

Watertown Township
2630 South Sandusky Rd
Sandusky, MI 48471

Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 4, 2025 – 6:03 pm

MEMBERSHIP ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Cambridge, Coats, Cole, Diaz, Kenny & Ross

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: Matt Cole, Scott Straffon, Diane & Don Ferguson, Gary Heberling, Bill Parrish, Clint & Kenton Stoutenburg, Dick Henderson, Jason Radloff, Jim Hacker, Holly & Andrew Knight, Jim Cambridge

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST BOARD MEETING

Kenny requested approval of the January 7, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

*** Motion by Cambridge, supported by Cole to approve the January 7, 2025 minutes as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Supervisor Kenny instructed Trustee Cole that unapproved Board Minutes are to be posted on the website within 8 business days after each meeting.

ADDITION OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Cole to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

County Commissioner Gary Heberling reported:

- To promote transparency and accountability with his constituents, he sends out a monthly update report.
- At the first meeting of the 2025 year, the Board of Commissioners Officers were selected
- The Personnel Committee approved filling the position of Drain Maintenance Supervisor and two Court Clerk Positions.
- Commissioners recognized and honored retiring personnel.
- Commissioners approved the FY2026 Contract Clauses Certification and adopted the FY2026 Resolution of Intent for Sanilac Transportation.
- Commissioners approved the Economic Development Corporation Agreement Between Huron County Economic Development Corporation and the County of Sanilac.
- Commissioners approved an update to the Lexington County Park Project.
- Animal Control Division purchased a vehicle from the Sail Conservation Department. Two Animal Control Vehicles will be put up for sale.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Coats

1) Approval of Checks Issued

- Coats requested the Board's approval of the monthly payments, check numbers 17863 – 17889 equaling \$14,250.88

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Cole to approve the monthly payments as presented. All in favor Motion carried

Coats responded to the concerns expressed at the January 2025 Board Meeting.

- There are no dedicated funds for the sewer. She believes this is referring to when there was a Watertown Utility Authority and the funds were separated and dedicated. There is now a fund within the fund. A set of books are kept separate and the funds are moved over because all expenses and items are paid through the general fund.
- In regards to sewer invoicing. Her internet kicked out while updating the software. As a result, she couldn't use the software until it could be fixed several months later. Then 3 months ago she lost power while using the software causing software issues with closing out one month and starting another. This took another couple of months to sort out.

CLERK'S REPORT: Ross

1) Approval of Current Claim

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Cole to approve the current claims as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ross reported that:

- The Township received a Workman's Compensation dividend check for \$122.55. She gave the check to the Treasurer for deposit.
- The audit is scheduled for June 12th with King & King CPA.

CEMETERY REPORT: Tammy Ross

1) Burials

- None

SEWER REPORT: Jim Hacker

Jim Hacker reported that:

- Residents have raised concerns about overage charges from the August reading. He reviewed all the information but could not identify an issue. The readings appear to be accurate, and the readings taken three months later were all higher, as expected.
- Several meters cannot be read or accessed, so the readings are estimated.

Zoning: Jim Hacker

Jim Hacker reported that:

- He approved the Mark Campbell Land Split and forwarded to the Assessor.

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Ross to approve the land split from Campbell LLC to Mark Campbell as presented. All in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried

- He has another application he is working on, but the parcel is not big enough for the shed size requested.
- The MSU Zoning Administrator certification classes are still full. He is on the waiting list for the next available class.

WEBSITE REPORT: Cambridge

Cambridge reported that she:

- Added and archived proposed & approved minutes & agendas as appropriate.
- Updated the calendar as appropriate.
- Added the missing winter tax invoices notice.
- Added bid requests for Auditing and Snow Plowing Services.
- Added Planning Commission Member needed notice and the application.

Cambridge also reported the next Planning Commission Meeting will be March 20, 2025.

TAX ASSESSOR: Diaz

Diaz:

- Requested the Board consideration of the 2025 Poverty Exemption Policy & Guidelines.

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Coats to approve the 2025 Poverty Exemption Policy & Guidelines as presented.
Roll call vote, All in favor, Motion carried

- Reported that Board of Review Meetings will be held on March 10th from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm and March 11th from 3:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Notices will be sent out the last week of February 2025. Cambridge will add this notice to the website. Notices will also be posted, by Diaz, in the newspaper and on the Township Hall door.

CORRESPONDENCE

- 1) Activation Alert for Sensors
 - Kenny reported that the sensors were found in the election mailbox.
 - Kenny thanked Steve Scribner for reporting a window open in the basement. Kenny investigated and it looked like the window fell open. There was no evidence of anything stolen or frozen.
- 2) Budget Information Request to Board
 - Kenny requested that the Board schedule a Public Budget Hearing. A notice must be posted on the door, the website and in the newspaper six (6) days before the meeting. The Board, by unanimous consensus, scheduled the Public Budget Meeting Hearing at 6:00 on March 4, 2025. The regular Board meeting will start after completion of the Budget Hearing. Ross will notify the newspaper. Cambridge will post on the website and on the Hall door.
 - Coats and/or Ross will provide a general ledger of expenses before the budget meeting.
- 3) SLC Water Service Reply to Questions
 - Kenny reported that SLC Water Service Representative, Aaron Bennett did send an email regarding the new water meters and how they work with BS&A, but he could not make the meeting in person. If needed, he can attend the regular March Board meeting. There will be a \$1.06 per month cellular end user fee.
- 4) Brine SCRS
 - Kenny will contact Wilkinson Solutions Inc. regarding brining township roads.
- 5) USPS Missing Mail Update
 - Kenny reported that the search for missing mail is ongoing.
- 6) Bill Dixon RACO Alarm Renewal
 - Kenny reported that previous Supervisor Bill Dixon forwarded the Annual Service Renewal Notice for the Sewer System Alarm account. Kenny will reach out to Dixon to request that an invoice be sent directly to Ross.

