

Charter Township of Portage
Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

April 14, 2025

The Charter Township of Portage held a Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Brandon Scholie at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call:

In attendance were Supervisor Brandon Scholie, Clerk Amy Skewes, Treasurer Betsy Smith, and Trustees Dale Belanger, Nick Lanctot, and Amber Voght as stated by roll call. Absent: Janelle Datto (Trustee).

Additions or Changes to the Meeting Agenda:

- New Business – New Water Clerk, Kristen Archambeau.
- Water/Sewer – Set up to accept credit card payments.
- Old Business – Denton and Gaffney Road update.

A motion was made by Lanctot and seconded by Voght to approve the meeting agenda. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Lanctot, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Approval of the Board of Trustees Previous Minutes:

A motion was made by Voght and seconded by Lanctot to approve the meeting minutes from last month's Regular Board of Trustees Meeting, held March 10, 2025 and special meeting minutes on March 21, 2025. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Lanctot, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Approval of the Bills:

A motion was made by Belanger and seconded by Scholie to approve the bills as audited. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Lanctot, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Review Clerk's Report:

- Quiet month, working on end of year stuff/adjustments.

Review Treasurer's Report:

- Working on year-end balancing/reconciliations.
- Treasurer out of office/town: 4/18 - 4/21.
- Audit: Working on end of year wrap up in preparation for our audit; we have our meetings in late April, and the final audit is due at the latest by 6/30/25 unless we apply for an extension.
- Rural development final numbers for 2024 are included, have been slightly adjusted up since the last meeting.
- Rural Development 2025 chart with new minimum balances.

- In the column for March, the future payments are also included so we know what our bottom-line minimum is with those mandatory expenses.
- Future payments are in bold/italic in columns K-O.
- Adams is charging more for water by 1.18%, affecting wholesale rates for water purchased.
- Income *should* help, the January payments are the first with the new fees included so we need to watch these balances and do another rate increase by mid-year (approve at the May meeting) if they are not gaining enough to be in the positive this year.
- Treasurer distributed a letter of resignation; tentative last day will be middle of June.

Review Zoning Administrator's Report for March 2025:

ZONING APPLICATIONS:

- 3/12 – Green Acres Road, fire # TBD, new home, approved.

INQUIRIES & COMPLAINTS:

- 3/10 – Resident inquiring if she can add a mobile home to a lot where there already is a house.
- 3/10 – Rules for building a 'tiny' house in the township
- 3/12 – What can be built on a substandard lot in R-3.
- 3/12 – What are the setbacks for a new home on Green Acres Road.
- 3/19 – Another complaint about the constantly barking dog in Hurontown.
- 3/20 – Setback requirements for new garage in #2 Location
- 3/25 – Rules for new home near Onkalo's Corners
- 3/26 – What are the rental rules in R-3.

OTHER ZONING ACTIVITIES:

- Continuing conversations with MTA for guidance about inconsistencies in the Zoning Ordinance, for questions about the Master Plan update, and for guidance about the procedure for subdivision plats.
- The Master Plan update is going well: the narrative is nearly complete, info from the 2020 Census is being incorporated into the appropriate township data tables, and false information is being removed. A PC work session will be scheduled in late April to work on the body of the Master Plan text.
- I will meet with the Township attorney on the 16th to discuss the township's role in the proposed subdivision plat near Dodgeville and to review the updated version of the Municipal Civil Infraction Ordinance.
- I have already spoken with MTA, the County Drain Commissioner, and a local engineering firm about subdivision plats in general and those which have been established in the county but outside of Portage Township.

Review Fire Departments:

- Otter Lake Fire Department (OLFD)
 - No representative
- Hurontown Fire Department (HTFD)
 - 1 fire
 - Smokehouse training

Review Assessor's Report:

Distributed

Trustee Reports:

- Voght: Planning Commission had a regular meeting on April 10, 2025; there is Special Meeting on April 24, 2025 to continue work on the Master Plan.
- Belanger: Asked Kody if they need extra help this summer. Will discuss later.

Water/Sewer Update:

- Meters being estimated since September 2024; accounts not being charged correctly.
- Set up to take water/sewer/tax payments.

DPW Report:

Bulldozer not being used, will look into putting it up for bids. A motion was made by Lanctot to put the bulldozer up for bids, seconded by Scholie. Motion was carried by a roll call vote. Aye: Belanger, Lanctot, Scholie, Skewes, Smith, and Voght. Nay: None.

Kody Maki updated the board:

- Waiting on new radios for the water tower.
- Helping with the water meter issues.
- Township should look into replacing water line on Sharon Ave if the City of Houghton fixes the road.
- Sewer readings are increasing with the snow melt.

Public Comments:

- A resident wants to revise the noise ordinance so the constable can enforce it, he is dealing with barking dogs at his home. Scholie spoke to the attorney and is speaking to her to get it revised.
- Another resident stated neighbors are driving ORV/dirtbikes at all hours, such as midnight.
- Roy Britz stated there is a meeting regarding a new Jail on 4/15 at 10:00 am at the Circuit Court.
- A resident has concerns about the chaos in the federal government and how it might affect the Copper Country

Correspondence:

John Cima requesting a letter of support for a grant to repave part of Erickson Drive. The board will sign a letter of support.

Old Business:

- Denton and Gaffney Road bid awarded to B&B Construction. Work will begin in June.

New Business:

- A+ Pest Control – Will look into an as needed treatment.
- 4 Seasons Solution Garbage Pickup – Will try 4 Seasons for a year.
- Hired Kristen Archambeau as the new Water Clerk.

Public Comment:

- A resident asked who the Township Attorney is.

Meetings:

- Trustees Meeting – May 12, 2025 at 6:00 pm.
- Water Committee – April 17, 2025 at 1:00 pm.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Public Attendance:

- Jared Ruotsala - HTFD
- Roy Britz
- Kody Maki
- Amy Hjerstedt
- Karen Timonen
- Cody Dillinger

X

Brandon Scholie
Supervisor

X

Amy Skewes
Clerk