



**Saugatuck Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Saugatuck Township Hall
Meeting held in person & via Zoom**

Call to Order: Supervisor Bigford called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Supervisor Abby Bigford, Clerk Cindy Osman, Treasurer Jon Helmrich, Trustee Brenda Marcy, and Trustee Stacey Aldrich.

Absent:

Also Present: Manager Daniel DeFranco, Recording Secretary Morgan Coulston, Vicky Rosenberg, Holly Anderson, Bobbie Gaunt, Fran VanHowe, Marsha Sikora, Elliott Sturm, Tyler DeNooyer.

Reports: Supervisor Bigford opened the floor for reports, noting that the scheduled presentation by Assessor Anthony Meyaard of Assessing Solutions had been canceled.

1. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Helmrich provided an update on Township finances; the report is on file.

2. Planning Commission

Clerk Osman summarized key items from the April Planning Commission meeting, including recommended Zoning Ordinance amendments and the Commission's determination that the proposed office building on Blue Star Highway did not qualify as a permitted use.

3. Clerk's Report

Osman reported that the May 6th election ran smoothly and shared voter turnout statistics. She expressed appreciation to the election inspectors for their hard work and dedication.

4. Manager's Report

Township Manager DeFranco presented an update on current Township projects; the report is on file.

Public Comment:

- Vicky Rosenberg urged the Board to deny the proposed North Shore boat ramp, stating it conflicted with the original marina approval and raised significant boating safety concerns.
- Holly Anderson acknowledged the difficulties of municipal governance amid national political tensions and encouraged the Board to make a meaningful impact by denying the boat ramp and repealing the North Shore marina approval.
- Bobbie Gaunt reflected on her leadership experience and challenged the Board to consider the legacy they would leave behind. She emphasized that lasting legacies require difficult decisions and encouraged opposition to the proposed boat ramp for the benefit of both the community and the environment.
- Fran VanHowe shared her past experience with the original boat ramp, raising questions about the marina permits and the interpretation of language allowing for a new ramp.
- Marsha Sikora voiced concerns about river congestion and expressed her opposition to North Shore's overall plans.

Public Comment Closed

Agenda Approval:

Supervisor Bigford introduced the agenda. Helmrich requested that an item titled "Multi-Bank Security Resolution" be added to the Consent Agenda under "Operations".

A **Motion** was made by Osman to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Supervisor Bigford introduced the consent agenda.

1. Bills & Review of Invoices

- a) Accounts Payable Invoices: \$807,605.75
- b) Payroll (check register attached): \$55,371.95
- c) EFT Bills: \$16,396.94

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) April 8, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
- b) April 9, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- c) April 14, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
- d) April 16, 2025, Strategic Planning Minutes

3. Disbursements

- a) None

4. Reports

- a) Clerk Report
- b) Fire Board
- c) Parks Commission
- d) Interurban Board

5. Correspondence

- a) CVB Fireworks Donation

6. Operations

- a) Assessing Solutions Contract Renewal
- b) Health Insurance Plan Renewal
- c) Water Rates Resolution
- d) Deer Removal Agreement
- e) IT Contract
- f) Site Work Solutions Application for Payment 2
- g) Multi-Bank Security Resolution

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the consent agenda as amended. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Fiduciary Oversight: N/A

Policy Development, Evaluation, and Actions: N/A

Legislative Actions (Ordinances):

1. Zoning Amendments

The Planning Commission forwarded a package of six recommended zoning ordinance amendments to the Township Board for consideration. These amendments aimed to align local regulations with the goals of environmental protection, development oversight, and consistency with the Master Plan. The Township Planner provided a summary of the proposed changes:

- **15-Foot Setbacks in R-3 District:** Restored the R-3 setback standard from the former ordinance, bringing it into alignment with the newly adopted Lakeside Overlay District.
- **Grading Plan Requirements:** Introduced a new requirement for grading plans to be reviewed by the Township Engineer and Planning Commission. This amendment responded to increasing concerns over

mass grading and tree removal, ensuring compliance with drainage standards and triggering County Health Department review for soil erosion and sedimentation control.

