

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WHITE LAKE
DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
March 17, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Kowall called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Clerk Noble called the Roll:

Present:

Rik Kowall, Supervisor
Mike Roman, Treasurer
Anthony L. Noble, Clerk
Scott Ruggles, Trustee
Steve Anderson, Trustee
Andrea Voorheis, Trustee
Liz Smith, Trustee

Also Present:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Nick Spencer, Building Official
Aaron Potter, Director of DPS
Daniel T. Keller, Chief of Police
J. David Feitchner, Fire Chief
Lisa Hamameh, Township Attorney
Hannah Kennedy-Galley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Kowall wanted to add Item L. Zoning Resolution and item M. Resolution to approve the real estate listing of the Township Property on Hitchcock Road.

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Treasurer Roman to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. REVENUE AND EXPENSES
- B. CHECK DISBURSEMENTS
- C. BUDGET AMENDMENTS
- D. DEPARTMENT REPORT - POLICE
- E. DEPARTMENT REPORT - FIRE
- F. DEPARTMENT REPORT - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

G. DEPARTMENT REPORT - TREASURER

H. SENIOR ADVISORY APPOINTMENT

It was **MOVED** by Clerk Noble, seconded by Trustee Voorheis to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

MINUTES

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - REGULAR BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 17, 2026

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Anderson, seconded by Clerk Noble to approve the meeting minutes of February 17, 2026, as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

PRESENTATIONS

A. SWEARING IN - OFFICER JEFFREY SUTTON PROMOTION TO SERGEANT

Chief Keller introduced Officer Sutton, and he was then sworn in by Clerk Noble. Sergeant Sutton's badge was pinned by his children.

B. FORECLOSURE PREVENTION LETTER - OAKLAND COUNTY

Supervisor Kowall read a letter from Oakland County Treasurer Wittenberg regarding tax foreclosure prevention.

Supervisor Kowall shared DLZ was awarded the Honorable Conceptor Award at the 2026 ACEC/Michigan Engineering & Surveying Excellence Awards Gala for their engineering design of the Aspen Meadows Well House.

NEW BUSINESS

A. SECOND READING; EDENDALE REZONING REQUEST

Director O'Neil summarized the applicant's request.

Mary Earley, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, expressed her appreciation of the Township in general but is concerned that the valid concerns of the nearby residents were not considered in upholding the denial of the Planning Commission. She admonished the Board members who voted to overturn the Planning Commission's denial of the Edendale Crossing preliminary site plan approval. She stated those members got it wrong.

It was **MOVED** by Treasurer Roman, seconded by Clerk Noble to approve the rezoning for the Edendale Crossing project, located on the northwest corner of Bogie Lake Road and Cedar Island Road and identified as parcel IDs: 12-29-476-016 through 12-29-476-024 (nine adjacent parcels total) from R1-A Single Family Residential and AG (Agricultural) to PD (Planned Development). The motion carried with a voice vote: (4 yes votes - Ruggles, Smith and Voorheis opposed).

B. REQUEST TO APPROVE THE OAKLAND COUNTY TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT FOR THE 2026 GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM

Supervisor Kowall said there was some back and forth about the program initially, but it was decided to keep the program as it has been in the past.

Trustee Smith said one of the things that Township can do with its roads is take care of the gravel, since the County has jurisdiction of the maintenance of public roads in the Township.

It was MOVED by Treasurer Roman, seconded by Clerk Noble, to approve the Oakland County Tri-Party Agreement for the 2026 Gravel Road Program in the amount of \$46,667.00 from the Township. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Kowall/yes, Smith/yes, Voorheis/yes, Anderson/yes, Noble/yes, Ruggles/yes, Roman/yes).

C. REQUEST TO APPROVE PSAP AGREEMENT- CARBYNE, INC. FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT MOTOROLA PHONE REPLACEMENT

Lieutenant Ivory stated that the 911 call handling system is aging and has been in place since 2017. Every emergency call center in the County uses this system. The Department is currently with Motorola, but it has aged out. Carbyne is the vendor of choice, and a discount will be provided since Carbyne provides County services as well. He added that without the software, 911 calls could not be handled.

Trustee Voorheis asked for an installation date. Lieutenant Ivory said once the new Public Safety building is ready to occupy, the system will be installed. There will be no down time.

Trustee Anderson asked if the old equipment could be salvaged or sold to another agency. Lieutenant Ivory said potentially, but most likely not due to the age of the equipment.

Attorney Hamameh stated she has negotiated an adoption agreement with Carbyne. The original contract is a cooperative contract with Oakland County, so the adoption agreement will provide White Lake with the benefit of the lower, negotiated contract.