Kenny received an update from Foster and Swift regarding the State of Michigan regarding House Bills 4027 & 4028. The bills are an effort to restore local control over renewable energy projects & end the state's control. Municipal leaders are calling on lawmakers to pass House Bills 4027 & 4028 without delay.

Kenny spoke about emails that were received regarding needed tax information

Kenny received an invoice from Steve Scribner for snow plowing.

Kenny received a notice from SEMCO regarding a possible rate increases for the township.

Kenny received a notice from the Sanilac County Sheriff's Department regarding a slight rate increase for Blight Officer Service.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Snow Plowing Bid
 - Kenny reported that four (4) snow bids were received and he reviewed them with the Board

*** Motion by Coats, Supported by Cambridge to award the snow plowing bid to Wolverine Lawn Care for the remainder of the 2025 snow season. All in favor. Motion carried.

- 2) ESTA Sick Time for Employees
 - Cambridge led a discussion on how, if approved, changes of the Sick Time Act (ESTA) through House Bill 4002 may affect the Township payroll.
- 3) Audit CPA Firm
 - Kenny reported that he contacted several audit firms and only received one reply that the firm was not interested in performing the annual audit. King and King, CPA will continue as the Township Auditing firm.
- 4) Mowing for 2025 – Hall and Cemetery
 - Kenny discussed advertising for mowing bids now. The bid should be specific, including how often the mowing is to be done, how often trimming is to be done, roughly when the service should stop, etc. Cambridge showed the Board a lawn proposal from a previous year. Ross reported that she has been contacted by companies interested in giving the board a bid. Kenny also discussed the possibility of the Township purchasing lawn equipment and hiring someone to take care of the lawn.
- 5) Creation of a Cemetery Committee
 - Cambridge led a discussion on starting a three (3) member volunteer cemetery committee to address such needs as landscaping, who takes care of newly planted trees, etc. and advise the Board. Kenny would like a copy of the sexton job description and proceed from there. The issue was tabled
- 6) Facebook Policy
 - Cambridge advised that a Facebook Policy must be in place before starting the page. Due to Township printer issues, she could not print a sample policy tonight, but will have it ready for the next meeting. This issue was tabled until March.
- 7) Budget Creation
 - Please see Correspondence, Item #2.
- 8) Sewer Meter Replacement Billing
 - Kenny had a discussion with Sandusky City Manager Dave Faber. The City will begin sending monthly invoices to Watertown Township for sewer charges. The City Council has requested that Supervisor Kenny meet with them directly to discuss the renewal of the agreement and provide updates on the sewer system. Before entering negotiations, Kenny plans to seek a legal opinion on the required updates to the agreement. Monthly billing will begin in April, so the Township must implement the new water meters and the SLC Billing System as soon as possible to ensure compliance. The current agreement with the City of Sandusky will expire on December 31, 2026.
 - Kenny presented his personal sewer billing to Coats and asked for a resolution to catch the billing up. She will bill monthly until current.
 - Discussion was held on the SLC Onboard form. SLC Rep. Aaron Bennett will be invited to the next Board meeting.
 - Discussion was held on how sewer water is metered.
- 9) Statutory Duties of the Township Board and Policies
 - Kenny presented the Board with information from the Township Attorney and MTA regarding duties and policies. He requested the Township attorney write up a resolution/policy that all township records be kept at the hall. Copies may be taken home to use while conducting township business.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Sylvan Drive Blight

- Kenny reported that the homeowner showed up at the Magistrates Office with his ticket and they are waiting to talk with a lawyer.
- 2) Planning Commission Vacancy
- Kenny reported that one application has been received, but the posting is open until the Commission's March 20, 2025 meeting.

Diaz asked if there is a conflict between Jim Hacker's new Zoning Administrator position and his role on the Board of Review Committee. According to Mr. Hacker and Kenny, since the Board of Review does not make decisions, there is no conflict. Diaz also informed the Board that B.O.R. Training will take place on Wednesday at the Sanilac Career Center from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Township Resident

- Informed the Board that he believes if all Watertown residents are on the sewer system, funds would not have to be kept separate. However, as not all residents are on the system, the funds must be kept separate. Tax funds collected for the sewer can not be used elsewhere and visa-versa. If funds are needed to help the sewer fund out, funds can be borrowed from the township and paid back with interest.
- Informed the Board that there are cemetery ordinances.
- Informed the Board that there were signs in the cemetery stating what you could and could not do, but they disappeared with the trees. Perhaps they could be put back up.

ADJOURN

*** Motion by Cambridge, Supported by Ross to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Ross, Clerk