

Lee Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 10th, 2025

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 Rawson, Clerk Blackburn, Trustee Hatfield, Trustee Lewis.

Members Absent: Treasurer Godlew.

Amendments: None.

Board Comments:

Trustee Lewis:

- Trustee Ben suggested the board consider a unique ordinance or policy for tiny homes. He emphasized that township members cannot complain about how people live or what they see if the township does not provide options for tiny homes. He recommends the board address this issue in the near future.
- Trustee Lewis inquired about the closure of 107th Avenue between 56th and 58th Streets. He noted that no action has been taken on the road and questioned where the allocated funds went.
- Supervisor Rawson clarified that, based on his inquiry with the treasurer (who was not in attendance), the funds were reserved and used for the widening of 56th Street.

Supervisor Rawson:

- Allegan County has issued a warning to residents regarding bird flu. More information is available here: <https://www.allegancounty.org/Home/Components/News/News/434/647>.

Clerk Blackburn:

- Due to pending federal legislation, as Clerk and head of the township's elections, I strongly encourage all voting members to secure documentation of their citizenship. If the proposed legislation passes, registered voters may be required to re-register with the local clerk using these documents. Acceptable documentation may include:
 - Active passport
 - Birth certificate
 - Social Security card
 - Naturalization documentation
 - Name change documentation (e.g., adoption court documents, marriage or divorce certificates)
- I will be attending election chair training at the end of March and assisting with the May election, shadowing election officials in Otsego.
- The township has acquired new election equipment through the Physical Security and Election Resiliency Grant. This includes:
 - Two new ballot boxes to replace outdated, rusty ones
 - A Windows 11 Electronic Poll Book to meet updated election requirements for 2024

Citizens Comment:

Charlotte Goodall:

- Encouraged the township to explore tiny homes and other solutions to address the lack of affordable housing for residents.
- Raised questions regarding the recent road closures and the spending of allocated funds.

- Expressed concerns about summer rentals, specifically whether there are any restrictions on property purchases for rental purposes and whether they are taxed differently than residential properties.
- **Clerk Blackburn** responded, explaining that properties used as non-primary residences typically do not qualify for tax reductions such as the Principal Residence Exemption or the Homestead Property Tax Credit. She further noted that due to the township's historical preference against zoning, there is little power to regulate property purchases or usage. While the township can enact ordinances to restrict land use, zoning would be required to localize those regulations to specific areas.

Janeen Horton – Bloomingdale Communications:

- Announced that Bloomingdale Communications will be expanding its fiber internet network, adding 340 new locations.
- **Estimated timeline:**
 - **Construction start:** Late spring to early summer 2025
 - **Completion:** Late summer to early fall 2025
- Residents can expect to see engineering and construction activity during this period.
- For more information or to check service availability at a specific address, visit: <https://billpay.bloomingdalecom.com/buildout/>

Patty Conway:

- Highlighted the lack of affordable housing and suggested the township or a non-profit apply for grants to conduct a planning study on housing needs and infrastructure development.
- Recommended the following resources for further exploration:
 - **Office of Rural Prosperity:** <https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/office-of-rural-development>
 - **Allegan County Housing Assessment 2023:** <https://alleganfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Housing-Assessment-Executive-Summary-Draft-September-2023.pdf>

Guest Speakers: None.

Approval of Regular Board Minutes:

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to approve the previous months regular meeting minutes as presented. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes: None.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report was read by Clerk Blackburn provided by Treasurer Godlew, printed here:

2024 property tax season has concluded. I am pleased to report that Lee Township has successfully settled with the County and was accurate to the penny. All outstanding taxes are now delinquent and must be paid to the Allegan County Treasurer. You can pay online, by mail, or in person. Contact them for the exact amount due including late fees. Their office is no longer in the courthouse and has moved to the County Services Building at 3283 122nd Avenue.

Please note there are three parcels with delinquent "personal property" tax which must still be paid to Lee Township. These parcels were notified via certified letter. All others must go to Allegan.

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to receive the Treasurer's Report as given. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Commissioners Report:

County Commissioner Brad Lubbers stated that if you've received the Allegan County 2025 survey, please do participate, this is how our county gains an understanding of where county resources could be allocated.

Allegan County Clerk Report: None.

Deputy Report: Deputy Wasilewski introduced himself, he is new in Allegan county but comes to Lee Township with 4 years of prior experience. He is looking forward to working with the community. Deputy Godsey will be transitioning duties over to Deputy Wasilewski in the coming weeks.

