

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WHITE LAKE
DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
January 20, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Kowall called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. He led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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 (Late Arrival at 6:37 P.M.)

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Sean O'Neil, Community Development Director
Daniel T. Keller, Chief of Police
J. David Feitchner, Fire Chief
Lisa Hamameh, Township Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was **MOVED** by Clerk Noble, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. REVENUE AND EXPENSES
- B. CHECK DISBURSEMENTS
- C. LIST OF BILLS
- D. DEPARTMENT REPORT - POLICE
- E. DEPARTMENT REPORT - FIRE
- F. DEPARTMENT REPORT - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- G. DEPARTMENT REPORT - TREASURER
- H. ELECTION CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

It was **MOVED** by Clerk Noble, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes).

MINUTES

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - REGULAR BOARD MEETING, DECEMBER 16, 2025

It was MOVED by Trustee Voorheis, seconded by Clerk Noble to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025. The motion carried with a voice vote: (6 yes votes).

Clerk Noble noted that Trustee Smith would be late to tonight's meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. CONCEPTUAL PRESENTATION – PONTIAC LAKE DEVELOPMENT

Director O'Neil introduced Greg Fisher to give a presentation on the Lakefront Boardwalk project. He stated this a 3.4-acre parcel on the westside of the peninsula at Pontiac Lake Road and M59.

Greg Fisher and staff presented their mixed- use waterfront development to include a restaurant, upscale condominiums, a boardwalk and a marina. It will be operated year-round. He estimates the project cost to be between 7.5 and 9 million dollars.

The Board initiated a question and answer and provided feedback on the presentation and suggested connecting with the Homeowner's Association.

Director O'Neil spoke about the potential challenges for temporary use permitting going forward.

B. CONSIDERATION OF PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPROVAL – EDENDALE

Director O'Neil briefly reviewed the applicant's request with the Board and added this is a two-prong request seeking preliminary site plan approval and rezoning. He stated this project previously went to the Planning Commission where the site plan was denied. Revisions were made and the matter was again denied by the Planning Commission. The applicant requested to come to the Board for review.

Trustee Anderson asked for clarification of the number of units.

Director O'Neil said that currently there are 109 units shown. He added that there are some unknowns depending on the Road Commission. He explained in more detail the R1D district rezoning and offered that he did not know if any variances would be needed.

Supervisor Kowall asked about the difference in 109 units compared to 120 units.

Director O'Neil stated he felt that the amendment of the number of units should be directed to the applicant and their design team.

Supervisor Kowall suggested more creativity to lessen the impact along Cedar Island Road. He also recognized the fact that it is a considerable expense for the applicant to bring the sewer line 5,280 feet.

James Eppink addressed the board. He is representing the applicant, PH Homes. He thanked Director O'Neil and Trustee Ruggles for all their help. He stated they have been working with the Planning Commission for over a year now. He stated much consideration has been given to the community, the Zoning Ordinance and the Township's Master Plan. He summed up a description of the existing property and stated that it is off Bogie Lake Road and close to the High School and the Middle School. It is designed to help school system and will be a continuous feeder to the school system with obtainable type housing.

Mr. Eppink spoke at length on the lot size and housing density, and open space as it relates to the Master Plan's objective of affordable housing to attract new residents as well as the retention of those residents. He stated that earlier plans had about 188 homes on it. He stated PH Homes agrees based on the studies that attached homes may not be right for this market and they have submitted numerous revisions that have scaled back. First down to 145, then 125 and now to 120 with almost ten acres of open space that includes a four-acre park, a playground, a pavilion and a walking trail. The parallel plan of 109 homes does not require any open space. He spoke to the community benefits including a one-million-dollar investment to extend the sanitary sewer 5,100 feet to their project and then extend it additionally to the north which will activate sanitary sewer opportunities going forward. He also spoke of the road improvement far beyond what would be required with the Road Commission.

Mr. Eppink requested the Board consider the applicant's site plan. He believes it to be very much in line with the master plan and would be a terrific addition to White Lake Township.

