

**TUSCARORA TOWNSHIP BOARD**  
**November 7, 2024 Time: 7:00 pm**  
**3546 S. Straits Hwy. Indian River, MI 49749**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**AGENDA:**

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Minutes
4. Township Transition Report
5. Sewer Project Invoices
6. Sewer Project Change Orders
7. Reimbursements, Budget Amendment, Bills
8. Public Comments (3 minutes)
9. Board Comments
10. Adjournment

**MINUTES:**

**Item 1. Call to order:** Supervisor Kramer called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Item 2. Roll Call:** Supervisor Kramer, Clerk Reidsma, Treasurer Dillaha, Trustee Vance, and Trustee Pearson present. A Quorum present. Staff: Dep Supervisor Odenwald, Administrative Asst Chris Green, and CPA Accountant Dan Repinski.

**Item 3. Minutes**

**Motion:** Move to approve the 10-25-24 special meeting minutes.

Moved by Vance, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote.

**Item 4. Township Transition Report**

Information: The Board's achievements over the past two years (Nov 2022-Nov 2024) were summarized and reviewed by Trustee Vance (**comments attached**). Board members verbally added comments during the information presentation. As a means of transition, the Board then presented a "Board to do List" encompassing Township government departments and/or activities: Cemetery, Sewers/Water, Commercial Rehabilitation District, Police, River Steps, Roads & Bridges, Fireworks, Assessor, IT, Property, Special Assessment Districts, Grants, Insurances, Accounting, Building, Elections, and Miscellaneous (**transition list attached**). Again, each Board member commented on their area of responsibility or given their subject matter knowledge.

**Item 5. Sewer Project Invoices**

**Motion:** Move to approve invoices as recorded in the Board Packet.

Moved by Reidsma, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

Information: Performance Engineers submitted \$3560.00 for Sewer expansion – Equalization Tank / SPHR grant and \$55,633.58 for Sewer Expansion – Phase 1. Elmers submitted \$700,502.20 for Sewer Extension Phase 1- Gravity project. Matt's Underground submitted \$205,542.33 for Sewer Extension Phase 1 – LPS. Grand Traverse Construction submitted \$245,026.62 for Waster Water Treatment Plant expansion (\$170, 361.60 from USDA Phase I funded work and \$74,665.02 attributed to EGLE funded work on equalization / surge tank)

**Item 6. Sewer Project Change Orders**

**Motion:** Move to approve change order #1 as documented in Board packet for \$25,970.00.

Moved by Vance, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

Information: The contingency fund for change orders has \$266,209.74 available. Matt's Underground submitted an "Add" of 4600 square yards of pulverization at \$3.20 / SYD to the contract for \$14,720.00. and an "Add" of 900 sft of concrete sidewalk replacement at \$12.50 /sft for a total "Add" of \$25,970.00.

**Motion:** Move to approve change order #2 (line 1) as documented in Board packet for \$12560.72.

Moved by Dillaha., seconded by Pearson.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

Information: The contingency fund for change orders has \$266,209.74 available. Grand Traverse Construction Change order #2 (line 1) submitted an "Add" for "replacement & reroute Main effluent Pipe" for \$12,560.72.

**Motion:** Move to approve change order #2 (line 3) as documented in Board packet for \$4306.69.

Moved by Vance, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

Information: The contingency fund for change orders has \$266,209.74 available. Grand Traverse Construction Change order #2 (line 3) submitted an "Add" for a "48inch x 72 inch Access Hatch" for \$4306.69.

**Motion:** Move to approve change order #2 (line 4) as documented in Board packet for a \$3800.00 credit

Moved by Pearson, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

Information: The contingency fund for change orders has \$266,209.74 available. Grand Traverse Construction Change order #2 (line 4) submitted an "Deduct for a Revised concrete wall/slab keyway" for a \$3800.00 credit.

**Item 7. Reimbursements, Budget Amendments, Bills**

**Motion:** Move to approve all legal bills and court costs for the Township Supervisor immediately upon presentation until all matters are adjudicated. The Board further finds that all criteria of MCL 691.1408 (2) have been met per the Board packet.