- **Low Impact Development (LID):** Expanded the existing LID requirements—previously applicable only to multi-family and commercial developments—to include any project requiring site plan review. LID emphasizes preservation of natural features and drainage-responsive development and is consistent with the Township's Master Plan.
- **Mineral Extraction and Mobile Food Units:** Strengthened buffering requirements for food trucks near residential zones and eliminated the exemption for mineral extraction operations removing less than 15 yards per day, which had previously allowed for significant unpermitted excavation.
- **Miscellaneous Provisions:** Made technical corrections to section numbering and updated the definition of "structure" to include retaining walls, improving clarity and regulatory precision.
- **Private Road Paving Standards:** Updated the road base material specification, replacing the previously allowed gravel with a more durable pebble-size material, as recommended by the Township Engineer.

The Commission recommended approval of the full amendment package.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve Ordinance No. 2025-02, an ordinance to amend sections 8.20, 12.70, 18.20 and 22.10 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definition of "structure" and correct miscellaneous typos. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-03, an ordinance to amend section 3.40 if the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to change the side setbacks in the R-3 zoning from 10 feet to 15 feet. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-04, an ordinance to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review. Supported by Helmrich. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-05, an ordinance to amend sections 8.180 and 8.300 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to modify the special use criteria for mineral extraction and mobile food units. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve Ordinance No. 2025-06, an ordinance to amend section 7.120 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to private streets that are required to be paved must use MDOT 21A specification aggregate. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-07, an ordinance to add a new section 7.140 to the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to require and establish standards for the review of grading plans. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Strategic Discussions and Actions: N/A

Professional Development: N/A

Other Unfinished Business: N/A

Other New Business:

1. DWSRF Submission for Lead Line Replacement (Public Hearing)

Saugatuck Township pursued funding through the Michigan Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to obtain a low-interest loan for essential upgrades to its Water Distribution System. The proposed project involved replacing approximately 50 lead or galvanized service lines at an estimated cost of \$520,000 during fiscal year 2026, in compliance with Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule, which mandates the statewide replacement of all lead service lines by 2041.

The Township sought a 20-year loan at a 2.5% interest rate, with estimated annual debt payments of \$33,357. Based on current projections, this would result in an approximate cost of \$3.17 per month for the average residential customer—an increase consistent with the Township's existing rate structure, which includes annual water rate increases of \$2.00 to support ongoing infrastructure improvements outlined in the Township's Asset Management Plan.

As required by the DWSRF application process, the Township made the draft Project Plan available to the public via its website, scheduled a public hearing to receive feedback on the proposed improvements, and planned to adopt a resolution finalizing the Project Plan and designating an authorized project representative. The public hearing was held to fulfill this requirement and to gather community input on the proposed upgrades. Township Engineer Tyler DeNooyer gave an overview of the Township's lead service line replacement efforts, highlighting past progress and the need for continued work to meet state requirements. He also explained the DWSRF application process, including the scope of the proposed project, the expected costs, and the benefits of securing low-interest financing to support safe and reliable water service.

Supervisor Bigford opened the Public Hearing at 7:01 PM. There was no public comment. Supervisor Bigford closed the Public Hearing at 7:02 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Resolution 2025-13, a resolution adopting a final project planning document for water system improvements and designating an authorized project representative. Supported by

Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. Right-of-Way Vacation

The Board considered the proposed vacation of approximately 1,000 feet of right-of-way along Dugout Road, which had previously been abandoned by the Allegan County Road Commission. The segment, located on a steep bluff and ending in private property, was in poor condition and raised safety concerns. Due to its location between private parcels, it was not suitable for public recreational use. The resolution formally vacated the Township's interest in the right-of-way, aligning with the County's prior action and addressing ongoing safety and maintenance concerns.

