

West Branch Township

1016 County Road 545 N

Skandia, MI 49885

Kris Shaw – Supervisor

Deena Barnhart – Clerk

Catherine Shaw – Treasurer

Laurie Beauchamp – Trustee

Matthew Barnhart – Trustee

RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 5, 2026

7:15 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER – Kris Shaw called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

2. ROLL CALL – In attendance at the meeting were: Chair – Kris Shaw; Vice Chair – Ray Johnson; Secretary – Natalie Chmiko; Brandon Chmiko; Cherry Mashue; Brenda Aldrich (new committee member); Nellie Turton; Catherine Shaw.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

4. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Review & Approve Agenda – There was a motion to approve the agenda by Kris Shaw, with a second by Brandon Chmiko. No opposed, motion carries.
 - B. Review & Approve Minutes from last meeting on July 28, 2025 – There was a motion to approve the minutes by Ray Johnson, with a second by Brandon Chmiko. No opposed, motion carries.

5. FUNDRAISER
 - A. Tailgate & Car Show September 13, 2025 Results – Kris Shaw reviewed the result of the September Tailgate fundraiser. Overall, the committee is happy with the turnout of the event. The effort raised \$4,860, with expenses of \$503.64.
 - B. Save the Date – September 12, 2026 – Ray Johnson shared that we would like to focus on increasing the car show attendance as a natural draw for the fundraiser activities.
 - C. Marketing/Poster – Kris Shaw shared that he would like to get a poster/flyer out early this year, and has suggested putting together a smaller marketing committee to make the process more efficient. Ray, Natalie and Cherry volunteered. The group plans to focus on the 2nd annual “Field of Dreams Car Show” with a secondary mention of the tailgate fundraiser. The group briefly discussed reviewing the professional photos took last year along with potentially establishing a recognizable logo to use for the event going forward. The group will also explore the potential of selling sponsorships on

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the poster, perhaps spots of \$1,500/\$500 to bring credibility and visibility to the event. The group plans to have a draft flyer ready by early March.

The group also has plans to continue the dash plaques and trophies for the attendees and winners. This committee will ensure we also do promotion on the radio and TV6, as was done last year.

Other discussion about the tailgate included Kris recommending we split up into additional committees. Other fundraiser activities include:

- Having a donation box for the cars at the registration desk;
- The Skandia Lions club has offered to do a pancake breakfast to raise money and promote the event. Last time, this netted about \$1,200. The group aims to do this in March, April or May depending on availability.
- Texas Roadhouse has offered to host a fundraiser night, usually on Mondays, where 10% of sales goes to the cause for about 3-4 hours.

6. 2025 GRANT STATUS –

Kris Shaw reviewed the 2025 grant results. He first shared the news that the Skandia Lions Club awarded the recreation committee a \$5,000 grant for commercial grade picnic tables. Kris ordered one to test the quality and will order additional if satisfactory. Kris shared that he would like to make plaques with the dates of grant funding for the park. Additionally, the Lions Club committed to hosting the drinks at the 2026 Car Show. Kris will formally make the request to the Fire Department to get them committed to do the food sales again.

Catherine committed to sharing additional matching grants with the Lion's Club in the future. Kris mentioned he would like to put a thank you note together for the Lions Club.

Kris also reviewed the status of the DNR grants, which were announced last month. Unfortunately, West Branch Township did not receive either of the DNR grants it applied for. Natalie shared that now that the process is understood, we will be able to make adjustments to get more points for funding.

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7. FUTURE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Tribal Grants –

The Sault Tribe owns Property in West Branch and has 2% grant opportunity right on website and they also do bigger projects. Ray committed to look into this.

KBIC – may have grant funding available.

Ojibwa – Brenda committed to reaching out to contact about grant opportunities.

DNR Recreation Grants –

The group discussed hiring a grant writer, but decided that wouldn't be worth it this year. Instead, they discussed hiring an engineer or someone that can do preliminary mapping services. Natalie will reach out to Megan, who was the previous contact that made the map. She also will ask Merrie, the DNR grant coordinator. Natalie committed to setting up a meeting with Merrie to go over last year's application and determine areas for improvement. Initial areas she suggests improving on are: 1) budget and reasonable cost estimates 2) Mapping 3) ADA and Universal Design/Accessibility.

The group also plans to do a survey for all residents regarding what is needed for accessibility in recreation. Cherry also said she could support as she works with people with disabilities.

8. 2026 RECREATION PROJECTS

Kris shared that he would still like to see some movement in recreation development for 2026 as there is budget set aside for improvements. His goal is by August having a pavilion building, concessions, or initial site work done in the field. Ray suggested including a stage or music venue with power and lights. Kris, Ray and Brandon will form a subcommittee to take on reaching out to contractors for proposals for the build.

Kris also shared that he is working on putting together a proposal for the West Branch Township Board to consider for 2026-2027 budget which would include a

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build out of outdoor public restrooms incorporated into the existing hall building and septic field.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None.

The group set the next meeting date: February 23, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

10. EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

11. MEETING ADJOURN at 8:35pm.