WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 18, 2026

1. Meeting called to order at 7:02pm 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-**Motion to approve agenda made by Clerk Taylor, supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.**
5. Approval of Minutes- Monthly Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2026 were reviewed. **Motion made to approve (with a correction to change the word "choose" to "chose" made by Trustee Johnson, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**
6. Public Comment- Several people attended including some members that are on various West Branch boards. No public comment at this time.
7. Action Items-
   a. Skandia/West Branch Joint Operations Monthly Expenses 7/14/2026-8/17/2026- **Motion made by Supervisor Shaw to pay the joint bills in the amount of $18,146.94, supported by Trustee Beauchamp. Motion carried.**
   b. Skandia/West Branch Joint Operations Budget-August 17, 2026-**Supervisor Shaw made a motion to approve the joint budget through August 17th. Motion supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**
   c. Treasurer's Financial Report- None provided (Medical excused, will be provided at next month's board meeting.
   d. Budget- Upon review several line items were discussed that were over budget. All were explained with the exception of Registrations. It will be looked into. **Motion made by Trustee Johnson to approve the budget, supported by Clerk Taylor. Motion carried.**
   e. West Branch Township Bills Payable- **Motion to approve bills payable in the amount of $52,121.35 (West Branch Bills Payable $43,047.88 plus Township's share of Joint Operations bills payable $9073.47 made by Trustee Beauchamp, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried**
8. Reports-
   a. Joint Operations/Meeting Review- Supervisor Shaw presented several topics that had been discussed. Chief Downs reported that there have been 42 calls year to date, that he had attended the Marquette County Firefighters Association Meeting**,** had

talked with Brian from Emergency Management and was told that there are connections if they are in need of certain items such as clothing. There was discussion regarding mutual aid between the townships. There is a new system called MABIS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) that we are not a member of at this time. CPR is due in October. It is required every two years. Marquette County Firefighters Association's next meeting is scheduled for September 22nd at the Skandia Fire Department. He reported that there were a couple of parades in July. He said that they had tied for 1st place overall with Champion Township at the Marquette County Fairgrounds. The first week of October is Fire Prevention Week at Sawyer. Kevin also gave a report for EMS for Kim who was otherwise occupied for the evening. They have not gotten their AED yet but a loaner was received. The new one is back ordered. Continuing education credits were discussed, Forsyth EMS offered for Skandia/West Branch to attend for their continuing education credits. First Responder Water Authority's next meeting is set for September 28th and will discuss getting the 2nd well up and running. Some snowplowing bids have been received. September 10th is the deadline for the joint snowplowing bids, the contract will be awarded during the meetings to be held on September 13, 14 and 15th. Supervisor Shaw received a call back regarding the Skandia Truss property that we are interested in acquiring to be used as the new fire hall. Initially he was told that the property would not be divided and that the price was 3.4 million dollars. He received another call from the same realtor stating the reason why they were not interested in dividing it and that the price offered to the townships would be 2.9 million. It was listed to the public for that price. A meeting will be set to come to an agreement on what price we should offer. A Transfer Station Meeting was held at Skandia Township. A survey was created to seek feedback from residents that use the facility. It is not finalized and we were given a copy to see if we would want any changes made to it. It was suggested that we may receive more feedback if it were an electronic survey. A tire grant of $3000 was awarded to us and has been set up for September 26th from 9am until 12pm. There is a limit of (10) tires not greater than 21 inches per household and ID must be shown.

b. Assessor Report- None
c. Zoning Administrator Report- Ray Johnson reported that a variance request was made for 212 Fassbender Rd Marquette, Michigan and it was granted. Three requests were made for fire numbers. Two complaints of blight properties.
    1. Responsibility For Complaints- Supervisor Shaw reported that the MTA states that it is the board's responsibility to ensure that the zoning be enforced by the Zoning Administrator. There was discussion regarding how to enforce violations. There was also discussion regarding having a "Formal Blight Complaint Form" as

well as possibly forming a Blight Committee to review them. This will be included in next month's packet.

2. Fire Number Issuance- A discussion regarding who is responsible for fire number signs. **A motion was made to provide a free fire number sign to any new property; charge a fee of $20 for any sign that is no longer legible if it is brought in; $40 for any sign that is missing by Treasurer Shaw, supported by Trustee Johnson. Motion carried.**

