

EDWARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

May 11, 2026 7:30pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Rob Kowalski, Clerk Korey Kripli, Treasurer Eileen Fournier, Trustee George Bodin, and Trustee Dan Zettel .

ATTENDANCE: County Commissioner Mark Surbrook, Zoning Administrator Bob Clayton, Deputy Treasurer Sydney Lademan (absent), and Deputy Clerk Kim Glasser (absent). Several residents of Edwards Township.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 13, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion by Eileen Fournier, supported by George Bodin to approve the April 13, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve the agenda with the change of moving Planning Update to 14A. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE AGENDA: N/A

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR:

Robert Clayton wrote two zoning permits and is anticipating a couple more this upcoming month. The Amish are constructing a secondary school. Bob checked with DHS and they are allowed to install two 500 gallon tanks to be pumped out since they have no running water. House on M-30 is going to court tomorrow. Taxes have not been paid.

Motion by Rob Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve the Amish to install a 1000 gallon tank or two 500 gallon tanks for their school.

Motion carried.

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by George Bodin to pay the back taxes on the house on M-30 in order for the township to own the home, clean up the area, and then sell the property to make the township whole again.

Motion carried.

SEXTON REPORT:

Mike Laier installed 21 dozen flags for Veterans at the cemetery. He stated that there is a burial on May 30th. Cameras and trash cans will be installed soon.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER: N/A

LIBRARY UPDATE:

Korey Kripli stated that there were seven applicants for the Library Director search at the West Branch District Library. Interviews will be had on June 2nd.

TREASURER REPORT:

Eileen Fournier presented the Treasurer's Report. Motion by Dan Zettel, supported by George Bodin to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion by Dan Zettel, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve bills with Payroll Checks 10,393 - 10,414 and Payable Checks 7684 - 7700. Total is \$14,768.87.

Roll Call: Kowalski Y Kripli Y Fournier Y Bodin Y Zettel Y

Motion approved.

HALL DEPOSIT RETURNS:

There were four hall returns for Dustin Wenkel (\$150), Judy Winter (\$150), Elizabeth Orr (\$150), and Tina Freimark (\$150) for a total of \$600. Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to approve the hall returns for a total of \$600.

Motion carried.

ASSESSING - ALLISON & RANDY:

Allison Thompson and Quentin Thompson II introduced themselves as the new Assessors for Edwards Township. They both explained the process of Assessing property and what they intend to do as the township Assessor. Randy Booth, the Ogemaw County Equalization Director, attended the

meeting and spoke about the lack of field work from the previous Assessor at Edwards Township and talked about what the future looks like with the new Assessors. Randy stated that if new construction has not been reported a Form 4154 Petition needs to be filed with the state tax commission. The value of that role will be added for the following year. New construction is houses and pole barns. Sheds, decks, and small things are not reported. Dan Zettel asked Randy if he looks at construction every year. Randy stated that he looks at them every year and double checks the new construction that is reported for each township. He does the audits before BOR so the Assessor can correct it at BOR. Randy does not do an audit every year and only did an audit because of the Amish coming to Edwards Township. Dan Zettel asked if Zach Van Wormer was passing the audit that Randy would do for new construction. Randy stated that he does not conduct an audit every year. He looked at Edwards Township more in depth since he thought it was weird that the Assessor had not reported any new construction with how many building permits had been reported. This wasn't just Edwards Township, Randy had six townships in total that had not reported new construction. Randy went back three years to verify the permits for Edwards Township. He presented a spreadsheet with around fifty permits that showed only fourteen that had the right value appropriated. Dan Zettel asked who makes sure the Assessor is doing their job. Randy stated that on July 27th the State Tax Commission is coming to West Branch to talk about roles and responsibilities of the Assessors. He also stated that board members can look at the data that was given to the townships by the Assessor in order to monitor the data. Robert Kowalski stated that he has zero data for 2025 and that it was never put into his computer by Zach. He reached out to MVW & Associates and have not received a response. Randy stated that he has backups from 2022 to present and will give them to Edwards Township. Allison found a hand written note for property values for Agriculture. This value was \$2,400 per acre and was used by Zach in 2024 and he changed it to \$3,125 in 2025. Randy stated that Agriculture sales should be valued around \$3,000 per acre going off the data from Agriculture studies for Ogemaw County. Dan Zettel asked why his property tax assessment went up \$105,000 while his neighbors went down. Randy stated that the last time he was at Dan's property was 2021. Dan asked who can change that value. Randy stated that Zach, the previous Assessor, is the only one that can change that value. Dan asked how his value is raised if nobody has done field work on his property since 2021. Randy stated that it is up to the Assessor to determine that value. Dan asked if there was anyone else in Edwards

Township that had that big of an adjustment and Randy stated that he would have to look at the data.