Trustee Anderson asked Trustee Ruggles if the Planning Commission ever provided a hard number of homes they wanted to see on the Site Plan. Trustee Ruggles stated no. He believes the Commissioners as a whole thought it was too dense. And there were questions on the public Benefits.

Treasurer Roman asked about the benefits of the sidewalks on the main roads and the sewer extension.

Trustee Ruggles stated no, everyone on the Planning Commission agreed it was a public benefit.

Clerk Noble stated it is a public benefit.

Treasurer Roman stated there has never been a bigger public benefit.

Director O'Neil stated the Planning Commission did recognize that the School District failed to bring sanitary sewers across their frontage, but they also felt that the sewer was self-serving as the sewer unlocks the development potential of the site.

Treasurer Roman stated there are hundreds of homes that currently can't get sewer and by bringing this line north, it would allow for that option. He believes that must be made clear to the Commission.

Director O'Neil replied that it is the job of the Developer to sell the public benefits to the Planning Commission.

Trustee Anderson asked Treasurer Roman how this development would affect our tax base.

Treasurer Roman answered approximately \$250,000.00 in the first year after all homes were developed.

Director O'Neil stated that according to the community impact statement the amount across all taxing jurisdictions would be \$950,000.00.

Trustee Noble confirmed that if R1D, the developer would not have to do the berms and connect the sidewalks to the school campus. He stated that the sidewalks are a public safety concern and therefore would be a community benefit.

Director O'Neil stated on that issue everyone agreed it would be a public benefit for the sidewalk system but even if they were to do R1D with 109 lots, the developer would have to bring the sewer.

Trustee Ruggles agreed and added the paving of Cedar Island Road as a benefit.

Trustee Smith asked the applicant if they will continue with the sidewalk system if the Board goes with R1D. The applicant answered that they would have to take everything into consideration and reevaluate pro-forma of a less attractive product.

Trustee Smith stated she thinks the density is too much. She recommends 60.

Trustee Voorheis said her first thought when she saw this was for mobile homes. She stated she would like to see 2-acre parcels and around 72 homes.

Craig Piasecki asked Trustee Voorheis if she has been through the Preserve of Hidden Development and if so, did it look like manufactured homes. She replied she has and it stated it does not. Mr. Piasecki offered that the look of these homes will be equally nice or better.

Clerk Noble stated he thought it would be easier to work with a planned development (PD) than an R1D.

Director O'Neil stated the PD is always the most flexible.

Trustee Smith asked if less than 109 can be required with the PD. Director O'Neil stated the Board can approve any amount, but no applicant would have to accept it.

Kurt Thompson, 3096 Havenwood Dr., stated is the president of Brentwood HOA and disagrees that the sewers are a public benefit. He spoke in opposition to the development.

Mary Early, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, spoke in opposition to the development.

Gene Kula, 1203 Cedar Meadows Dr., spoke in opposition to the development.

Jean Shiloff, 2115 Reidsview Dr., suggested a smaller number of homes along Cedar Island to blend with existing housing.

Kathy McCarthy, 1819 Mayfair Dr., spoke in opposition to the development.

Treasurer Roman thanked all the residents who came out to speak. He appreciates the passion although he does disagree. He supports the development because the applicant did what was asked in the Master Plan. He added that the Master Plan is developed with public input and this falls within the density of the Master Plan at 3 units per acre. He acknowledged that with a sewer challenge coming from the south end of the school the development requires more density. He supports the landscape mitigation that has three-foot berms set back at twenty feet in addition to the trees. This will help hide some of the density. He acknowledged the public benefit of the sewer, sidewalks for walkability and greenspace.

Treasurer Roman added that he finds the current process and layers of red tape for developers frustrating. He reminded that regardless of the Boards decision, the ultimate decision lies with the Planning Commission. He sees that as potentially a problem as the Township could be subject to litigation on a matter that the Board does not have final say.

Clerk Noble stated it is a mathematical problem for developers and that this Board does not have the final say.

