

WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING

MAY 20th, 2025 7:00PM

Meeting opened with Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken by Supervisor Kris Shaw. Members present included Supervisor Kris Shaw, Clerk Deena Barnhart, Treasurer Catherine Shaw, and Trustee Matthew Barnhart. Trustee Laurie Beauchamp was excused. Also present were Zoning Administrator Mike Beltz, Greg Hardy, Karla Hardy, Bob Struck, Melissa Krans, Mark Krans, and Sally Niemi.

AGENDA: A motion to approve the Agenda with additions of adding G. Board of Review under Reports was made by Deena Barnhart and supported by Catherine Shaw. M/C

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MINUTES: A motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from April 15, 2025 meeting was made by Catherine Shaw and supported by Matthew Barnhart. M/C

JOB BILLS PAYABLE: A motion to approve the JOB Bills totaling \$18,842.56 was made by Catherine Shaw and supported by Kris Shaw. M/C

JOB BUDGET REPORT: A motion to approve the JOB Budget was made by Catherine Shaw and supported by Kris Shaw. M/C

FINANCIAL REPORT: A motion to approve the Financial Report as presented was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Matthew Barnhart. M/C

BUDGET REPORT: A motion to approve the Budget with the following adjustment: move the \$2,839.43 from Supplies to Equipment Large Purchase was made by Deena Barnhart and supported by Catherine Shaw. M/C

BILLS PAYABLE: A motion to pay the West Branch Township Bills totaling \$111,081.72 was made by Catherine Shaw and supported by Deena Barnhart. M/C

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Zoning Administrator Mike Beltz reported he completed a FIOA request for attorney's at a condo association in Sawyer. A permit for a garage on Boyer Road was processed and there was discussion about the fees charged for a Zoning Variance Permit. Kris Shaw stated he would further discuss this matter with Mike Beltz after the meeting.

ASSESSOR REPORT: Assessor Cameron Fuess sent a report stating everything is going well, all information for the audit has been uploaded, the meeting just needs to be scheduled.

MARQ-TRAN ADVISORY BOARD: Trustee Matthew Barnhart shared information he received from the Marq-Trab Advisory Meeting Residents had inquired about where the bus stops in Skandia and door to door service. Matthew had a map for the board members to look at which showed where the bus stops are in Skandia and he also explained how the door to door service could be reserved. Kris Shaw suggested a link to Marq-Tran be put on the Township website. Matthew agreed and also shared he could create a QR code if that was desired. The next meeting is scheduled for June 19, 2025.

PLANNING COMMISSION Nothing at this time.

PETER WHITE LIBRARY: Nothing at this time.

BOARD OF REVIEW: The next meeting for the Board of Review will be in July, dates to be announced.

WATER DEPARTMENT: An auditor is needed for the water authority, it was suggested the new auditor for West Branch Township be approached.

RECREATION TEAM: Kris Shaw reported that the Recreation Team will be having a Public Hearing on May 21, 2025 at 7:30pm, seeking public input and suggestions from the community for the DNR Grant.

JOINT OPERATIONS: The minutes from the JOB Committee meeting are on file.

A motion to hire Tayea Stone as a First Responder was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Catherine Shaw. M/C

A Par Plan Grant was applied for with the intent to purchase new cameras for the Transfer Station. The Grant was approved but for only \$1506.00 which would not cover the necessary costs. **A motion to refuse the Par Plan Grant was made by Matthew Barnhart and supported by Kris Shaw. M/C**

A motion to approve the posting of the JOB Secretary position with correction of adding Catherine Shaw in place of Deena Barnhart as representing WB Township was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Matthew Barnhart. M/C

SOA: Bob Struck requested he be placed as the resident representative for West Branch Township on the Sawyer Operations Authority. **A motion to appoint Bob Struck the West Branch resident representative was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Matthew Barnhart. M/C**

CORRESPONDENCE: All correspondence is on file.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. ROAD UPDATE: The check for \$86,928.45 was mailed on 5/17/2025. Mark Krans stated that the culverts have been marked and Bacco has an excavator parked in the area.
- B. MAINTAINENCE WORKER: This subject will be discussed at the June meeting when Laurie Beachamp is present. For now Ray Johnson and Brandon Chmiko will mow the grass.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **CEMETERY: A motion to hire Andrew Bahrman and Pam Bahrman was the new Sexton was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Deena Barnhart. M/C**

Andrew Bahrman gave Kris Shaw a list of supplies that will be needed to perform the Sexton duties properly. Pam Bahrman sent an email stating the Township needs to update our cemetery ordinance and re-evaluate our fee scale. Pam is also working on cleaning up the cemetery map and provided a job description for the Sexton position.

A motion to adopt following burial fees, effective immediately:

Urn: \$200.00

Standard Casket: \$700.00

Infant Burial: \$300.00

Disinterment: \$1,000.00 was made by Kris Shaw and supported by Catherine Shaw. M/C

Lot fee prices will be discussed at the June meeting.

EXTENDED AGENDA ITEMS: Matthew Barnhart discussed the matter of campers being parked on property with people living in them. Matthew stated he does not believe there is currently anything in the Township's zoning about this issue. Kris Shaw suggested that Matthew speak with Laurie Beauchamp and the Planning Commission, this will have to be looked into. Kris Shaw stated he received a complaint about the trash ordinance being violated, Kris will discuss this matter with the Zoning Administrator.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: Sally Niemi asked about purchases Kris Shaw made for the Cemetery, she questioned whether those items were present before. Kris replied that the things he was asked to purchase were not present in the storage building and therefore he purchased what was requested by the new Sexton. Sally Niemi also asked about the potential for running out of space at the cemetery if people from outside the Township purchase all the plots. Kris explained that people have to be residents, taxpayers, or be able to provide a link IE: former resident, relative etc., of West Branch Township to purchase cemetery plots. Karla Hardy stated she likes the new website, she said it's an improvement over what was there and it looks good.

BOARD COMMENT: Kris Shaw stated he would like to see everyone come to support the Rec Team at the public hearing on Wednesday May 21 at 7:30pm..

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm


Submitted by Deena Barnhart, Clerk