George Bodin asked what the steps are for reporting building permits for new construction to the Assessor. Randy stated that the job of the Assessor is to receive the building permits from the township. The Zoning Administrator gives the permits to the Supervisor and the Supervisor gives the permits to the Assessor. Allison stated the next BOR is for correcting any clerical errors, not for hearings. Dale Sheltroun stated the notices weren't mailed out on time, BOR went through the entire roll and Zach signed it and approved it, and the County Commissioners approved that roll. Rick Stillwagon asked how long it would take to assess the township again. Randy stated five years if 20% of the township is assessed every year. Dan Zettel asked how his assessed taxable value on his property went up so much. Randy stated that Dan could appeal in Lansing. Korey Kripli asked if this has ever happened before and Randy stated yes. Kripli asked if there are any repercussions for the previous Assessor. Randy stated that the township can file a complaint with the state tax commission.

Motion by Eillen Fournier, supported by George Bodin to sign the L4029 to give to Randy Booth at Equalization. Motion carried.

PLANNING UPDATE:

Rick Stillwagon stated that the Planning Board met with DTE and received information about natural gas for Edwards Township. The average cost is around \$3,000 for installation. Rick stated that they would like to put a flyer in the property tax statements for residents of Edwards Township which will provide information on installing natural gas.

BILLS:

The bills were discussed as presented.

CHAPMAN LAKE CONTRACT:

A map of the residents that own property and pay the special assessment for Chapman Lake was presented. The green parcels have paid and the orange parcels have not. Robert Kowalski stated that the last contract for the Chapman Lake Assessment expired in 2017. He stated that some Veterans are not paying Special Assessments through their property taxes and that should not be happening. Allison Thompson will be looking at this issue. The attorney stated that in order to issue a contract, it must be for a

minimum of ten years and there must be public and special meetings. Rob asked the board if they want to continue being in charge of Special Assessments. Kripli asked if they have an HOA. Kowalski stated they do not. Kripli asked how they would take care of the road without the township. Kowalski stated that they would have to create an HOA and they would have to pay it directly.

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by George Bodin to reach out to the residents of Chapman Lake that are part of the Chapman Lake Assessment that after next year we will have to come up with a new contract.

HORSE SIGNS:

The board approved three horse signs to be installed on Green and Brewer Road. Rob stated that the one sign is not correct and he is waiting to hear back from the Road Commission.

CELL TOWER:

The cell tower never got turned into the tax roll. Verizon hasn't paid taxes since the tower has been installed. Bob Clayton has sent an email to the company about the blinking light on the tower. If there is no response for 45 days, the township attorney will reach out.

RAU ROAD - HIDDEN DRIVE:

A person called Rob Kowalski about Sunset Drive and the hidden driveway where there has been an accident that occurred. He asked for a Hidden Driveway sign. Rob stated that the state does not approve Hidden Driveway signs.

FIRE BOARD CONTRIBUTION:

The contract from the Fire Department read assessed value and not SCV. The contract has been updated to read assessed value. Edwards Township overpaid \$6,999 and this will be credited for next year's contribution. Members of the committee at the Fire Department have decided to not buy a new engine and to fix the original engine for around \$50,000. This should decrease the township contribution for next year.

HALL SURVEY DEED:

The Township attorney drew up the warranty deeds for the property to the west of the township hall. This process should be completed once everything is signed and approved by the attorney.

IRONS PARK:

Irons Park has added new attractions at the park and have added more fence railing. For \$50, you can put your name on the planks and have them installed at Irons Park.

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to contribute \$100 to purchase two pickets at Irons Park.

Roll Call: Fournier Y Kripli Y Kowalski Y Zettel Y Bodin Y

Motion carried.

SPENDING LIMIT:

Robert Kowalski asked the board if the spending limit without board approval could be raised from \$250 to \$500.

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by Eileen Fournier to increase the spending limit without board approval from \$250 to \$500 for the Supervisor and Hall Manager.

Roll Call: Bodin Y Zettel Y Kowalski Y Kripli Y Fournier Y

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rick Stillwagon asked about the generator at the hall. Rob stated that someone shut the safety switch off. He found a company out of St. Helen that can maintain the generator.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Township Board Meeting: Monday, June 8, 2026 7:30pm

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Robert Kowalski, supported by George Bodin to adjourn at 9:27pm. Motion carried.

Rob Kowalski, Supervisor

Korey Kripli, Clerk