

BENZONIA TOWNSHIP BOARD

Approved

REGULAR MEETING

June 11, 2025

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Barnard at 3:00 PM.

Present: Barnard, Burns, Rose, Orr and Heller

Absent: None

Staff: Haase, Adams, Nye, Pitcher

Guests: 10

Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Burns to approve the agenda and Rose seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Supervisor Barnard said that he planned to address everything in Trustee Orr's email concerning today's meeting.

Motion by Rose to approve the minutes from the regular meeting May 14th, 2025 as well as special meeting May 22nd, 2025 as presented. Burns supports. All ayes, motion carried.

TREASURERS REPORT: The treasurer presented the report for May 2025 and also explained the Personal Property Tax issues.

CLERKS'S REPORT: The Clerk presented the Profit and Loss statement for the General, Fire Department and new township hall funds along with a list of the payables for May 2025. After a discussion, Burns made a motion with Rose supporting and a roll call vote taken. All ayes and motion carried.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: Barnard introduced Justin Keiller with Edward Jones to talk about the townships annuity and switching it over to a local company. Keiller said that the township would benefit by moving the money to a 457 plan/John Hancock. After a discussion, **Burns made a motion, supported by Rose to move our MetLife accounts to John Hancock to start immediately. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting AYE. Motion passed.**

Update on CLWSA lawsuit: It has been dismissed. Supervisor Barnard and Trustee Orr attended the mediation hearing, representing the township. Update on Sunkissed Hills lawsuit is still up in the air with nothing happening currently. No report on the Forerunner suit. Information on

the speed signs: one is up and running on Crystal Drive near Harris Road and they are looking for a location for the second one. Heller stated the ZA position is moving along with five or six resumes received and interviews to be arranged on June 24 and 26th, 2025. Platte Township will be included in the interview process. Supervisor Barnard said he got a response to his letter, from an attorney representing the Sober Living House. The response states they are moving forward under a single-family residential use. The attorney lists why and Barnard is following up with reasons why SFR does not work. The new web site is approximately three weeks until it goes live.

STAFF REPORTS:

1. FIRE CHIEF: Chief Adams stated there were 11 fire and 34 medical calls for a total of 45 for May. YTD calls are 276. The dept physicals are complete for the year, the new Scott air packs are in service. Chief attended an active assailant conference. He also attended the village of Beulah meeting to request an expanded perimeter for the fireworks. Chief is beginning process for a basic training session with Manistee this fall.
2. Commissioners Report: Nye stated that dog licenses can be purchased online and they will be mailed to you. The merger between the EDC and the Chamber of Commerce will happen. It will have a new name and is a public/private joint venture. Funding of \$40k per year for 5yrs has been earmarked. Sheriffs' department audit had 100% compliance at the Jail. Airport Authority update, the memorandum of understanding has been signed by all three entities. The Point Betsie Lighthouse apron replacement was bid out originally at \$1mil, recently new bids were received for between \$9-10 million. There has been grants and local fundraising but there is still approx. a \$2mil funding gap. There are jobs available with EMS, Paramedics, Equalization and 911.
3. Zoning Administrator: 20 permits issued to date. Planning commission Thursday June 12th at 6pm it will be a virtual meeting with McKenna to kick off the ordinance rewrite.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT: 4 county residents made public comments.

COMMUNICATION: None

PENDING BUSINESS: Attorney Use Policy will be addressed at a special meeting. Barnard received a cost for wedge and paving Shields Dr. **Burns made a motion to hire the BCRC to wedge and pave Shields Dr. not to exceed \$106,089.29.** Rose seconded, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion passed. In regards to the FOIA appeal, closed session was brought up. **Burns made a motion to go into closed session, Rose seconded.**

Meeting went into closed session.

Back in open session, Barnard states that it was recommended to uphold the FOIA denial but to release the unredacted pages. **Barnard made motion to release unredacted info for the FOIA appeal. Orr second, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Cemetery: Water issue has been fixed.
- Parks: No report.
- Building and Grounds: No report.
- Fire Department: No report
- Township Roads: No report.
- Community Activities No report.
- Finance: Truth in Taxation hearing to be held just prior to regular board meeting in July.
- Personnel: ZA interviews were reported earlier.
- Policy: No report
- ZBA: No report
- Blight: The Eldridge Rd violation letter was responded to and owners are planning on getting a dumpster. Platte Rd possible option under the dangerous buildings act. If so, will need to be posted in the newspaper.

NEW BUSINESS: **Burns made a motion to adopt the FOIA fee schedule as presented.** Rose second, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion passed. Barnard started discussion regarding the Adult-use ordinance and it being a Police Power Ordinance and not a Zoning Ordinance. Discussion. **Barnard made a motion to adopt the Adult-Use ordinance amendments,** Burns supported, roll call vote taken, Orr-N, Burns-Y, Barnard-Y, Heller-Y, Rose-Y, motion carried.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: 2 residents made public comments.

Supervisor adjourned the meeting at 5:30 P.M.

Submitted by:

Diana L. Heller, Clerk

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **Motion passed to move annuities to John Hancock.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to move into closed session.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to release additional info due to FOIA appeal.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to wedge and pave Shields Dr.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to adopt the FOIA fee schedule.**
- ❖ **Motion passed to adopt the Adult-Use ordinance amendments.**

