

Lee Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Lee Township Board was called to order at 7:30 pm at the Lee Township Hall, located at 877 56th Street, Pullman, Michigan.

Members Present: Supervisor Owen, Trustee Galdikas, Treasurer Godlew, Trustee Hatfield.

Members Absent: Clerk Friel.

Amendments: None.

Board Comments: Trustee Galdikas spoke on behalf of the board to honor and thank our veterans.

Supervisor Owen gave a report on behalf of Clerk Friel. She apologized for not being able to make her last meeting but could not make it due to personal reasons. She would like to thank our community for the opportunity to serve in this capacity, writing “It has been a pleasure to be your clerk for the last four years. Regarding the election, we had a very successful election day. Everything ran smoothly, and our voters were so pleasant and patient as our team worked through anything that came up. A big thank you to our election crew who worked from 6am to 1 am to ensure the elections were successful. We had 772 people voted in person, 276 absentee ballots, 275 early voters, for a total of 1273 ballots. It was a great turnout.”

Trustee Galdikas also thanked the residents of Lee for allowing her to serve them for the past 12 years. It was her honor and privilege to represent them. She extended congratulations to the incoming board and encouraged them to work hard as they address critical issues for the community.

Trustee Hatfield thanked the community for allowing her to serve the past four years and for re-electing her.

Citizens Comments: Tim Kotas acknowledged the hard work both Trustee Galdikas and Supervisor Owen have given to the people of Lee Township over the past 12 years.

Guest Speaker: Brad Lubbers the new County Commissioner introduced himself and stated he had been friends Dean Kapenga, and although his position as Commissioner came earlier than expected due to Dean's passing, he looks forward to serving in this role starting in January.

Approval of Regular Board Minutes:

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Godlew to approve the October 14th, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes: Election Meeting.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Godlew to approve the October 14th, 2024 Election Meeting Minutes as presented. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was read by Treasurer Godlew.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Hatfield to receive the Treasurer's report as given. Roll call vote was taken: Yes-Galdikas, Godlew, Hatfield, Owen. Motion carried.

Commissioner's Report: None.

Deputy Report: Deputy Godsey has been doing extensive training for the past couple of months for a total of 260 hours. Lee Township had 170 calls in October. On December 18th he will be going to the day shift. He has been assisting with an ordinance violation that has gone to a pretrial hearing.

Fire Department/EMS Report: Zack reported 39 calls for the month with 22 medicals. October 17th the department provided Fire Prevention activities for Pullman Elementary students.

Code Official Report: Jeff Olney was not able to attend the meeting but continues to work on follow-ups.

Assessor's Report: Supervisor Owen read a report from Assessor Heather Jahr including approved splits for Parcel 12-027-017-00, split approved creating 1 child parcel having approximately 5.7 acres of land and 295 ft of frontage on 54th and remainder parent parcel having 32 acres of land and 695 feet of frontage on 54th St. Lot Line adjustment approved for Parcels 12-700-056-00 to parcel 12-700-058-00.

Jahr added she has had many instances where residents are trying to transfer ownership but have no legal documentation verifying, they own the property. In order for property ownership to be reflected on the assessment/tax rolls, chain of title must be verified; adding to the Allegan County Register of Deeds office does not assure ownership verification.

The Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) rendered a Final Opinion and Order regarding the appeal of 2024 property valuation for parcel 12-008-041-11. Petitioner (Mr. Doug Bale) was appealing to lower the parcel's 2024 Taxable and Assessed Values from \$33,300 to \$14,000. The MTT ordered the 2024 Taxable and Assessed values to be set at \$30,000 on the 2024 Roll.

She has received 3 MTT petitions, filed by Mr. Adam Brody of Varnum Law, regarding appeal for application of the Qualified Agricultural Exemption to parcels 12-013-006-00, 12-013-007-00, and 12-017-014-11 owned by Mr. John Harris.

Ambulance Report: None.

Building Inspector Report: In the month of October there were 9 electrical permits, 3 mechanicals, 2 plumbing and 6 building permits for improvements in the amount of \$233,911.

Cemetery Report: AJ Canfield reported that in the last month they removed the brush and bags from the fall cleanup and graded the roads. He also thanked Marcus for volunteering his time to help. Work on the water issues at the cemetery has begun.

Transfer Station Report: Treasurer Godlew reported that for the month of October the Transfer Station brought in \$1,526.00 and 68 tickets.

Lake Board Report: John Van Gessel sent a report stating that the Lake Board was unable to gather for a 2025 planning session. The Lake Board has funds for the year and expects the milfoil to be under control. The hope is there will be some study of work that needs to be done at the channel. He looks forward to meeting the new county commissioner and drain commissioner.

Newsletter Report: Fall/Winter newsletter is at the printers and will be in mailboxes by Thanksgiving. It will also be available on the Township website in both English and Spanish.

Holiday Committee Report: Beautify Pullman is taking the lead on the annual Christmas Social which will take place Saturday December 7 from 5-7 pm at the Town Square. A lite meal, cookies and hot chocolate, gifts for children up to age 12 and Santa are all a part of the activities planned.

Pullman Pride Report: Applications for the 2025 scholarship will be available online by mid-December.

