

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday February 10, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

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

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

Absent: none

Visitors: Sally Olson, Elaine Keiser, Jim Bartlett, Garon Gopigian, Kathy & Steve Erber, Elsa Mersereau, Cora Waite, Dawson Moore, Paul & Annie Mooradian, Helen Habicht, Ed Taylor, Eva MacDonald, Jim Osetek, Tom Cook

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve agenda & additional items: Green asked to have an additional item added to the agenda, item “J,” Personnel Committee Recommendations. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Olson seconded. All ayes.

Approve minutes of regular meeting on January 13, 2026: Baker asked for a correction of Caitlin Donnelly’s name in the second Public Comment section. Change from “*Katylin*” to “*Caitlin*.” Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2026, with corrections. Green seconded. All ayes.

Public comments: Paul Mooradian expressed his concerns about Project Centennial. He highlighted the potential cost overruns, the need for more careful review, asked if the Board read the contract thoroughly, suggests more community input and involvement, questioned the Architects contract with the 8% fee stating it will add to the project cost and requested that the Township pause the current building committee and create a new committee with experts from within the community. He also addressed Board member Hollingsworth’s comments at an earlier Project Centennial Design meeting.

Review correspondence not included below: none

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

Action Items:

- a. Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeal – Murphy introduced the West Traverse Township Planning Commission Board members along with the West Traverse Township Zoning Board of Appeals members expressing the Township Board members appreciation for all the hard work they have done over the past year. ZA Lane gave an overview of the 2025 Annual Report along with a brief PowerPoint presentation highlighting the projects the two Boards have completed such as Pond Hill Farm, Harbor Point Association, the Otis, etc. Charlie Hollerith, Jim Bartlett, Molly Thompson, Dave Green, gave thanks to the West Traverse Township Board, fellow Planning Commissioners and Zoning Board of Appeals members for all they have accomplished.

- b. Project Centennial Updates – Olson gave an update on the last sub-committee meeting and that the members, Green, Hollingsworth, and Olson concluded that the building as designed is where it needs to be. **Olson made a motion to accept the base design drawings for the Project Centennial drawings dated 2-6-26. Hollingsworth seconded.** Murphy asked for Board discussion. Baker expressed concerns about needing to get more public input/feedback, how to get the information to the public regarding the Design Phase meetings and how to make those meetings more accessible. **Roll Call: Baker – no, Green – no, Murphy – no, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Three (3) no, two (2) yes.** Olson pointed out that the audio recordings of the Design Phase meetings are on the website along with the current site plans, agendas, and minutes.
- c. Bendzinski & Co Engagement Letter Review – Green noted this discussion is to approve and authorize a signer for the engagement letter. It was suggested that Murphy be the authorized signer. Green updated the Board on a conference call on February 3, 2026, with Miller Canfield and Bendzinski regarding the solicitations of bids and would the Board approve the successful bidder the opportunity to post a sign stating, “Financed by”. Green noted interest rate and the length of time for bids to be received. Three motions are needed, one to approve the contract, one to approve a signer on the contract and one to allow the successful bidder to erect a sign denoting the project is financed by them. **Baker made the motion to approve the contract. Olson seconded. Roll Call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. All yes. Hollingsworth made the motion to authorize Supervisor Murphy to sign on behalf of the Township Board. Baker seconded. Roll Call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. All yes. Hollingsworth made the motion to authorize the chosen financial institute to put a sign out saying “Financing Provided by” contingent on the specifications allowed by the Township as to sign size. Baker seconded. All ayes.**
- d. Review of Preliminary Budget Draft – Green commented on the fact that the Township collects more in taxes every year than is budgeted due to various construction projects that come into the tax base. He also commented on the fact that the Township budgeted a certain amount for the semi-annual payments for the new Township Hall noting that in the fiscal year 2026/2027 the first payment will be lower than expected as the loan will not close until August. The Board then discussed loan calls and how interest will affect that. Murphy noted there will be a Public Hearing for the budget on March 10, 2026, with a regular Board meeting on March 24, 2026. Baker mentioned that there were misconceptions about what money the Township has and asked Hollingsworth to explain how it all works. Hollingsworth explained how the money is distributed to various entities, road fund, sewer fund, water fund, to name a few, and that if anyone would like to more information on how it's distributed to please let her know.
- e. Existing Township Hall/Big Barn Discussion – The Board opted to combine both discussions. Olson noted he has been continuing conversations with various people to see if a 501c3 could be created to take over the current Township Hall. He said things are moving towards that goal. Olson addressed the issue of whether creosote is on either of the barns. He said that a test had been done to determine if there is any creosote on the buildings and that the results should be back in a few weeks. Baker updated the Board on the calls she has made about getting the current Township Hall on the National Registry and will hopefully have more information for next month’s meeting. Olson and Hollingsworth reiterated that the Board feels strongly about making saving the current Township Hall a priority and that they have no intention of destroying the building. Discussion on the Big Barn followed with the Board agreeing that it does need to come down. Olson has been in touch with a barn wood reclamation company but at a stand still until the issue of creosote is addressed.

