

Au Train Township Regular Board Meeting  
December 13, 2021  
6:00 o'clock p.m.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Au Train Township Board convened on the above date at 6:00 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Michelle Doucette, with the following members present: Mary Johnson, Clerk; Kristy Cota, Treasurer; Jake Miller, Trustee; and Tom Balmes, Trustee.

\*VISITORS PRESENT – Approximately 8 persons attended the meeting in person. A complete list is on file with Clerk Johnson.

\*APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions and Changes to the Agenda were made as necessary. MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Treasurer Cota, to approve the Agenda as amended. MOTION CARRIED.

\*MINUTES

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Supervisor Doucette, to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2021 Regular Board Meeting, as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

\*BILLS AND CLAIMS

MOTION by Supervisor Doucette, second by Treasurer Cota, to accept this month's bill list as presented and authorize that they be paid as funds are available. DOUCETTE, YES; COTA, YES; BALMES, YES; MILLER, YES; JOHNSON, YES. MOTION CARRIED. (General Fund Checks Numbered #16634 through #16654; Fire Fund Checks Numbered #8654 through #8686; Garbage Fund Checks Numbered #2092. Clerk Johnson noted that the gross payroll to the Fire Department was \$17,470.

\*BOARD MEMBER REPORTS -

•TREASURER'S REPORT - For the Month of November, 2021

GENERAL FUND CHECKING

Beginning Balance	\$	227,310.32
Deposits		910.03
Interest		26.97
Disbursements		21,381.12
Total Checks Not Cleared		
Ending Balance	\$	206,866.20

FIRE FUND CHECKING

Beginning Balance	\$	564,370.61
Deposits		
Interest		68.46
Disbursements		27,696.84
Total Checks Not Cleared		230.88
Ending Balance	\$	536,511.35

Certificate of Deposit \$ 51,362.98

GARBAGE FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 154,441.48
Deposits	
Interest	18.14
Disbursements	13,672.52
Ending Balance	\$ 140,787.10
ROAD FUND CHECKING	
Beginning Balance	\$ 356,212.14
Deposits	
Interest	43.43
Disbursements	118,000.00
Ending Balance	\$ 238,255.57

\*A Complete copy of the November 30, 2021 the report is on file with Clerk Johnson.

Treasurer Cota noted that she will be holding in person office hours on Monday, December 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-5:00 for receipt of Winter Tax Bill payments.

\*TRUSTEE'S REPORT - Trustee Balmes noted he had conversations with residents about zoning violations within the Township.

Trustee Miller noted that he also had conversations about zoning violations and the Planning Commission.

\*CLERK'S REPORT - Clerk Johnson provided an update to the Board on recent activities. These included 2021 payroll for the Fire Department members, finished continuing ed for State Accreditation, worked on gathering information on the Alger County Commissioner redistricting plan, and will begin the process of reviewing the several hundred absent voter applications that the Secretary of State sent out in 2020 that were returned. They have all been forwarded to the local Clerks for review and processing in the Qualified Voter File. Work on 1099's and W2's will be in January.

\*SUPERVISOR'S REPORT - Supervisor Doucette updated the Board on recent activities, which include addressing several calls. She noted that several calls involved snow removal and the garbage tipper cards, dealing with the dumpster on Raico Road/Sunset Dr., set up a creation burial in the old cemetery, followed up with True North Treks an their Zoning Compliance permit application, and provided the Board members with information on upcoming webinars. Supervisor Doucette also noted that she continues to follow the FERC website for any updated information on the Forest Lake Dam.

\*SPECIAL PRESENTATION - None

\*PUBLIC COMMENT - None

\*COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Financial Reports* - Clerk Johnson presented monthly financial reports for all funds. All reports were emailed to Board members prior to the meeting for review.

*Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission/ZBA* - Zoning Administrator Jason McCarthy's report was received and is on file. Mr. McCarthy was present. Blight complaints and the Cole Appeal was discussed. Also information on the DRAFT for the Recreation Plan was provided. A public input meeting is scheduled for January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm to allow the public to provide information on the recreational needs of the Township.

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission in January 4, 2021 at 6:00 pm. They are continuing zoning map review and will schedule 2022 Quarterly Meeting dates.

Additional discussion was made regarding the Way/Stein dispute. Mr. Stein apparently constructed a building in 2002/2003 without permits and too close to Mr. Way's property line and Kerry Way is apparently allowing for a short term rental on his property. The matter appears to be a neighbor dispute that will be presented to Attorney Murphy for opinion as to any further involvement from the Township.

The Zoning Board of Appeals will be meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

*Assessor/Board of Review* - The Assessor's Monthly report was provided and is on file. The December Board of Review is scheduled for December 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm. Assessor Fuess was present and provided additional information.

Board of Review Appointments - MOTION by Supervisor Doucette, second by Clerk Johnson to appoint the following persons to the Board of Review for 2 year terms: Donna Shields, Duke Fillmore, and Kristy Drake. The Alternate is Jerry Doucette. MOTION CARRIED.

*Maintenance Department Report/Comm Bldg./Promotions/Cemetery* - Ryan Walther updated the Board on recent activities. The cemetery gates were closed for the winter and snow piled to prevent unauthorized access by snowmobilers and ATV's. A handrail was installed at the sidewalk entrance to the Clerk/Treasurer office. Ryan also noted that he would be replacing the Au Train Firehall exterior front lights as with snow coming off the roof they are being destroyed.

