

Watertown Township
2630 South Sandusky Road
Sandusky, MI 48471

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 6:10 p.m.

The meeting was held at the Watertown Township Hall

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL

Supervisor Zach Heifner called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Hacker, Heifner, Radloff, Ross, Coats

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Cole, Diaz

GUESTS: Julie Heifner, Scott Straffon, Judy Smith, Pat Krumenaker, WMIC Lady, Matt Cole, Vicky Bright, Jessica Ulfig, Dick and Marsha Henderson, Gary Heberling, Michael and Lyne Stauffer, Scott Kenny, Mike and Christine Papp, Al Stoutenburg, RJ Henderson, Rick Panburn, Man with camera, Don and Diane Ferguson, Jeff Renaudin, Joanne Bye

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- Heifner requested approval of the Tuesday, July 28, 2026 Regular Board Meeting.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to approve the Tuesday, July 28, 2026 Regular Board Meeting minutes as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

- Heifner requested approval of the Tuesday, August 18, 2026 Special Board Meeting.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Ross, to approve the Tuesday, August 18, 2026 Special Board Meeting minutes as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

- Heifner requested approval of the Tuesday, August 25, 2026 Special Board Meeting.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to approve the Tuesday, August 25, 2026 Special Board Meeting minutes as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Heifner asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to approve the agenda as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Heifner reported receiving:

- An email solicitation from Zero Renewables requesting to speak with someone regarding the renewable energy products and services offered by the company.
- An email from a Township resident questioning whether the former Supervisor's Letter of Resignation was valid. Heifner contacted the Township Attorney, who confirmed that the resignation was valid.
- An email from a Township resident questioning whether the former Supervisor could hold another Board position following his resignation. Heifner spoke with the Township Attorney, who advised that the former Supervisor cannot hold another elected position at this time, but may hold an appointed position.
- A message from the former Deputy Supervisor regarding a Township resident's property issues. Coats followed up on the matter.
- An email from a Township resident requesting information regarding vacant positions and the application process. The requested information was provided.
- An email from a Township resident requesting a copy of the former Supervisor's Resignation Letter. A copy was provided.
- An email from a Township resident requesting information regarding when all Watertown governmental unit members need to be reappointed and when they took the Oath of Office. The request was referred to the Clerk, who advised that a FOIA request would be required to obtain the requested records and that additional time would be needed to compile the information.
- A Township resident inquired whether property taxes could be paid online. Coats reported that property taxes cannot currently be paid online, although online payment may be available in the future.
- A Township resident asked where she could locate the WTB Administrative Policy Handbook. Heifner will look into the matter and follow up with the resident.
- An Agreement for Roadside Ditch Cleanout was presented, requesting that the Township pay a portion of the cost to clean out an existing ditch to improve drainage. The estimated cost for the ditch cleanout is \$200. The dirt will be trucked from the site, with the property owner responsible for 100% of the estimated \$290 trucking cost. The property owner will also be responsible for seeding the area.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Coats, to approve the Roadside Ditch Cleanout Agreement as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS/INVITED GUESTS

Joanne Bye, Sanilac County Recycling Center Facility Coordinator/Supervisor, reported that several concerned citizens have contacted her questioning why the packaging from the Solar Project is not being recycled. She stated that, despite previous arrangements to recycle the material, the packaging is reportedly being sent to the landfill.

Ms. Bye reported that packaging from approximately 270,000 solar panels is expected to generate approximately 4,050,000 pounds of cardboard. She stated that disposing of the cardboard in the landfill will not only consume significant landfill space but will also result in an estimated \$202,000 loss in potential County recycling revenue.

Radloff reported that he had contacted the company to determine whether an agreement could be reached and is waiting on a return call. Heifner stated that he would also contact the company.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Coats requested Board approval of monthly payments totaling \$42,173.36 covering check numbers 18461 through 18495.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to acknowledge the monthly payments as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Coats reported the following:

- She spoke with Tim Franzel of Shaw, Franzel and Kursinsky, PLLC, regarding the proper entry for the Sewer Fund. The matter has been resolved.
- She also made an entry for expenses related to Samsung deferred revenue.

Discussion was held with Board Members regarding the financial reports.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

CLERK'S REPORT

- Ross requested approval to pay the monthly claims. The Maner Costerison Forensic Audit invoice in the amount of \$17,992.56 was discussed.

Motion by Heifner, supported by Hacker, to forward the Maner Costerison Forensic Audit Invoice and Engagement Letter to Mike Homier of Foster Swift Law Firm for review and evaluation, and to request that Mr. Homier obtain and forward to the Board all audit information previously promised. Hacker, Heifner, Radloff, and Ross voted yes, and Coats voted no. Motion carried, 4-1.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to approve payment of the bills. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

- Discussion was held regarding the new Budget vs. Actual Report recently assigned to the Clerk.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to acknowledge receipt of the Budget vs. Actual Reports from the Clerk and Treasurer. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

CEMETERY REPORT

Ross presented the Cemetery Report for August 2026.

