

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday July 8, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

Supervisor Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Olson, Murphy, Green, Hollingsworth, Baker

Absent: none

Visitors: Kathy & Steve Erber, Garon Gopigian, Lisa Morris, David Berryman, Lynne Lesky, Joan B., Janet B., Hope Roisin, Carolyn Sandford

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve agenda & additional items: **Green made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Hollingsworth seconded. Five (5) ayes.**

Public comments: none

Approve minutes of regular meeting on June 10, 2025. Green asked to have the sentence, “noting significant losses over the years,” changed to, “*declining trends in revenue over the years.*”
Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the June 10, 2025, minutes with corrections. Green seconded. Five (5) ayes.

Review correspondence not included below: The Board members reviewed the 2024 Water Quality Report for West Traverse Township.

Thorne Swift Manager Report: Hammond gave his report to the Board. Number of visitors is steady, the boardwalks are cleaned and water sealed, they have begun removal of invasive species and the scheduled events for the season are going well. Hammond stated that he was able to speak with HT Roofing, and they will be out in August to begin the re-roofing of the Pavillion building.

Action Items:

- a. Draft Auditor Report – Dan Smith & Company, the Townships Auditor, gave his report on the Township financial records. Smith noted no concerns and that the Townships financial records are in order.
- b. Alanson Library Contract Renewal – Representatives from the Alanson Public Library gave a presentation to the Township Board about the Library, its resources, and what programs it offers. The Board discussed the cost of renewal, the number of Township residents that use it, services provided etc. **Green made the motion to deny the renewal request from the Alanson Library. Olson seconded. Roll call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five (5) yes.**

Proposed: July 8, 2025

Accepted: August 12, 2025

- c. Pond Hill Farm Special Use Permit Amendment Request – ZA Lane gave an overview of the Special Use Amendment requested from Pond Hill Farm for increased parking during their Fall Festival and 4th of July weekends. Green proposed amending the SUP to allow increased parking for non-festival weekends raising the number from 185-250, also increasing attendees from 500-600 with all other conditions applying and will re-visit the SUP again in January of 2026. **Green made the following motion: based upon the recommendation of the Township Planning Commission, I move to approve case #2-2025, a request for an amendment to an approved Special Use Permit, as submitted by David Berryman on behalf of Pond Hill Farm, located at 5699 S. Lake Shore, tax parcels 24-16-12-33-100-001, 24-16-12-32-200-002, 24-16-12-32-200-004, to allow for an increase in the permitted number of parking spaces and parked vehicles from 375-500 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays annually during the last two weeks in September and during the month of October, because the applicable standards of the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance have been met, subject to the following conditions:**

- **Parking areas shall be delineated by berm, fence or some other method so that the total number of spaces can be identified and the number of parked vehicles shall not exceed 250 during the regular season of business for Pond Hill Farm and 500 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays annually during the last two weeks in September and during the month of October.**
- **Parking attendants provided by Pond Hill Farm shall be onsite during the business hours to direct vehicle and pedestrian traffic and to ensure the number of parked vehicles do not exceed the number of approved parking spaces and that all vehicles are in approved parking spaces.**
- **There shall be an event attendee limit of 600 people at any one time during the regular season of business for Pond Hill Farm. There shall be an event attendee limit of 1,350 people at any one-time during Pond Hill Farm's Fall Festival weekends, held annually on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the last two weeks in September and during the month of October.**
- **All required permits and approvals from all applicable regulatory agencies, including District Health Department #3, MDOT, and the Emmet County Building Department, shall be obtained and kept current by the applicants or Pond Hill Farm and a copy shall be provided to the Township and kept on file with the West Traverse Township Clerk.**
- **A copy of Pond Hill Farm's insurance liability coverage shall be provided to the Zoning administrator.**
- **This amendment shall be permitted for one year from the issuance of the zoning permit. The Planning Commission shall reevaluate this amendment no later than January 30, 2026, and determine if any negative effects have occurred. If no negative effects have occurred, the Planning Commission may extend this amendment to a future**

date or indefinitely. No public hearing or further amendment of the special land use permit is required for this one-year review.