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, seconded by Trustee Anderson to Approve PSAP Agreement- Carbyne, Inc. for Police Department Motorola Phone Replacement in the amount of \$ 230,541.18 and to allow Supervisor Kowall to sign the agreement. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Kowall/yes, Smith/yes, Noble/yes, Roman/yes, Voorheis/yes, Ruggles/yes, Anderson/yes)

D. REQUEST TO APPROVE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT 2026 FLEET VEHICLE PURCHASE

Lieutenant Ivory stated the Dodge Durango, Jeep Grand Wagoneer, and Chevy Tahoe were evaluated. The Dodge Durango was ultimately chosen, and Szott Dodge provided the lowest bid.

Trustee Voorheis asked when the vehicles would be delivered. Lieutenant Ivory said in the fall, and the decommissioned vehicles will be auctioned by the Clerk's office.

It was MOVED by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Trustee Smith to purchase three 2026 Dodge Durangos from Szott Dodge in the amount of \$132,447.00. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Voorheis/yes, Smith/yes, Noble/yes, Ruggles/yes Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Anderson/yes)

Lieutenant Ivory said the Department is also looking to replace the administrative investigation vehicle. The current vehicle requires more repair than what it is worth. Szott Dodge provided the lowest bid for a used vehicle which is a 2022 Dodge Ram Truck.

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Trustee Ruggles to approve the purchase of a 2022 Dodge Ram Truck from Szott Dodge in the amount of \$25,939.00. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Smith/yes, Roman/yes, Noble/yes, Ruggles/yes, Kowall/yes, Anderson/yes, Voorheis/yes).

E. REQUEST TO APPROVE THE PONTIAC LAKE ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - SEWER RELOCATION

Supervisor Kowall stated 80% of the project costs will be picked up by federal funding and the Sewer Fund is in good order to pick up the remainder of the costs.

Director Potter stated that he has been working with the Road Commission of Oakland County about this project, and there were many conflicts with utilities within the project area. The soils in the project area is also an issue. The mains must be relocated for the roads to be constructed. The project will include bypass pumping since there isn't an alternate pipeline in the area. He spoke with the Road Commission, and the project construction costs are federal grant funding eligible. Federal funds can help fund the project provided the main relocation is included. The Township would be responsible for the costs related to engineering, design, and as-builts.

Trustee Anderson asked for clarification on additional extra fees that could be potentially incurred.

Director Potter stated he did not see a need for directional boring soils testing, and if there were EGLE permit fees, it would be around \$1,200.00. He was uncertain whether EGLE would review an expediated review of the sewer relocation, but if they did, it would cost around \$12,00.00.

The Board discussed the collaborative permitting processes deadlines with WRC and EGLE.

Treasurer Roman shared his frustrations with the increased project costs.

Director Potter stated the communication from the County has been poor. He added that the intent is to relocate into road right of way so an easement can be placed on the sewer infrastructure.

Trustee Smith asked what would happen if this project did not go forward. Director Potter said the project will die.

Supervisor Kowall stated that there is a participation factor, and RCOC chose this project for a reason. If it did not go forward, the Township may be required to pay for the entire project including the relocation and the road re-construction in the future.

Director Potter stated MDOT will be handling payments, including construction change orders. He will not have the ability to stop the project if there is an overage.

Shannon Filarecki of DLZ, stated that the Federal Aid Committee identifies potential projects on five-year transportation improvement plan. Five years ago, the Federal Aid Committee identified this project, and RCOC got it approved and it warranted enough points to receive MDOT funding. MDOT covers 80% of the cost of construction, and 20% is covered by the local, which is usually split between RCOC and the local community. Anything considered non-participatory, i.e., utility relocation, is borne by that utility. DTE and Consumers will be responsible for their relocations at their own costs. If the project is terminated tonight, the sewer will remain in place, but the cover above the sewer will be greatly reduced. This could potentially lead to a sewer main break in freezing temperatures. It would lead to a sanitary sewer overflow and would require EGLE intervention. She did not recommend this scenario.

Ms. Filarecki recommended the Township approve the design costs to relocate the sewer at the very least tonight. The survey has already been completed and is a cost savings measure. When the project is done and completed, including easements and permits, that is when the RCOC can bid on a project. That is the reason why the deadline for this project is very tight. She added if the bids come in excess of 10% over the engineer's estimate, there is an opportunity for the RCOC to look at the project scope and determine any cost savings from there.

