

Helena Township Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 7:00pm
8751 Helena Road, Alden, Michigan 49612

Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Supervisor Butch Peeples at 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: All in room stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Butch Peeples, Catherine Rice, Jim Schilling and Butch Bartz (via Zoom)

Members Absent: Tony Smedra

Conflict of Interest: No Conflicts

Approval of Minutes: January 9, 2024 Minutes; pending the corrections of the presentation of bills in January, and it is the TAA receiving two new ambulances, not the township. Motion by Jim Schilling, seconded by Butch Bartz. Minutes approved.

Public Comment: Paul Sak found a blight ordinance in response to a January meeting inquiry from Julie Schlecker. It is ordinance 5.01.03 and has to do with accumulated junk in residents' yard.

Treasurer's Report January 2025

\$183,539.42 – receipts

\$ 34,984.26 – disbursements

There was no presentation of bills for February; no checks have been written.

Motion by Jim Schilling to approve January 2025 Treasurer's report and seconded by Butch Bartz. Treasurer's report approved.

The State of Michigan requires that approved Helena Township check signatories are identified and documented. As such, the following are approved signatories: Treasurer-Catherine Rice; Deputy Treasurer-Ernest Rice; and Township Clerk-Tony Smedra. Catherine Rice provided the paperwork for this to be formalized with Alden State Bank.

Fire Chief Report: Reviewed the South Torch Lake Fire & Rescue report from Chief Paul Fabiano.

- The Fire Department was not successful in their application for a grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa/Chippewa Indians request of \$10,998.00 to purchase a handheld sonar unit and rapid deployment craft. They will reapply in June 2025.
- The Fire Department is working with TAA to provide space in the fire station for an ambulance. The ambulance will be in the local station for a twelve (12) hour shift, then return to their station for the remainder of the twenty-four (24) hour shift.
- Helena Township Community Dinner is planned at the Fire Station on Wednesday, February 26th, 2025 from 5-6pm.

Sherriff's report:

There is a new COA Director and new HDNW MI Director for Antrim County. Plans are moving forward with the Public Safety Center and full plans can be accessed on the Antrim County website.

Township Ambulance Authority (TAA) report:

- Mike Lee advised the two new ambulances have been received by TAA and will replace the two smaller ones.
- New cardiac monitors have been received.
- Investigation is occurring to expand coverage and implementation strategies are taking place with Helena Township Fire Department.
- Calls in 2024 within the nine (9) township service areas were 2328 compared with 1900 in 2023. See full report for more detail.

All reports are linked with the minutes on the township website www.helenatownship.com

Communications: None

Committee Reports:

Zoning: Bob Logee shared that in January 2025 there were five (5) zoning reports, four (4) field checks and six (6) public contacts.

Parks & Recreation: Supervisor Peoples will represent the township board on Parks and Recreation.

- The Ball Park Project was approved to move forward at the January meeting.
- In January donations of \$50,000 and in February \$25,000. was received towards the project.
- There was a brief discussion of implementing a walkway with ADA accessibility at the Harbor.
- Inventories are being completed of the amenities in the township to documents what repairs/replacements need to be addressed.
- Barry Snyder asked for approval for the library to continue their book walk at Coy Mountain from spring through fall. Motion by Catherine Rice and 2nd by Jim Schilling. Motion approved.

Planning Commission: .

- Mike Robinson was appointed as the new chair; Sue Moglovkin will continue as a valuable member.
- Finalizing ordinance language and activities are on-going. Currently, the ordinance work product is being sent to the attorney for review.

- The Planning Commission will be seeking resident input with regards to shoreline use and short-term rentals.

Roads: No report; however, the County removed several of the snowbanks in the downtown area.

New Business:

- Butch Peeples is consulting with website developers for a refresh/update more user friendly Helena Township website.

Old Business:

Announcements:

- Brandon Corbin, from the Antrim County VA reported there is health care expansion eligibility for veterans. It was suggested that the VA department have a representative at the fire department community dinners. This may be advantageous to the vets.
- Helena Township will be having a cleanup day this year. Butch Peeples is seeking estimates from both GFL and Revolution Waste.
- Barry Snyder suggested putting signs on the Frontier building and Harvey's building directing visitors to the public restrooms.
- In the Village of Alden, crosswalks were briefly discussed. It was determined that this is County property, and road space is very narrow. Additional six parking spaces would be eliminated.
- Discussion regarding having electric signs for a 25 mph speed limit within the village. In the near future a new law may allow townships to set their own speed limits with the villages.

Public Comment:

- Lori and Gary Mayes have established the Helena Township Advocacy Group (HTAG) to encourage working together with the Planning Commission and Board to increase transparency and awareness of important topics impacting our community. A full handout is available from Gary Mayes.
- The township and appointed boards were thanks for their service and commitment.

Adjournment: Adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Rice & Fay M. VandenBerg, Helena Township Board Recording Secretary