

**BATES TOWNSHIP BOARD**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Bates Township Board of Trustees was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.

Supervisor Stafford called the meeting to order; Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken with Supervisor Stafford, Clerk Benson-Stafford, Treasurer Nelson, Trustees Franzene & Trustee Adams present. Also, in attendance were PW Benson & Karnack; ZA Bofinger; Assessor Erhart; Larry Nelson, PC; IC Comm Judd; Sue Passamani, BHPS; Fay Frailing, BHPS; Residents.

**ATTENDEES**

Trustee Adams made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous month's meeting. Supported by Trustee Franzene. All ayes. Motion carried.

**MINUTES**

Trustee Adams made a motion to accept the January 2026 Treasurers report. Supported by Clerk Benson-Stafford. Roll call vote: Nelson, yes; Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Adams, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

General Fund:	\$ 216,186.80
Sewer Fund:	\$ 92,658.33
Water Fund:	\$ 293,206.19
Road Fund:	\$ 258,029.43

**Invoice Approval**

Trustee Franzene made a motion to pay the township invoices. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Adams, yes; Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**INVOICE APPROVAL**

County Commissioner Report – Comm Judd stated that 911 Dispatch is up to 6 full time employees. / There is an agreement across the UP to enter into a new CAD system, excluding Marquette. / Pentoga Park is getting a new Vendor for their store, and they will be offering kayak and canoe rentals.

**COUNTY COMM REPORT**

ICECA Report – Brett stated that the 2025 BAH events had 67 attendees and 6/events. / 2026 – 20,000 visitor guides were printed.

**ICECA**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Assessor Report – Assr Erhart stated that the Notice of Assessments were being printer. They will be in the mail to property owners 2 weeks prior to the first petition hearing, March 9<sup>th</sup>. /BOR dates are Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-9:00 and Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-3:00. / There have been updates to the Michigan Land Division rules. / The county has updated their market adjustments to Assessment Classes. / The State mandated inflation rate multiplier for 2026 is 1.027. This means taxable values will go up by 2.7% for 2026. / A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk.

**ASSESSOR REPORT**

Zoning Administrator Report – ZA Bofinger stated he has received an inquiry into a lot for sale on W. Sunset Lake Rd as to whether it is buildable. / He has received an inquiry about a lot for sale on Winslow Lake and whether it can be subdivided and/or multiple structures put on it. / He continues to meet with property owners & answer questions. / Year-to-date permits issued: 2 for 2026. / A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk.

**ZONING ADMIN REPORT**

Planning Commission – The PC will meet on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00pm. / The GIS mapping is going to include assigned zoning districts to each parcel. / The PC continues to work on the zoning ordinance updates and the master plan updates.

**PLANNING COMM**

Road Projects- Nothing new to report.

**ROAD PROJECTS**

**Hall**- Nothing new to report. / **Shop**– Nothing new to report. / **Water** – A 2" line leak was repaired on Vinnedge Rd. / There were 8 letters sent to property owners whose meters are not working properly. Three owners have called back, and the meters have been repaired. The process is a second notice will go out 30 days after the first. A third notice will go out after the second notice. If there is no response, the water will be shut off. / **Sewer** – Repaired a hose on a lift station. / **Cemetery** – Closed for the season. / **Park** – Closed for the season. / **School** – Nothing new to report. / **Paint River Boat Launch** – Closed for the season.

**HALL-SHOP-WTR-SWR-CEM-PARK-SCH-PR BL**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS (cont'd)**

Windsor Center– Stafford said Dawn is aligning the financial accounts with the State of Michigan chart of accounts. / Rent increases are in effect. / There will be a millage renewal request this fall.

**WINDSOR  
CTR**

Bates Hall Preservation Society Update – Sue Passamani stated that as of the meeting date they have \$316,000 funds. / They are working on a Michigan History \$2000 grant for the hall mural. / They continue to seek out new grant opportunities. / They are currently working on the bid process for the USDA grant.

**BHPS**

WIDL – Trustee Adams said the meeting is next week. Nothing new to report.

**WIDL**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Supervisor Statement – Stafford stated that the trailer was picked from Colfax. / Brock Van Oss will be looking at a couple of parcels. / The three township Supervisors will be meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup> to sign the Mini Excavator agreement. (Bates, Iron River, and Stambaugh Twps.)

**SUPERVISOR  
STATEMENT**

Sunset Lake Milfoil – Nothing new to report.

**SUNSET  
LAKE  
MILFOIL**

Mini Excavator Agreement – Trustee Adams made a motion to approve the language of the agreement. Supported by Trustee Franzene. All ayes. Motion carried. (A copy of the agreement is on file with the Clerk).

**MINI EXC  
AGREEMENT**

**NEW BUSINESS**

Election Agreement – Clerk Benson-Stafford made a motion to approve the “stand alone election agreement,” meaning Bates Twp residents will vote in Bates for the 9 days of early in person voting for the August and November 2026 elections.” Supported by Trustee Adams. All ayes. Motion carried.