Treasurer Roman asked how much will be spent on DLZ services before MDOT is able to bid. Ms. Filarecki said \$60,000.00. The costs will include the design, the pumping system, and permitting. Everything, including designs, easements, and right of way, need to be complete prior to MDOT bidding on construction services.

Treasurer Roman asked how much the Township will initially need to pay for the project. Ms. Filarecki \$141,000 for design and construction engineering as built review.

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, seconded by Supervisor Kowall to approve the Pontiac Lake Road Improvement Project Sewer Relocation -Design Costs presented by DLZ, in the amount of \$141,000.00 and for the Supervisor to sign. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Kowall/yes, Ruggles/yes, Noble/yes, Smith/yes, Anderson/yes, Voorheis/yes, Roman/yes).

It was MOVED by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Trustee Anderson declaring the Township's intent to move forward with the relocation/reconstruction project, understanding there is a 20% Township Commitment, and awaiting a contract to finalize details. The motion carried will a roll call vote: (7 yes votes). (Kowall/yes, Ruggles/yes, Noble/yes, Smith/yes, Anderson/yes, Voorheis/yes, Roman/yes).

- F. RESOLUTION #26-008; APPROVING THE WEST NILE VIRUS EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, seconded by Supervisor Kowall to approve Resolution #26-008; Approve the West Nile Virus Expense Reimbursement Request. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

G. WATER LATE FEE DISCUSSION

The Supervisor commented that late fees for water billing are addressed in Township Ordinance.

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Clerk Noble to deny the waiver request for late water fees as requested. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

H. DISCUSSION REGARDING TOWNSHIP'S ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION 6.8 - SITE PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Treasurer Roman stated he did not know that the Planning Commission had final site plan approval authority and not the Township Board. He stated that it was backwards, and the Board should have the final say on final site plan approvals.

Trustee Voorheis asked the Board if they do not trust the appointed Planning Commissioners to make the correct choices. She stated she is okay with leaving the process as is.

Trustee Anderson stated he was a Planning Commissioner for 19 years, and the Planning Commission does understand more about developments and planning than the Board since they deal with it all the time. However, the Planning Commissioners have changed over the years, and the Planning Commissioners have different backgrounds.

Trustee Smith stated that voting for project approval and denial is not personal. She thought the Board should discuss changing the ordinance.

Trustee Ruggles stated he respected his fellow Planning Commissioners, and the ordinance is fine the way it is.

Supervisor Kowall stated he sat on the Planning Commission for several years, and the mix of Commissioner provides good public input. There has been one recent issue with approval out of many projects that have come to the Board over the years. He said he gave his full faith and support to the Planning Commissioners and saw no need to change the ordinance.

Director O'Neil stated the project approval process was changed almost 20 years ago to streamline the process for both the Township and applicant alike. He said the Township Board is the emergency brake to stop a project at preliminary site plan approval. He added he would put the Planning Commission up against any he has worked with, and they have all done a phenomenal job over the years.

Trustee Smith asked if the ordinance could be tweaked so that normal process is followed unless we reach a situation like the recent issue with the Edendale Crossing project, then the matter would come to the Township Board.

Trustee Voorheis asked why it is necessary just because of one speed bump in 19 years.

Director O'Neil said that he could not think of appropriate language to modify the ordinance that would address such an amendment.

Clerk Noble stated that if there were litigation issues, he would want the final say to remain with the Township Board.

Attorney Hamameh asked if the Board would want all the ZBA hearings also.

Director O'Neil recognized the point but clarified that ZBA and ZBA are statutorily different. He clarified the current responsibilities of the Planning Commission and what items are currently recommended to the Township Board.

Clerk Noble asked Director O'Neil if the Planning Commission in Lyon Township has final say. Director O'Neil acknowledged yes, they do as well as Commerce Township and most of our neighbors.

Clerk Noble asked if there are some that only recommend to which Director O'Neil stated that it is an older business model and the trend has been to move toward a streamline process.

Clerk Noble asked if that made it wrong. Director O'Neil stated it did not and the Board can amend the process. He added that he prefers the current process for streamline purposes and stated it works well. He stated in many communities it doesn't even come to the Township Board.

Mary Earley, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, said she attends a lot of Township meetings, and the Planning Commission is amazing. She added they ask a lot of questions and review the plans. She encouraged the Board to trust their Boards and Committees.

It was MOVED by Treasurer Roman, seconded by Clerk Noble to direct the Planning Commission to initiate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that would change the process for site plan approval to require final site plan approval by the Township Board on recommendation of the Planning Commission. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (4 yes votes). (Voorheis/no, Kowall/no, Roman/yes, Smith/yes, Anderson/yes, Ruggles/no, Noble/yes).