- There were no burials.
 - Three grave sites were sold: two at the township resident rate and one at the out-of-township rate.
-

ZONING/PLANNING/WEBSITE/ASSESSOR REPORTS

Zoning

- Hacker submitted two Land Use Permits
- Hacker spoke with Township Attorney Kyle O'Mara regarding the dangerous building with blight on Sylvan Drive. A thirty-day extension was denied. Mr. O'Mara contacted the Sheriff's Department to proceed with the enforcement of the Dangerous Building and Blight Ordinances. The Sheriff's Department will need a Letter of Commitment from the Township to confirm enforcing the Ordinances.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to contract with the Sheriff's Office to serve the paperwork regarding Dangerous Building and Blight Ordinance infractions. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

- Hacker reported that a resident requested a refund of permit fees after deciding not to proceed with the project. By consensus, the Board agreed to refund the permit fee and research the development of a policy outlining when permit fees may be refunded.

Planning Committee

- Radloff reported that a Special Meeting was held on August 6, 2026, for the ITC Substation Plan Review. The site plan was approved, and construction of the substation is underway.

Website Report

- Ross presented the August 2026 Website Report on behalf of the Website Administrator Rebecca Cambridge. The report included updates regarding the posting of Board and Committee minutes, announcements, and contact information.

Assessor Report

- Assessor Jeannie Diaz reported that she will be conducting assessments, primarily in the Jean Street area of Sandusky.
- Hacker requested Diaz's assistance in reviewing area buildings that may not have permits and may require a new assessment. Diaz agreed to review the properties with him.

SEWER SYSTEM REPORT

- Hacker reported that he contacted Blue Water Company, and its staff will assist Coats with importing the information into the BS&A program, including identifying information that is currently unavailable to her.
- Coats explained the water/sewer billing process.
- Hacker reported that the City of Sandusky has increased its water rates and discussed related billing issues.
- Heifner reported that he contacted Moore Township regarding the monitoring of its sewer system. Moore Township uses Matthew Harris of MTT Services for sewer system monitoring. Mr. Harris quoted a rate of \$86.00 per week (\$4,472 annually) to monitor the Watertown Township Sewer System, with emergency services billed at \$30.00 per hour. Discussion was held.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Coats, to contract with Matthew Harris of MTT Services as presented. Coats, Heifner, Radloff, and Ross voted yes; Hacker abstained. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Township Banking Access, Signature Cards and Account Controls

- Coats reported that she is working on read-only access for Heifner to the Township's bank accounts. She is meeting with a Huntington Bank Representative next week and is expecting a call from the Chase Bank Representative.

Road Commission Projects – Status and Follow-Up

- Radloff will introduce Heifner to Sanilac County Road Maintenance Supervisor, Andrew Palmer.

Township Financial/IT Systems Follow-Up

- Heifner led a discussion regarding the implementation of a township server. An informal quote for a server with remote licensing ranged from \$7,500 to \$10,000. Due to the cost, Heifner proposed exploring the option of upgrading the Township's computer to Windows Professional and utilizing a VPN through a firewall. This would allow remote access to the computer when needed. Discussion was held. The matter was tabled pending additional information.

Grant Funds – Status, Accounting, Restrictions and Project Priorities

- Heifner clarified that all EGLE Grant funds are available and discussed which bank account should be used to deposit the funds. Hacker discussed the Edward Jones presentation regarding the possibility of obtaining a higher interest rate. Radloff discussed holding a public meeting to receive input from residents regarding potential uses for the EGLE Grant funds. This matter was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

Compensation Resolution

- Heifner led a discussion regarding the Compensation Increase Resolution approved by the Board in June 2026 and the Board's subsequent motion at the July 2026 Board meeting to rescind the increase. Following a review, the Township legal counsel advised that, because the compensation increase had been approved and paid for one month, the increase could not be rescinded.

Township legal counsel recommends that the Board rescind the July 2026 motion attempting to rescind the June 2026 Compensation Increase Resolution, acknowledge that the June 2026 Resolution remains in effect, and direct the Clerk to pay compensation in accordance with the June 2026 Resolution, including any missed amounts. Any Board action regarding compensation should occur at a public meeting and be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Hacker clarified that, at the time of the July 2026 motion, the intent was for each Board member to personally decline the compensation increase. Heifner noted that, because the Board had received the increase for one month, the compensation could not be legally rescinded. The Board tabled this matter and will further research the matter with legal counsel.

Township FOIA Coordinator

- Heifner led a discussion on the hire of a Township FOIA Coordinator.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to explore hiring a dedicated Township FOIA Coordinator and get quotes for the service. All present voted yes; Motion carried.

