

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday January 13, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

Supervisor Murphy absent, Clerk Olson in his stead, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Olson, Hollingsworth, Baker, Green

Absent: Murphy

Visitors: Lisa Morris, Garon Gopigian, Kathy & Steve Erber, Caitlin Donnelly, Elsa Mersereau, Cora Waite, Dawson Moore, Paul & Annie Mooradian, Helen Habicht, Justin Bassett, Emily Hughes

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve agenda & additional items: Agenda approved as presented. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.

Public comments: Paul Mooradian highlighted the lack of public notice regarding the building of the new Township Hall. He pointed out that the minutes from the Board meetings are lacking detail, community engagement is absent, needs to be more information discussed about the cost of the building, and asked the Board to consider lowering the cost and use more cost-effective building options. Mooradian distributed three Amortization Schedules to the Board for them to consider. Dawson Moore had questions and concerns about the finances, bond issuance, fees, lending fees, cash reserves, the selection of the financial advisors, and who they partner/co-market with. Cora Waite had questions about the payment structure, will constructing the new Township Hall delay any other projects in the Township and where the employees will work during the construction of the new Hall. Garon Gopigian would look to see more details captured in the minutes. Emily Hughes noted her appreciation to all the speakers during public comment.

Approve minutes of regular meeting on December 9, 2025: Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the minutes of December 9, 2025, as presented. Green seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent. Baker asked for clarifications about what the meeting minutes should contain, expressed concerns about the accuracy, and suggests the possibility of using Zoom recordings for better public access. Olson noted that the Township minutes comply with the standards set by the MTA and State of Michigan. Olson also addressed the Township's current limitations on maintaining long-term storage. Options were discussed to better communication for Township residents.

Review correspondence not included below: Olson gave a summary of the Harbor Springs Area Fire Authority Annual Year End Report.

Thorne Swift Manager Report: none due to THS being closed for the season.

Action Items:

- a. Project Centennial Committee Update – Olson gave updates on the design process, that Green is working on obtaining finances, what the next steps will be, sub-contractors, and how the Board is controlling costs. Green noted that there will be multiple Open Houses with Power Point presentations available for the Township residents regarding the new Township Hall. Baker asked about the budget, what the percentage rate will be, term of loan etc., and noted the meeting time, 1:30 in the afternoon, is not convenient for those that work during the day.
- b. Phase One Environmental Assessment – Green would like to have an Environmental Assessment done on the proposed new Township Hall property soon, before building and explained why it is needed. He noted that a questionnaire will need to be completed and suggested Hollingsworth be the one to do that. Discussion was had on whether to have the assessment just on the proposed building site or the entire property including the present Township Hall site. Olson spoke with a company from Traverse City that does Environmental Assessments and received a tentative cost estimate. The Board requested obtaining three (3) bids. Olson asked for a motion to obtain bids for a Phase One Environmental Assessment. **Hollingsworth made the motion that the Township Board move forward with obtaining bids for a Phase One Environmental Assessment on the proposed site. Baker seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.**
- c. Approval of Bank/Credit Union Bid List – Green explained the importance of having a variety of Banks and Credit Unions to ensure competitive rates, noting the names of the Bank and Credit Unions on the list. The Board discussed the list provided in the Board packet. **Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the Bank and Credit Union list except for Choice One which will be removed. Baker seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.** Green noted that a second motion was needed for approval to appoint a Board member to sign the Capital Improvement letter for the Township Board. **Hollingsworth made the motion to authorize Trustee Dave Green to sign on behalf of the Township Board regarding the Capital Improvements Bond list. Baker seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.**
- d. WTTS Chicken Ordinance – The Board discussed the Chicken Ordinance noting it had been tentatively approved last year but needed to give various Associations in the Township time to amend their by-laws and rules. The Township Board gave their final approval with the ordinance being implemented on January 29, 2026, after which time, residents who currently have chickens or wish to obtain them will need to request and complete a registration form. The form will be available on the Township website with hard copies also available at the office if needed. **Baker made the motion to formally adopt the West Traverse Township Chicken Ordinance effective January 29, 2026. Hollingsworth seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.**
- e. Big Barn Discussion – The Board discussed the history and the future of the Big Barn. Baker expressed the desire to preserve the buildings historical value. The Board suggested adding it to the Recreation Committee agenda to get their ideas and thoughts on how or if it could be incorporated in the plan.

Reports and Updates:

- a. Clerk – no report.
- b. Treasurer – Hollingsworth reported that out of the 2500 tax bills that went out, almost a thousand have come back. She received the annual 425 Agreement, and the funds were distributed accordingly. Hollingsworth also noted the impact of the new USPS Post Mark rule and how it will affect tax payments. A note was placed on the Township's website on the homepage and on the tax page regarding this new USPS rule.
- c. Planning Commission – Green informed the Board that the PC will be finishing the Master Plan, reviewing Pond Hill Farms SUP and they will be holding elections for new officers at their Jan 14, 2026, meeting.
- d. Zoning Administrator – Included in packet.
- e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – No new updates, the committee to meet next week.
- f. Supervisor – none

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

Public comments – Garon Gopigian commented on the great work Architect Elaine Keiser & Jamie Stone are doing, asked if there could be more information in the meeting minutes and would we consider having Zoom available for meetings. Gopigian wondered about creosote on/in both the barns and is the Fire Department aware of it. Annie Mooradian commented on what needs to be in the minutes, how it needs to reflect the contents, asked about obtaining Zoom for meetings and questioned if the meeting packets/agendas are being put out in a timely manner. Paul Mooradian also asked about the possibility of Zoom meetings noting that the current minutes are currently inadequate and need more detail. Justin Bassett said the minutes are “sketchy,” agreed that Zoom is needed and thanked Baker for all she does along with the others. Lisa Morris also said the transcripts need more detail, asked if the new Township Hall designs could be placed on the website. She echoed Gopigians' concerns about creosote, agreed with the Board on obtaining an Environmental Assessment for the properties noting it is especially important in areas where the public will be and asked if the Board was still discussing the property exchange for the Township 80. Baker replied that the Township 80 is on the Recreation Committees agenda. Caitlin Donnelly suggested that the Phase One Environmental study be done on the entire property and some of the information needed could be found in historical documents. Elsa Mersereau mentioned the idea of using Otter AI for better transcription. Emily Hughes noted this was her first meeting and she thanked Board members Olson, Hollingsworth, and Baker. Cora Waite commented on the lack of detail in the minutes, also asked about obtaining Zoom, would it be in the new Hall, would the plans for the new Township Hall be available online and noted that personal feelings amongst Board members should not be addressed during public meetings. Dawson Moore commented on the banks that the Board has contacted, where the list came from and made a comment about two board members and their “true colors.”

Board comments – Hollingsworth thanked the public for their participation and expressed appreciation for their input. Baker also thanked everyone for attending and asked to have the current Township Hall placed on February's agenda for further discussion.

Next Regular Meeting – February 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn – Olson asked for a motion to adjourn the January 13, 2026, Township Board meeting.
Hollingsworth made the motion to adjourn at 7:16 p.m. Green seconded. Four (4) ayes, one (1) absent.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jay Olson, Clerk
Transcribed by: Amy Peters