Moved by Dillaha, seconded by Pearson.

Motion passed 4-0 roll call vote (Kramer recuses himself)

**Information:** Supervisor Kramer removed himself from participation in the agenda item and requested Trustee Vance to conduct the Board's engagement / decision on the item. The Board packet provided the Michigan Compiled Law (MCL), referenced in the motion, for the Board's reference and use in voting on the item for Reimbursement at an initial legal cost submission of \$2943.96.

**Motion:** Move to approve the Budget Amendments and the Bills as documented in the Board packet.

Moved by Pearson, seconded by Dillaha.

Motion passed 5-0 voice vote

**Information:** The Budget amendments were for Legal 101-266-801.00 at +\$25,000.00 and Buildings & Grounds 101-901-970.00 for -\$25,000.00. Bills included \$14,135.51 for the Invoice register, \$2,199.17 for the sewer Attorney fees, Mead & Hunt Professional Services related to Sewers of \$1080.00 and \$280.00, plus \$17,743.00 for DDA expenses with Consumers Power.

**Item 8. Public Comments (opened at 9:17pm / closed at 9:30 pm)**

P. McGinnis – Comments & accusations regarding Supervisor Kramer regarding court hearings.

N. Kramer – Thanking the Board for their accomplishments and castigating the Citizens Against Virtually Everything.

K. Parkinen – Thanking Board for their achievements & acknowledged the push back board endured.

M. Machowitz – thanking board for the positive changes made in the Township.

R. Murdock – Looking forward working with new board on positive growth and assistance on Phase Sewer project.

D. Webb – Announced that the Sturgeon statue now has the easement for a well by Ramsey drilling.

**Item 10. Board Comments:**

Five Board members made comments.

**Item 11 Meeting adjourned: 9:54 pm.**

Respectfully submitted, Jay Reidsma, Township Clerk

## Achievements (2022-2024 Nov)

The General Fund serves as the lifeline for all funding, supporting essential expenditures like salaries and bills. Maintaining a healthy General Fund Balance is crucial for ensuring financial stability. This fiscal year marks our second consecutive balanced budget, achieved through zero-based budgeting. Under this policy, departments received necessary operational funding, while one-time high-cost expenditures were categorized as Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) and financed separately from their operational budgets. Last year's general operating costs totaled \$842,000, excluding CIPs. Additionally, we generated \$300,000 in extra revenue through land and cemetery plot sales, which funded vital community improvement projects.

This success is attributed to rigorous accountability, zero-based budgeting, and efficient financial management. By prioritizing capital improvements, aggressively pursuing grants, and practicing prudent fiscal planning, each department maximized resources to achieve more with less. Importantly, all these achievements were made without increasing taxes, ensuring fiscal responsibility and community benefit.

**Office Personnel:** Our office staff and elected officials have exceeded their statutory duties to ensure effective operations. We hired our current Administrative Assistant with professional experience in office and elections assistance, crucial for managing four elections this year. Through cross-training, these professionals now work year-round, supported by volunteers on special projects, enabling our office to operate five days a week from 9am to 4pm.

**Cemetery Improvements:** Oakhill and Ohioville cemeteries have seen significant enhancements, including improved grounds and renovated buildings at Oakhill. We updated Pontom Cemetery Software to serve as our master database with backup Master Cards. Increased and published fees covering operational costs, allowing us to effectively validate remaining burial locations.

**Elections:** This year, we managed four elections. Prioritizing the neglected qualified voter file was crucial. Over 200 voters were placed on "Residency Verification," 22 deceased voters were removed, and 20 voters were disqualified due to residency changes. These steps significantly bolstered Election Integrity.

**Park and Meeting Room Reservations** -- developed a website status and notification process to provide more transparency and access than wall calendars.

Police Pension Fund – Two years ago the police pension fund has a liability of almost one million dollars. This year we were able to make an additional \$300,000 voluntary contribution to benefit the police, the township government, and the taxpayer. It should bring our underfunded liability down to approximately the \$550,000 range.

