WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday September 8, 2026
6:00 p.m.

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

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

Absent: none

Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

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

Approve minutes of regular meeting August 11, 2026: Baker pointed out a misspelling on top of page 2, "*Travere*" should be "*Traverse".* Baker asked, for clarification purposes, that on page 3, under Reports & Updates, Planning Commission, "*possible future construction*" should be amended to "*possible future Data Center Construction".* **Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the August 11, 2026, meeting minutes with corrections. Baker seconded. All ayes**.

Visitors: Sally Olson, Kathy & Steve Erber, Ed Taylor, Karin Offield, Tamara Stevens, Garon Gopigian, Lisa Morris

Public Comments – none

Review Correspondence not listed below:

Thorne Swift Report – Hammond updated the board on the Thorne Swift report mentioning the continuing reduced traffic due to the Lower Shore Road closure, discussed the successful Monarch Butterfly release and ongoing trail maintenance.

Action Items:

a. Barn Proposals – Olson outlined the five options for dealing with the large Barn and recapped three proposal bid requests received. Lisa Morris discussed her proposal for the barn and surrounding land noting the intention to renovate it with potential investors. A letter from Tim Kepford was included in the packet with his proposal read by Olson. Karin Offield presented her proposal (see attached) to preserve the large barn, renovate the current Township Hall with the possibility of the Rotary Club's Centennial Grant to help offset the cost of preservation. The Board discussed the options, whether or not to have sealed bids, timelines and the proposals presented. Murphy allowed for public comment regarding the proposals and the Petoskey Rotary Centennial Grant. Garon Gopigian commented on how the property will be a "standout" and unique campus. Kathy Erber commented that Karin Offield's proposal is very positive and a true fit. It was noted that someone from

Beckett & Raeder would consult on preparation of the grant for the Township. **Green made the following motion.** *"Therefore, I'm offering this motion to obtain the Board's approval of this project and authority to pursue obtaining the Rotary Centennial Grant for PROJECT CENTENNIAL: Preserve the Heritage Project."* **Baker seconded. Roll call vote: Murphy – yes, Green – yes, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five ayes.**

b. Project Centennial Updates – Olson informed the Board that the footings have been poured, pouring the walls will be next, the project is on schedule and that there are weekly construction meetings being held on Tuesdays here at the Township Hall.
c. Rotary Centennial Grant – see discussion and motion approval in Action Item A.
d. Administrative Fee Discussion – Hollingsworth proposed reinstating the previous Administrative Fee to help offset tax collection, cost to the County to print/mail tax bills, Assessor expenses, etc., which are currently funded through the General Fund. Green commented on the impact and timing. Murphy allowed for public comment regarding the proposed Administrative Fee. Garon Gopigian, Tamara Stevens and Kathy Erber commented on the timing of it and perhaps the possibility of allowing the West Traverse Township residents a chance to vote on it. The Board decided to table the discussion until the October meeting to gather more information and consider public input.
e. Planning Commission Recommendation for amending Zoning Ordinance – Green explained the need to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow the ZBA to review any variance. **Murphy made the following motion.** "*I, Edward Murphy, move to adopt Ordinance Number 2 of 2026, which will amend Section 403.5 of the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance to ensure compliance with Article 8 of the Zoning Ordinance and Section 406 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2026, as amended, MCL 125.3604".* **Baker seconded. Roll call vote: Murphy – yes, Green – yes, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five ayes.**
f. 2026/2027 Tax Rate Approval – L 4029 – Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the 2026 Tax rate as presented. Green seconded. **Roll call vote: Murphy – yes, Green – yes, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five ayes.**

Reports & Updates

a. Clerk – Olson informed the Board that Absentee Ballots will be mailed out the week of September 28, 2026, and that he's preparing for the upcoming November General Election.
b. Treasurer – Hollingsworth provided updates on the number of Tax/Sewer payments received, and the establishment of the new bank account for the new Township Hall Construction Bond money. She also informed the Board of the progress from Mead & Hunt regarding the Forest Beach/Pine Tr Sewer system.
c. Planning Commission – Green updated the Board on next Planning Commission mtg and discussion about establishing a moratorium for possible future Data Centers in the Township.
d. Zoning Administrator – provided in packet

e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – Olson discussed the plans for the green space and walking trails on the Township property. Hammond mentioned efforts to obtain bids for tree removal and site prep for the proposed playground by the Nature Center.
f. Supervisor – Murphy updated the Board on negotiations with a cell tower company for a possible tower off Hughston Rd and the upcoming HSFA (Harbor Springs Fire Authority) meeting.