**ELECTION  
AGREEMENT**

UPSET – Clerk Benson-Stafford made a motion to approve a \$500 fee to support UPSET services. Supported by Treasurer Nelson. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Adams, yes; Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**UPSET**

2026-2027 Budget – The proposed budget has been made available for 30-day review.

**2026-2027  
BUDGET**

Budget Hearing – Clerk Benson-Stafford will publish the Budget Hearing date of Monday, March 30, 2026 @ 4:00pm.

**BUDGET  
HEARING**

Board of Review Alternate Member – Clerk Benson-Stafford will publish an ad seeking a Board of Review member to serve as an alternate for the remainder of the 2026 year, as well as potential full member effective January 1, 2027.

**BOR  
MEMBER  
WANTED**

March Board of Review Dates – Organizational meeting is Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 9:30am. Board of Review dates are Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> 3:00-9:00 and Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 9:00-3:00.

**MARCH BOR  
DATES**

Salary and Wage Increases – After much discussion which included public comment the following increases were made.

**SALARY &  
WAGE  
INCREASES**

Public Works Employees – Trustee Adams made a motion to approve an increase of full time Benson from \$31.50 to \$34.00/hour; full time Karnack from \$25.00 to \$30.00/hour; part time Franzmeier from \$21.50 to \$22.50/hour. Supported by Stafford. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Nelson, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Adams, yes; Stafford, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)**

Salary and Wage Increases (cont'd) – After much discussion which included public comment the following decisions were made.

**SALARY &  
WAGE  
INCREASES**

Board of Review – Supervisor Stafford made a motion to approve an increase of the rate from \$65/ ½ day to \$75/ ½ day and from \$130/ full day to \$150 / full day. Supported by Trustee Franzene. Roll call vote: Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Adams, yes; Stafford, yes; Franzene, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Planning Commission & ZBA – Trustee Adams made a motion to approve an increase of the rate from \$65/meetings to \$75/meeting and the Chair position from \$80/meeting to \$90/meeting. Supported by Trustee Franzene. Roll call vote: Nelson, yes; Stafford, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Adams, yes; Franzene, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Election Workers – Clerk Benson-Stafford made a motion to approve an increase of the inspector positions from \$16/hour to \$18/hour and the Chair position from \$18/hour to \$20/hour. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Adams, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried. / Benson-Stafford pointed out that the wages are reimbursed by the federal government for some elections. Also, these are not considered “employee” positions.

Park Host – Supervisor Stafford made a motion to approve an increase of the rate from \$800/month to \$850/month, noting that this is a 1099 position and not an employee position. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Franzene, yes; Adams, yes; Stafford, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Trustees – Supervisor Stafford made a motion to approve increase of the rate from \$320/month to \$350/month; for two meetings. Supported by Treasurer Nelson. Roll call vote: Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Franzene, abstain; Adams, abstain; Stafford, yes. Motion carried.

Supervisor – Trustee Franzene made a motion to approve an increase of the rate of \$22500/year to \$24000/year. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Nelson, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Adams, yes; Stafford, abstain; Franzene, yes. Motion carried.

Clerk - Trustee Adams made a motion to approve an increase of the rate of 2.8% COLA from \$30616.75/year to \$31474/year. Supported by Treasurer Nelson. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Benson-Stafford, abstain; Adams, yes. Motion carried.

Treasurer – Trustee Adams made a motion to approve an increase of the rate of 2.8% COLA from \$28472.50/year to \$29427/year. Supported by Benson-Stafford. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes; Nelson, abstain; Adams, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes. Motion carried.

Assessor - Trustee Adams made a motion to approve an increase of the rate of 2.8% COLA from \$25830/year to \$26553/year. Supported by Benson-Stafford. Roll call vote: Franzene, yes; Stafford, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Adams, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement - Trustee Franzene made a motion to approve an increase of the rate of \$1225/month to \$1260/month, which is \$400/month code enforcement and \$860/month Zoning Administrator. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Stafford, yes; Nelson, yes; Benson-Stafford, yes; Adams, yes; Franzene, yes. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)**

Sewer Rates – Due to the ever-increasing cost of maintenance for 12 sewer lift stations and the sewer lagoon, Supervisor Stafford made a motion to increase the sewer rates from \$31/month to \$35/month effective April 1, 2026. Supported by Trustee Adams. Roll call vote: Benson-Stafford, yes; Franzene, yes; Adams, yes; Nelson, yes; Stafford, yes. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**SEWER RATE  
INCREASE**

**GUEST COMMENTS**

- Ernie Schmidt stated that the township has great employees and you want to get them to stay with good wages.
- Trustee Adams promoted the Easy Aces Radio Program at the Crystal Theatre on Saturday night at 7:00, which several Bates Twp residents are starring in.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- ICECA Report

**ADJOURNMENT**

Treasurer Nelson made a motion to adjourn. Supported by Trustee Adams. All ayes. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:58pm. Next regular meeting will be held at the Twp Hall on Wednesday, March 11, 2026.

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Barbara Benson-Stafford, Clerk

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_