Township Records Storage – The township Records room was completely redone and organized and appropriate records destroyed according to record retention act requirements.

... This has truly been a remarkable year for the people of Tuscarora Township. This Board heard your concerns about the decaying and neglected infrastructure throughout the community LOUD AND CLEAR, and we made it the highest priority. With the help of many volunteers and a dedicated Board of Trustees, this community has achieved significant milestones in improving roads, bridges, parks, road-ends, cemeteries, township buildings, the airport, blight, and sewers.

Club Road, long plagued by serious decay for decades, faced the prospect of being downgraded to gravel. This would have not only hampered traffic to the boat launch and Marina Park but also posed safety concerns. We utilized federal Covid funds to complete this essential paving project.

Nabanois Road has recently been paved, benefiting users of the boat launch and enhancing the quality of life for residents by eliminating dust and potholes.

Gravel and brining have been applied to unimproved roads township-wide, addressing washouts, potholes, and unsafe conditions. The township has provided the Road Commission with much needed funds for gravel and repairs which will continue through October. Brining these roads helps control dust, a significant issue for residents living on these roads.

**Bridges.** The bridge on Straits Highway has some minor issues underneath, including peeling concrete wall paint that not only looks unsightly but exposes the structure to salt and road debris. The County Road Commission has generously provided the necessary paint. Supervisor Kramer and his grandson Blake, have already started the scraping.

**River Steps.** Completion of the steps from River Street to Indian River is a significant achievement. While initial cost estimates were far off, ensuring safe access was paramount given the dangers posed by the deteriorating previous steps. The new steps are not only safe and ADA compliant, but also aesthetically

pleasing, promising years of use, but recent construction issues of a neighboring property has caused some issues with the steps, and this is being addressed.

**Parks.** Cooperation Park has many improvements thanks to a county grant. Volunteers and employees have been hard at work renovating the concession stand, bathrooms, and bleachers. Gravel has been laid on driveways, with more planned. The Township's acquisition of a new dump-style truck promises long-term utility for our employees.

Marina Park has had extensive gravel placement to reinforce parking areas, enhancing usability during wet weather, and improving overall parking conditions. Last fall, a dedicated group of citizens came together to beautify the township hall, River Steps, Marina Park, Boat Dock, and Boat Launch areas, evident this spring with the blooming daffodils and tulips across the township. Over 2000 daffodil bulbs were planted last year, with another 1000 planted this fall.

Hide-away Park. Gravel was added to correct mud and washout issues on the driveway, and a park-style grill has been installed, making the park more accessible and enhancing its useability and atmosphere.

Devoe Beach Park. The wall between the beach and grassy area has been extended, coupled with the ongoing exceptional maintenance efforts by the park's employees and commission, ensures the park remains pristine. Efforts are underway to secure a DNR grant for new restrooms, crucial when the sewer systems are constructed.

**Road Ends.** Access to our waterways via road ends is crucial for our citizens to enjoy our lakes, rivers, and streams. Over the years, many road ends have been abolished, and others have become overgrown and neglected, making public access nearly impossible. These road ends, as their name suggests, mark the termination points of roads. And they belong to the public, not adjacent property owners. While they are publicly owned and maintained by the County, maintenance has not been a priority for the Road Commission.

Thanks to YOUR voices, we have collaborated with the Road Commission to prioritize the maintenance and improvement of these road ends. With the dedicated support of volunteers and the County Road Commission, we have identified several neglected road ends for restoration, making them accessible and usable once again for the entire community. This effort underscores our commitment to

enhancing public access to our natural water resources and ensuring these valuable assets are enjoyed by all.

**Cemeteries.** Significant progress has been made at Oak Hill Cemetery, with completed refurbishment of the building and foundation fortification funded by a Blight Grant. Tree trimming has enhanced the aesthetics, with diseased or problematic trees removed. While Ohio Ville Cemetery requires some minor attention, overall cemetery conditions have vastly improved, thanks to the diligent efforts of our maintenance crew.

**Township Buildings and Properties.** A \$200,000 grant facilitated much-needed repairs to the Township building and property. Foundation repairs are underway on the south side, with collaboration from the Library, Police Department, and Township Supervisor to secure the necessary funding.