A **Motion** was made by Osman to adopt Resolution 2025-14, a resolution to vacate public right-of-way commonly known as Dugout Road. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. Water Main Construction Agreement

The Board reviewed a proposed Watermain Construction Agreement between Saugatuck Township and North Shores of Saugatuck LLC. The developer planned to extend the public watermain along 135th Avenue to serve a new site condominium development, which had received final site plan approval from the Planning Commission, contingent upon several conditions—including execution of an easement and a water infrastructure agreement approved by the Township Board prior to occupancy.

The agreement formalized the responsibilities and conditions for the watermain extension, ensuring compliance with Township standards and the recording of necessary easements for long-term access and maintenance.

Staff recommended approval to support the orderly extension of public utilities in accordance with the approved development plan.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the Water Main Construction Agreement with North Shores of Saugatuck, LLC. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

4. June 2025 Pride Month Proclamation

Since 2019, the Township Board had designated June as Pride Month to affirm Saugatuck Township as an inclusive and welcoming community. The recognition honored the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals to the Township's vitality and encouraged residents to reflect on the ongoing struggle for equality. To continue this commitment, the Board was asked to reaffirm the message by designating June 2025 as Pride Month in Saugatuck Township.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to designate June as Pride Month in Saugatuck Township. Supported by Bigford.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

5. Ambulance Station Roof Repair Request

The Township received a funding request from the Ambulance Service Committee to support the replacement of the roof at the Fennville Ambulance Station. The facility, owned by the City of Fennville, is used by Life Ambulance to stage a unit serving the Ambulance Service District—including the portion of Saugatuck Township south of the Kalamazoo River.

Municipalities within the district had historically shared maintenance costs for the station. Following an assessment that the roof required replacement, the City of Fennville obtained two bids, though no contractor had been selected and no cost-sharing agreement had been finalized.

The Committee requested that Saugatuck Township contribute up to \$5,000 toward the project. In alignment with past collaborative efforts to maintain shared infrastructure, staff recommended the Board consider approving the request.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to make available no more than \$5,000 to the Emergency Services Committee for the repair of the City of Fennville Ambulance Station Roof. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Future Topics: N/A

Public Comment: There was no public comment. **Public Comment Closed**

Board Member Comments:

- Marcy thanked Daniel for his efforts on recent grant work and reminded the Board that Tony Schippa would be offering a CPR refresher class.
- Aldrich expressed support for the recently approved deer removal contract and provided an update from the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee.
- Helmrich reported on the recent Tri-Community session held with Representative Joey Andrews.

Adjournment: Supervisor Bigford adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM

MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Osman to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the consent agenda as amended. Supported by Aldrich.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve Ordinance No. 2025-02, an ordinance to amend sections 8.20, 12.70, 18.20 and 22.10 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definition of "structure" and correct miscellaneous typos. Supported by Osman.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
4. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-03, an ordinance to amend section 3.40 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to change the side setbacks in the R-3 zoning from 10 feet to 15 feet. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
5. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-04, an ordinance to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review. Supported by Helmrich. Supported by Helmrich.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
6. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-05, an ordinance to amend sections 8.180 and 8.300 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to modify the special use criteria for mineral extraction and mobile food units. Supported by Helmrich.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
7. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve Ordinance No. 2025-06, an ordinance to amend section 7.120 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to private streets that are required to be paved must use MDOT 21A specification aggregate. Supported by Osman.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

8. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve Ordinance No. 2025-07, an ordinance to add a new section 7.140 to the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to require and establish standards for the review of grading plans. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

9. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Resolution 2025-13, a resolution adopting a final project planning document for water system improvements and designating an authorized project representative. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

10. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to approve the Water Main Construction Agreement with North Shores of Saugatuck, LLC. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

11. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to designate June as Pride Month in Saugatuck Township. Supported by Bigford.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

12. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to make available no more than \$5,000 to the Emergency Services Committee for the repair of the City of Fennville Ambulance Station Roof. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Respectfully,

Morgan Coulston

Recording Secretary

I, Cindy Osman, Township Clerk, certify that these minutes were approved on June 11, 2025 by the Township Board.



Township Clerk

6/11/2025

Date