Road Commission Report: No report

Unfinished Business:

P.P. Scholarship Fund: Trustee Galdikas presented a contract from the Allegan County Community Foundation (ACCF), as previously discussed, to take over the fiduciary oversight of the scholarship fund. The ACCF will also expediate the application process for students. Trustee Galdikas and her husband donated \$1200.00 to the fund in honor of the 12 years that Scott Owen served as Supervisor.

Galdikas motioned to accept the contract with ACCF which moves the Pullman Pride funds to ACCF and gives them the authority to manage the scholarship process and funds. Seconded by Hatfield. All in favor. Roll Call, yes, Hatfield, Galdikas, Godlew, Owen. Motion carried.

New Business:

Monitoring Well Contract: Supervisor Owen explained the monitor well contract for boring in Lee Township for a study to measure water quantity not quality. It will be at Fire Station 2. No cost to Township, they just need our permission.

Motion to approve monitoring well by Owen, seconded by Godlew. All voted "Aye." Motion carried. Motion carried.

B.O.R. Renewing Members: At last month's Board meeting all current BOR members indicated a willingness to continue to serve.

Motion to approve Sally Lacy, Shirley Kay, Ray Russell and Kris Lapoint (alternate) as Board of Review members by Owen and seconded by Hatfield. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

They need to be sworn in within 10 days.

Battery Storage Facility: A company has leased property from a private citizen in the heart of Lee Township to build a battery storage facility. The Township Board is concerned about the environmental impact. Research regarding PA 233 which went into effect November 30, 2024 indicates non-zoned municipalities have no authority over such projects and are not protected by any state regulations. Legal counsel has confirmed this as well. Zoning is required to be eligible to receive protection under state guidelines and oversight.

Township Land Sale: T. Kotas reviewed that the Township Board had already approved 123Net access to Township property for "staging" as they begin to lay fiber in Pullman. 123Net would like the Township Board to consider selling the parcel on 56th just south of the hall that butts up to the RR tracks, so they can also utilize it for a network hub once the work is complete.

Owen motioned to entertain an offer to sell 123Net the parcel at least fair market value. Godlew second the motion. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Free Library building: Supervisor Owen gave a brief review of the attempts to resolve the issue of the "free library" building on township property and the outstanding utility fees not paid by the library group, as well as a building permit request to remove the building by the library representative. Galdikas added during recent preparations to shred decades old files which are past their retention requirement, a file was found with documentation that included a cancelled check for \$4000 for the purchase of the building by the Township and documents signed by Doug Bale, the Lee Township Supervisor at the time, and Fennville District Library representative, stating sole ownership of the building to the Township. Legal counsel for the Township submitted a letter to MTS, building official, to retract the permit to move the building by Laraway/Bale as they are not the legal owners. A cease & desist notice was also filed. The Board discussed what to do with the building.

A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Hatfield to sell the building for fair market value to recoup its costs and pay off the outstanding bills left by the library committee. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Printing of Tax Newsletter:

Treasurer Godlew stated he is preparing the tax newsletter and requested approval of printing not to exceed \$300.

Motion by Godlew and seconded by Galdikas to approve printing the tax newsletter not to exceed \$300. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Mailing of Assessment Notices:

The Assessor is required to print and mail annual assessment notices to all landowners. Godlew received 2 quotes for the work; one from KCI for \$801 plus postage and one from Pullman Printworks for \$696 plus postage which also includes printing a copy of the assessment roll document for the Assessor. He stated the postage estimates for both quotes were the same and recommended the board utilize the cheaper local option.

Motion by Godlew and seconded by Owen to approve printing and mailing of assessment notices by Pullman Printworks. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Payment of Bills: Presented by Treasurer Godlew in the absence of Clerk Friel, totaling \$128,827.44.

A motion was made by Galdikas and seconded by Owen to approve the payment of the bills for a total of \$128,827.44. Yes-Galdikas, Hatfield, Godlew, Owen. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Supervisor Owen read his final correspondence as Township Supervisor.

Dear Electors of Lee Township,

As I stand before you at my final meeting as your Supervisor, I want to express my deep gratitude for the honor of serving this community over the past twelve years. It has been a privilege to work on behalf of Lee Township, and I am immensely grateful for the trust you have placed in me throughout my time in this role. As I prepare to pass on my duties, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the responsibilities that come with serving on this board. Our role as township officials is one of stewardship. We are fiduciaries for Lee Township, charged with the careful management of its resources and the thoughtful consideration of decisions that impact the community as a whole. It is essential that every member of this board respect and uphold these duties.

To the incoming board, I encourage you to approach your responsibilities with a commitment to integrity and due diligence. This means:

- 1. Research and Awareness: Ensure that you are well-versed in all relevant mandates, policies, regulations, and laws. Decisions made must reflect the best interests of Lee Township as a whole, not just a few.*
- 2. Fiscal Responsibility: Every expenditure must be scrutinized to confirm that it aligns with legal requirements and serves the township's interests. I encourage you to consistently consult legal representation when questions arise about the legality or appropriateness of expenses.*

As you step into these roles, I hope you will approach them with the resolve and conviction necessary to uphold the trust placed in you by our community. I have every confidence that you will rise to the occasion and serve Lee Township with honor and diligence.

Once again, thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve. I will always hold this experience dear and will continue to keep Lee Township in my thoughts and prayers as it moves into this new chapter.

With sincere gratitude, Scott Owen

Adjournment: A motion was made by Owen and seconded by Galdikas to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Ann Hatfield, Trustee on behalf of Clerk Friel