

WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
July 14, 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.
4. Approval of Agenda – Trustee Johnson requested an addition under “11. New Business - MCSWA Landfill Billing. Clerk Taylor requested an addition under “11. New Business – Elections. **Motion to approve agenda with additions made by Clerk Taylor, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**
5. June Monthly Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2026 were reviewed - **Motion made to approve made by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Beauchamp. Motion carried.** Special Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2026 were reviewed - **Motion made to approve made by Trustee Beauchamp, supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.**
6. Public Comments: Twenty-three members from West Branch and surrounding areas were present at the meeting. Six chose to voice their comments publicly. All speaking voiced opposition to a data center, water shed concerns, concerns with agendas and meetings not being readily available on website, offered assistance on a citizen advisory.
7. Action Items –
 - a. West Branch Financial Report as of June 30, 2026, reviewed. **Motion made by Trustee Johnson, supported by Clerk Taylor to approve Financial Report. Motion carried.**
 - b. Approval of Budget Report through July 14, 2026. **Motion made by Supervisor Shaw, supported by Treasurer Shaw to approve the budget. Motion carried.**
 - c. West Branch Bills Payable for the period of May 22 through June 16, 2026. **Motion to approve bills payable in the amount of \$44,605.86 (West Branch Bills Payable \$33,538.20 plus Township’s share of Joint Operations bills payable \$11,067.66) made by Supervisor Shaw, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**
8. Reports
 - a. Joint Operations Meeting Review – Supervisor Shaw reviewed indicated that this month’s Joint Meeting was a full quarterly board meeting so a full report was not necessary – although he wanted a clarification for the record regarding the disposal of electronics at joint transfer facility. He had received a “text” from Skandia Supervisor on the topic of “electronics disposal”. He wants the record to show that he at no point indicated that West Branch Township was in agreement with not accepting “electronics”. His only response was the topic should be discussed at the June Meeting. Supervisor Shaw also tried to contact a realtor regarding a possible Fire Hall property location – but no response has been received.
 - b. Assessor’s Report – State audit has been approved.

- c. Zoning Administrator – Reported on his work in progress noting the period from 6-16 to 7-14 was quieter than last month. Had 9 blight complaints, 3 animal complaints, work continued on moratorium and blight. Looking forward to training opportunities thru MTA.
- d. Planning Commission – Sent to Board tonight for consideration updated Planning Commission By-Laws – explained by Chairperson Aldrich.
 - Proposed Moratorium which was forwarded to Attorney Hoff, who attended meeting, for review prior to Board Approval. She expressed her appreciation of the work that was done by the Planning Commission and stated how well it was written that she only had to add “legal references”. She acknowledged T. Watson for his work on the ordinance. She also stressed the importance of now starting the work on the zoning ordinance and offered her assistance. She also reminded us of MTA’s inhouse attorney as a valuable resource also. After attorney’s comments, Supervisor Shaw read aloud the proposed moratorium #2026-03 and noted it will be valid for a 1 year period but can be extended if necessary. **Motion was made by Trustee Beauchamp to approve the Moratorium as written, supported by Clerk Taylor, effective July 14, 2026. Roll call vote was taken: Trustee Johnson – yes; Trustee Beauchamp – yes; Treasurer Shaw – yes; Clerk Taylor – yes; Supervisor Shaw – yes.**
 - Chairperson Aldrich explained the need for updated Planning Commission By-Laws noting that the most current by-laws were dated in the 1990’s. It was noted by our attorney present that it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to create their own by-laws and a vote of approval by board was not necessary.
 - The purchase of an Adobe license was approved for two of the computers – Administrative Assistant and Clerk.
- e. Cemetery Board – No report.
- f. Peter White Public Library present and reported on several items including their participation at Skandia Community Days, summer feeding program. Questions from public have been received at township regarding Sunday Hours at Library – they are under consideration but staffing/funding issues limit this service. Supervisor Shaw extended an invitation to the library to have a presence at the September 12th Car Show at the West Branch Recreation Area Fund Raiser.
- g. Board of Review – One board of review petition to be held on July 20 at 5:30pm. Next possible session in December.
- h. Recreation Team – Supervisor Shaw thanked all past volunteers and welcomed any new volunteers for the September 12th Car Show, indicating to talk with either himself or Ray Johnson after the meeting (or anytime) if interested. Shaw and Johnson have been actively working on site prep. Noted that new picnic tables are put together and ready for use. Supervisor Shaw then explained that he has been working on pricing of playground equipment. He has been reviewing pricing on the State Contracts which are available for local government use and has narrowed his search. He requested permission to utilize the grant funding from KBIC (\$3500), Marquette Harbor Rotary (\$10,000), up to \$10,000 each for Recreation Funding