d. Planning Commission- No meeting was held this month. Moratorium was published and has been properly filed. Next meeting will be September 21,2026 at 7pm.
    1. Discussion of 2027 Appointments- Applications will be requested of anyone desiring to serve on a board. It will be the board's decision to appoint new members. The supervisor may appoint as well. Current members will need to re-apply.
e. Cemetery Board- Pam Bahrman reports that between the dates of 6/16/26 and 8/18/26 there were zero plots sold, there were two burials, one marker installation and was contacted by a funeral home in relation to fixing a headstone. During this time period the new signage was put up as well as a pamphlet holder. Mowing, cleanup and trimming continue. Work continues on the maps and the plot binders. Missing flagpoles are still being worked on. There was discussion regarding retaining walls in two areas of the cemetery. A Cemetery Board Meeting was held on 8/4/26. The next meeting will be held on 1/11/27 at 7pm. A copy of their Monthly Meeting Minutes and a Cemetery Report was provided.
    1. Creation of Cemetery Funds-A Cemetery Project/Wish List was provided. Some discussion was had regarding how it will be entered and accounted for.
f. Peter White Public Library Liaison- Natasha Lanz shared that there is so much more offered at the library than books. They include concerts, movies, weekly meditation programs, a large puzzle table, a puzzle exchange, a financial literacy series beginning this fall as well as a "tech coaching" program for seniors. Seniors can sign up for as many 30-minute sessions as they would like. Unless stated, all of the services at the library are free of charge.
g. Board of Review- A meeting was held on 7/14/26. Four petitions had been received, all were resolved. Next meeting to be held on 12/14/26 if needed to correct clerical errors.
h. Recreation Team- Playground Set has been ordered, estimated to arrive in 6-8 weeks.
    1. Sponsorship Letter for Donations-Board approval is required for a letter to be circulated in the community asking for sponsorships in excess of $1000. **Trustee Beauchamp made a motion to approve the letter with a correction made to the**

**greeting (Dear Community Leader will be replaced by Dear Community Members and Business Leaders), supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**

2. Recreation Facebook Site- After discussion, **Trustee Beauchamp made a motion to approve the creation of a Facebook page for the West Branch Township Recreation Area, supported by Supervisor Shaw. Motion carried.**
3. Sign wording- After discussion, **Trustee Beauchamp made a motion to approve the wording to be placed on the permanent sign as "West Branch Township Recreation Area Meyland Park, supported by Clerk Taylor. Motion carried.**

i. SOA- No meeting

j. Zoning Board of Appeals- Meeting was held on 8/10/26 for a proposed variance at 212 Fassbender Rd. Marquette, MI 49855. Variance was granted. Next scheduled meeting is 1/18/27 at 7pm. Note: Supervisor Shaw stated that an annual meeting is required of the ZBA, even if there are no variances requested.

9. Correspondence- An invitation from Live DemoDay (PA), UP North Summit, and the Upper Peninsula Telephone Company
10. Old Business-
    a. Employee Manual-Addition of Mileage Reimbursement Forms/Time Sheets/Supply Requisitions-Approval/Authority Requirements-After discussion, it was verified by Supervisor Shaw that approval must be granted by one of the three officers before payment will be processed.
    b. Road Millage/Road Commission- Nothing slated for West Branch Township
11. New Business
    a. Attorney- Permission must be obtained from Supervisor to contact. A letter was received from Bonnie L. Huff, Attorney at Law including a statement for legal services rendered. She suggests that we, as a board, decide whether we find value in her work on behalf of the township. She will be contacted as to what she feels is a fair amount of time regarding the phone calls and emails between her and the prior clerk. We will request that she bill us quarterly and also prior to the end of March for budget reasons. We do value her service to the township and hope to utilize her in the future.
    b. Solution 26-05 – Bureau of Land Management- **A roll call vote was held. All voted in favor. Resolution Declared Adopted.**
    c. Transfer Facility Rates for 2027- Supervisor Shaw asks that we all bring our written opinions to our next meeting. We currently subsidize it in excess of $40,000.
    d. Forsyth Township Townhall Meeting- An open forum meeting will be held in Gwinn. It is expected that AI Data Centers and Military Presence will be the topics to be discussed. Supervisor Shaw will attend as West Branch Township's representative.
12. Extended Agenda Items-

a. Natalie Chmiko requested a letter with our heading on it on behalf of the township respectfully asking that you designate KI Sawyer as eligible in your statewide opportunity zone to the US Treasury. After discussion, we declined due to not having time to inform ourselves of this matter.
b. Tanner Watson has expressed interest in being a temporary part-time groundskeeper at the same rate of pay to help fill the void that Andrew Bahrman's leaving will create. **Supervisor Shaw made a motion to approve Tanner Watson to this position, supported by Treasurer Shaw. Motion carried.**

13. Extended Public Comment- Questions were raised regarding the tire grant as well as an opinion on keeping the Formal Blight Complaint Form anonymous to protect the complainant. Also, the suggestion that the survey regarding the Transfer Station have an online option. Information was also shared about Goodwill and Lake Superior Watershed Partnership in regards to electronics recycling. A suggestion was made to the greeting on the sponsorship letter. It will be added as an addendum. It was also suggested that appointments be made to boards in staggered terms to ensure that there is always varying lengths of terms. A request was made to make recycling clearer. A comment was made whether a blight committee is really necessary.
14. Board Comment- Supervisor Shaw thanks everyone for coming and for being very patient as we had a lot to go over. Treasurer Shaw reports that we have subsidized the transfer station $17.000 since April 1st. Trustee Johnson stated that the Fire Grant was submitted for the generator.
15. Adjournment- 9:22pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Taylor, Township Clerk