

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW, MI 49079
ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 19, 2025

- I. The Almena Township Board meeting was held at the Township Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Clerk Rickli. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Clerk.

Roll Call: Kelly Redmond, Tim Kloosterman, Pat Denny-Diget, John Wagner, Mark Roman, Sandra Rickli, Late: Joe Leduc (excused)

Some agenda items are out of order due to Supervisor Leduc's late arrival.

MOTION: Motion by Sandra Rickli to appoint Kelly Redmond to chair the meeting in the absence of Supervisor Leduc, **second** by Tim Kloosterman.

Motion passed 6-0.

- II. **Agenda Changes/Approval:**

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to approve the February 19, 2025 agenda as written, **second** by Pat Denny-Diget.

Motion passed 6-0.

- III. **Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2025 Changes/Approval:**

MOTION: Motion by John Wagner to approve the minutes dated January 15, 2025 as written, **second** by Pat Denny-Diget.

Motion passed 6-0.

- IV. **Presentation and Approval of Bills:**

The Clerk presented the monthly disbursements for the period of January 20, 2025 through February 19, 2025. Monthly invoices to be paid in the amount of \$16,478.76 checks written on 01/23/2025 for \$5,455.31 checks written on 02/05/25 for \$4,562.69 payroll paid 02/04/2025 for \$13,501.33 for a total of \$39,998.09

MOTION: Motion by Sandra Rickli to approve disbursements in the amount of \$39,998.09 **second** by Mark Roman.

Motion passed 6-0.

- V. **Reports:**

Sheriff's Department: Deputy Tarner reported 75 complaints in Almena Township last month and 18 traffic stops. In the month of January the Sheriff's Department ran 1,058 calls for service. Deputy Tarner wants residents to be careful on the roads with the weather and to be on the lookout for deer again.

Paw Paw Fire Department: Chief Kyle Richardson reported for the Paw Paw Fire Department. The department is finishing up the budget with truck maintenance and purchasing much needed equipment. Ice rescue training has been completed this month;

the Department will also be hosting all Van Buren County Fire Departments for grain bin training for which fire rescue and extinguishing is very complex. The Department will be participating in the annual Paw Paw Chili cook-off happening February 22, 2025 12pm-4pm. The Chief asks that residents keep Ethan Quillen and his family in their thoughts and prayers on February 22, 2025 as it will be the two year anniversary of his passing in the line of duty in Almena Township during an ice storm. The chief reported thirteen calls for the entire coverage area for the month of January and seven for the month of February.

Mattawan Fire Department: Chief Scott Brooks reported for the Mattawan Fire Department. He would like to adopt a county-wide Van Buren County Fire code to allow all county fire departments to help one another seamlessly; right now each township adopts its own fire code. He hopes to have a formal proposal to be distributed at next month's meeting. He has also been in communication with state representative Pauline Wendzel to propose lowering the property taxes of volunteer firefighters as is done in some other states. For the month of January the Department ran 83 calls, 18 of which were in Almena Township; fire and EMS for the year total 135 calls.

VI. Limited Public Comment:

Ruth Robb 30601 28th Ave: Commented about dust-control and gravel application on her road.

Susan Rall 30638 28th Ave: Concerns over increased property tax due to inflation.

Katie Rall 30638 28th Ave: Commented about gravel application to her road; also spoke against allowing solar farms in Almena Township.

Kenneth Baker: Introduced himself and a business idea he is considering for Almena Township.

VII. Reports:

Clerk: The Clerk reported that a state-funded drop box for ballots has been ordered; the deadline has passed for notice of a May election and May 13, 2025 will be the deadline for filing for an August election date. Post-election audit have all been completed; the Clerk attended the election coordinating committee meeting to sign contracts for all of Van Buren and small portion of Kalamazoo County Schools. The IRS mileage rate has increased to seventy cents per mile. The unemployment audit is nearly complete and another budget meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2025.

Treasurer: The treasurer reported that the Treasurer's Department clean-up is ongoing and he and his deputy met with the township auditor (Steve Bryer) who answered all questions they had and provided many solutions. The treasurer would like to give much credit to him for all of his help and expertise.