I. DISCUSSION REGARDING TOWNSHIP'S CODE OF ORDINANCES - CHAPTER 8, ARTICLE VII - RENTAL PROPERTY

Supervisor Kowall stated it would be a disservice to the Township to abandon the program, and it could use streamlining. The program can be revised to just look at basic life safety issues.

Trustee Ruggles stated he is in opposition of the program and does not like the inspections or the fees that come with it.

Clerk Noble stated Novi does not have a rental inspection program, and they have over 8500 rental units. He stated the program is government overreach.

Trustee Smith stated that tenants have legal remedies to seek against landlords even if there isn't a rental program. She stated she is not for the program.

Building Official Spencer stated the rental program will need an overhaul if kept. The inspectors are state licensed code officials and bound by code. They are not Township employees. When the inspectors inspect rentals, they are looking at code violations as well, it's hard for them to walk away from code violations and approve the rental inspection. He suggested bringing in a third-party company to handle rentals.

Treasurer Roman said the program is hard to administer, and it's unfair to the properties that comply when there are many rentals who are non-compliant.

Director O'Neil said the program has been in place since 2020. The fee that has been charged has been nominal, and the program does not make money, it in fact loses money. The program is not allowed to make money.

Trustee Smith added the program should be scrapped, and a working program could be brought back to the Board later.

Trustee Ruggles said the program's initial scope was safety, health and welfare, but that's not what is being done.

Supervisor Kowall stated that is what he would like to see instead of eliminating the program entirely.

It was MOVED by Treasurer Roman, seconded by Clerk Noble for the Township Attorney to draft language to rescind the Rental Ordinance program. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (6 yes votes) (Voorheis/yes, Kowall/no, Noble/yes, Roman/yes, Ruggles/yes, Anderson/yes, Smith/yes).

J. RESOLUTION #26-006; APPROVING THE WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP FEE SCHEDULE REVISIONS (2026-01)

Building Official Spencer stated the many of the Building Division fees have not been updated in over 15 years, and this will clarify a lot of the fees for residents and contractors. He added that the permit applications will also be formatted for more clarity.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve Resolution #26-006; approving the White Lake Township Fee Schedule Revisions (2026-01). The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

K. RESOLUTION #26-007; APPROVING THE 2026 DUST CONTROL PROGRAM

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Trustee Smith to approve the 2026 Dust Control Program as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes, Voorheis opposed).

L. RESOLUTION #26-005; LOCAL ZONING OPPOSITION TO THE PASSAGE OF HOUSE BILLS 5529-5532 AND 5581-558

It was **MOVED** by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Trustee Smith to approve Resolution #26-005; Local Zoning Opposition to the passage of House Bills 5529-5532 and 5581-558. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

M. RESOLUTION #26-009; TOWNSHIP SURPLUS PROPERTY SALE LISTING - HITCHCOCK ROAD.

Supervisor Kowall stated he was looking for approval to list for sale Township owned, surplus property that has been deemed surplus and unnecessary by the Township

It was **MOVED** by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Trustee Ruggles to approve Resolution #26-009; Township Surplus Property Sale Listing - Hitchcock Road. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

FYI - CIVIC CENTER UPDATE

Supervisor Kowall stated construction is ongoing at Township Hall, the roof is almost complete. Progress is steady at the Public Safety building.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Voorheis stated No Haz Day is April 29th at Alpine Valley, and the Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling Program is back.

Trustee Anderson said the ZBA heard three cases last month and were all approved. They will be hearing four cases next week. He advised everyone to be careful tonight.

Treasurer Roman thanked the public present at the meeting and those watching at home.

Clerk Noble said the audit will start next week.

Trustee Ruggles stated the Planning Commission will be meeting this Thursday. He wished everyone a Happy Saint Patrick's Day.

Trustee Smith said the sample chairs for the new Board room are in the old Board room for testing.

The Friends of the Library had a successful book sale. She thanked DLZ, Director Potter, and the Board for the unique night at the ACEC. Happy Saint Patrick's Day, stay safe.

Supervisor Kowall thanked everyone in attendance. He is proud of Director Potter, his staff, and DLZ for their achievement. He added prayer for the local and national disruption this week.

ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Treasurer Roman to adjourn at 9:17 P.M. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

Rik Kowall, Supervisor
Charter Township of White Lake

Anthony L. Noble, Clerk MiPMC
Charter Township of White Lake

DRAFT