Except as expressly amended by this motion, all conditions of the previously approved special use permit and corresponding special use permit agreements, as executed between Pond Hill Farm and West Traverse Township and finalized on March 23, 2023, and on December 21, 2023, shall remain in full force and effect. Finally, the Township Board authorizes the Township Supervisor to execute the corresponding “Amendment to Special Use Permit Agreement.” Baker seconded. Roll call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five (5) yes.

- d. Tunnel of Trees/Heritage Hwy – Carolyn Sandford gave a history of the Tunnel of Trees and Heritage Hwy.
- e. Harbor Springs Airport Authority – Green gave an update on the recent HSAA meeting. Green had suggested to the Airport Board members the possibility of creating an advisory committee to assist with airport issues. The Airport Board did not think it was necessary. Township Board members discussed various options regarding the HSAA and ultimately decided to ask to be released. Hollingsworth expressed disappointment with the previous Township’s Representative and the lack of communication to the Board on these issues. Supervisor Murphy will send an official letter requesting withdrawal from the agreement to the HSAA Chairman, Bill Dohm. **Hollingsworth made the motion to withdraw from the Harbor - Petoskey Airport Authority agreement. Baker seconded. Roll call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five (5) yes.**
- f. New Township Hall updates – Olson updated the Board on the evaluation received from Paul White Consultant, about the functionality of the current Township Hall. It was determined from the evaluation that the current Township building is functionally obsolete for business use.
- g. Liability Risk Review – Olson informed the Board of the recent insurance risk review and the changes that needed to be added for compliance. Social media, driving policies were added and a request for lighted exit signs.
- h. WTT Employee Handbook – Olson noted that with these insurance requirement changes, along with adding the ESTA (paid time off) section, the Employee handbook will be updated with signatures required. Copies will be distributed to employees. **Baker made the motion to adopt the new West Traverse Township Employee Handbook. Green seconded. Roll Call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – no, Olson – yes. Four (4) yes, one (1) no.**

Reports and Updates: **NOTE: Baker asked to have Recreation Committee moved to first report**

- a. Clerk – Olson informed the Board that four of the Township laptops are not Windows 11 compatible and the Township will need to purchase new ones. Olson also noted that per Election laws, a security camera will need to be installed to monitor the drop box. He will contact Squier to obtain a quote. Olson informed the Board that since the execution of “textmygov,” the Townships website has had a significant uptick in visits/views.

- b. Treasurer – Hollingsworth updated the Board that sixteen of the twenty-nine of sewer bills have been received and that the tax bills were loaded onto the system and were mailed on July 1, 2025. Summer tax bill to the school was also mailed.
- c. Planning Commission – Green informed the Board that the Planning Commission is holding their first Open House on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. The Planning Commission meeting will follow where they will review the Master Plan.
- d. Zoning Administrator – Included in packet. Lane was present at the meeting and informed the Board of ongoing enforcements within the Township.
- e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – Baker discussed the updates from the Recreation Committee about constructing sidewalks on State and Cemetery. Township 80 has been cleared along with the Fords property and Griffen Road.
- f. Supervisor – none.

Approve payables & payroll – **Green made the motion to approve the payables & payroll as presented. Hollingsworth seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Public comments – Garon Gopigian thanked Green for his work with the HSAA and had questions about fuel sales from the airport. Gopigian stated the importance of the lighted exit signs. Lisa Morris showed the Board a water sample with Golden Brown algae taken from the shoreline noting that it is getting worse, is concerned it is coming from sewer seepage and/or fertilizers and wondered who to contact about it. Murphy will contact the Tip of the Mitt Watershed. Steve Erber also commented on the algae supporting Morris' statement that it may be coming from sewer seepage and lawn fertilizers.

Board comments – none.

Next Regular Meeting – **August 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**

Adjourn – **Murphy asked for a motion to adjourn the July 8, 2025, Township Board meeting. Green made the motion to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. Hollingsworth seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jay Olson, Clerk

Transcribed by: Amy Peters