Fire Department/ EMS Report: Zack Chamberlain for January ran a total of 43 calls. During the first part of January they ran ice rescue training. For February they ran a total of 42 calls.

Code Official Report: Jeff Olney stated that now that the snow has melted, he is actively addressing several blight issues.

Clerk Blackburn reminded residents that resources for reporting ordinance violations are available on the Lee Township website, along with information on reporting sewage and water concerns to the Allegan County Health Department.

Lee Township ordinances and complaint form:

<http://www.leetwp.org/departments/townshipordinances.htm>

Allegan County Environmental Health

3255 122nd Ave, Ste. 200

Allegan, MI 49010

(269) 673-5415

(269) 673-4172 Fax

alleganeh@allegancounty.org

Assessor's Report: Supervisor Rawson:

Please note the March Board of Review dates are as follows:

- March 12th – Appeals Meeting – 2:00pm - 5:00pm & 6:00pm - 9:00pm
- March 13th – Appeals Meeting - 11:00am - 2:00pm & 3:00pm - 6:00pm

Ambulance Reports: Clerk Blackburn asked Zack to provide an overview for the public on how Life EMS coordinates with first responders. Zack explained that Life EMS provides a trained workforce of paramedics and EMTs. Since local first responders may not always have that level of medical training, both teams respond to calls and assess the situation before determining the best course of action.

Clerk Blackburn highlighted a concerning issue from the Life EMS 2024 Yearly Report: Lee Township had the worst response time metrics compared to other areas. For instance, only 60% of Priority 1 calls met the 15-minute response threshold.

The Clerk stressed the importance of board representation at these meetings, specifically urging Trustee Lewis to attend and advocate for the township, as he missed the last meeting. She further suggested that if a board member is unable to attend in the future, they should notify the board in advance so an alternate representative can be assigned.

Building Inspector's Report: Building Inspector's report was read by Supervisor Rawson. There were 6 electrical inspections; 9 build inspections; 1 build permit – with a value of \$13,500

Cemetery Report: AJ is planning to attend the budget meeting and lobby the board for funding to fix the roads within the cemetery and allocated funding for tree trimming as a preventative safety measure.

Transfer Station Report: Transfer station report was read by Clerk Blackburn. A total of 26 tickets were collected for a total of \$978.00.

Lake Board: None.

Newsletter Report: Trustee Hatfield reminded those in attendance that any information that needs to be published in the newsletter should be sent to her by the end of May as publishing and printing is planned for beginning of June.

Holiday Committee Report: None.

Pullman Pride Report: Trustee Hatfield is hosting a planning meeting on Monday March 17th at 4pm at the Lee township hall. Any who wish to help and participate are welcome to attend.

Road Committee Report: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution for light contract with Consumers Energy at 5615 109th Ave.

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Blackburn to approve the resolution for light contract with Consumers Energy regarding 5615 109th Ave. Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Updated Michigan minimum wage as of Feb 21,2025

Clerk Blackburn presented that the Michigan minimum wage has been increased and will continue to increase over the next few years. More information can be found here:

<https://www.michigan.gov/leo/news/2024/10/01/michigan-minimum-wage-rate-2025-increase-schedule>

Clerk Blackburn proposed this item remain under unfinished business for our upcoming budget meeting.

Implications of Earned Sick Time act as Feb 21 ,2025

Clerk Blackburn presented a draft policy for Earned Sick Time for the employees of Lee Township. She has sent a copy of this to our township law office for official review. The policy and notice must be in place by March 23rd, 2025. She will be working closely with the attorneys to ensure lawful compliance with the new legislation that was just passed at the end of February in the state of Michigan.

Clerk Blackburn proposed this item remain under unfinished business for our upcoming budget meeting.

Variance request for Parcel 03-12-020-008-50 Amado Salazar 5ft setback ordinance requires 7 ft

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to approve the variance.

Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Free Dump days proposed May 17th, July 12th and September 20th

A motion was made by Blackburn and seconded by Hatfield to approve and adopt the free dump days for 2025. Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Township work order for Dust Control

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to approve the work order for 2 dust control applications at a cost of \$19,000 each for 2025. Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Payment of the Bills: Presented by Clerk Blackburn, totaling \$60,751.89.

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to approve the payment of the bills for a total of \$60,751.89. as presented by Clerk Blackburn. Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes Trustee Lewis - yes.

Correspondence: None.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to adjourn the meeting. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Minutes submitted by: Kathryn Blackburn, Clerk