Approve August accounts payables & payroll – Baker made the motion to approve the August payables & payroll. Hollingsworth seconded. Five (5) ayes.

Public Comments – Steve Erber thanked the Board for posting the full meeting packets as well as the recordings. Lisa Morris inquired if all of the barn proposals and correspondence have been disclosed, Olson confirmed that it all has been. Garon Gopigian expressed his appreciation for the possibility of the cell tower and wondered how long before it would be functional.

Board comments – Hollingsworth mentioned the Harbor Springs Fire Dept fundraising five mile walk in full turn out gear on Friday, September 11, 2026. Baker reminded the Board members to submit information for the upcoming winter newsletter so it can be ready to submit to the County specifically asking Hollingsworth to include a financial breakdown.

Next Regular Meeting – The next West Traverse Township Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn – Murphy asked for a motion to adjourn the September 8, 2026, Township Board meeting. **Hollingsworth made the motion to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Green seconded. Five (5) ayes.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jay Olson, Clerk

Transcribed by:
Amy Peters

Karin Offield's Barn Proposal September 8, 2026

Jaye asked me to present tonight what I've been working on recently and what I'm interested in for West Traverse Township's Barn Element of the Project Centennial.

So here, exactly, are my intentions: after learning about the buildings, and listening to West Traverse Township's plans, I'm interested in saving the Big Cook Barn, using the timbers from the smaller garage barn to help repair it, and helping the 122-year-old Town Hall get a new life cycle once it's vacated. Since I don't want to repeat the details Jaye's already laid out in his WTT Project Centennial, let me instead tell you why I'm interested in working with a team on the Rotary Club of Petoskey's Centennial Grant Program
-their legacy investment in the Emmet County community.

I believe the West Traverse Township Heritage Program gives us a real head start on becoming the recipient of the $277,000 Rotary Centennial Grant. Here's how it lays out.

The buildings are already owned by West Traverse Township. The $277,000 in Rotary funding could cover the barn shoring (scope still to be determined), the Town Hall's ADA updates, new siding, ramp repair, roof cleaning, and foundation sealing. Alongside that, a dedicated West Traverse Township non profit will be formed during this grant cycle to serve as the operating partner- holding day-to-day responsibility for the management, maintenance, and programming of both the Big Barn and the Township Hall. Even if the grant isn't awarded to the West Traverse Township Heritage Program this cycle, that non profit doesn't go away- it becomes the fundraising engine that keeps building toward this same goal, and it will already be up and running by the time the winner is announced.

Three things close the gap between where we are now and being able to call this a "shovel-ready" project: 1)designing the actual grant request, 2) the logistical work that has to happen before snow season, and 3) getting permits in place.

So before November 1, that breaks down into two kinds of work. First, the physical work in 2026 that can't wait for spring: repairing the small barn's roof to prevent a winter collapse, and hiring a tree company to remove the trees next to the Big Barn. Second, the application itself needs documentation: at least one structural assessment or contractor estimate for the Big Barn work-with a dated estimate or engineer's letter- plus the current status of any historical-site-designation application. For the Town Hall, we'll want a rough scope-of-work or quote for each piece: ADA access to the main floor, siding, roof, ramp, and foundation work.

I see three pieces fitting together: the new Town Hall going up across the street, the 122-year-old Hall beginning a second century of service to groups none of us have even dreamed up yet, and the Big Cook Barn. Together, they'd give West Traverse Township a new vantage point on preservation - one that

speaks to both Harbor Springs' heritage and the Township's own farming history. And this collaboration

- all of it made possible by the potential of being selected for the Rotary Club of Petoskey's Centennial Grant- is what ties the three pieces into one collaboration

I'd like to recommend that the WTT approve this direction that Jaye has laid out. I'd also like to recommend approving the roof repair on the small barn and clearing the trees away from the Big Barn before winter, once the bids are reviewed.

One final detail not yet mentioned: We should schedule a Community Clean-Up Day- a volunteer effort around the Big Cook Barn to clear and salvage any important artifacts before any large machinery starts rolling in for the tree removal and the smaller barn's roof repair.

Thank you for the time to speak.

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Proposed: September 8, 2026
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