WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Tuesday October 13, 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: Murphy requested to add Action Item "E Cell Tower Discussion" to the agenda. **Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the agenda with the additional action item. Olson seconded**. **Five (5) ayes.**

Approve minutes of regular meeting September 8, 2026: Murphy noted for the record the Zoning Ordinance approved last month was spoken into the record as, "*Zoning Ordinance 01-2026*", but needed to be, "*Zoning Ordinance 02-2026*". The minutes were changed to reflect the correction. **Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the September 8, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Green seconded. Five (5) ayes**.

Visitors: Sally Olson, Ed Taylor, Garon Gopigian

Public Comments – Sally Olson addressed Hollingsworth's experience as Treasurer and thanked her for her years of dedication to the Township. Olson stated that she, as a Township resident, supports the Administrative Fee and cited the Michigan Compiled Law 211.44 where it refers to "Property Tax Administration Fees" specifically as a "Fee" not a Tax. Garon Gopigian updated the Board on the latest Tunnel of Trees/Heritage Highway meetings and that new representatives were appointed. Gopigian echoed Olson's comments regarding Hollingsworth's experience, added that he disagrees with adding the Administrative Fee and noted that this is not the year to do it.

Review Correspondence not listed below: Baker read aloud a personal statement regarding Board decorum, past disrespectful behavior and asked to have it included in the minutes. *see attached*

Thorne Swift Report – Hammond updated the Board on the Thorne Swift report mentioning it was a bit busier this month. They are water sealing the trails, doing routine grounds work and recently released 295 Monarch Butterflies. He also spoke with ECRC (Emmet County Road Commission) regarding Lower Shore Dr., was told that they are awaiting the engineering plans, soil results and are hoping to begin repairs in Spring of 2027.

Proposed: October 13, 2026
Accepted: November 10, 2026

Action Items:

a. Project Centennial Updates – Olson reported on the new Hall construction progress. foundation and footing work are complete, underground plumbing, electrical, HVAC, AV, security, and network infrastructures are progressing. They hope to backfill soon and that despite the weather, work is generally on schedule. The Construction sign identifying Elaine Keiser, Architect, Huntington Bank and Harborview Builders will be installed in a few days. Olson also informed the Board about the progress with Offield's "Preserve the Heritage" non-profit group, the surveys that have gone out via TEXTMYGOV concerning the project and that he is working with the Beckett & Raeder grant writer regarding the submission of the Rotary Grant paperwork.

b. Administrative Fee Discussion – The Board debated whether the 1% Administration Fee should be added now or wait. Questions were raised as to why and when it was removed, what costs the fee would cover that the General Fund is currently absorbing, would it be applied for the upcoming Winter Tax bill, and what would the optics be if it were reinstated now. After discussion, Olson read the following motion. "***Now Be It Further Resolved, that this resolution shall apply to all property tax levies that shall become due starting with the 2026 Winter Tax bill or any year thereafter, and this resolution shall continue in full force and effect unless and until revoked or rescinded by resolution of the West Traverse Township Board of Trustees."*** **Hollingsworth seconded. Roll call vote: Murphy – yes, Green – no, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Four (4) ayes, one (1) no.**

c. Data Center Moratorium Proposal – Green summarized the Data Center information received from the Planning Commission. After a brief discussion Baker made the following motion. "***I, Stephanie Baker, move to adopt Ordinance Number 3 of 2026, to impose a temporary moratorium on accepting or considering applications for Data Centers, while West Traverse Township completes a study of Data Centers and related potential benefits and potential impacts, along with Zoning Ordinances and Zoning Regulations pertaining to Data Centers, and undertakes any required drafting and adopting of such ordinances and regulations for West Traverse Township."*** **Hollingsworth seconded. Roll call vote: Murphy – yes, Green – yes, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five (5) ayes.**

d. Lower Shore Discussion – The Board discussed the recent ECRC (Emmet County Road Commission)meeting regarding Lower Shore repairs and the costs associated. Concerns were noted about depleting the Township Road Fund. An option for potentially receiving support from a State supported "Neighborhood Road Fund" was discussed. Green said he would pursue this option with the ECRC (Emmet County Road Commission)and will keep the Board informed.

e. Cell Tower Discussion – Murphy informed the Board of the recent negotiations with the cell phone tower contractor. The contract was approved conditionally and will proceed through the Township Attorney and to the Planning Commission for review. Hollingsworth made the following motion. "***I make a motion to approve pending attorney review, subject also to Planning Commission approval and if approved, authorize Murphy to sign on behalf of the Township***." **Olson seconded. Roll call**

vote: Murphy – yes, Green – yes, Baker – yes, Hollingsworth – yes, Olson – yes. Five (5) ayes.

Reports & Updates

a. Clerk – Olson updated the Board on the Early Voting dates, time, and location along with the number of Absentee ballots returned at the State level and also at the Township. Olson also stated that there will be a Parks and Recreation Open House held here at the Township Hall on Wednesday October 21, 2026, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., to receive public input on plans for the Township/Cook property.
b. Treasurer – Hollingsworth updated the Board on summer taxes, payouts, when the winter taxes will be mailed, how the sewer project is progressing, the invoices the Forest Beach/Pine Trail residents will receive, the recent ZBA meeting and recent water tap in for Ann's Nest. Hollingsworth pointed out the price list for adding a newsletter to the winter tax mailing. The Board discussed options for the newsletter and the content with Baker providing a newsletter example for Board approval before the deadline.
c. Planning Commission – Green updated the Board on the ongoing Data Center discussions and the new business to amend a PUD from 2021 in Birchwood for duplexes.
d. Zoning Administrator – provided in packet
e. Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee – none
f. Supervisor – Murphy mentioned the recent HSFA (Harbor Springs Fire Authority) meeting and will update the Board next month.

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

Public Comments – Sally Olson thanked the Board for the consideration and adoption of the Administration Fee. Garon Gopigian thanked the Board for their hard work and thanked Green for fighting for the taxpayers with his vote against the Administration Fee.

Board comments – none

Next Regular Meeting – The next West Traverse Township Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday November 10, 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 7:32 p.m. Olson seconded. Five (5) ayes.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jay Olson, Clerk

Transcribed by:
Amy Peters

Proposed: October 13, 2026
Accepted: November 10, 2026

TO: West Traverse Township Board of Trustees

FROM: Stephanie Baker, Township Trustee

DATE: October 13, 2026

SUBJECT: Official Statement Regarding Board Decorum

I am making this statement tonight to formally address the ongoing pattern of disrespectful behavior that has increasingly disrupted our township meetings.

Colleagues and members of the public deserve to present ideas and conduct township business in a receptive, professional, collaborative environment. While disagreement is a normal and healthy part of governance, hostility and direct verbal abuse including profanity directed at board members and snide comments toward audience members after board meetings, cross the line from healthy debate into a clear breach of general decorum.

We do not need to agree on every issue, but we must maintain a willingness to listen, have respectful debates, and work professionally on behalf of our residents. The current hostility is eroding the public's trust and projecting a level of dysfunction that reflects poorly on this entire board.

Going forward, I am requesting that we treat each board member with respect and a willingness to collaborate. The current climate is toxic and disrespectful and I, personally, will no longer stand for it.

We owe it to our community and each other to restore professionalism to this table.

I formally request that the full text of this written statement be incorporated in the official minutes for tonight’s meeting.

Stephanie Baker, Township Trustee
West Traverse Township Board of Trustees