Trustee Ruggles stated a lot of time and effort has been put into this project. He stated he may not agree with everyone, but he respects the opinions and appreciated the comments from Treasurer Roman.

Trustee Smith added she is not comfortable with the density and would like to see the least number of homes possible. She acknowledged appreciation for the presentation.

The Board discussed with Attorney Hamameh suggestions on parameters for sending this back to the Planning Commission to reconsideration.

Supervisor Kowall stated the reality is that the sewer coming up Bogie Lake is a public benefit like it or not. It would make residents with failed septs eligible to participate in the Township's emergency financial plan to connect to sewers. He reminded that White Lake is a ground water community. He said the problem is trying to find the balance.

Trustee Ruggles suggested several changes of the site plan including removal of approximately five lots.

Attorney Hamameh again counseled the Board on moving forward procedurally.

Mr. Eppink asked for conditional preliminary site plan approval.

Trustee Anderson reminded that the final approval is with the Planning Commission and that the Board can not approve such a request.

Director O'Neil stated approving a conditional preliminary site plan is not a great option and could be a disaster if the Planning Commission is not involved.

Mr. Eppink agreed and stated he hadn't thought of that. He stated he is just looking for as much direction as possible.

Trustee Smith stated the Board gave a lot of feedback.

It was MOVED by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Treasure Roman, to remand the Edendale Preliminary Site Plan Approval back to the Planning Commission for reconsideration with the recommendation from the Township Board to remove a minimum of five lots including lot 17, lot 18, and three lots along Cedar Lake Road. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (5 yes votes) (Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Noble/yes, Ruggles/yes, Smith/no, Anderson/yes, Voorheis/no).

C. FIRST READING; EDENDALE REZONING REQUEST

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, seconded by Trustee Anderson, to postpone the First Reading; Edendale Rezoning Request indefinitely, to accompany the Planning Commission and the motion made on item B. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

D. REQUEST TO CREATE PART-TIME FIRE INSPECTOR POSITION

Chief Feichtner presented his request to create a part-time Fire Inspector job position. He stated this position would relieve the large gap in our service delivery.

Trustee Ruggles asked how many current residential rental inspections are currently pending?

He deferred to the Supervisor for a number. Supervisor Kowall stated there has been a significant setback due to staffing, but he estimates several hundred.

Trustee Ruggles asked who from the Fire Department currently does inspections now. Chief Feichtner answered nobody on staff currently does them. Trustee Ruggles clarified if Fire Department staff do these inspections now. Chief Feichtner said not always. He then clarified that the Fire Marshal does participate in the rental ordinance inspections.

Trustee Ruggles stated he is not in favor of single-family residences being included in the rental ordinance. He stated the Board doesn't know the status of the rental ordinance because the Board has never been updated about it.

Trustee Smith stated she wasn't for this ordinance when it was created. At the time she had staffing question and agrees that the Board has never been updated. She suggested revisiting the ordinance and then making a manpower determination.

Chief Feichtner stated there is plenty of work for this position just on the Fire side of the inspections. He is trying to maximize the position by working alongside the Building Department to assist with the Rental Ordinance.

Trustee Ruggles suggested the new Deputy Chief do the inspections. He questioned how all these things were done in the past and now we need to add all these administrative positions. He is against these positions and would have voted against adding a deputy chief position.

Treasurer Roman agrees with removing the single-family rentals being in the rental ordinance.

Supervisor Kowall argued for keeping single family rentals in the ordinance. He stated these properties are a business and this does not impede property rights. He agreed that updates should be forthcoming and requested the Community Development Director submit a report to the Board monthly.

Chief Feichtner responding to Supervisor Kowall stated the position has gone through Human Resources and the labor attorney. He stated the wage is at the top end of the part time on call rate. He stated the position will have to meet that fire certification as well as the additional inspections certifications.

Trustee Voorheis stated there is a rumor of the person already picked to be hired for this position. She asked if these job qualifications were manufactured to have his qualifications in there.

Chief Feichtner stated the position was modeled from a previous department.

Clerk Noble questioned if we can afford the position. He stated he is also opposed to the single-family rental being in the ordinance. Supervisor Kowall interrupted and stated taking it away would be a disservice.

