

WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2026

1. Meeting called to order at 7pm by Supervisor Kris Shaw.
2. Pledge of Allegiance recited.
3. Roll Call: Present – Kris Shaw, Supervisor; Jane Taylor, Clerk; Catherine Shaw, Treasurer; Trustees Lisa Johnson and Laurie Beauchamp. Supervisor Shaw introduced Jane Taylor as our new Clerk.
4. Approval of Agenda – Supervisor Shaw requested an addition to the agenda – before Public Comment we have a special guest – Christal Carter, Forsyth Township Zoning Administrator. **Motion to approve agenda with addition of special guest prior to public comments made by Treasurer Shaw and supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.**
5. May Monthly Meeting Minutes from May 19, 2026 - **Motion made to approve made by Trustee Beauchamp, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.** Special Meeting Minutes from June 2, 2026 - **Motion made to approve made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.**
6. Forsyth Township Zoning Administrator Christal Carter addressed the board and guests regarding a potential data center in West Branch Township. She clarified that no applications received, only inquiries about power and related matters. She noted that townships cannot ban data centers but may establish regulations. She cautioned attendees not to rely on information on social media and explained that, if an application for a data center is received, public hearings would be part of the process. She will share relevant information with the Township Board and residents.
7. Public Comment – Approximately sixty (60) township residents and residents from other Marquette County locations attended the meeting – board room filled to capacity. Twenty attendees shared their concerns – including health concerns, noise levels, light pollution, possibility of banding together with other communities to resolve this issue, need for environmental assessments, energy consumption, etc. Attendees were all present to share their opposition to a data center in our township. Residents shared their appreciation of West Branch residency and not wanting change. An attendee shared “What Michigan Local Governments Should Know About Data Centers” dated February 2026 published by the University of Michigan, Center for Empowering Communities. No one in attendance shared any comments in favor of a data center. At the end of public comment Supervisor Shaw again asked people to not put their full faith in social media and the best way to get correct information is to attend board meetings, planning commission meetings, etc.
8. Action Items –
 - a. Approval of Joint Operations Bills – **Motion made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Beauchamp to pay Joint Bills as submitted through June 15, 2026. Motion carried.**
 - b. Approval of Joint Budget thru June 15, 2026 – **Motion made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Johnson to approve budget as presented. Motion carried.**
 - c. West Branch Financial Report as of May 31, 2026, reviewed. **Motion made by Trustee Johnson, supported by Supervisor Shaw to approve Financial Report. Motion carried.**

- d. Approval of Budget Report through June 16, 2026. **Motion made by Supervisor Shaw, supported by Treasurer Shaw to approve the budget. Motion carried.**
- e. West Branch Bills Payable for the period of May 22 through June 16, 2026. **Motion to approve bills payable in the amount of \$25,270.64 (West Branch Bills Payable \$19,007.32 plus Township's share of Joint Operations bills payable \$6,263.32) made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.** Authorization given to process payroll through same time period as soon as QuickBooks is available again.

9. Reports

- a. Joint Operations Meeting Review – Supervisor Shaw reported that Fire Department has responded to 25 fire calls year to date. Fire Grant is on hold as of this date but will be monitored by Fire Chief and Skandia Township Supervisor. Fire Chief obtaining another bid on the generator West Branch will submit for grant purposes. First Responders had 12 calls this month, 101 calls year to date. AED ordered, not yet received. Skandia and West Branch will coordinate purchasing fire number call signs from same vendor – WB Zoning Adm. Will work with Skandia Clerk on this. All is going well at the Transfer Facility. **Motion made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Clerk Taylor to approve the hiring of Lisa Polkinhorn as an alternate worker at same rate paid to other transferee facility attendants. Motion carried.** Dumpster needs repair, GFL will not haul for safety reasons. MCSWMA disposal fees will increase to \$98/ton on July 1. Supervisor Shaw commented that the Township currently supplements disposal costs beyond the funds collected from transfer facility cards by approximately \$40,000/year.
- b. Assessor's Report – none.
- c. Zoning Administrator – Reported on his work in progress.
- d. Marq-Tran Board – no report. Remove from agenda.
- e. Planning Commission – Report attached.
- f. Cemetery Board – Report attached. NMU Archiving of maps is in the application process. No new report on creation of cemetery funds. Positive community feedback reported regarding the spring cleaning that took place. It was discussed that a fall clean-up and another spring clean-up would be of benefit.
- g. Peter White Public Library representative reported their 5-year Strategic Plan is complete and being implemented. Summer reading programs are in full swing, and meals are available to those in need. Digital resources are available also. See their website for details.
- h. Board of Review – no report.
- i. Recreation Team – Supervisor Shaw was happy to report three grants have been obtained. \$10,000 from Harbor Rotary Large Grant for playground equipment; \$3,500 from Keweenaw Bay Indian Community 2% Funding for inclusive playground equipment, and \$12,000 from Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians towards a pavilion. Working on permits for pavilion currently. Texas Roadhouse also had a 10% donation night on 6-15 for Recreation. REMINDER – September 12 is this year's car show. Volunteers are welcome as well as vendors, participants, and people to enjoy the event.

- j. SOA – no meeting.
- 10. Correspondence – email received regarding a UPPCO hearing on June 25 at 10am.
- 11. Old Business
 - a. Employee Manual Review/Approval – tabled until next meeting.
 - b. Road Millage/Road Commission – County’s schedule is full for this season already.
- 12. New Business – none
- 13. Extended Agenda Items -- none
- 14. Extended Public Comment

Several comments made including suggestions for more education on recycling efforts at transfer facility, picnic table status, data center comments, speed limit enforcement, West Branch Township website details, and thank you to township board for listening to residents’ concerns, etc.
- 15. Board Comment --

Supervisor Shaw thanked the public for attendance and sharing concerns and thanked Forsyth Zoning Administrator for her involvement at the meeting.
- 16. Adjournment – 8:40pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Taylor, Township Clerk