The Board successfully sold property in Commerce Park, which had been on the market for many years, along with other township-owned properties that were not in use. The revenue generated from these sales has been instrumental in funding infrastructure projects.

**Housing and Economic Development.** The shortage of middle-income housing is a significant challenge in our community, affecting professionals like teachers, nurses, and small business owners who struggle to find suitable housing options. This issue often forces families to relocate, disrupting community stability and cohesion. To address this pressing need, a developer has purchased land in Commerce Park with plans to construct housing specifically tailored to middle-income professionals. This initiative aims to retain local talent, foster community growth, and provide housing solutions that align with the needs of our residents.

Furthermore, Tuscarora Township is in the process of establishing a municipal parking lot in a strategic location along the trail and Martha Street north. This area is conveniently situated near the downtown shopping district, making it an ideal location for a public parking facility. Preliminary engineering plans have already been developed. Enhancing parking infrastructure not only supports local small businesses by improving accessibility but also enhances overall convenience for residents and visitors alike.

These initiatives highlight our commitment to tackling critical housing shortages and enhancing infrastructure within Tuscarora Township. By addressing these

challenges, we aim to create a sustainable and vibrant community that meets the needs of current and future residents for years to come.

**Airport.** Volunteer hangar owners have been instrumental in maintaining and improving airport facilities, often donating equipment and labor. We hired a company to do the crack sealing, and some of the airport volunteers, along with Supervisor Kramer, rolled up their sleeves and got the line painting done, ensuring compliance with MDOT Aeronautics standards and securing funds for future airport improvements from timber sales.

**Other Improvements.** Blight enforcement continues to target trash, unregistered vehicles, and overgrown properties like those on Parke and King Roads. Removal of two mobile homes on Frontenac has mitigated blight issues at no cost to taxpayers. Community Dump Day, initiated last year due to public demand, returned this last August, offering free disposal services to residents.

Broadband expansion efforts, supported by various community entities, are underway across Cheboygan County, including underserved areas in Tuscarora Township.

The new VA Clinic is operational, benefiting local veterans and the broader community. Additionally, Pat & Gary's Party Store have made significant contributions to our local economy and community vibrancy. Bigby Coffee is operational.

The Township Board meetings are now being broadcasted LIVE on YouTube for increased transparency and community engagement. For more information, please visit our website.

**Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation District.** We have established a Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation District, essential for securing MEDC grants and loans to support local business improvements. These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to enhancing our downtown area without increasing taxes.

**Sewers.** We are in the process of fulfilling the most important citizen driven project in the history of Tuscarora Township. Years ago, during the first sewer project in the Commercial District, a Board member at that time said she would NEVER do another sewer project... ever. Well, we are doing not ONE, not TWO, not THREE, but a total of FOUR sewer projects including Phase 1, 2 and 3, and an EGLE funded plant upgrade. This project is estimated to be a \$16 million dollar



investment, and would not be possible without the numerous funding sources we were able to obtain.

**Fireworks.** July 4<sup>th</sup> is the community parade, and Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup> are the fireworks. It will be the most spectacular show we have ever had, thanks to the many community donations. This is an important event, not only for our community, but for the country, as it is an event that brings everyone together for one purpose... to be thankful for our country, and to honor those who have preserved our freedoms.

I would like to personally extend my gratitude to the township employees, including our office staff, park's employees, and our police officers for their professionalism and dedication to getting their jobs done. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who work on our committees, with absolutely NO pay or compensation... just their love and devotion to this community that inspires them to get involved. I would also like to thank the many volunteers and community organizations who show up to help with community projects, from planting flowers, working at the airport, cleaning road ends, or working at the food distributions, to name a few, all of which are equally important. This is what brings communities together, and this is what keeps Tuscarora strong.

