes; Balmes, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

3. Township Hall Furnace/AC replacement Bids - Clerk Johnson presented three bids for a furnace and air conditioner at the Township Hall. The Board discussion included differences in model, unit size, removal/disposal of existing system, condenser pad inclusion, and warranty length.

Bid Amounts: Trudell Plumbing & Heating: $13,660, Hiawatha Heating and Cooling: $14,250 and Micks Mechanical: $14,654.

The Board discussed needing more information, especially warranty details and model numbers, before making a final decision. Action was tabled until the October meeting.

4. Generator Service Agreement - The Board reviewed a generator service agreement and authorization with Superior Electric. The equipment has not been serviced recently and batteries need replacement. The Board accepted the service arrangement with Superior Electric (original installer) as preventative maintenance, with the understanding that the batteries had already been ordered and the costs were reasonable. The costs for the Fire Department units at 16 Mile Lake and Christmas are $795.00 and the Township Hall $350.00.

5. L4029 Tax Rate Request Review/Approval (Winter 2026 Tax Collection) - The Board reviewed and completed the annual Winter Tax Rate Discussion, which included the rates determined with the March, 2026 Budget Approval and General Appropriations Act Resolution. Moved Johnson/seconded Balmes, to approve the 2026 Tax Rate Request - Form L4029 for the Winter Tax Collection. The following rates were confirmed: General Fund Allocate- 0.6647; Road Fund- 0.9605; Fire Fund- 2.9407; Garbage Fund- 2.0000. Johnson, yes; Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

The Board also discussed whether to pursue a future millage to support the General Fund. The 1 mill Allocate continues to be reduced by the Headlee Rollback and is now only 0.6647. There also remains the possibility of restoring the full 1 mill via election or approaching the Alger County Board of Commissioners asking them to consider restoring it to the full one mill, as originally intended, for AuTrain Township and all other Townships within the community.

6. Audit Documents - ACM CPA's PLLC f/k/a Anderson, Tackman & Co. - Clerk Johnson presented documents to the Board for review regarding engagement with ACM CPA's PLLC for audit services. Anderson, Tackman & Co is now A. Cedric and Michaels (ACM). Moved Cota/seconded Johnson, to approve the Consent of Transfer and Engagement Letter for audit services. Motion carried.

The cost of the services was also presented. Moved Balmes/seconded Cota to approve the contract for audit services with ACM CPA'S PLLC in the amount of $10,500. Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Carr, yes; Miller, yes; Johnson, yes. Motion carried.

7. Michigan Municipal League Insurance Proposal - Clerk Johnson presented the proposal from MML for renewal of Liability/Property insurance coverage for one year, effective October 22, 2026. Clerk Johnson noted that the increase in cost was driven by higher property values, replacement costs, a 4% inflation guard, payroll changes, and a small increase. Part of the cost will be offset by a dividend of approximately $810.00. Moved Balmes/seconded Cota to approve the renewal of Liabillity/Property Insurance with MML for one year effective October 22, 2026 in the amount of $26,665 plus membership fee of $225.00. Balmes, yes; Cota, yes; Johnson, yes; Miller, yes; Carr, yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Public Comment was received by Duane Newton, via email and Wyatt Seaberg.

Board Member Comments: Board Member comments included discussion about upcoming changes and higher costs expected from BS&A, which may force municipalities toward cloud-based systems. In addition Quickbooks (Intuit) is expected to only offer Online systems as a replacement for their desktop version currently used by the Township. The reduction in State Revenue payments, rising costs and increases in administrative software and personel are all issues the Township will be facing in the future.

Next Meeting: The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for October 12th, 2026 at 6:00PM.

Adjournment: Moved Balmes/seconded Johnson to adjourn at 7:48PM. Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Walther Johnson, Clerk

MW Johnson

Mary Walther Johnson

APPROVED DATE: October 12, 2026
Prepared: 09/22/2026 mwj