Trustee Smith suggested postponing and then revisiting the ordinance.

Treasurer Roman stated if the single-family homes are removed from the ordinance the Township is no longer responsible for solving people's problems.

It was MOVED by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Ruggles, to postpone the part-time Fire Inspector position. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (4 yes votes) (Kowall/no, Roman/yes, Noble/yes, Ruggles/yes, Smith/yes, Anderson/no, Voorheis/no).

E. RESOLUTION #26-001; CHARITABLE GAMING LICENSE – NEW WAVE ANGLER INITIATIVE

Nick Marsh, Vice President of New Wave Angler, a nonprofit initiative, presented a request for his community driven program aimed at expanding youth access to outdoor recreation and conservation education. He is requesting local approval for a Charitable Gaming License to be issued by the State.

It was MOVED by Trustee Ruggles, seconded by Clerk Noble, to approve Resolution #26-001, Charitable Gaming License – New Wave Angler Initiative. The motion carried with a voice vote: (7 yes votes).

F. REQUEST TO APPROVE INVOCATION POLICY

Trustee Anderson presented the request to approve invocation policy. He stated it was drafted by the Township Attorney after taking into the Boards concerns.

Mary Early, 5925 Pine Ridge Court, spoke in opposition to an Invocation from the Board.

Chris Todd, Pastor of Oxbow Lake Baptist Church, he spoke in favor of an Invocation.

Trustee Anderson read an email from Pastor Paul of Grace Church offering to participate. He read a second email from Pastor Garcia of Auburn Hills.

Trustee Smith asked about tweaking the Policy. Attorney Hamameh responded that the Board can modify however the Board desires. Trustee Smith suggested changing #9 to allow standing or sitting. Referring to #2 h., she also suggests all invites go out on Township letterhead.

Clerk Noble asked for clarification of 2 a. and asked who the designee is. The Supervisor responded that he determines that.

Trustee Anderson offered his services.

Trustee Smith stated it should come from the Supervisor's office. They have an Executive Secretary.

Treasurer Roman suggested the time should be 1 minute instead of 3 minutes.

Clerk Noble again asked for clarification. Attorney Hamameh responded that as written the Supervisor does get to choose the designee.

It was MOVED by Trustee Anderson, seconded by Supervisor Kowall to approve the Invocation Policy as written and approved by the Township Attorney, which will be administered by the Supervisor's Office. The approved policy will take effect at the next Board meeting on 02/17/2026, with corrections to 9 and 2 h as stated by Trustee Smith. The motion carried with a roll call vote: (7 yes votes) (Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Noble/yes, Smith/yes, Anderson/yes, Voorheis/yes).

Attorney Hamameh clarified that the process will begin in February not the actual invocation.

FYI - CIVIC CENTER UPDATE

Supervisor Kowall stated the Public Safety Building is going well. A lot of the masonry is up and mechanical in place. Anticipation dates for Public Safety are July 4th and the latter part of summer for Township Hall.

Pontiac Lake Road is on schedule. There is a Public Meeting coming in February.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Voorheis advised to stay warm.

Trustee Anderson thanked the residents and the Pastors for their support. He stated ZBA will have two cases for review. He thanked the Chief of Police for assigning a supervisor to attend a HOA meeting. He said the DFCU ribbon cutting will be on the 28th.

Clerk Noble congratulated Finance Director Elaine Homeister on her retirement.

Treasurer Roman thanked everyone for attending. He recognized yesterday as MLK day.

Trustee Smith stated she attended the ribbon cutting at Lakeland High School. She also thanked Elaine. She updated the interior progress for the new Township Building. She cautioned all to stay safe in this cold weather.

Trustee Ruggles stated he will do his best to take all the comments back to the next Planning Commission meeting.

Supervisor Kowall also commented on the extreme cold. He thanked Elaine also. He thanked Trustee Anderson for his work on the Invocation Policy.

ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, seconded by Trustee Anderson to adjourn at 9:39 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