Salary discussion for the position was prompted by a raise request from Ryan Walther. The current pay is a monthly salary of \$900.00 per month. After continued review and discussion, MOTION by Trustee Miller, second by Treasurer Cota, to offer \$1,200.00 per month salary for the Maintenance Position held by Ryan Walter, starting January 1, 2022. MILLER, YES; COTA, YES; JOHNSON, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; BALMES, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Several positive comments were provided regarding Ryan's performance, work ethic and asset to the Township.

*Fire Department/First Responders* – The Fire Department report was received and is on file. Chief Perry King was present and provided additional information to the Board. There were 4 calls during the month of November. Discussion regarding the previously authorized purchase of turn out gear was made. Chief King suggested that new turn out gear be purchase for all active members. This would allow for a bulk discount and reduce the future cost increases that are expected for equipment that is needed. He would also like to purchase new rack storage systems for the gear - one at each firehall.

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Trustee Balmes to authorize up to \$6,300.00 for the purchase of rack storage systems at each firehall to house turnout gear. JOHNSON, YES; BALMES, YES; MILLER, YES; COTA, YES; DOUCETTE, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Trustee Balmes to authorize the purchase of 25 complete sets of turn out gear for active fire department members through Pomasl, at a cost of \$62,050.00. A Review of the Fire Department Equipment budget would necessitate the moving of funds from the Ending Fund Equity. JOHNSON, YES; BALMES, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; COTA, YES; MILLER, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Chief King also provided information to the Board regarding the need to allow for lights and sirens on fire department members vehicles. This will allow them to safely respond to fire calls by notifying other drivers that they are responding to an emergency. There will be strict policy written with the department procedures that would require acknowledgment and a signature of members participating. Clerk Johnson will review the MTA website for any guidance in creating such a policy. The lights and sirens should also be installed on the Township Utility truck.

Covid 19 Hazard Pay discussion. Clerk Johnson noted that she has reviewed the guidelines and Chief King noted that he spoke with County Emergency Management about authorization of Hazard Pay for active Fire Department members using funds from the SLFRF grant. Clerk Johnson noted that while the funds have been deposited in the General Fund Account they can be redistributed as needed. After further discussion and review, MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Trustee Balmes, to authorize a one-time Hazard Payment of \$750.00 to active Fire Department members for their unwavering dedication to the Township and Fire Department during the Covid-19 pandemic, funded by the grants received through the Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. JOHNSON, YES; BALMES, YES; DOUCETTE, YES; COTA, YES; MILLER, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion about placing the ambulance out on sealed bids for inventory reduction was made. Chief King will provide Clerk Johnson with information on advertisement. Bids could be reviewed at the January Board Meeting.

*County Commission Update* - Commissioner/Chair Jerry Doucette provided information to the Board on recent activities and issues being addressed by the Board. HB 5351 regarding Personal Property Tax will be coming up for a vote and Commissioner Doucette requested the Township email our State Representatives and Senators regarding the Bill.

The County Board has negotiated contracts with employees, who are working lots of hours and that went well. Information regarding the Vacation Rentals bill and the possible Privatization of Mental Health Services in the State was also provided.

**\*UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Cory Cole Zoning Violation Appeal - Cory Cole filed the paperwork to the Zoning Board of Appeals within the extended time frame authorized by the Board in November. Zoning Administrator Jason McCarthy, after review of the application, the original Zoning Compliance Application and discussion with Attorney Murphy, recommended via email to the Board and Mr. Cole and Mr. Newton, that the matter be dropped and withdrew his decision that the property was in violation of zoning. Discussion on the matter continued with the Board. Mr. McCarthy noted that his responsibility is to the Township and feels this decision reduces the risk of the Community. Without a violation of zoning, there would be no need to proceed with an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals and he recommended that the Township return the fee paid to Mr. Cole. Mr. McCarthy indicated he would provide a letter regarding the matter to all those involved that it is his opinion that a violation no longer exists. The Board continued discussion about the length of time spent on this matter and the confusion of how a Blight Complaint Violation became a Zoning Violation.

Trustee Balmes exited the meeting at 8:15 to attend to an additional obligation.

SLFRF Plan and Projects - Clerk Johnson noted that she will obtain additional guidance for the Township Board as we proceed with determining a plan to appropriately allocate these funds.

**\*NEW BUSINESS**

2022 Forfeiture Report - Supervisor Doucette presented information on the State of Michigan 2022 Forfeiture Report due. Clerk Johnson noted it had already been filed as the Township did not gain any forfeiture property this past year.

2022 Board Meeting Dates - After review of the calendar and discussion, the Au Train Township Board agreed to continue meeting on the second Monday of each month, with additional meetings added in February for Budget Workshop Meetings.

Generator Maintenance Agreement - Supervisor Doucette provided information to the Board on the Generator Maintenance Agreement received from Superior Electric for the generators at the Au Train Township Community Building/Firehall, and the Christmas and 16 Mile Lake Fire Halls for review. Discussion regarding the history of maintenance and work that had been previous done by Mike Sanderson. While Mr. Sanderson has provided satisfactory maintenance on each of the generators, it was felt that the installers may be a better option for access to parts and overall knowledge of the units. MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Trustee Cota, to contract with Superior Electric and accept the Maintenance Agreements with the cost being \$315.00 for the General Fund and \$705.00 for the Fire Fund, yearly. JOHNSON, YES; COTA, YES; MILLER, YES; DOUCETTE, YES. MOTION CARRIED.

\*PUBLIC COMMENT - Public Comments were received from Tom Beauchaine, Barb Carter, John Carr and Matt Lang.

**\*ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, MOTION by Clerk Johnson, second by Trustee Balmes, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED. MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:41 pm.

Submitted by: Mary Walther Johnson, Au Train Township Clerk