## Board To Do List as of 11/8/2024

### Cemetery:

1. Ohioville needs all new gravel down the middle of the road (in CIP).
2. Ohioville needs tree trimming and cutting of dead trees (in CIP).
3. Oak Hill needs more tree removal and trimming in the older section (in CIP),
4. Eaves troughs needed on Oak Hill building.
5. Move road around mausoleum for it is not running over vacant grave sites (fence, rocks).
6. Finish updating cemetery cards (ours and grave diggers) and Pontem records.
7. Update available list with 40-year rule.
8. Cemetery has broken lot markers that need to be replaced.

### Sewers/Water:

1. Operations Contracts (2) for the current sewer system need to be bid out in December.
2. Commerce Park water supply contract needs to be bid. Need water ordinance? Changes on sewer ordinance?
3. Commerce Park needs to have all water and sewer lines marked and the contract with MISS DIG needs to be amended.
4. \$1m congressional earmark. Need grants.gov application prepared for Region V. NEMCOG is preparing. When approved, restore contingency funds (over \$200K) to the general fund. Restore plant expansion revisions. Re-add parts storage and chemical storage at plant. Fund engineering and prepare to apply for USDA-RD grants and loans for phase 3 SAD.
5. Address REU O&M issues for recently vacated lots and determine refunds, if any. Issue refunds applied for and approved by the Board.
6. EGLE Sewer Grant is 100% reimbursable. See documents on Twp share drive.
7. Check on Passport DNR Grant for Devoe Beach Bathrooms December decision. Another source could be MDARD for \$100,000.
8. Establish a "DPW" cost center in general fund or Enterprise fund. Move all maintenance people to that cost center and hire additional as needed. Share resources with Parks and prorate as needed.
9. Consider how to solve the current yearly sewer losses.
10. State Park - start regular metered billing in August 2025.
11. Raise sewer rates 6% or CPI in March 2025.
12. Mail billing notices to new sewer customers in late November.
13. Need process and forms for Phase I and II hook up information and payment type.
14. Trying to figure out RRI payment increase and how to pay.
15. Need workpapers to support our numbers for sewer billing.
16. Sewer meter readings monthly/quarterly.
17. Determine 1 or 3 enterprise funds for the different sewers.
18. Fix EPA/Loan %s.
19. VA Clinic REU re-appraisal.
20. Security system at processing plant. FEMA funding? Marina Park Sea wall replacement.

21. Consider setting up a sewer authority to: update the ordinance and/or develop a process for change orders and monitor changes in the community.

Commercial Rehab District:

1. Process current request for Exemption Certificate. Must be completed in 60 days.

Police:

1. Police requesting generator for trailer.
2. Needs continued budget support to pay down under-funded retirement fund.
3. Negotiate new police contract in 2025.
4. Insurance contributions by employees' changes with first payroll in December.

Fire Department:

1. Language of fire contract needs updating before December renewal.
2. Fire taxes should be collected in advance not arrears.
3. Eventually the supporting townships should form a fire authority with civilian oversight and public audits.
4. Township should be listed as additional insured.
5. Consider establishing an authority with a member from each township the fire department serves.

River Steps:

1. Follow up on repair claim with insurance company for engineering report costs and final repair.

Roads and Bridges:

1. Work with Road Commission to continue to repair township gravel roads and develop priority list with road foreman. We have been providing over \$50K a year in gravel to the Road Commission. (Road Commission only changes for gravel. They pay for hauling, spreading, labor, etc.)
2. Complete Bridge painting (concrete) near township river steps and docks. Road Commission has already approved permit. Use industrial strength paint from Do It Center.
3. Road end cleanup. Work with Road Commission to continue to clean up public road ends. Permits already obtained from road commission.
4. Additional gravel is needed in Co-Op Park, Lower Marina Park, Hide-Away Park, and specific roads prior to brining.
5. 2025 Brining contract.
6. Downtown parking striping and bump out painting.
7. DeVoe Beach parking lot striping.
8. Work with County to provide agreed upon camera for Recycling Center.