ITC Check/Construction Bond or Other Township Funds – Receipt, Transfer and Deposit

- Heifner led a discussion regarding the check received from ITC. Hacker explained that the check represents 5% of the Construction Bond. The amount was established when the application was originally processed and has since been approved by the Planning Commission. Discussion was held regarding depositing the funds into a separate, non-interest-bearing account. Upon completion of the project and satisfaction of all required conditions, the funds will be returned to ITC. Coats will establish the new account.

Planning Commission Vacancy – Interview and Appointment

- Ross reported that she did not receive any applications for the Planning Commission vacancy. Discussion was held, and it was determined that the application deadline would be extended for an additional 30 days.

Motion by Heifner, supported by Hacker, to extend the deadline to apply for the Planning Commission vacancy until October 5, 2026, at midnight. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Deputy Township Supervisor – Appointment Announcement

- Heifner announced his appointment of Julie Heifner as Deputy Supervisor. She was sworn into office by Ross on Friday, August 28, 2026, and began her duties on Monday, August 31, 2026.
- Heifner requested permission for the Deputy Supervisor to hold trial office hours at the Township Hall on Tuesdays during the month of September, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to provide residents with an opportunity to speak with someone in person. Heifner noted that the Deputy Supervisor will be available to receive correspondence requests only at this time and is not requesting additional compensation. The trial office hours and duties will be reevaluated at the end of the month. Discussion was held.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to approve a 30-day trial period for the Deputy Supervisor to hold office hours at the Township Hall on Tuesdays during the month of September, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Zoning Board of Appeals – Organizational Meeting and Rules of Procedure

- Coats reported that the meeting has not yet been scheduled because one committee member is currently out of the country.

August 4, 2026 Primary Election Costs – Reimbursement Eligibility and Filing Responsibility

- Heifner led a discussion regarding Primary Election cost reimbursements. Ross stated that, based on her understanding, reimbursement is available only for Presidential Primary Elections. Discussion was held. Hacker encouraged the Clerk to submit a reimbursement request for consideration.

Township Officer Duties and Responsibilities – Review

- Heifner led a discussion regarding Township Officer duties and responsibilities. As the Township's legal agent, Heifner requested that he be copied on all legal correspondence. Heifner read aloud the statutory duties of each Township Board position and encouraged each officer to fulfill their respective duties to the best of their ability.

Open Meetings Act/Post-Adjournment Quorum Reminder

- Heifner reminded the Board that deliberations involving a quorum of Board members regarding Township business must take place at a properly noticed meeting, as required by the Open Meetings Act. He requested that Board members promptly depart after meetings are adjourned or when their duties are done and refrain from discussing Township business when a quorum of Board members is present outside of a properly noticed meeting. He emphasized the importance of complying with the Open Meetings Act.

September Community Clean-Up/Dump Day

- Heifner led a discussion regarding a September Community Clean-Up/Dump Day. He reported that the Deputy Supervisor contacted GFL and Waste Management to obtain dumpster quotes, with GFL providing the lowest quote.

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to approve a September Community Clean-Up/Dump Day on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., using dumpsters from GFL. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Clerk Computer – Prior Authorization, Purchase and Funding

- Heifner led a discussion regarding replacing the Clerk's outdated laptop. He was granted access to the Clerk's QuickBooks account and reported that the laptop's performance was inadequate for the Clerk's duties. The Clerk stated that the purchase of a new laptop had previously been approved but that she needs assistance selecting an appropriate replacement. Heifner agreed to obtain quotes for a replacement laptop.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Heifner, to approve the purchase of a laptop computer for the Township Clerk's use, at a cost not to exceed \$1,200. If the replacement cost exceeds \$1,200, the purchase will be brought back before the Board for consideration at its next regular meeting. Coats, Hacker, Heifner, and Radloff voted yes; Ross abstained. Motion carried.

Sewer Billing Rates and Customer Classification

- This was addressed under Sewer System Report.

Lift Station Preventive Maintenance/Service Provider

- This was addressed under Sewer System Report.

Township Debit/Purchasing Card – Policy and Authorization

- Heifner requested a debit or purchasing card for Township purchases. Discussion was held regarding this option and the alternative of reimbursing for purchases.

OTHER BUSINESS PROPERLY BEFORE THE BOARD

Township Insurance Policy

- Heifner reviewed the Township's insurance policy and noted that the only gap in coverage he identified was the lack of cyber liability coverage. Heifner recommended that the Township consider obtaining cyber liability coverage in the future and recommended accepting the insurance quote as presented. Discussion was held. Discussion was held.

Motion by Hacker, supported by Radloff, to accept the insurance quote as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPCOMING MEETINGS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

- A resident presented his Property Tax Payment to the Treasurer.
-

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Radloff, supported by Hacker, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Regular Board Meeting – Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Ross
Township Clerk