Raised by Committee and Township Budget. Total purchase to be \$30,000 or less. Current equipment under consideration \$26,431 but no final selection has been made yet. **Motion made by Clerk Taylor, supported by Trustee Johnson authorizing Supervisor Shaw to purchase a playground system up to \$30,000 using grant funding, recreation fund raising, and township budget as indicated. Motion carried.** REMINDER – September 12th is this year's car show. Volunteers are welcome as well as vendors, participants, and people to enjoy the event.

Purchase of a "demonstration check" was approved.

- i. SOA – Trustee Johnson attended the July Meeting and reports that it was suggested that Forsyth, Skandia, West Branch and Marquette County hold a "town hall" type meeting at Sawyer School to address public's concerns regarding zoning, data centers, etc. No date has been set yet. Marquette County has funding available for waste management
9. Correspondence – received expressing gratitude for Fire Department and its work installing smoke detectors for residents – in this case for a resident that needed a hearing impaired "bed shaker".

10. Old Business

- a. Employee Manual Review/Approval – Reviewed and approval was made with the inclusion of offering direct deposit to employees and having two pay schedules – one for monthly employees and a bi-weekly for hourly employees. Clarified that the pay schedules are dependent on position type (salary or hourly) not employee preference. **Motion made to approve Employee Manual and direct deposit option made by Supervisor Shaw, supported by Clerk Taylor. Motion carried.**
- b. Road Millage/Road Commission – county's schedule is full for this season already. It was noted that our millage generates approximately \$40,000/year and because no work can be done this year, funds have been moved to an interest-bearing Certificate of Deposit.

11. New Business –

- a. Back-up of office computers was briefly discussed and it was agreed to contact our computer tech and ask for quarterly service. All in attendance agreed.
- b. Landfill Billing – MCSWMA landfill permit billings were explained. Suggestion to consider an administrative fee be added to invoices for users who have more than 10 transactions per month. **Motion was made by Trustee Johnson, supported by Clerk Taylor that a 2% administrative fee be added to invoices with more than ten (10) transactions per month. Motion carried.** Delinquent accounts were also discussed. At this time, delinquent accounts are to continue to be billed as usual. Writing off of any accounts is prohibited.
- c. Elections – Clerk Taylor indicated that she is new to the election process and was hoping for an election specialist recommended by the County Clerk to help her - but that has fallen through. She is in need of a "Republican" election inspector. Please pass this on to anyone you may think might be able to help us out this election cycle.

12. Extended Agenda Items -- none

13. Extended Public Comment – Seven chose to participate in this public comment – summarized as concerns for working on solar & wind farms also; concerns of non-disclosure agreements – it

was noted none currently exist; suggested a "late" fee also be included in MCSWMA landfill invoicing; Planning Commission was thanked for moratorium work; and public again expressed their interest in a public advisory committee to help in moving forward on current data center regulation. Public was thanked for their comments, T. Watson was thanked for his work on the moratorium, and public told it now is the time to work and be heard.

14. Board Comment -- Public was thanked for their comments, T. Watson was thanked for his work on the moratorium, and public told it now is the time to work and be heard.

15. Adjournment – 8:57pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Taylor, Township Clerk

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