Fireworks:

1. Bid out contract.
2. Set date.

Assessor:

1. Continue to update the assessing roles (many were out of date).

IT:

1. Update Web and Facebook log in and passwords.
2. Train on "Power PDF Standard" to help assemble board packets.
3. Update financials on the web page monthly.
4. In accordance with policy in Chapter 2, have board members submit agenda items by previous Wednesday. Post board packet by Friday 5PM. (Board packet assembly is done on the share drive in the Supervisor – Board Packet file.)
5. Train on setting up live stream on YouTube for each meeting.
6. Train on sound system setup.
7. Train on temperature control software.
8. Train on security camera setup and recordings.
9. Finish set-up on new server.
10. IT admin duties for Google email, MS365, YouTube, Zoom meetings, server access, Gmail should transition to MS365.
11. Domain name should transition to .gov.
12. Follow up with Merit upgrades.
13. Transition to new PC for supervisor.
14. Investigate/budget forced transition to BS&A cloud.

Property:

1. Complete new property survey for township property surrounding Station 310 and address severe encroachment in rear of restaurant.
2. Plan sidewalk connecting both downtown parking lots.

SADs:

1. Review Chippewa Beach SAD.
2. Review current amortization schedule for commercial sewer SAD.
3. Figure out why spreadsheet and BS&A documents do not agree with ledger.
4. Paying interest to USDA on amounts that have been paid off for tap ins but not turned over to USDA. Figure the amount.
5. Nabanois payments.

Grants:

1. File for reimbursement on parks grant.
2. File for reimbursement on building grant.

#### Insurances:

1. Check with insurance agent and see what equipment and buildings is covered by insurance (Zamboni, tractor, Zamboni garage, etc.)
2. Get update from insurance agent about reimbursement on claim for steps to river \$996.00.
3. Time to bid out insurance, due to poor service.

#### Accounting:

1. Need to issue RFP for auditing firms for the 2024-2025 fiscal year – usually for 3 years.
2. Did BS&A get the entries for years 2039 (2 entries) and 6012 removed?
3. Maintenance needs a new timeclock – can new one interface with BS&A?
4. Payroll needs workman's comp codes updated.
5. Why does payroll have 3 types of election workers – are they correct? When to use which one?
6. Need to set up Land in the assets.
7. Figure out how to pay unemployment on uniform cleaning allowance for police (per audit).
8. Work on BS&A recording time off for police department.
9. New sick pay rules to follow – what are they and what is required?
10. Old outstanding checks still on the bank reconciliations back to 2018? Finish clean up.
11. Maintain certificate of insurance requirements for yearly workman's comp audit.
12. Collect trailer tax fees.
13. Audit REU's and additional REUs.
14. Send payoff information to USDA. This should happen annually. It has been done once since 2012.
15. Personal property taxes – audit which parcels are active, and which are not. Capture contact information from owners so that we can more efficiently collect taxes and clean up the roles.
16. Catch up on Egrams reporting – we are waiting on them to move the budget.

#### Building:

1. Bid out cleaning contract for township & library approved 8/13/2024 board meeting.
2. The carpet needs to be cleaned.
3. Fire and building alarms installations.
4. Water sensor added to sump pump pit.
5. Knox box alarm contacts wired in.
6. Flush/test sprinkler lines and heads – annual tests going forward.
7. Follow up on heating coil claim – vendor caused the coil to freeze. Township has been billed and we should not pay it.

#### Elections:

1. Perform daily work required to keep election rolls current.

Boat Launch:

1. Boat launch envelopes and fee collections.
2. Investigate automating payments.
3. Update informational signage in display case; detailed instructions on how to fill out envelope.

Miscellaneous:

1. Property owners want a place to dump compost (leaves).
2. Need new rugs at outside entry and in hallway.
3. Who is doing the HSA paperwork for the library (Form 5500? and other questions outlined in an email with the library director).
4. Continue to monitor Chamber of Commerce shared expenses for bathrooms and shared water well.
5. Follow up on parking lot zoning appeal.
6. DDA: music series, conflict of interest. Also move closer to downtown with no alcohol present.
7. Community trash day?
8. DDA expansion along river. Legal fees to be paid by Howe Marine.
9. Surety Bond claim investigation.
10. Renew sam.gov.
11. Collecting of tie down fees.
12. Township Meeting security concerns.