- f. Review Phase One Environmental Assessment Quotes – Olson updated the Township Board on the bids received for the Environmental Assessment, quotes in the packet. Bids were received from Otwell Mawby, P.C, from Traverse City and Mackinac Environmental Technology Co-op Inc. from Petoskey. Olson said there was a \$400 difference between them. Baker questioned if Mackinac would match Otwell Mawby price. Olson will look into it. Hollingsworth questioned the possibility of Creosote on the barns. Baker asked how long do the findings last, would they need to be re-done in the future. Green asked that the company chosen to come out when the snow has melted. Hollingsworth said that she feels it is not necessary to get an assessment of all three properties, only on the property where the new Township Hall will be located. The Board discussed further whether to get an assessment of all three properties and if a third quote was necessary. **Baker made the motion to accept Mackinac Environmental Technology Co-op Inc. quote but not to exceed \$2700. Green seconded. Roll Call vote: Baker – yes, Green – yes, Murphy- yes, Hollingsworth – no, Olson – yes. Four (4) yes, one (1) no.**
- g. Township 80 Proposal for Little Traverse Conservancy – Baker proposed discussing the possibility of selling the Township 80 to the Little Traverse Conservancy after a meeting with Supervisor Murphy. If bought by Little Traverse Conservancy, would preserve the land indefinitely. Baker noted a copy of the Deed was found and a stipulation was that if it ever were to be sold it would be used for park purposes only. Hollingsworth asked Baker if the conservancy instigated this possible sale, is it a formal offer or did someone else approach them. Baker said she had mentioned the possibility of it at a recent LTC meeting. The Board discussed the potential benefits and the challenges of selling the property, noting the need for more public input and the need to explore this further with the Conservancy. The Board appointed Baker and Murphy as the point persons with the Conservancy.
- h. Consent to Entry of Judgement Discussion – the Board members discussed the paperwork provided in their packet regarding the Consent to Entry of Judgement and the Board’s requirement to sign off on it. **Hollingsworth made the motion to accept the Consent to Entry of Judgement. Green seconded. All yes.**
- i. Personnel Committee Recommendations – the Board discussed and approved the 2026/2027 recommendations for a pay rate increases for Township Board members, Deputies, Trustees, Secretary, Thorne Swift Manager and employees, for Planning Commissioners, ZBA and BOR members. Green had requested compensation schedules from other Townships to see how West Traverse Township compared and thanked Olson for putting it together. **Baker made the motion to approve the West Traverse Township Compensation Schedule for Fiscal Year starting April 1, 2026, and ending March 31, 2027. Olson seconded. Roll call vote: Baker – yes, Green -yes, Murphy – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. All yes.**

Reports and Updates:

- a. Clerk – Olson gave an overview of the West Traverse Township Insurance Policy Renewal noting slight increases. Olson discussed the recent USPS Postmark Rule and that it will not affect most Absentee Voter Ballots. He informed the Board that there will be three (3) elections this year, May 5, August 4, and November 4. Olson also noted a new piece of equipment, the E-Meet Meeting Capsule, a Zoom Meeting capable recording device that will replace the old audio recording system for Otter AI recordings and noted the cost of a future Zoom Meeting account which will allow the public the ability to watch Board meetings, etc., live. Hollingsworth asked Olson to touch on the recent changes/updates made to the website with audio files being added and that the minutes do meet the MTA standards, etc. Baker thanked Olson for “hearing the Public’s request” concerning

communication. **Baker made the motion to reimburse Olson for the cost of the E-Meet Meeting Capsule. Hollingsworth seconded. All yes.**

- b. Treasurer – Hollingsworth updated the Board on the number of taxes received so far and broke down how the taxes are distributed to the various accounts. She spoke about the importance of transparency in the Townships budgets and added the full accounting will be available in March with copies available for anyone interested.
- c. Planning Commission – Green informed the Board that the Otis Hotel SUP is on the Planning Commission's agenda for the next meeting and thanked Lane and the Planning Commissioners for their hard work.
- d. Zoning Administrator – Included in packet.
- e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – Baker informed the Board of an upcoming meeting and that they are discussing a trail system through the Township property making sure the trails are ADA compliant. Baker also discussed the possibility of a parking area for the Township 80 on Griffen Rd. The committee is working on a Recreation Master Plan for the Township properties with plans to present any updates at the new Board meeting.
- f. Supervisor – none

Approve January payables & payroll – **Green made the motion to approve the January payables & payroll as presented. Hollingsworth seconded. Five (5) ayes.**

Public comments – Paul Mooradian inquired about the next Project Centennial Design meeting dates along with the dates for the Township Board Budget hearing and the regular Township Board meeting. Mooradian also commented on the amount that is distributed to the local school district. Dawson Moore thanked the Township Board for their consideration and efforts on communication. Emily Hughes thanked Olson for the communication enhancements as well. The Township Board Members said that if anyone has questions or concerns to please call or email the Board members.

Board comments – Hollingsworth thanked Olson for all his hard work with upgrading Township communications and thanked the public for attending the meeting, how much their input is appreciated and please call with any questions or concerns. Baker echoed Hollingsworth statements.

Next Regular Meeting – **Public Hearing on March 10, 2026, and March 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**

Adjourn – Olson asked for a motion to adjourn the February 10, 2026, Township Board meeting. **Hollingsworth made the motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Baker seconded. Five (5) ayes**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jay Olson, Clerk

Transcribed by: Amy Peters