Supervisor: The Supervisor reported that the Board of Review dates are set for March 10, 2025 9am-12pm and 4:30pm-7:30pm and March 13, 2025 12pm-3pm and 4:30pm-7:30pm by appointment; the township spring clean-up date will be April 19th from 8am-1pm; complaints on the books are low in the township and no new complaints have been reported this month.

Fire Committee: Tim Kloosterman reported that he did not attend the last meeting, but we are still waiting for the Paw Paw Fire Board Contract for the board to review.

Planning Commission: John Wagner reported that the Master plan review is on track to have a survey out to residents by mid-March 2025, and a community meeting in April 2025.

VIII. Old Business:

2. Planning Commission Reappointments:

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to reappoint Steve Manning to a three-year term on the Almena Township Planning Commission expiring March, 2028, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

Motion passed 6-0.

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to reappoint Matt Moulds to a three-year term on the Almena Township Planning Commission expiring March, 2028, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

Motion passed 6-0.

3. Cemetery Board Reappointments:

MOTION: Motion by Pat Denny-Diget to reappoint Chris Rickli to a two-year term on the Almena Township Cemetery Board expiring March, 2027, **second** by Tim Kloosterman.

Motion passed 6-0.

IX. New Business:

5. Van Buren County Conservation District:

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman that the Almena Township Board agrees to contribute \$500 toward the 2025 Van Buren County Resource Recovery and Recycling Program contract with the Conservation District, **second** by John Wagner.

Motion passed 6-0.

Supervisor Leduc arrived at the meeting at @7:30pm

MOTION: Motion by Kelly Redmond to appoint Supervisor Leduc to chair the meeting, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

Motion passed 7-0.

X. Old Business:

1. Inoperable Vehicles, Vehicle Repair and Storage Ordinance, Review/Adopt: The inoperable vehicle, vehicle repair and storage ordinance has been through many revisions to include comments/suggestions from the residents and the board members. The latest version was reviewed by the board which resulted in a motion.

MOTION: Motion by Mark Roman to change the township board meeting date in ordinance 2025-01 from December 18, 2024 to February 19, 2025, **second** by Tim Kloosterman.

Motion passed 7-0.

MOTION: Motion by Pat Denny-Diget to approve ordinance 2025-01 Inoperable Vehicles, Vehicle Repair and Storage Ordinance as amended, **second** by Mark Roman.

Roll Call Vote: John Wagner-Y, Tim Kloosterman-Y, Sandra Rickli-Y, Kelly Redmond-Y, Pat Denny- Diget-Y, Mark Roman-Y, Joe Leduc-Y.

Motion passed 7-0.

4. Building update and discussion: All bids have been returned and reviewed for the Township Hall addition; the lowest bid has been accepted.

MOTION: Motion by Pat Denny-Diget to accept the lowest bid by Cornerstone Construction for the addition to the Almena Township Hall for \$421,900, **second** by Tim Kloosterman.

Motion passed 7-0.

XI. New Business:

1. Hayden Creek Purchase opportunity: The DNR has agreed to sell the Hayden Creek property behind the township hall to Almena Township at twenty-five percent of the appraised value. The only stipulation is that the property will be used as a park/walking trails and will be (designated as) a conservancy, and that it will not be sold. The next step will be to submit an application to the DNR.

MOTION: Motion by John Wagner to submit an application to the DNR to show interest in purchasing the Hayden Creek Property neighboring the township hall and to schedule the appraisal of the property not to exceed \$5,000.00 **second** by Pat Denny- for Almena Township in the future.

Motion passed 7-0.

XII. Open Public Comment:

Katie Rall 30638 28th Ave: Suggested using Southwest Michigan Conservancy to maintain the park and trails once developed, a great resource.

XIII. Adjournment:

MOTION: Motion by Kelly Redmond to adjourn, **second** by Mark Roman.

Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.

Meeting Minutes Approval Date: 3-19-2025

Cc: Twp. Board (7)